

Lifestyle

A group of Danish market traders and their supplier came to study how fruit and vegetables are grown and sold in Spanish markets

Learning from Malaga's noisy markets

PILAR R. QUIRÓS MALAGA

They came to study everything: from how they plant lettuces and pick tomatoes in Vélez-Málaga to how they tempt shoppers with a handful of 'boquerones' in Malaga's central market. Rather than taking in the usual museums and other tourist sites, the group of Danish visitors who were in Malaga at the end of last week had come to find out how the Spanish grow their vegetables in market gardens and the marketing methods they use to sell them.

They started Saturday morning with chocolate and *churros* to stock up on calories ready for their tour of the city, by bike. While they were here to study Spanish methods in the markets, they also managed to teach a lesson at the same time: that a bike is the perfect means of transport to get around a busy city.

After the *churros*, Mark, Bjarne, Jakob, Martin, Johan, Dennis, Ingolf, Kemal, Morten, Gitte, Tanja and Anne stepped into the provisional Ataranzas market (the original building is being renovated) to discover its charms. The fishmongers were the first thing they noticed, especially the way they were shouting about the freshness and other benefits of their produce to attract attention.

The visitors admired the great variety of seafood available and



ON TWO WHEELS. THE GROUP TOURED THE COVERED MARKETS BY BIKE. ANTONIO SALAS

the different types of shellfish, asking all the varieties' names. Anne, 22, just like her companions, was surprised that the fish, fruit and meat were all on sale in the same place, but without being pre-packed. "Here I can ask for one fish, the one I like the best, because there's a great variety, and just take that home. That's impossible in Denmark, it's great".

Martin, the head buyer of the firm Total Produce, who is the one "to blame" for this unusual trip, agreed. His company supplies all the other traders with fruit and vegetables.

All in one place

He also pointed out how "attractive" it is to be able to buy fish, meat and fruit loose by the kilo

in the same place, something they can't do in Denmark due to health and safety regulations. What Martin liked best about the visit, however, was the way the Spanish stallholders sell their produce. "They sing, shout and make the customers notice them. We are much quieter" he explained.

The visitors looked at the range of fruit and even took photos of

Anne

"Here I can choose a fish from an enormous variety; there you can't buy fish that isn't prepacked"

Martin

"I love the way the vendors shout; it's proved that 70% of the fruit and veg a Danish family buys is not on their shopping list"

Mark

"We sell fruit and vegetables per item and here per kilo; it's very different"

Tanja

"We've discovered lots of types of fruit we'd never seen before"

the ones they were less familiar with such as the variety of apple known in Spain as 'doncella verde'. They were impressed by the Moscatel raisins, almonds, olive oil, and by being able to buy olives by weight. Some commented on the similarities between the Andalusian markets and the Arab souks.

A taste of Malaga wine at the invitation of a local stallholder, warmed the Danish visitors before they pedalled off to see the market in Ciudad Jardín. They got wet on the way, one of the disadvantages of their chosen form of transport, but soon dried off later with a few beers and tapas in a local bar.

Direct answers

Happy as I am?

I've been reading your advice for awhile and I think you're both very down-to-earth, sensible people. I feel comfortable with your answers. That being said, I need some help.

I'm almost 20, and I've never dated anyone. Honestly, I've never been interested in any guy. I don't like summer flings, and I've never dated just because "all my friends are doing it." I'm 100 percent happy with myself, so there's never been a desire to find a partner.

Apparently, love turns up when you're not looking for it. I recently met a man who respects me more than my own family, is on the same intellectual level as I am, and shares my

By Wayne and Tamara

same passions. When he asked if we could formally start a relationship, I said no. I told him I'd like to keep him as a friend for now. I'm still trying to financially establish myself and get back into school.

I moved away to pursue a job and haven't seen him for more than six months. I think about him every single day. When I left I had a little crush on this man. I missed him, but I went on with my life. Six months later, I find myself restraining my fingers from dialing his phone number. I keep myself busy so I don't send him six billion e-mails in two hours.

I find myself doing all the silly first-time love things, like write him letters, poetry, and music. I send him presents for

no reason.

He said he would rather be alone the rest of his life than have someone that wasn't me. I have never seen respect like he's showed me. If it were up to me, I would ask him to wait a few years before we start anything.

Of course, I'm trying to be realistic, and that isn't fair to him. I don't want to drop the life I have now and move back. I just got a job I've been trying to get for six months. I play guitar in an amazing band, and I just moved to New York, an amazing city.

Like I said, I'm 100 percent happy on my own. If he did go off and find a life with someone I'd probably accept it and acknowledge it was a missed opportunity for me. As long as he's happy, I'm glad for him. Am I missing out on something I should be taking advantage of?

Cissy

Cissy, your letter is full of doubletalk, but not the malicious kind. I'll be happy for him if he leaves, but I can't stop thinking about him. I'd like him to wait, but I can't ask him to park his life for years to see if I'll date him.

To outsiders you appear to be possessed of a warrior self, and you're really out there. But your romantic life says you've yet to enter the fray. We know you value intimate relationships, which is great. You understand if the person you marry is no more than the last person you dated, you'll never be content.

One line in your letter stands out. "He respects me more than my own family." Why does a man you hardly know respect you more than they do?

We suspect there's a deficit of affection in your family. If that's the case, it's time to get your hurt self and your hero self into alignment.

Perhaps this isn't just about him, the job, or the location. It's an awful lot about you. We don't willy-nilly recommend counseling, but maybe you have some things that need sorting out, so find someone who can help you. Don't just let things drift along until it's too late.

In older times a man might have built a house, cleared his land, and ploughed his fields not knowing who he would wed, or when, but becoming ready to wed. That's where we think you are. Clearing the fields and getting ready for what is to come, but not yet there.

Wayne and Tamara

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