

# La Casita

Near Villanueva de La Concepción

Málaga Province

Andalucía



## Useful Information

## La Casita - Useful Information

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*Note: we will send directions to get to La Casita and other details after you have booked.*

## Introduction

You will have seen an outline description and some photos of La Casita on our web site [www.sojam.com/casita](http://www.sojam.com/casita). What follows is a fuller description of the house and things to do in the area. La Casita is in a beautiful mountainous location, as yet relatively undiscovered, ideal for both energetic or peaceful holidays. It also has good access to well known Andalucían sites and is within an hour of the coast and Málaga airport.

## La Casita: Around and About

### *What to do and Where to go*

- El Torcal, an outstanding limestone outcrop (and National Park), is two to four Km to the north of La Casita. The western end can be reached on foot or by bike, and is highly explorable, although the walks are not marked on any maps. There is a motorable track up from the Cortijo la Torre, which will get you started.
- The visitors' centre (April 2006 - being rebuilt) at the eastern end of El Torcal is reached by car after passing through Vva de la Concepción towards Antequera. Views from here are spectacular - towards the Sierra Nevada in the East, the plains of Extremadura to the north beyond Antequera, and the hills to the coast to the south. Super-fit folk might bike to the visitors centre - note however that the top of El Torcal is over 1,000 metres!
- There is a shortish 1.8 km walk (the Green Route) from the visitors centre. This is well marked, and attractive (great flowers in May/June). There is a longer Yellow Route which is glorious. Other routes are officially closed, but off piste excursions are possible and well worthwhile. The views from the *miradores* (viewpoints) are amazing.
- Antequera is an attractive and so far untouristy town with several interesting churches, a ruined Alcazaba and some prehistoric Dolmens. Well worth spending time wandering around the streets in both the older and newer parts of the town.
- Ronda and the pueblos blancos are approx 2-3 hours away by road. Beautiful but more tourists. Options are to go by the main roads or test your map-reading skills and use the minor roads and tracks -

very pretty. There are also buses and trains to Ronda from Antequera and Málaga.

- Málaga has an interesting and attractive older part, although much of the rest has been overdeveloped. The coast generally is quite busy, although there are a few interesting small towns and nice beaches on the coast to the west and east of Málaga. Allow up to 2 hours each way. There is an impressive Aquapark west of Málaga.
- For Chris Stewart fans, the Alpujarras (of Driving over Lemons fame) is another beautiful area south of Granada. It may be reached via Granada, across country or along the coast. Allow 2½ hours - more in summer.
- Cádiz, Jaen and Jerez de la Frontera are further afield but worth a visit. Ubeda and Baeza in the northeast of Andalucia are beautiful, historic old towns in the midst of the intensive olive production zone. Stunning architecture ....
- You may want to consider staying overnight in some of these towns and cities. Hotel information in the Rough Guide and Lonely Planet etc. in La Casita.
- Some major attractions, such as the Alhambra Palace in Granada, now run advance booking systems which you would be well advised to use, especially if you are going in summer or at Easter. You can buy tickets by phone with a credit card by phoning offices of the BBVA bank: 902224460 within Spain or +34 913465936 or +34 914745920 from outside Spain (English spoken). You state the day and time of your visit, and they give you a ticket number. You then pick up the tickets in a special queue - "Taquilla de reserva" - at the Alhambra ticket office. This system guarantees you a ticket and is faster than the normal queue. The price is about 7 Euros and normal opening hours are 8:30 am - 8.00pm, 7 days per week.
- Evening visits to the Alhambra Palace are also possible during the summer. There is a useful website for Granada which gives latest information, also in English: <http://granadainfo.com/>
- Closer to home, Villanueva has a new-ish swimming pool, on the left, about 200m out of town off the Torcal/Antequera road (signposted 'piscina'). La Casita also has a small paddling ('plunge') pool, to cool you off at the end of a hot day.
- The lakes of the Guadalhorce complex (beyond El Chorro) are also good for swimming in summer
- In La Casita you should find a range of travel and guide books (Lonely Planet, Rough Guide), rail and bus timetables and local information. Please add any useful leaflets etc you may collect.

Comments, suggestions and ideas, good and bad experiences will be welcome - there is a visitors book, please write any useful information, comments and suggestions in it.

### *Getting Around*

- There should be some road maps in La Casita. Large scale maps, e.g. for hiking and cycling are not easily available. We have left enlarged photocopies of these maps with some suggestions for local walks and rides. We would be grateful for any information you could add to these.
- There is a petrol station in Villanueva. There are also ample opportunities to fill up on the motorway, or in Antequera or other large towns and cities.
- By car, Antequera is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, Málaga 55mins, Granada  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, Córdoba 2 hours and Sevilla  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.
- Another option is to visit Granada, Córdoba and Sevilla by train from Antequera (timetable in La Casita). The station is just north of the town, follow signs for Córdoba then station (Estación RENFE). Cars can be parked outside the station.

### *Before you Go*

- Hiring cars should be done before you go. There are many companies accessible on the internet (Eg. CarJet, Autos Abroad, Holiday Autos, etc). Note that some companies charge extra if you arrive late at night.
- Book any special excursions you want to make before you leave such as buying tickets for the sights of Granada, especially if you plan to go at a busy tourist time, which includes Easter weeks. We have written up instructions for Granada above.
- La Casita is located at 690 metres above sea level in beautiful hills with spectacular views. From October to April it is chilly in the evenings, and can be cool and wet in the day, even when it is hot on the coast. It can also be glorious. Summer - May to late September - is usually hot. You will need warm clothing in winter.

### *Shops and Shopping*

- There is a small shop in the local hamlet about 1 KM away - it is really just a front room of a house, but has all basic household

- food, veg drink etc. Bread is not the best and milk is UHT. Look for the small 'Tabac' sign tucked away on the right of a small passage.
- There is a baker in La Joya (Hoya) close-by (the Spanish word for bakery is 'panadería'). It is on the left as you drive in. There is also a pharmacy in La Joya, and, tucked away opposite, a good small shop.
  - The local Cheese factory sells mild and strong goats cheese in rounds like cheddar - it is very good and not "goaty"
  - Villanueva de la Concepción has a large range of smallish shops, which sell almost everything. Fresh milk is occasionally available in the Discor supermarket on Mondays and at a new-ish delicatessen with no name - go into Villanueva, turn right (south) down the hill towards Málaga and immediately right again. The shop is on the first corner on your left - this shop also has good baguettes and an excellent range of frozen food, and the owner speaks good English.
  - There is also a reasonable bakery/cafe the Plaza (square) Andalucía in Villanueva, which is the more easterly of the two plazas in the older part of town. Turn 3<sup>rd</sup> right going down the hill towards Málaga.
  - Villanueva also has a colourful market on Mondays in the new main Plaza - keep going towards the Torcal instead of turning right down the hill, and then take the first left. You will see the market on your left after a 20 or 30 yards. There is a good selection of fresh fruit and vegetables.
  - The nearest large supermarkets are in Antequera (about 25mins away) and Málaga (55 mins drive). Antequera now has an 'Eroski/La Veronica' complex which is a shopping mall with a large supermarket. It's a mall - you can get everything there including English newspapers (little shop, ground floor, just outside the supermarket). Other options include the 'Mercadona' supermarkets and even a Lidl's
  - There is a daily covered market in a lovely renovated building in Antequera - great fish!

### *Bars and Restaurants*

- So far, there is one bar in the local village and a couple in La Joya nearby (3KM). There is also a new, nice-looking restaurant in La Joya 'El Rincon del Hortalano' which we haven't tried yet, and numerous bars in Villanueva. Most bars do tapas and we can recommend the Bar Godoy near the Plaza (Andalucia) in Villanueva

for both tapas and meals. There is also a new bar - 'Xe Bar' near the new main Plaza (see above) run by an English couple, Wendy and Tom.

- There is a good Pizzería in Villanueva, and also a good restaurant 'El Pajarito', which, if you are driving west towards La Higuera/Pastelero, is on the right hand side of the road just before you get to the Pizzeria (which is on the left). Closed on Thursdays. Look out for other eating opportunities (and do leave opinions!).
- The Posada del Torcal (between La Joya and Villanueva) is a foreign owned, expensive hotel with a restaurant "La Galería" which has just opened to the public. If you feel like pushing the boat out, it may be worth a try. Let us know.
- Antequera has numerous bars and restaurants. Recommended for food are the restaurant in the Hotel La Castilla, also 'El Angelote', and the restaurant in the bullring (which is a great location). Be aware that the Spanish eat late - it can be difficult to find a restaurant serving meals anywhere before about 9pm, although tapas and variations on the theme are always available.
- The bar in the street behind the Hotel La Castilla in Antequera does excellent churros in the mornings and late afternoons. (Churros are circles of batter fried in oil and traditionally dunked in thick hot chocolate - mmmmm)
- There is a small street more or less behind the plaza San Sebastian (running parallel to the main drag) which has a couple of nice restaurants too

### *Finance*

- Spain changed from the peseta to the euro in January 2002.
- There are ATM machines (cajero automático) in Málaga airport (including one in the baggage/customs hall near the foot of the escalator) which give euros against most UK debit and credit cards. There is also a bank which should change travellers cheques when it's open.
- There is a Unicaja bank in Villanueva on the Plaza Andalucía, with an ATM machine which takes Cirrus, Visa and most other cards. It should also change travellers cheques. There is a second ATM in the Caja Rural close to Bar Godoy.
- Antequera has numerous banks and ATM machines.

- Most Spanish restaurants, shops and petrol stations in larger towns take Visa and Mastercard. Be prepared to pay cash for most things in Villanueva.
- Train tickets can be bought using credit and debit cards.

## La Casita -What's There?

### *Accommodation*

- Good sized sitting room with double bed settee, fireplace with wood burning stove, and electric wall heater (+ space for extra beds)
- Toolsheds and stable storing bikes, firewood and garden equipment.
- 1 bedroom with double bed (+space for a camp bed)
- 1 bedroom with 2 single beds (+space for a camp bed)
- 1 dining/all purpose room with dining table and chairs and wood burning stove (an extra bed can be fitted into this room and the dining table placed in the sitting room if required)
- 1 fold up bed + mattress, 42 inches wide; 1 inflatable bed, double size (with pumps - both car cigarette lighter powered and foot pump - all in tool store), one single foam foldable chair/bed in the sitting room, one light weight camp bed in store.
- Limitless possibilities for tents under the olives but be prepared to shift the stones!
- Ample double and single duvets, sheets and duvet covers; put a duvet on top of the mattress if you find the beds too firm.
- Ample pillows and pillowcases (bring your own if allergic to feathers); the pillows have all been washed and dried in the Andalucian sunshine.
- Blankets for when it's cooler and two double electric blankets.
- You should find the main beds made up if we have known about your visit in advance - make adjustments to suit your needs. Extra bedding is stored in the 2 large cupboards in the small hallway outside the bathroom.
- Pillows are stored in the large wooden chest covered by fabric in the sitting room.

## *Catering*

- Good size kitchen double sink with hot water from small bottled-gas water heater, drainer, pots, pans, cooking utensils, crockery, glasses and cutlery (enough for 6-8).
- Fridge-freezer, bottled-gas cooker (with grill and oven), espresso coffee machines, toaster, mixer, juice presser, electric kettle, microwave with grill and bread-making machine complete with instructions (bring your own flour, although a limited range of bread flour is beginning to appear in the supermarkets in Antequera and Málaga, along with yeast. ). And a Swedish smoker!
- Dining table and 6 chairs (for use inside), plus extra tables to be used inside or out, and 7 or so fold-up chairs.

## *Cleanliness*

- One small bathroom with shower, wash basin and loo, and one larger bathroom with shower, loo, wash basin, bath and bidet.
- Hot water to bathrooms from central electric water heater.
- There is a washing machine in the utility room.
- Towels to borrow or take your own.

## *Outside*

- Large shaded patio running length of house, water, gardens (still being tamed), olive grove, 360° views.
- Two woven hammocks with straps (stored in the house) can be hung between the two strong trees on the patio. Please take inside when not in use. Also three 'sitting hammocks' which are great for reading outdoors. All with hooks and loops for hanging from the trees or the west-facing patio
- A small paddling ('plunge') pool.

## *House and garden keeping*

- We have made arrangements with Juan Pozo and his wife, María Dolores, to clean and look after La Casita for visitors. They will come in before your visit, and make sure the place is clean and tidy. After you go, they will launder the towels and bedding, clean generally and replace dust covers.
- There is plenty of space for BBQs outside and two grills/grids.

- La Casita has most household items for at least six people, but if there is anything unusual you can't do without take it with you. E.g. a thermos flask may be useful if you take tea with you on walks or want to carry chilled water etc. We have two cold boxes - one large, one small - which are useful for picnics and also for buying meat and fish in Antequera or Málaga in the summer.
- The house has fly protected windows and fly repellent door curtains which keep the flies down in summer. You may need mosquito coils for the patio in the evening, personal repellents, and Anthisan for bites, although over the year we have not experienced any mosquito problems. Flies can be a problem when local farmers are putting manure on the olives.
- Take sunscreen (or buy locally). Local coffee is fine but you may want to take herb or Indian tea with you as local alternatives are a bit variable.

### *Electricity*

- Plugs are 2-pin round with or without earth. There are some adapters in the house, but take your own in case these have walked! Voltage is 220, as in the UK.

## La Casita - Arriving and Leaving

### *Getting there*

- If you are arriving at Málaga airport you need to arrange to hire a car. This should be arranged before you leave the UK. It will take you between 45 minutes to an hour to reach La Casita from the airport, depending on traffic.
- Taxis are usually available at the airport (40 Euros), or can be pre-booked. Manuel in Villanueva de la Concepción (tel +34 952 753196) can be contacted to collect from or take to Málaga airport - or for other journeys.
- We will send you detailed 'how to get there' instructions.

### *Leaving*

- Please leave La Casita in tidy condition to enable María Dolores to clean and prepare for the next visitors.
- Instructions for leaving are given in the survival information that we will send you,

## Booking

If after reading this you are interested in booking a stay at La Casita please contact us by phone or email for further details. We ask you to contribute towards its upkeep: for groups of up to 4 adults, this is £250/week for June to September inclusive, and £200 the rest of the year: for additional persons please add 10% per individual. Please pay a quarter as a deposit to confirm your booking. If you are unable to go and no one takes up your place we will retain your deposit. Please pay us the balance before you go.

As soon as you have booked your flights, or decided how you will get to La Casita, please let us know so we can co-ordinate arrivals and departure of any others (including ourselves) at either end of your stay.

*Owners:*

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