



THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE

Costa de Azahar

Discovering Spain's Best-Kept Mediterranean Secret

A House Sussex Spain Publication

Welcome To Spain's Orange Blossom Coast

Some places are discovered. Others are remembered. The Costa de Azahar somehow manages to be both.

Stretching along the coast of Castellon province, north of Valencia, this quieter Mediterranean coastline remains one of Spain's most rewarding places to explore. While many travellers head automatically to the Costa del Sol or Costa Blanca, the Orange Blossom Coast offers something increasingly rare: space, authenticity, local culture and a gentler pace of life.

Here, mornings begin with coffee near the marina. Families gather on wide sandy beaches. Markets fill with citrus, seafood and local produce. Historic towns rise above the sea. Natural parks protect stretches of coastline that still feel wonderfully untouched.

This is not Spain at its loudest. It is Spain at its most quietly confident.

This guide has been created to help you discover the Costa de Azahar through local eyes — as a holiday destination first, and perhaps one day as a place to return to, invest in or call your own.

"Some places are discovered. Others are remembered.
The Costa de Azahar somehow manages to be both."



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Spain's Quieter Mediterranean Coast

The Costa de Azahar is often described as Spain's Orange Blossom Coast, named after the citrus groves that have shaped the landscape and identity of Castellon province.

It is not as internationally famous as Marbella, Alicante or Mallorca. That is part of its appeal.

For holidaymakers, the Costa de Azahar offers the Mediterranean without the same level of over-commercialisation. Beaches feel spacious. Towns still work for local people. Restaurants are often family-run. The rhythm of life remains Spanish rather than manufactured for tourists.

The coastline combines long sandy beaches, protected natural parks, fishing towns, historic castles, marinas, local markets and mountain backdrops.

It is a region that rewards slower travel.

Rather than rushing from attraction to attraction, the Costa de Azahar invites you to settle into its rhythm: swim in the morning, lunch late, rest in the afternoon, walk by the sea at sunset, eat outside after dark.

Best for:

Families wanting relaxed beach holidays | Couples wanting quieter Mediterranean escapes | Food lovers | Outdoor travellers | Second-home dreamers | People who prefer authentic Spain to resort-heavy Spain



House Sussex Local Tip: The Costa de Azahar is at its best when you do less. Choose one town as a base, hire a car, and explore slowly.

Between Valencia And The Mountains

The Costa de Azahar sits on Spain's eastern Mediterranean coast in the province of Castellon, within the Valencian Community.

It lies north of Valencia and south of the Ebro Delta, with key coastal towns including Alcossebre, Peniscola, Benicassim, Oropesa del Mar, Benicarlo and Vinaros.

For UK travellers, Valencia Airport is often the main gateway, with good road connections north along the coast. Castellon Airport can also be convenient depending on flight routes and season.

Key Locations:

Valencia | Castellon de la Plana | Benicassim | Oropesa del Mar | Alcossebre | Peniscola | Benicarlo | Vinaros | Serra d'Irta Natural Park | Desert de les Palmes Natural Park | Columbretes Islands



House Sussex Local Tip: If you want flexibility, hire a car. The coastline is best experienced by moving between beaches, coves, villages and restaurants at your own pace.

A Better Way To Discover Spain

House Sussex Spain is designed for people who want more than a villa booking.

We help guests discover the region properly, with guidance on where to stay, where to eat, which beaches suit different types of traveller and how to experience the area beyond the obvious tourist spots.

For some clients, this begins as a holiday.

For others, it becomes the start of a longer relationship with Spain: returning each year, exploring ownership, buying a villa, improving it, holiday letting it or eventually creating a Mediterranean lifestyle of their own.

But the first step is always the same.

Fall in love with the place.

What House Sussex Spain can help with:

Curated villa stays | Area guidance | Restaurant recommendations | Beach and day-trip suggestions | Local guest guides | Holiday let advice | Property ownership guidance | Villa management | Guest experience support



"Before anyone buys into a place, they need to feel it."

Slow Mornings, Long Lunches & Evenings By The Sea

The lifestyle of the Costa de Azahar is not complicated. That is exactly why it feels so good.

Mornings are for coffee, fresh bread and the first swim of the day. Midday is for markets, shaded terraces and choosing whether lunch should be seafood, rice or something simple and local. Afternoons slow down. Evenings begin late, with families walking the promenade, children playing near the beach and restaurants filling as the air cools.

Outdoor living sits at the centre of everything.

Terraces matter. Shade matters. Sea breezes matter. A good villa is not just a place to sleep; it is where breakfast stretches into the morning, where lunch becomes an event, where the pool becomes the heart of the afternoon and where evenings end with a bottle of local wine under the stars.

What makes the lifestyle special:

Authentic Spanish towns | Family-friendly beaches | Local food culture | Easy outdoor living | Beautiful light
| Warm evenings | Less pressure, less noise, more space



House Sussex Local Tip: Live by Spanish time. Shop in the morning, eat lunch later, avoid the hottest part of the afternoon and enjoy the coast in the early evening when it is at its most beautiful.



ALCOSSEBRE

The Mediterranean You Thought Had Disappeared

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Alcossebre is one of the most appealing bases on the Costa de Azahar.

It sits between the Mediterranean and the protected landscape of Serra d'Irta, giving it a rare combination of beaches, coves, marina life and natural beauty.

Unlike larger resort towns, Alcossebre has retained a low-rise, relaxed atmosphere. It feels coastal without feeling overbuilt. Families return year after year because it is easy, safe, walkable and quietly beautiful.

The town is known for its beaches, including Las Fuentes, Carregador and Playa Romana, as well as smaller coves further along the coast. Las Fuentes is especially distinctive because of the freshwater springs that emerge through the seabed and sand.

Best Beach: Playa Romana — wide, sandy and family-friendly

Best Family Beach: Carregador — central, accessible and convenient

Best Hidden Cove: Cala Blanca or coves towards Serra d'Irta

Best Sunset Walk: Las Fuentes Marina towards Cala Blanca

Best Day Trip: Serra d'Irta Natural Park



Best For: Families | Couples | Nature lovers | Quiet villa holidays | Beach and walking holidays

House Sussex Local Tip: Choose Alcossebre if you want your holiday to feel relaxed rather than busy. It is ideal for guests who want beach days, good food, coastal walks and a villa lifestyle without needing nightlife on the doorstep.



PENISCOLA
Spain's Castle By The Sea

Spain's Castle By The Sea

Peniscola is unforgettable from the moment you see it.

The old town rises dramatically from the sea, crowned by the castle associated with Papa Luna, while the long sweep of Playa Norte stretches out below with one of the most recognisable views on the Castellon coast.

It is more dramatic and more visitor-focused than Alcossebre, with a stronger sense of spectacle. The old town is made for wandering: white walls, stone lanes, sea views, small shops, restaurants and sudden glimpses of blue water between buildings.

For families, Peniscola offers long beach days and plenty to explore. For couples, the old town becomes particularly atmospheric in the evening. For photographers, the castle, beach and skyline provide some of the strongest imagery on the Costa de Azahar.

Best Beach: Playa Norte — long sandy beach with castle views

Best Viewpoint: The old town walls around the castle

Best Family Activity: Explore the castle and old town before the beach

Best Evening Walk: From Playa Norte towards the old town at dusk

Best Restaurant Style: Rice dishes, seafood and terrace views



Best For: Families | Couples | Culture lovers | First-time visitors | Holidaymakers wanting a stronger sense of place

House Sussex Local Tip: Peniscola is best enjoyed outside the hottest part of the day. Visit the old town early, rest after lunch, then return in the evening when the streets feel cooler and more atmospheric.



BENICASSIM
Where Beach Life Meets Elegance

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Benicassim has a more polished, established feel than many towns on the coast.

It is known for its beaches, festivals, promenades and historic villas. The famous villas along the seafront give Benicassim a sense of old-world resort elegance, sometimes compared with the 'Biarritz' of the Valencian coast.

Vorammar Beach is one of the most romantic stretches of the town, with views of early twentieth-century villas and a quieter residential atmosphere. Els Terrers is known for its seafront promenade, sailing school and relaxed beach feel. Torre San Vicente brings together beach life and heritage, with the old watchtower providing a focal point.

Benicassim also has a cultural edge, helped by major music festivals and proximity to Desert de les Palmes Natural Park.

Best Beach: Voramar — elegant, atmospheric, ideal for couples

Best Family Beach: Torre San Vicente — popular, accessible, active

Best Sunset: Torre San Vicente or the Voramar promenade

Best Day Out: Desert de les Palmes Natural Park

Best Local Experience: Walk the Route of the Villas



Best For: Couples | Festival visitors | Beach lovers | Culture seekers | Guests wanting a more elegant resort atmosphere

House Sussex Local Tip: Benicassim works beautifully for a split holiday: beach mornings, long lunches, festival or cultural evenings, and a day in the hills when you want a break from the sand.



OROPESA DEL MAR
Beaches, Families & Easy Summer Living

Beaches, Families & Easy Summer Living

Oropesa del Mar is a practical, family-friendly coastal town with a wide variety of beaches and holiday infrastructure.

It is not as intimate as Alcossebre or as dramatic as Peníscola, but it works very well for families who want easy beach access, services, promenades and a straightforward summer-holiday rhythm.

The town offers several different beaches, including La Concha, Morro de Gos, Les Amplaries and quieter coves such as El Retor and La Renega.

La Concha is one of the most family-friendly options, with calm, shallow water and good facilities. Morro de Gos offers a longer stretch of sand and promenade. La Renega is more natural, with smaller coves and rockier scenery.

Best Beach For Families: La Concha — sheltered, calm water

Best Long Walk: Morro de Gos promenade

Best Natural Cove: La Renega — rugged, natural coastline

Best Day Out: Cycle the old railway route to Benicassim



Best For: Families | Apartment holidays | Easy beach access | Summer stays | Guests wanting facilities close by

House Sussex Local Tip: Oropesa changes dramatically by season. In high summer it becomes lively and busy. Outside peak season, it can feel much quieter and more local.

Local Life, Seafood & Year-Round Spain

Benicarlo and Vinaros offer a more everyday version of the Costa de Azahar.

These are not purely holiday resorts. They are working coastal towns with ports, shops, restaurants, beaches and year-round communities.

Benicarlo is known for gastronomy, especially its celebrated artichokes, while Vinaros has a strong fishing identity and is particularly associated with prawns.

For holidaymakers, these towns offer a more local experience. You come here less for polished resort glamour and more for Spanish life, food, markets and practical year-round atmosphere.

Best Food Experience: Seafood and market produce — look for restaurants where local ingredients lead the menu

Best Day Out: Combine a morning market visit with lunch near the port



Best For: Food lovers | Longer stays | Travellers wanting local Spain | Remote workers | Guests who prefer working towns to resort towns

House Sussex Local Tip: These towns are especially useful if you are thinking about a longer stay. They have the shops, services and year-round infrastructure that pure resorts often lack.

Beyond The Beach

Castellon de la Plana provides the urban centre of the province, while the inland villages reveal a completely different side of the region.

For many visitors, the coast is the main attraction. But those who explore inland discover hilltop villages, quiet roads, citrus groves, olive oil experiences, mountain views and a slower rural rhythm.

Castellon itself is useful for shopping, transport, culture and services. The inland villages are better for day trips, local restaurants, photography and exploring a Spain that feels less seasonal.

Best Local Experience: Drive inland for lunch rather than staying on the coast every day

Best Day Trip Idea: Combine a village visit with a viewpoint, local restaurant and afternoon return to the coast



Best For: Day trips | Culture | Markets | Rural drives | Long lunches | Photography

House Sussex Local Tip: The most memorable holidays often happen when you leave the beach for a few hours. One inland lunch can change how you understand the whole region.



BEACHES & COVES
From Family Sands To Secret Swimming Spots

From Family Sands To Secret Swimming Spots

The Costa de Azahar is not one type of beach.

It offers wide family beaches, urban promenades, quiet coves, rocky swimming spots and protected natural coastline.

For families, the best beaches are usually sandy, accessible and close to facilities. For couples, quieter coves and sunset walks may matter more. For active travellers, beaches near natural parks and walking routes offer something more rewarding.

Best Family Beaches: Playa Romana, Alcossebre | La Concha, Oropesa | Playa Norte, Peniscola | Torre San Vicente, Benicassim

Best Romantic Beaches: Voramar, Benicassim | Coves near Serra d'Irta | Quieter stretches near Alcossebre

Best Beach For Views: Playa Norte, Peniscola — the castle backdrop makes it unforgettable

Best Natural Beach: La Renega, Oropesa | Serra d'Irta coves

Best For A Long Walk: Morro de Gos, Oropesa | Benicassim promenade | Playa Norte, Peniscola

House Sussex Local Tip: Ask what kind of beach day you want before choosing where to go. Facilities, sand, shade, parking, restaurants and waves vary significantly from beach to beach.

Where The Mountains Meet The Sea

One of the great strengths of the Costa de Azahar is the way coastal living meets protected natural landscape.

Serra d'Irta Natural Park sits between Alcossebre and Peniscola and protects one of the last undeveloped coastal mountain landscapes in the Valencian Community. It offers walking routes, coves, cliffs, Mediterranean vegetation and extraordinary sea views.

Desert de les Palmes, close to Benicassim and Castellon, offers mountain scenery, viewpoints, historic religious sites and a complete change of atmosphere from the beach.

The Columbretes Islands, off the Castellon coast, are known for their ecological value, marine life and volcanic character. They are especially interesting for nature lovers and divers.



Best For: Walking | Cycling | Photography | Nature | Snorkelling | Day trips | Guests who want more than beaches

House Sussex Local Tip: Take water, good shoes and sun protection seriously. Even easy routes feel different in Mediterranean heat.



FOOD, MARKETS & WINE
A Coastline Best Tasted Slowly

A Coastline Best Tasted Slowly

Food is one of the quiet pleasures of the Costa de Azahar.

This is a region of rice dishes, seafood, citrus, olive oil, market vegetables and long lunches. It is not about rushing. It is about choosing well, sitting outside and allowing lunch to take the time it deserves.

What to try: Arroz a banda | Seafood rice | Fideua | Grilled fish | Local prawns | Benicarlo artichokes | Valencian oranges | Local olive oil | Mediterranean wines

Best Food Towns:

Benicarlo for artichokes and market produce

Vinaros for prawns and seafood

Peniscola for seafood with views

Benicassim for beach restaurants and polished dining

Alcossebre for relaxed family meals and marina dining



House Sussex Local Tip: If a restaurant is full of Spanish families on a Sunday lunchtime, that is usually a very good sign.

Easy, Sunny, Relaxed

The Costa de Azahar works beautifully for family holidays because it offers the things families actually need.

Safe beaches. Space. Practical towns. Restaurants that welcome children. Apartments and villas with outdoor areas. A slower pace. Easy day trips. Less pressure than larger international resorts.

For younger children, choose areas with calm beaches, easy parking, supermarkets and short walks to restaurants. For teenagers, consider towns with more activity, beach sports, cycling, festivals or water-based options.

What Families Should Look For In A Villa:

Pool | Shade | Air conditioning | Washing machine | Parking | Walkable restaurants | Wi-Fi | Outdoor dining | Safe stairs and terraces | Beach equipment



Best Family Bases: Alcossebre | Oropesa del Mar | Peniscola | Benicassim

House Sussex Local Tip: The best family holidays are won before arrival. Clear directions, stocked basics, beach recommendations and restaurant bookings make the first 24 hours feel effortless.

Sea Views, Castle Walks & Dinner Under The Stars

For couples, the Costa de Azahar offers a softer, quieter kind of Mediterranean romance.

This is not about glamour in the obvious sense. It is about small moments.

Dinner in Peniscola's old town. A sunset walk in Benicassim. Coffee by the marina in Alcossebre. A quiet cove after the day-trippers have gone. A terrace with sea views. A bottle of local wine after dark.

Best Romantic Bases:

Peniscola for old-town atmosphere

Benicassim for elegant beach walks

Alcossebre for quiet coastal living

Best Romantic Experiences:

Sunset at Peniscola old town

Vorammar promenade

Dinner near Las Fuentes Marina

A quiet beach morning before breakfast



House Sussex Local Tip: Book one proper dinner before you travel. The best romantic evenings are rarely the ones left to chance in August.

For Travellers Who Like To Move

The Costa de Azahar is ideal for travellers who want more than a sun lounger.

The combination of coast, natural parks, marinas and mountains creates opportunities for walking, cycling, sailing, paddleboarding, swimming, snorkelling and day trips.

Activity ideas: Walk in Serra d'Irta | Cycle between coastal towns | Explore Desert de les Palmes | Try sailing in Benicassim | Snorkel around quieter coves | Take a boat trip | Walk old town streets early morning

Best For Walking: Serra d'Irta | Desert de les Palmes | Peniscola old town

Best For Cycling: Benicassim and Oropesa coastal routes | Inland village roads

Best For Water: Alcossebre | Benicassim | Peniscola



House Sussex Local Tip: Do active things early. In summer, mornings are for movement, afternoons are for shade, pools and long lunches.



OWNING A VILLA
When A Holiday Starts To Feel Like Home

When A Holiday Starts To Feel Like Home

Many people first visit the Costa de Azahar for a holiday.

Some leave wondering what it would be like to own a part of it.

That is natural.

A good villa can become a family retreat, a source of rental income, a long-term investment or simply a place to return to year after year.

But ownership should be approached carefully.

The best villa is not just the one you fall in love with. It is the one that works practically.

Consider:

Location | Access | Running costs | Maintenance | Letting potential | Legal position | Community rules |
Local demand | Resale appeal



House Sussex View: Start with lifestyle, then test the numbers. If a property works both emotionally and practically, it becomes much more interesting.

A Different Process, A Better Result With The Right Advice

Buying in Spain is different from buying in the UK.

The process can be straightforward, but it should never be rushed.

A typical purchase may involve:

Finding the property. Agreeing terms. Appointing an independent lawyer. Obtaining an NIE number. Reservation or private contract. Due diligence. Deposit. Mortgage or finance arrangement if required. Notary completion. Land Registry registration. Utility transfer. Local tax administration.

Buyers should always take independent legal advice.

House Sussex Spain can help coordinate introductions, explain the process and support clients through each stage, but formal legal and tax advice should always come from qualified Spanish professionals.



House Sussex Local Tip: Do not fall in love with a view before checking the paperwork.

The Practical Details That Matter

Legal and tax issues are not the glamorous part of owning a Spanish property, but they are essential.

Important areas include:

NIE number. Legal ownership checks. Planning permissions. Community rules. Tourist rental permissions. Local taxes. Non-resident tax. Insurance. Utility contracts. Inheritance planning. Holiday letting compliance.

For any property intended for holiday letting, tourist rental rules should be checked before purchase. Regulations vary by region and municipality, and rules can change.

House Sussex Spain does not replace lawyers, tax advisers or mortgage brokers. Instead, we help clients understand what needs to be checked and introduce appropriate professionals where required.

House Sussex Local Tip: If income is part of the plan, licensing and local compatibility must be checked before completion, not afterwards.

What Makes Guests Book?

Not every beautiful property makes a successful holiday let.

Guests book for clear reasons.

The strongest holiday lets usually offer:

Good photography. Pool or outdoor space. Air conditioning. Wi-Fi. Parking. Beach or town access. Comfortable beds. Good bathrooms. Outdoor dining. Clear guest information. Professional cleaning. Reliable maintenance. Strong local recommendations.

A property does not need to be huge. It needs to be memorable, practical and easy to enjoy.

Questions to ask:

Who is the ideal guest? | Why would they choose this property? | Which months will it perform best? | What makes it better than similar properties? | Can it be managed reliably?



House Sussex View: Holiday let success is not created by simply listing a villa online. It is created through presentation, pricing, service, cleaning, maintenance and guest experience.

From Favourite Holiday To Long-Term Strategy

For some clients, the Costa de Azahar begins as a holiday destination.

For others, it becomes a lifestyle decision.

There are several ways to approach ownership:

Buy and enjoy. Buy and let occasionally. Buy specifically for holiday income. Buy, improve and resell. Buy, improve, let and refinance. Build a small portfolio over time.

There is no single right answer.

The best strategy depends on your lifestyle, budget, risk appetite and long-term goals.

House Sussex Spain helps clients think clearly about the options before committing.

"The best property decisions begin with a lifestyle question, not a spreadsheet."

From First Stay To Long-Term Ownership

House Sussex Spain can support clients at different stages of the journey.

For Holidaymakers:

Curated villa stays | Area recommendations | Restaurant suggestions | Beach guidance | Local guest guides

For Future Buyers:

Area advice | Property search | Viewing coordination | Legal introductions | Tax adviser introductions | Finance introductions

For Owners:

Holiday let setup | Guest management | Cleaning coordination | Maintenance support | Revenue review | Property checks

For Investors:

Opportunity review | Refurbishment coordination | Holiday let assessment | Exit strategy discussion

House Sussex Spain exists to make the region easier to understand, easier to enjoy and easier to own in.



Looking After Your Villa When You Are Not There

The ownership stage is where many overseas buyers need the most support.

A villa requires care.

Cleaning. Keyholding. Maintenance. Guest communication. Pool checks. Garden care. Repairs. Utility issues. Weather checks. Pre-arrival preparation. Post-stay inspection.

Possible services include:

Property checks | Cleaning coordination | Guest communication | Maintenance coordination | Holiday let setup | Photography | Listing optimisation | Owner reporting | Revenue review | Refurbishment advice



House Sussex Local Tip: The best-managed villas feel effortless to guests because the work is done quietly behind the scenes.

A Coast Worth Discovering Slowly

The Costa de Azahar is not the loudest part of Spain.

It does not need to be.

Its appeal is quieter, warmer and more enduring.

It is found in morning swims, market fruit, castle views, shaded lunches, evening walks and the feeling that life here still belongs to local people.

For holidaymakers, it offers space, authenticity and Mediterranean beauty.

For families, it offers simplicity.

For couples, it offers atmosphere.

For active travellers, it offers nature.

For future owners, it offers possibility.

But first, it should be experienced as a place.

Not as an investment.

Not as a transaction.

As somewhere to stay, explore and remember.

Begin With A Stay

If the Costa de Azahar feels like somewhere you would like to discover, House Sussex Spain can help you take the first step.

Stay in a carefully selected villa.

Explore the coast with local recommendations.

Discover the towns, beaches, food and lifestyle.

And if, one day, you decide this could become more than a holiday, we can help with that too.

Request Villa Availability

Book A Costa de Azahar Discovery Call

Discuss Villa Ownership

House Sussex Spain

Costa de Azahar

Property. Managed Beautifully.