

Mid-Summer Days are Here

Traditionally, July and August is vacation time for most Spaniards. Urban families take at least a full 10 days to leave the cities and enjoy the beaches; however, this year most of us are not going too far due to the CoVid-19 situation. Yes, the state of alarm in Spain has been over since the end of June; nevertheless, caution and economic upheaval have hindered the usual "beach-packing" summer frenzy. Most people who are venturing out have decided to stay in isolated rural accommodations with their own families where they have more control of their surroundings.

All this may seem somber, yet it is not. We are still enjoying summer and coming up with inventive ways to have fun. Those of us who stay around are visiting local monuments and museums as well as meeting with friends in outdoor cafes while wearing masks or keeping the appropriate safety distance. I have taken this opportunity to plant eggplants and tomatoes. So many veggies are popping up that we are giving some away. Alfonso and I make Andalusian gazpacho at least twice a week and have had to search for new recipes, some traditional, and some with our own twist. Below is the recipe for our homemade gazpacho.

It is so nice to know that even though I am thousands of miles away I am still able to meet with all of you thanks to technology. We have used Zoom several times to see each other and share experiences creating and reinforcing our human bond. And now I can be back to being part of ARRUF's Activities Committee again. Wow!

Besides keeping in touch with friends and family, such as the Women's Club of Rice, this new "*The Jetsons*" technology is allowing us to maintain our minds in the learning mood. I have been able to participate in quite a number of online seminars and workshops; I am also able to teach others from afar so I started to impart private Spanish classes to some of my old

students from the Women's Institute of Houston. It is so encouraging to see how they are enjoying this time as they improve their Spanish while being confined. This is wonderful!

In the meantime, we are also working on the planning of future tours. As part of the Association of Travel Agencies of Seville, we are regularly searching for solutions and ideas to provide the best and safest experiences to our future travelers once things are stable again. I just contacted Traveling Owls to discuss future tours for the Rice Community. I am hopeful that things will turn out well soon. And now, here is a short video showing parts of Andalusia's rural charm. Please enjoy, dream, and plan for the future: <https://youtu.be/nzs61guWtZk>

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