

U3A Denia

Asociación de la
Tercera Edad de Denia
www.u3adenia.org



TRAVEL, ARTS & CULTURE NEWSLETTER

January 2017

Part 1 - January to June inclusive

Part 2 - September to December inclusive

Travel Team:

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Travel organiser

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Travel Treasurer

Message from Pam

Hello everyone - I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas wherever you were and I wish you all a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

I am sure you will join me in thanking Margaret and Bob Kelly who have taken numerous trips throughout their 9 years of being involved with U3A Dénia Travel. They expressed a wish to retire from the travel team after the Christmas 2016 trip to Orihuela.

Please take a few minutes to read through the details of the forthcoming trips/events for 2017 which I am sure will interest the majority of our members. All members are welcome to suggest places of interest for 2017.

Pam Rowlinson
U3A Dénia Travel Group Leader

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Proposed Trips



2017 TRAVEL CALENDAR

MONTH	DESTINATION	TRIP LEADER/S
JANUARY:	23rd Day trip to Ikea, Valencia	- booking now open
FEBRUARY:	Day trip to Sagunto	- booking now open
MARCH:	Day trip to Valencia to visit the Fallas displays	- booking open
APRIL:	Teruel and Albarracin - 3 days 2 nights	- booking will open As soon as price has been confirmed
MAY:	3rd - 8th May 2017 - A Medieval and Cultural trip to Cataluna	6 days, 5 nights - This trip is now open for bookings
JUNE:	Murcia	
SEPTEMBER:	Southern France	
OCTOBER:	Being researched	
NOVEMBER:	Barcelona	
DECEMBER:	Day trip to Alicante Castle and Christmas Shopping	Christmas Break - location to be confirmed

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All the above trips which are not yet open for booking are still being researched. As soon as they are confirmed the U3A Dénia Travel webpages will be updated

2018 PROPOSED TRIPS

Prague/Krakow 4 nights
Rioja to San Sebastian 7 days
Extremadura – May 2018

To book go to the U3A Dénia website and sign in (You must sign in to book travel events). Then go to Travel pages and select the Christmas in Orihuela trip then click on [here](#) and enter your details.

Recent Trips 2016:

Valencia Shopping Trip

46 Members joined the coach for the annual shopping trip to Valencia.

Madrid Christmas Market

Leaving behind a dull and drizzly Dénia, 52 members from Dénia and Val de Pop started our journey to Madrid. As we'd based the cost on a much lower turnout, everyone received a €20 refund, which went down very well. Arriving late afternoon at our hotel we had a few hours spare to suss out the area and decide where to eat in the evening. We shouldn't have worried; there were countless restaurants and tapas bars all within walking distance. After nightfall we re-boarded the coach to see Madrid's Christmas lights. Grand Via and the main shopping areas were lovely, but It was obvious that the city had cut back this year as they were not as spectacular as in previous years.

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Next morning a local guide, Susanna, boarded the coach to give us a tour of the city. We were expecting someone to point out the main monuments and places of interest but we were in for a pleasant surprise. Susanna was a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide who gave us a real insight into Spanish history and Madrid's place in it. The two hour tour finished at the Prado and we had the rest of the afternoon as free time to visit museums and art galleries or just shop until we dropped. In the evening we were out again to explore the Christmas market and partake of the fabulous tapas selection on offer. One of our party even booked a seat to see Lion King.



I think we were all a little disappointed with the market feeling that it failed to live up to expectations based on photos from previous years. Held in the beautiful Plaza Mayor the majority of stalls were selling religious figurines for nativity sets. The rest of them sold tinsel and toys, but glüwein was nowhere in sight! Never mind. We found our own favourite places to eat and drink as we joined Madrid's outdoor society for the evening. It being a bit on the chilly side, however, many of us opted for tapas in the famous Mercado de San Miguel, which was just a 10 minute walk from our hotel.

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On our final day we drove to Toledo where we spent a couple of hours and had lunch. It was cold - only four degrees - and a bit foggy, and we were glad of our scarves and hooded jackets. Many of us took the opportunity to visit the fabulous Cathedral ranked among the greatest Gothic structures in Europe and considered by some to be the finest example of 13th Century Gothic style in Spain.



As well as a myriad of cobbled, Medieval streets, Toledo boasts high quality individual shops. Judging by the number of bags brought back to the coach we made the most of it.



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Within an hour of leaving Toledo, the sun came out and the temperature was noticeably warmer by the time we stopped for coffee. A quiz on the coach caught out those who weren't paying attention to our guides, but Dennis and Linda were, and they were rewarded with a nice bottle of cava.

Our hotel was faultless, with modern, comfortable rooms, a generous buffet breakfast and a decent-sized bar area to entertain us at the end of the evening. Juan, our driver, was careful and considerate and did a brilliant job of manoeuvring us through Madrid's evening rush hour traffic to see the lights. Rolf, our 'gentleman' guide, was, as always, excellent. His knowledge is endless and his many maps always welcome. It was a thoroughly enjoyable trip with a super group of people. Here's to the next time!

Ginny Whitehead

Christmas in Orihuela

87 members of U3A Dénia spent 4 nights at the Hotel La Zenia for Christmas 2016 where we all had a great time with lovely food, lovely weather and good company and friendly helpful staff.

The days were spent enjoying the wonderful costal walks around the Hotel or playing petanque on the beach or spending all our money in the La Zenia shopping mall, close by, some members of our party also indulged some swimming in the sea.



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Christmas Day Gala dinner was served in a private room just for us, the food was wonderful and a visit from Father Christmas added to the enjoyment.



After dinner we relaxed in the bar, where there was a display of Flamenco dancing after which we danced the night away.



All in all a great experience

2017

JANUARY 23RD

A trip to the new Ikea store in Valencia.



The visit to the store will last approximately 3-4 hours allowing time to shop and have coffee or lunch in store followed by an opportunity to stock up on food in the food supermarket

Leaving Dénia/Ondara at 10am and leaving no later than 3.00pm

The cost will be from €8 - €10 depending upon numbers

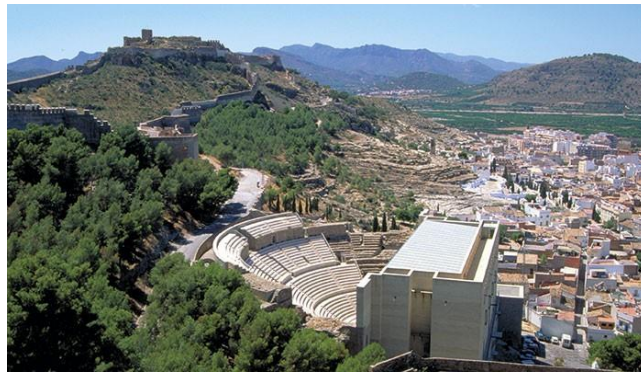
Pick up times:

Dénia new marina (Las Rotas Beach) 9.30am

MacDonald Dénia 9.45am

Mas y Mas Ondara 10.00am

February – 22nd



Visit with an official guide to Sagunto in English with the tourist train. Including visit to the Castle and the Theatre.

Lunch at Mirador de Sagunto



Price per person: €50 p.p. including lunch (minimum of 30 people)

Leaving Dénia at 9.30am

17th March

A trip to Valencia to view the Fallas statues



The annual trip to see the world famous Fallas in Valencia next year will be on Friday 17th March and will cost just €8.

The coach will leave Dénia new Marina at 9am, MacDonald's at 9.15am and Más y Más in Ondara at 9.30am and we should arrive in Valencia around 11am, depending on traffic.

You will be provided with a map of where to find the five main Fallas, but there are literally hundreds of them. We managed to visit about 40 last year and walked our legs off!

You'll have free time to walk round the Fallas, have lunch and do some sightseeing/shopping before picking the coach up at 4pm for our return journey.

GINNY and CHRIS WHITEHEAD

Cost per person - 8€

April 6th – Teruel and Albarracín



Day 1: Dénia – Teruel

Visiting the best Mudejar architecture in the Towers and the decorated coffered ceiling in the Cathedral, declared Unesco heritage site, visiting the Tomb of the Lovers of Teruel (Diego and Isabel are the protagonist of the most beautiful love story ever heard), who anybody in love should know

Day 2: Teruel – Albarracín – Teruel



There are plenty of monuments to visit in Albarracín, like the Church of Santa Maria, the Cathedral, the Episcopal Palace and some majestic mansions. But the charm of Albarracín resides in its streets, adapted to the difficult topography of the terrain, finding lots of stairs, corridors and passages among the streets.

Day 3: Teruel – Dénia

With stops en route

PRICE INCLUDES

- Modern coach including the planned trips
- 4-star hotel, half board with breakfast (cold buffet) and dinner. Dinner on days 1 and 2 and breakfast on days 2 and 3.

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- English speaking guide throughout and local guides at Teruel and Albarracin

PRICE DOESN'T INCLUDES

- Tickets to museums, monuments, tourist trains, etc.

PRICE PER PERSON – **to be confirmed**

Hotel Reina Christina 4*

Supplement for double room of single use: €50

Prices with VAT included

3rd May

MEDIEVAL AND CULTURAL CATALUÑA

Five nights, six days 3rd to 9 May 2017



DAY 1

An early start from Dénia with comfort stops on the way, we arrive in PEÑISCOLA for our lunch break. Its Templar castle and Medieval walls have made it a perfect place to film scenes from EL Cid. After lunch we continue to GIRONA where we will stay half board for two nights at the four star Double Tree by Hilton Hotel.

GIRONA is northern Cataluña's largest city and sits either side of the river Onyar - the old town on one side and the new town, with our hotel, on the other.

It has a beautiful historic Jewish quarter which is the largest in Europe. Here you'll see a labyrinth of quaint little cobbled streets, steps, arches, old stone buildings and lovely individual little shops, testament to

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its 2,000 year old history. Game of Thrones is filmed here. There is a castle (there's always a castle!) and you can walk around the walls. It's very steep in places, and for this reason the tourist train will take us around the town tomorrow morning. There are lovely flat walks along the river.

Every year in May, Girona hosts a flower festival.

For 10 days the city's historical buildings, courtyards, streets and gardens are adorned with floral arrangements. It's impossible to book hotel rooms during the festival but there are plenty of displays to see in advance of the actual date. We will be staying in Girona for two days before the festival starts.

DAY 2

After a buffet breakfast we'll walk to the tourist train pick up point for a forty-five minute tour of the city with English commentary. The rest of the day is free time for you to explore, shop, visit the flower arrangements or just take in the atmosphere of this beautiful old city. Buffet dinner is at our hotel.

DAY 3

After breakfast we leave Girona and head for PALS.



This fortified Medieval village was long neglected after the civil war until it was painstakingly restored by a local doctor. The pretty cobbled streets are flanked by aristocratic houses and there are lovely views over the countryside. We'll spend a few hours here, have lunch, then make our

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way to ROSES, where we will stay half board at the three star Prestige Sant Marc for the next three nights.

ROSES enjoys a beautiful position beneath Medieval fortress walls at the head of a sweeping bay. The site has been inhabited for over 3,000 years. Its a Spanish holiday resort and a perfect base for our trips around the area in the next few days.

DAY 4

After breakfast we'll travel to FIGUERES to visit Salvador Dalí's famous museum.



We'll have lunch there before setting off in the afternoon for PÚBOL. This tiny village was home to Dalí's wife Gala and the castle where she lived was bought by, and renovated for her, by Dalí. It is now a fascinating museum. Back to Roses for buffet dinner and overnight.

DAY 5

After breakfast we drive to BESALU with its 12th century Romanesque bridge, Medieval streets and imposing castle.

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After coffee we'll board the coach again to visit the beautiful fishing village of CADAQUÉS, which is the eastern most point in Spain.



Once considered the artists' capital of Spain, it's charm has remained and it is now an upmarket resort with a tranquil, untouristy feel. We'll stay for lunch - there are lots of restaurants overlooking the picturesque bay - and spend some time exploring the little shops and hidden alleyways before returning to our hotel in Roses for buffet dinner and overnight.

DAY 6

After breakfast on our final day, we'll make our way south, back to the Costa Blanca. We'll stop at the CODORNIU winery, the world's oldest and second largest producer of cava. This art nouveau winery was declared a National Historic Artistic Heritage in 1976. We'll take a tourist train around the buildings and caves and along the underground cellars, finishing with a wine tasting, the cost of which is included in the price. We aim to be back in Denia by early evening.

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COST

Between 25 and 30 people. €530 per person

Between 31 and 40 people. €470 per person

Between. 41 and 50 people. €445 per person

Single supplement €125

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Services of a Gandia Tours guide throughout

Half board at the 4* Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Girona

Half board at the 3* Prestige Sant Mark Hotel in Roses

Buffet breakfast and buffet dinner (no tourist menus!)

Wine and water with meals

Entry for Codorniu wine tasting

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Tourist train in Girona. €4.50

Entry to Dalí museum €9.00 (over 65s)

Entry to Gala Dalí house. €6.00 (over 65s)

Depending on numbers, we receive one or two free places. We will convert this into cash and hope to pay for exclusive use of the tourist train for our group.

You are under no obligation to take any of the tours or trips included if you'd prefer to do your own thing.

Please register your interest now. As soon as we have a minimum number to make the trip viable, we shall ask you for a deposit of 25%. Your seat is not guaranteed until we receive your deposit. We do hope you can join us.

GINNY and CHRIS WHITEHEAD

June 5th – 8th

A Corner of Murcia

Three night, four day trip to Mar Menor and the Roman ruins in Cartagena

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DAY ONE

Depart from Dénia with a lunch stop on the way, arriving at the Costa Narejos Hotel in the afternoon. Situated in Los Alcazares, and just 100 meters from a lovely beach, this modern 4-star hotel has a free Wi-Fi, a Turkish bath, spa and jacuzzi. Dinner is buffet-style with wine and water included.



DAY TWO

After breakfast, we'll take a short drive to La Zenia shopping centre. All your favourite shops are here, ladies, and there is Decathlon and Leroy Merlin for the boys! There will be free time for shopping and there are plenty of options for lunch. We'll return to the hotel in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight.

DAY THREE

After breakfast we'll take the coach to CARTAGENA.



Cartagena was founded around 220BC and boomed during the Roman period. We'll be visiting the Roman Theatre Museum, a beautifully structured museum with an impressively restored 1st century amphitheatre.

Cartagena is also famous for producing Licor 43 (Cuarenta Y Trés) and we'll be visiting the factory and sampling the wares.

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We'll see the old town and, for those with a head for heights, we'll take the panoramic lift for a fabulous view of Cartagena and the surrounding area. There will then be free time wander around the historic buildings with an optional lunch (details later), before we return to the hotel late afternoon. Dinner and overnight.

DAY 4

After breakfast, we return to Denia, stopping n the way for lunch.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

All meals are buffet style (no tourist menus) and include wine and water.
Services of a Gandia Tours Guide (Rolf) throughout the trip
Local English-speaking guide in Cartagena
Entry to the Roman Theatre Museum
Trips are optional and you are under no obligation to take any of them if you prefer to do your own thing.

COSTS

For a group of 30 people - 212eur per person in double
For a group of 40 people - 187eur per person in double
For a group of 50 people - 172eur per person in double
Single supplement is €30

As soon as the trip becomes viable we will ask you for a 25% non-returnable deposit.

We hope you can join us.

GINNY and CHRIS WHITEHEAD

September

Southern France

6 Days, 5 nights B&B

Day 1

Early departure from Dénia with breaks and lunch on the way. Arrive in Andorra with it's stunning location and duty-free shopping for overnight accommodation.



Andorra is a tiny, independent principality situated between France and Spain and is picturesquely situated in the Pyrenees mountains. It's known for its ski resorts and a tax-haven status that encourages duty-free shopping. Capital Andorra la Vella has boutiques and jewelers on Meritxell Avenue and several shopping centers. The old quarter, Barri Antic, houses Romanesque Santa Coloma Church, with a circular bell tower.

Day 2

A Medieval garrison and a Gothic chateau.

After breakfast, visit the Medieval garrison town of Villefranche de Conflente for free time and lunch.



Afternoon drive to Montpellier, with its huge Roman aqueduct and beautiful old town. Visit to the nearby Chateau d'O if time permits. Overnight accommodation in Hotel IBIS Montpellier.

Villefranche de Conflent is a tourist classic and lives off it, but it is nevertheless an interesting place. Founded around 1100 by the counts of Cerdagne to bar the road to Moorish invaders, remodeled by Vauban in the seventeenth century after rebelling against annexation by France, its streets and fortifications have remained untouched by subsequent development. Worth a look is the church of St-Jacques, with a primitively carved thirteenth-century baptismal font just inside the door, and you can walk the walls for a fee. If you do so, you will see why Vauban constructed the Libéria fortress on the heights overlooking the town to protect it from "aerial" bombardment. There's an excellent

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restaurant next to the church called "Auberge de St. Paul". Getting up to the Libéria involves climbing a stairway of a thousand steps beginning just across the old bridge and rail line at the end of rue St-Pierre. If you don't fancy the climb, look for the free minibus leaving from near the town's main gate. There is also an interesting cave called Les Canalettes right next to the village that you can visit. On your way back, we recommend stopping off at the natural hot springs of St. Thomas.

Day 3

In the footsteps of Van Gough.

After breakfast, drive to Aix-en-Provence to see their fabulous food and flower markets, Arles with its Roman amphitheatre where Van Gough lived and painted some of his most famous works, and Avignon with its bridge and lavender fields.

Were it not for the great metropolis of Marseille, just 30km south, Aix-en-Provence would be the dominant city of central Provence. Historically, culturally and socially, the two cities are moons apart, and for visitors the tendency is to love one and hate the other. Aix is more immediately attractive, a stately and in parts pretty place that's traditionally seen as conservative. The proudest moment in its history was its fifteenth-century heyday as an independent fiefdom under the beloved King René of Anjou, while in the nineteenth century it was home to close friends Paul Cézanne and Émile Zola. Today, the youth of Aix dress immaculately; hundreds of foreign students, particularly Americans, come to study here; and there's a certain snobbishness, almost of Parisian proportions.

Known as Vieil Aix, the tangle of medieval lanes at the city's heart is a great monument in its entirety, an enchanting ensemble that's far more compelling than any individual building or museum it contains. With so many streets alive with people; so many tempting restaurants, cafés and shops; a fountained square to rest in every few minutes; and a backdrop of architectural treats from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it's easy to while away days at a time enjoying its pleasures. On Saturdays, and to a lesser extent on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the centre is taken up with some of the finest markets in Provence.

ARLES



With its sun-kissed golden stone, small-town feel and splendid setting on the east bank of the Rhône, Arles ranks high among southern France's loveliest cities. It's also one of the oldest, with the extraordinary Roman amphitheatre at its heart, Les Arènes, simply the most famous of several magnificent monuments. Originally a Celtic settlement, Arles later became the Roman capital of Gaul, Britain and Spain. For centuries, the port of Arles prospered from trade up the Rhône, especially when enemies blockaded its eternal rival, Marseille. Decline set in with the arrival of the railways, however, and the town where Van Gogh spent a lonely and miserable period in the late nineteenth century was itself inward-looking and depressed.

Thankfully, however, Arles today is pleasantly laid back – at its liveliest on Saturdays, when Camargue farmers come in for the weekly market – and a delightful place simply to stroll around. Its compact central core, tucked into a ninety-degree curve in the river, is small enough to cross on foot in a few minutes. While ancient ruins are scattered everywhere, the heart of the Roman city, the place du Forum, remains the hub of popular life. Medieval Arles, on the other hand, centred on what's now the place de la République, the pedestrianised site of both the Cathédrale St-Trophime and the Hôtel de Ville. The one area where the city's former walls have survived lies to the east, in a quiet and attractive little corner. Sadly, the riverfront, once teeming with bars and bistros, was heavily damaged during World War II.

AVIGNON



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Capital of the Catholic Church during the early Middle Ages and for centuries a major artistic centre, Avignon remains an unmissable destination. Low medieval walls still encircle Avignon's old centre, as it nestles up against a ninety-degree bend in the Rhône river. Their gates and towers restored, the ramparts dramatically mark the historic core off from the formless sprawl of the modern city beyond. Despite their menacing crenellations, however, they were never a formidable defence. The major monuments occupy a compact quarter up against the river, just beyond the principal place de l'Horloge, at the northern end of rue de la République, the chief axis of the old town.

Yes, Avignon can be dauntingly crowded, but it's worth persevering, not simply for the colossal Palais des Papes, home to the medieval popes, and its fine crop of museums and ancient churches, but also the sheer life and energy that throbs through its lanes and alleyways.

Back to Montpellier for overnight accommodation.

Day 4

Either a free day to explore or an optional trip to Nîmes:



On the border between Provence and Languedoc, **Nîmes** is inescapably linked to two things – denim and Rome. The latter's influence resulted in some of the most extensive **Roman remains** in Europe, while the former (*de Nîmes - denim, get it?*), was manufactured for the first time in this city's textile mills and exported to the southern USA in the nineteenth century to clothe slaves.

The city is worth a visit, in part for the ruins and the narrow lanes of the compact old city, but also to experience its energy and direction, having enlisted the services of a galaxy of architects and designers – including Norman Foster, Jean Nouvel and Philippe Starck – in a bid to wrest southern supremacy from neighbouring Montpellier.

The focal point of the city is a first-century Roman arena, known as **Les Arènes**. One of the best-preserved Roman arenas in the world, its

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arcaded two-storey facade conceals massive interior vaulting, riddled with corridors and supporting raked tiers of seats with a capacity of more than twenty thousand spectators, whose staple fare was the blood and guts of gladiatorial combat. When Rome's sway was broken by the barbarian invasions, the arena became a fortress and eventually a slum, home to an incredible two thousand people when it was cleared in the early 1800s. Today it has recovered something of its former role, with passionate summer crowds still turning out for some blood-letting – Nîmes has the most active bullfighting scene outside Spain.

Back to Montpellier for overnight accommodation.

Day 5

After breakfast, drive to the fortified French walled town of Carcassonne, a World Heritage site, for free time and lunch. Continue to Perpignan, with its old town's warren of alleys and palm-shaded squares

CARCASSONE



Perched on a rocky hilltop and bristling with zigzag battlements, stout walls and spiky turrets, the fortified city of Carcassonne looks like something out of a children's storybook when it's seen from afar. A Unesco World Heritage Site since 1997, it's most people's idea of the perfect medieval castle.

La Cité, as the old walled town is now known, attracts over four million visitors every year, peaking in high summer. Time your visit for late in the day (or better still for spring and autumn) to truly appreciate the old town's medieval charm.

PERPIGNAN OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

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Framed by the peaks of the Pyrenees 13km west of the Mediterranean coastline and just 38km north of the Spanish border, Perpignan radiates out from the tight knot of the old town's warren of alleys, palm-shaded squares and shabby tenements painted in shades of lemon, peach and tangerine.



Historically, Perpignan (Perpinyà in Catalan) was capital of the kingdom of [Mallorca](#), a Mediterranean power that stretched northwards as far as Montpellier and included all the Balearic Islands; the Mallorcan kings' palace still stands guard at the southern end of the old town. Its proximity to [Spain](#) means the town is strong on fiestas.

Overnight accommodation in the Hotel IBIS.

Day 6

After breakfast, return to Dénia stopping for lunch in Tarragona or Peñíscola

November:

Barcelona



4 day/3 night stay in Barcelona with English speaking guide

Being researched

December:

Alicante



A visit to Santa Bárbara castle in the morning with English speaking guide to explain the important role played in the Spanish civil war.

Free time for lunch and afternoon shopping. Prices being researched.

An option to complete a travel request form will be offered at the monthly members meetings for those people who do not have access to internet.