

WELCOME NEW AUX

Welcome to La Cala de Mijas!

I'm Charlotte and I was an Aux at IES Torre Almenara from October 2023 to May 2024. I'm a student at University College London and spent the year here on my year abroad through the British Council. Prior to joining the school I had no teaching experience. At 20 years old moving abroad and starting a new profession was daunting at first but quickly I found my feet!

I picked the school based on the proximity to the beach and it being a secondary school. I have made this information sheet to give advice and some hints and tips for your first few weeks in Spain and what the school experience was like for me.



Day to day life at the school

Each week you have 12 hours dedicated to classes and 2 for preparation of resources in the staff room. I rotated between Week 1 and Week 2. Week 1 involved mainly the younger half of the high school and I was in Biology, History, Geography and Maths classes. Week 2 was with the older students again in History, Geography, Maths and Biology. I enjoyed the switch of rotas, I got to interact with most of students in the school and the routine was never boring. I would mainly create presentations for my lessons. The topics varied and were more complex the older the students. I did lessons on topics such as International Relations, UK Politicians, Historic Figures, Miner's Strikes, Suffragette Movements etc.

The teachers usually have an idea from which you can interpret however you wish. With the younger groups topics included Prehistory, Vikings, Pollution and many more. In other classes the teachers preferred me to have 1 to 1 conversation with the children where I would play language-based games or chat to them. The school environment is very welcoming. The English language level varies from group to group, but the children are always eager to be involved. The teachers are welcoming and friendly and always there to support you if you need. There are events throughout the school year which get you involved from World Book Week to the staff Christmas party and Secret Santa. The coordinator, Jesús, is the most helpful leader you could wish for! Any questions or issues are always answered or resolved rapidly.

The area

La Cala de Mijas is a beautiful coastal town with great connections to bigger towns like Fuengirola and Marbella. La Cala has the classic Andalucian seaside village atmosphere. The beach is picturesque and the school just a stone's throw away from the sea.

I decided to live in Fuengirola. To find accommodation and flatmates my biggest tip is to join Facebook and WhatsApp groups. I found two girls, an Australian and an American, and we found

a very reasonably priced apartment just under 300 a month in Fuengirola (the landlady is looking for new tenants this year if you're interested!).

Fuengirola is a 20-minute bus journey away from La Cala (M-220 bus). The buses are very punctual in the mornings and run usually twice an hour. The bus stop is around 10 minutes away from the school.

Fuengirola is very well connected to Malaga. The trainline (I will mention this later) takes you along the Costa del Sol.



When you arrive



When you arrive there are some admin bits you **need** to do. I used this blog, and it explains everything very well. As many English speakers move to this area the information is accessible and easy to understand. Also, I recommend speaking to someone in person who has already started their application / done the process before as it is useful to follow their footsteps.

<https://ultimatetravelscrapbook.com/blog/getting-a-tie-in-malaga-spain-step-by-step-guide>

You need to open a Spanish bank account so you can get paid. I went with N26 as it is the easiest account to open. The whole thing is online and in English. Other people I know went with Santander where it's all in person.

I didn't change my phone contract or number as my UK provider allows for European use. Here's an article if you need any advice on providers.

<https://www.spainexpat.com/information/mobile-and-cellular-phones-in-spain>

Hints and Tips

If you decide to travel to school by bus purchase a green card at the tobacco shop in La Cala that makes every journey 0.40 cent.

The Cercanias train has an abono which is 10 euro. This covers all your journeys along the route to Malaga for 3 months and after 16 journeys you get your money back.

If you want to improve your Spanish speak to the teachers! I did some intercambios in my free periods with teachers.

When you join the school you get to decide whether you want Mondays or Fridays off. I went for Monday and, as I usually finished at 12:30 or 11 on a Friday, I had an extra-long weekend.

Travel

Getting to Malaga airport could not be easier. The Cercanias train takes about 30 minutes to reach the airport. I travelled to Barcelona, Germany, Portugal, and Italy from Malaga. There are many buses and trains that connect Malaga to the rest of Andalusia. Using the buses and trains I went to Granada, Cordoba, Sevilla etc. If you are interested in trips I recommend Malaga South Experience (MSE). I did numerous trips with them like the Sahara trip to Morocco. Their trips are reasonably priced, well organised and a great way to make friends.



Overall, I hope you enjoy your time at IES Torre Almenara! The time here goes very quickly so make the most of it. If you have any questions or need any clarification please don't hesitate to contact me.

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