

# ABTA golf 2014

THE GOLF GUIDE FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

UP & COMING

## HOLIDAY HOTLIST

Escape the crowds and tee off at an undiscovered golfing gem

INTERVIEW

## PAUL McGINLEY

Exclusive with Europe's 2014 Ryder Cup captain

# GLOBAL GAME

Guide to the best courses  
& golf resorts worldwide

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# CULTUREshot

The Spanish Costas score well among golfers looking for a taste of the real Spain alongside manicured greens and fairways, says **Heidi Fuller-Love**

## Costa del Sol

### OFF COURSE

Once a string of sleepy fishing villages, Spain's sunny coast — stretching from ritzy Marbella to Nerja's spectacular caves — is ideal for fiesta-loving golfers seeking a keen dose of retail therapy, with just a soupçon of culture thrown-in.

It's at the heart of Andalusia, where flamenco sets the rhythm, so you can expect lively fiestas in pretty white villages like Frigiliana and Corumbela.

Further along the coast, you'll find Malaga, the birthplace of Pablo Picasso, with two world-class museums dedicated to Spain's legendary artist. From Malaga, it's a short hop to the millionaires' playground of Marbella, bustling with chic boutiques.

### ON COURSE

Home to more than 50 courses, the Costa del Sol has plenty to offer golfers of all ability levels. Top of the bill is the prestigious Valderrama Golf Club. Home to the Ryder Cup and other high-status competitions, this is Europe's number one course. A site of pilgrimage for golfers from around the globe, this immaculately-maintained Robert Trent Jones course, whose legendary par five 17th has foxed many a seasoned champion (including the legendary Tiger Woods), might be a difficult option for inexperienced players. But whether you go a round, or not, you will want to

pop into Valderrama's clubhouse to visit The Spike Bar, a stylish watering hole whose walls are lined with original photos of some of golf's most iconic players.

Framed by the Mijas mountains and favoured with spectacular views, the 18-hole, par 72, Alhaurin Golf and Country Club is a challenging course whose blind shots, a plethora of natural hazards, difficult landing zones and protected bunkers are guaranteed to keep you on your toes.

Designed by dashing golf legend Seve Ballesteros, the recently refurbished grounds now have a children's par-3 course and a new clubhouse with well-stocked Pro shop, and restaurant serving local specialities. There's also a four-star hotel on site. ►

### FACT FILE

#### VALDERRAMA GOLF CLUB

● GREEN FEE: £211.

[www.valderrama.com](http://www.valderrama.com)

#### ALHAURIN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

● GREEN FEE: £50.

[www.alhauringolf.com](http://www.alhauringolf.com)

## Costa Brava

### OFF COURSE

Dubbed Spain's 'wild coast', the Costa Brava stretches from just outside Barcelona to the French border, and is ideal for gastronomy-loving golfers eager to soak up an authentic Spanish vibe while taking trips out to sample some of the region's famed cultural activities.

Whether it's the exciting, soon-to-be-opened elBulliFoundation devoted to haute cuisine, or gourmet restaurants like Girona's Michelin-starred El Celler de Can Roca, Costa Brava is a foodies' paradise.

Luckily, you can burn off those extra calories with hikes out to coastal villages like Aiguafreda and Llafranc, or immerse yourself in walking tours to discover Barcelona's world-class attractions.

### ON COURSE

With its dramatic coastline and Pyrenees mountain backdrop, the Costa Brava is one of Spain's major golfing destinations. Classed as 'one of Europe's top 10 courses' by *Golf World*, the PGA Catalunya's Stadium course, designed by European PGA Tour aficionados Angel Gallardo and Neil Coles, is a must.

Surrounded by lush vegetation, this award-winning course is the only one in Spain to cater for such a wide range of abilities and every hole is playable from five different tees.

The excellent practice facilities include a vast putting green and bunkers with five sand types, while younger family members can join the new Sergio Garcia Junior Academy, created to find and coach young golfing talent.

Another excellent option is the recently created Emporda Golf Resort, whose two scenic 18-hole courses offer a variety of playing options to suit all levels. With long, tree-lined greens, the Forest course meanders through stunning natural scenery and suits most players, while the challenging Links course crosses a terrain mined with sand dunes and offers a more demanding game.

The keenest visiting golfers can stay overnight at the resort's four-star hotel and plan the next day's game from the comfort of a spacious room overlooking one of the fairways. ►

### FACT FILE

#### PGA CATALUNYA

● GREEN FEE: £47 (Stadium).

[www.pgacatalunya.com](http://www.pgacatalunya.com)

#### EMPORDA GOLF RESORT

● GREEN FEE: £64.

[www.empordagolf.com](http://www.empordagolf.com)



Coastal village of Llafranc

IMAGE: GETTY



## Costa de la Luz

### OFF COURSE

Stretching from Tarifa, near the western extremity of the Mediterranean, to Donana National Park towards the Portuguese border, Spain's Atlantic-facing 'coast of light' is ideal for nature-loving golfers who like to get off the beaten track, while having civilisation's pleasures close to hand. Home to the rare Iberian lynx and a host of migrating birds, this region has plenty of natural areas to tempt nature lovers, while water sports fans adore the breeze-swept beaches that are ideal for kite- and windsurfing. But when civilisation calls, the gritty, historic towns of Tarifa and Cadiz, with their laid-back beach bars and low-key restaurants, are just a short hop away.



IMAGES: GETTY

### ON COURSE

With more than 20 golf courses, there's plenty of tempting reasons to tee up on the Costa de la Luz. Dubbed one of the best courses in Europe by Seve Ballesteros, The Montenmedio Golf and Country Club's 18 hole, 72-par parkland course runs over beautifully picturesque terrain fringed with cork, pine and oak trees. As wild as the surrounding countryside, tree-lined fairways and fast greens promise a challenge to the most experienced player. An hour's drive from Jerez's sherry bodegas and tapas bars, this sprawling estate, complete with resident peacocks, has its own Spanish-style Hacienda hotel built around a fountain-watered courtyard — ideal for players who don't want to be distracted from their game.

One of the region's newer courses, Arcos Gardens Golf Club and Country Estate, close to the stunning white village of Arcos de la Frontera, is more suited to the novice player. Picture-perfect fairways surrounded by thousands of mature olive trees and long, gentle slopes make this an ideal walking course. The specially built recycling plant, which processes the town's wastewater for summer sprinkling, makes Arcos very eco-friendly, too. ■

**Arcos De La Frontera.**  
Below: Old Town and Jbel  
Moussa mountain, Tarifa

### FACT FILE

#### THE MONTENMEDIO GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

● GREEN FEE: £46.

[www.montenmediogolf.com](http://www.montenmediogolf.com)

#### ARCOS GARDENS GOLF CLUB & COUNTRY ESTATE

● GREEN FEE: £41.

[www.arcosgardens.com](http://www.arcosgardens.com)