

Bill and Cathy McArthur in Spain: 5

There are over 300 sunny days on the Costa del Sol, but we had two rainy weekends in a row. The first of those weekends we took a working weekend so that Bill could catch up on some computer work and so that we could work on our Spanish. We have gotten into the habit (we have lots of them) of walking into central Malaga in the afternoons. It is a pleasant walk along the water of around 3.5 miles. We usually shed a few layers of clothing as we walk into the afternoon sun and get warmed by its strong rays. We've come to appreciate Malaga as a very pretty city with interesting architecture, rich history, and friendly people. As a matter of fact, in the places we've been in Spain so far, the people have been uniformly friendly in their contacts with us.

One afternoon we visited the Museum of Malaga and the Palacio Episcopal, which had an exposition concerning the ancient Roman city of Malaga on this site. Malaga is the second oldest city in Europe with the Phoenicians, Vikings, Romans, Moors, and Visigoths in its heritage. We walked partway up the mountain directly behind El Palo one afternoon and found a beautiful Mediterranean panorama, large expensive houses, and big expensive cars.

We enjoy our fellow students and their tales of their homelands: Austria, Hungary, and Germany so far. Our class the past week has consisted of four "chicas", Bill, and a dog. Bill continues to be a combination of class dunce and class clown. His specialty is to create complex, grammatically correct sentences in Spanish, which don't have any meaning to the Spanish people. Actually this is similar to how he writes in English.

We decided that we needed a couple of nights of luxury, so we took a bus to Marbella and stayed two nights in the Hotel Fuerte Miramar Spa. The hotel is right on the beach just down from one of the marinas. There is a long walkway along the beach (paseo maritimo) which we walked on Saturday morning 4 miles down to Puerto Banus. Bill actually was able to ask, in Spanish, two police officers whether there were any public restrooms nearby. The officers were kind enough to answer in Spanish as well and we understood their response. We feel quite comfortable dealing with restaurant and most store situations in Spanish. We continue to use English when approaching the front desk at hotels however.

Marbella is very beautiful and consequently full of tourists, mostly from Germany from the snippets of conversations that we've overheard. The old pueblo area is very cute and filled with little shops ready and willing to take tourists' euros. We enjoyed a very good paella for lunch. While we were in the restaurant, a thunderstorm complete with heavy rain and hail

came through. The temperature dropped from 17 degrees to 10 degrees while we were eating. (BTW: 17 degrees here is 62 and 10 degrees here is 50 degrees back in Cape May.) By the time we were done, the rain had stopped and the sun was coming out again. We returned to the same restaurant for dinner and enjoyed portions of fish. We have decided to return to Marbella again soon.

Bill and Cathy