

Huerto de Los Almendros Jimena de la Frontera, Spain

More about the house and area

The House

The house stands in its own gardens with views of the pueblo of Jimena de la Frontera, one of the many pretty “white villages” for which this part of Spain is famous. To the front of the house is a large paddock where the next door farmer grazes his horses.

On the other side of the swimming pool is a small cottage which has been converted from the stables of the house. Here live Anna and Manolo who look after the house and welcome guests on arrival. They will be happy to tell you about any local events such as ferias or concerts which might interest you. They both speak very good English.

Swimming Pool

Spanish law requires us to point out that the pool is NOT a supervised facility and so may be used only on the understanding that such use is entirely at your own risk. Only the steps provided should be used to get into and out of the pool. If you are thinking of bringing small children you should also be aware that (as you can see from the photo in the brochure) the pool is not fenced off.

Bedding & Towels

Bedding and towels for the bathroom and kitchen are included, as are things like washing up liquid and cleaning cloths. We do ask you, however, to bring your own swimming towels.

Local Shops and Restaurants

Both the Estacion and Jimena itself have small supermarkets which are very satisfactory for groceries and every day needs. Each of them also has a range of other shops but for the very large supermarkets such as Carrefour you need to go down to the coast to Algeciras, La Linea or Estepona. And then, of course, there is always Marks and Spencers and Morrisons in Gibraltar!

There is also a small market in Jimena on Fridays. This varies from week to week but tends to be a mixture of fresh veg. and textiles/leather goods. Much larger markets are held on a daily basis up and down the coast. The nearest is a huge one in Estepona on a Wednesday. On a Sunday morning there is also a much more select affair in Estepona port. It is fun to wander around this market and then have lunch in the port as the market breaks up (about 2pm). A major league “people watching” opportunity! In season, you would be well advised to book as soon as they open in the morning if you want to sit outside. Also on a Sunday, there is a huge car boot sale between San Luis de Sabinillas and Estepona.

As to restaurants, there is a traditional “Venta” just along the main road towards Ronda called “La Rejas”. You are likely to need to speak a bit of Spanish here, it is definitely a bit of true Spain frequented by the locals. However, we suggest that you only go for a lunchtime drink and/or tapas as we have heard very poor reports about the food! In the pueblo there are restaurants at which some English is spoken, “El Anon”, and “La Tasca”.to name but two. There are also numerous bars at which some food may be available.

If you are tempted to go further afield then the choice is frankly, overwhelming. There are some excellent places in Duquesa down on the coast, including a fine fish restaurant called “Andres”, the “Molino” at the Estacion de Benoajan is an excellent outing on the train for lunch and the restaurants in the new Ocean Village complex in Gibraltar are good for lunch or dinner by the water’s edge. Speaking of Gib, early evening cocktails at the Rock Hotel is something special, if only for the stunning views over the bay as the sun sets. The list of restaurants really is endless, so no doubt you will discover your own favourites!

Places to Visit - Fairly Local

The castle in Jimena – mostly ruins but there are information boards (in English) all around the site telling the story of the castle. There is an information leaflet written by a friend of the house's original owner, Hamo Sassoon, in the desk drawer. In any event, the view from the top of the castle is worth the climb! Near the castle is the new information centre for the village. Opening times are very Spanish (i.e. a bit variable!), but the Dutch couple who run it are very enthusiastic and helpful.

Castellar – Another castle but this one is a little better preserved and has a community still living in it. There are also some stunning views on the way up to the top over a lake which the locals use as a guide to whether the coast is going to be subject to water shortages this year or not. You have a choice as to which road you use to get back down to the main Algeciras – Ronda road. You can go back the way you came or you can go straight on – but be warned, it's a pretty rough ride!!

Ronda – which you could drive or can be done on the train. Whilst there, the bullring is worth a visit and the views from the Parador are so beautiful that they may even help you to get over the cost of the drinks! Having said that, we think that the best bit about the town is the way that you can wander and “people watch” imagining an almost unchanged lifestyle over the past three or four centuries.

Gibraltar – You may have heard stories about Gib being a bit grubby but it has really cleaned its act up in the past 3 or 4 years and is now a good day trip. Don't forget your passport and don't be tempted to take your car in. It can take hours to get across the border by car. Opposite the frontier about three blocks inland there is a pretty secure underground car park which costs less than 2 Euro an hour. From there it is a five minute walk into Gib and there are plenty of buses which will take you over the airstrip into the town. Finally, remember to be careful what booze/cigarettes you bring back because Gib is a duty free zone so the Spanish customs won't be too impressed if you have more than your allowance.

The hill road to Ubrique – a lovely drive through some stunning Andaluth scenery. Also has a couple of Ventas en-route in which you can practice your Spanish whilst eating your lunch.

Costa de Luz & Tarifa – A windsurfer's paradise so try not to be blown off your feet! By far the least developed of the Costas with some stunning views over towards Morocco.

Beaches If you fancy a day by the sea there is a very pleasant beach (which is very safe for children) near to Sotogrande, about a half hour drive away. It is mostly used by Spanish people and is not too crowded. Also there are some nice little beach cafes where you can have a good local seafood lunch. If you ask Ana she will tell you how to get there.

The area is also excellent for horse riding, walking and birdwatching. The house is on the edge of the Alcornocales National Park which has some stunning scenery and wildlife. There are also several **Golf Courses** within easy reach including the famous **Valdorama**

Places to visit - Further away

Seville – is a beautiful city with one of the biggest ferias there is. This is held around Easter each year.

Jerez – home of the Spanish sheries, all the major names have on-site tasting facilities.

Malaga – everyone just passes by the city to the airport but the centre has not really been touched since the 15th century and is well worth a visit. Combine your visit with the Monday market for a special treat.

Granada – Not really possible in a day but well worth an overnight trip. Really shows to its full effect the Moorish influence on this part of Spain. It takes a little longer on the train but the views en-route make the journey very enjoyable.