

The Swedish Community in Spain

By Gunilla Westerlund, SVIV Representative

Why do so many Swedish people live temporarily or settle down for good in **Spain**, of all places? That is a very good question.

Many Swedes have a dream for their retirement: to buy a house or an apartment and spend time in the sun while Sweden is blanketed with rain or snow, especially during the dark months of October through March. They tend to settle in two main areas – one on the East Coast known as Costa Blanca from Valencia to Orihuela, and the other area further down south along the Costa del Sol with Malaga, Marbella and Gibraltar as the main attractions. The journey from Stockholm takes 4 – 5 hours by plane and 2 – 3 days by car.

The East Coast is for people who prefer long beaches with white sand and sunny weather 360 days a year. The South Coast sees more rain and is therefore greener; it is also fancier and more expensive. Some Swedes become Spanish citizens, learn the language, mingle with

the locals, and try hard to be as “español” as possible in their new environment. Prices are reasonable by Swedish standards, making travel, eating out and buying real estate quite affordable.

In Costa Blanca, where I live part-time, we have two excellent schools, one Scandinavian and the other international. In the big cities of Alicante and Torrevieja there are good employment possibilities working as teacher, broker, servant or builder, but you must still be able to speak Spanish. We have many Swedish associations – Mas Amigos, Club Nordico, Rotary, SWEA, SVIV and The Swedish Church. All of them arrange activities, and some of them offer car hire and apartment rentals. The Swedish consul helps

Swedes with practical information and passport renewals.

Sunny weather, seldom rain, much to see, extraordinary beaches, clear water for swimming, and friendly people – what more could a person wish for?



Above: The Andalusian city in Malaga. Below: Carnival in Alicante.



Above: Beautiful beaches in Costa Blanca. Below: Torrevieja.