

OUR BUMBLE

EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR MOTORHOME

By Joanne & Craig.





Scoffin a good ol' Spanish
Cake, Yum, Yum.



GARRUCHA TO PLAYA HIGUÉRICA

THURSDAY 11 JUNE

We were fast asleep and snoring in perfect harmony when I felt a wet patch. I bolted upright. Oh shit, the windows. I quickly ran around Vin closing all the roof openings before we got saturated. The storm had arrived - thunder, lightening and torrential rain. Once all the windows locked tight, I snuggled back up to Craig and continued to join him in noddy land.

It was rather grim outside with grey storm clouds and wild seas. We'd not been up 5 minutes when tap, tap on the door. Hey Bob, are you OK? Yes, in his Sean Connery voice. We are heading off now but here is the address of my son who lives in France. Just phone him when you are near by and tell him his dad has sent you. He will make sure plenty beer on the table waiting for you. We thanked him and with that we waved Bob, Nell and Brando their dog on their way.

Not long and we too hit the road. We left Andalusia and arrived in Murcia. It felt strange driving in the rain but it also made a nice change. The coastal drive was great as always but the landscape was rather different - black rock with mustard

coloured grass. Whilst the colours sound drab they were actually very nice. We have to say the coast of Spain is absolutely beautiful and not at all like we expected. Everyone raves on about Spain's high rise hotels but we've yet to find any. Yes, there are developed areas but they are not ugly like they portray. They are low profile and nearly always in good condition. Spain's coast gets a huge tick from us.

Not long and we were in Aguilas. It wasn't a pretty town just a concrete jungle with some rough bits. Never mind, we only to stay here for the Lidl. But, we couldn't find any parking spaces, so we had to park a few blocks away. Craig nearly broke his neck on the wet street tiles but I had little sympathy. His crocs are a disgrace and wafer thin with no tread left, so no wonder he slipped. I don't know why he just doesn't wear his other shoes or buy another pair of crocs. Blinkin men, not sure which phrase suits him the best.. tight arse or can't be arsed

Once inside Lidl we struggled to find the bits we needed and would you believe it but Craig said it wasn't a patch on Mercadona! Words I never

expected to hear. OMG, I think Craig might have pulled a brain cell when he slipped on the tiles. He's starting to abandon Lidl, quick sell your shares folks the growth guru has jumped ships. With that gob smacking comment, we bought our bits of goodies and set off to the big Mercadona on way out of Aguilas. Two supermarkets in one day, what are we doing...passing time cause the weather is naff.

With cupboards stocked up we set off to find water. It didn't take long to find as Craig has an eye for the taps. Once Vin filled to the max and the storm dying down, guess what we did? Wash the bloody Motorhome. Driving in the rain caused Vin to get dirty splash marks all up his arse and Craig didn't much care for his rough look. Shame he does share the same thoughts over his crocs.

With everything as full as possible and no other chores to do (at last I cry) we drove a few miles out of town to Carolina. A beautiful little bay with fine sand and very much under developed. We parked in a nice coastal garden and said hello to our South African neighbours (who now live in





Spain). They fell in love with this part of Spain years ago and so decided to up roots and move here. During the week they stay at their little villa but at the weekends they take their motorhome to the beach. Five minutes here and you can see why they fell in love with it...its authentic.

This stretch of coast is home to some of Spain's most beautiful, wild and underdeveloped coves and bays. There are no bus stops or tour guides, so unless you have a car you will struggle to get here but once here, it is lovely. You can walk from one bay to the next and see great rock formations, caves, coastal paths, rock pools and much much more.

FRIDAY AND THE WEEKEND 12, 13 AND 14 JUNE

Life's a beach and the weather is fabulous, so we decided to spend the weekend at this lovely part of the Spanish coastline. Unspoiled and totally basic just what we need.

We took some time to catch up on a bit of reading. Craig did research on the region of Murcia and I caught up on the news. I must admit the Greece situation does fascinate me even if it does

cause me to say, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Partly because we want to go to Greece next year and partly because I wonder when the bubble will burst and the wider impact on the world. Greece has always had a problem with its currency whether drachma or euro and without radical cultural reforms the problem will continue. The finance minister Yanis Varoufakis is one hell of a character, living the high life of a playboy on one hand and then negotiating deals on the other. His extravagant lifestyle and endless charm must wind all the other finance minister to despair. But come the end of June, he will need more than charm and a cheeky smile if he wants Greece to stay in the Euro. It seems the only thing left for Greece could be a scrip issue but this is only a short term solution with long term devastating problems. By issuing a scrip, Greece would then technically have two currencies - a Greek scrip and the Euro. The scrip might be in the same denomination, Euros but by the fact it is backed

by the Greek government as opposed to European Union, it will have a perceived lower value. Whenever there are two currencies in circulation, people will stash the perceived higher value and spend the lower value. This means people will stash the Euro (withdraw from savings?) and spend the scrip, which ultimately will starve the Greek government of Euros which is exactly what it doesn't want to do. I think Yanis should stop partying for a week and donate his weeks savings...should cover the first installment nicely! I don't trust him one bit but for some strange reason I do like the guy.

Over the weekend we checked out the different bays, the caves as well as do all the usual stuff like...washing. Oh, I nearly forgot, we had a BBQ, something we've not had for a while and the chicken was well tasty.

Aguilas Lighthouse, A nice little place for a spot of lunch.





LA HIGUÉRICA TO ISLA PLANA VIA BOLNUEVO

MONDAY 15 JUNE

It was 9.30 before we got up, which is not good at all. Half the bloody days gone! We seem to getting up later and later these days and need to get out of this bad habit. The pitter patter of little dachshund is no longer walking us up and kicking our bums in to gear!

We battened down the hatches and got ready for take off. No matter how many times we get ready to move, it is always a check and recheck task. Doors, cupboards, pots, pans, windows, hatches etc etc and you can guarantee that within minutes of setting off, clunk. Today was no exception, we'd forgot the main skylight. Don't fancy traveling down the road with that open..it would make a right mess of the roof if it tore off!

First stop, fuel station. We filled up with diesel and then nipped round the back to the service area. It's a very good petrol station with toilet, grey and fresh water facility. All free to clients. We ditched the grey water over the grid unlike the person before us,,who let it run all over the floor. Some people have no thought for the facility and others. Then with our long hose we will gave

the grey tank and pipes a good blast of clean water. Not too dirty but it did take away a small soap build up, which absolutely hums in this hot weather. I then rinsed some clothes and Craig got the water tubs ready. In between a French chap emptied his toilet. He then went and stuck the fresh water hose inside his damn toilet to rinse it. The dirty b'tard..excuse my French! Why did he use the fresh water hose? Now no one can use it! Some people are so rude and disrespectful. To be honest, we never use the hose pipes for this very reason. We either use our hose pipes or we fill the water containers straight from the tap. Then we know we are getting clean water. Despite this we got our sanitizer and wiped the hose clean.

With Vin full we then quickly stopped at Mercadona in Aguilas for some bits and then drove to harbour. By now, it was 1.30 and our bellies were shouting at us...feed me! So lunch at the harbour with fishermen and yachty folk. The front of Aguilas is actually very pretty with lots of palm tree lined streets, a promenade and a big rock with a castle perched on top. Around the corner of the rock, a lighthouse, a few fish restaurants and the marina. Certainly feels a lot nicer than on the outskirts where it feels very run

down and dirty. So apologies for my earlier comment but Aguilas is quite a nicer place.



A quick stop at the post office to mail some cards before heading out of town on to Ranch 332. The roads in this next of the world are called ranch...no A roads, now that makes a change. We could use the motorway but this section is a toll and so we avoided. The first part of the drive involved horrid potholes. We watched the trucks pull up and load up boxes upon boxes of tomatoes. If you like tomatoes then this is the place to be, there are miles upon miles of them. Then just near the end, I spotted a grow bag. I started to chuckle. I remember when mum bought a tomato grow bag and carefully placed it on her kitchen window sill. All summer she carefully watered the soil and tended to the plastic. She was might disappointed come the end of summer when she had no tomatoes. She thought the grow bag included tomato seeds! Bless.

After the tomato tunnels came the dusty, arid and rugged hills. Little mounds hills everywhere with just one abandoned road that meandered through the middle. We took that road...the road less travelled? It felt like we were driving through a huge jelly mould range. A trifle hot for jelly me





thinks..bum bum. Then a weird song came on the iPad...cookin my chickin. We both looked at each other, listened to a few lyrics and burst out laughing. But our laughter was cut short with a massive thud, rattle and bang. One of the kitchen cupboards flew open. The catch had broken. Craig pulled over and we took a look. The clip that keeps it shut had snapped. Craig shuffled off to the side of the van and got out his tool box. I could hear him smile, aaahhhaa, a little task for me to do. First he swapped the clip for one of the unused cupboards in the bedroom. Then he superglued the clip together and hey presto, we were sorted.

Five minutes later and we were driving passed the dried beds of Rio Amir on the entrance to Bolnuevo. An old fishing port on the Costa Calida with weird and wonderful rock formations. We parked up on the municipal car park, which happens to be in front of the rock formation and straight in front of the beach. The sun was blazing through the windscreen and talk about frying an egg, well forget the egg, you could roast a hog on this dash! Shame we don't have any apples.

We had half an hour doing our own thing and settling down when we spotted the 'oh no' sign. Yip, this town is anti camper. We signed and packed up. Half an hour scooting around town but to no avail. We trundled along the coast but every bay was the same...no campers. Jeez, man it is getting late and we need a spot for the night, give us a break. We drove until 9 and finally settled on some waste land facing Isla Plana. Overlooking the surfing bay and an ever so glamorous beige apartment block. Home for the night...on a piece of dirt. Cue the violins, folks!





ISLA PLANA TO PLAYA DE LA AZOHÌA

TUESDAY 16 JUNE

Well we managed to get up a little earlier at 9.15! Well 15 minutes makes all the difference and at least it's heading in the right direction. So much for an early start though and to top it off, it was 11 before we had breakfast, showered etc and got our bottoms in gear. Half the day gone dossing around, what a waste.

We punched in the coordinates and set off to Cartagena. We feel the need to see some historical stuff and explore rather than sea and sand. We love the beach but we've had our fill. Bumbling along the road to Cartagena and Craig spotted a nice bit of coast line. Shall we go down there for a bit? If you want and with that he took a sharp right turn. We do love the fact you can just change your mind at any time, the joys of freedom. We pulled up on some dirty patch right in front of some rock pools. Hey let's go see what is in the rock pools, Craig bellowed. We were getting ready for a paddle when Craig spotted a good parking spot in the distance. This time we got our the bikes and went for a cycle. We spotted a few potential places, so not long before Vin was moved once again to a nicer and cleaner location.



We'd not been parked up long when the local fishing boats pulled in with their daily catch. What perfect timing. A stroll down the little jetty to 'Alma Tieta' fishing boat to toot at today's goodies. Once the drama of the fishing was over with, we took a pew on the bench outside of Vin. Watching the world go by and soaking up the sun. A little later and a small boat pulled up with two divers. They were no recreational divers and as we watched, it became clear, it was Dale Winters and the supermarket sweep. Which

reminds me...I thought we'd had enough of the beach!

After a walk up to the tower on the headland, I braved the elements and went for a snorkel. The first snorkel of the year. Craig chickened it, soft lad. It wasn't teaming with fish but I did spot quite a few shoals of mackerel and sprats.

Craig needed to do some stuff on his laptop, so I took a stroll along the beach. Which really means, I got out the way cause Craig was losing his patience with the internet. Anyway, I found a nice big rock to sit on and I sat for ages just thinking about Peanut.. God, I miss him.

So for a change, I thought I'd try an idea for what's it is like where are we... If you like the idea then let us know and how you may like it laid out. We are keeping a database to share with all the relevant details & photos once we get back home.

The place

Playa de la Azohia
N.037.55312. W.001.17018

Why did we come here?

We were passing by when we noticed the coastline looking quite nice, so we turned off for a toot.

Our Bumble Verdict

Tiny fishing village with a handful of beach bum bars and the odd diving operator. The sea is crystal clear with peddled beaches. Lots of little coves to pull in and spend the day with the larger beaches offering some golden shipped in sand. There are no hotels here only small 2 storey apartment blocks and the odd villa. It is underdeveloped and low key, it's suits us down to the ground. This section of coast is like one huge natural bay, so when you look out to sea, you see the mountains and the rugged coast line of Costa Calida. It also means you get to see great sunsets even though you are on the east coast.

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE



We woke up, looked out the window and thought...let's stay another day. This place just has a great atmosphere and suits us down to a tea. It is so tranquil and has to be one of Spain best kept secrets, so ssshuuush don't tell anyone. We have two lovely neighbours both of which are French and an old English couple tucked on the end.

I switched on the Internet and wow, it seems a lot faster since Craig wiped out the iPad (remember the mood the other day, well his hard work paid off) and rebuilt it. It's still not mega but it is a damn sight faster than before. Then just as I went to check the news, FaceTime call. It was my sister, Mandy her grandson, Oliver. Awwww he looked so lovely and boy he is growing fast. I walked over to the little pier and pointed the camera at the sea. Lots of fish for Oliver to see and he was fascinated. We had a good chat, it was a lovely surprise x

In between, washing seat covers and pottering around we chatted to our neighbours. Exchanged stories and camping spots. The



The most amazing sunsets in the most tranquil place...La Azohia also on the cover.

English couple directed us to a wild camping website www.forgovw.org go to the maps section and it shows you all the potential wild camping spots. Good one!

I went for a snorkel, Craig attempted but bottled it at the shin level. Lots of little fish and a wonderfully entertaining octopus that kept me entertained for a good hour.

In the evening we watched the film Interstellar, it wasn't bad but wasn't great either. We did have a laugh about half way through. Not at the film but at our French neighbour. They moved the van, we assume to go and empty their loo and then returned five minutes later. She was adamant he parked in exactly the same spot and not a millimeter out of place. Well the poor chap must have moved back and forth 50 times. Every time he turned off the engine, she would bellow at him to move over. This drama lasted for ages and we couldn't watch the film for laughing. Thanks for the entertainment, a good Pearl & Dean break.





LA AZOHÌA TO CARTAGENA

THURSDAY 18 JUNE

Said cheerio to our neighbours and hit the road to Cartagena. The ride over the mountains was very relaxing for some strange reason even at the points where Vin's tread clung on to the edge of the steep, windy road.

Over the mountain and things started to look very different, developed and not so pretty. Clearly, Spain's hidden secret lay on the other side of the mountain range and not this side. Not long and we were entering the outskirts of Cartagena and it pretty rough. We spotted an Eroski (supermarket). Lets go and see if they have any Pataks curry paste. We both grinned at each other like excited kids and swiftly pulled in to the car park. When you are traveling the little things in life mean a lot and a yummy curry is worth a detour. By the time we found the world food isle we no longer felt like kids but pensioners requiring hip surgery. The store is huge. Talk about nip in for a curry! Several hours later we surfaced from Eroski with a bag of croissants. We were gutted, no curry, what are we going to do? Drown our sorrows in croissants. But all is not lost, Eroski have a fuel station and the diesel is might cheap at €1.11 per litre when every where else its



around €1.22. We brimmed Vin and then shot across the road to fill up the GPL at a shell station.

In Cartagena, we drove around the streets trying to find somewhere to park but all the one way streets made it difficult. We eventually parked on the west side just after the river. The building on the corner of the street looks very grand and rather impressive but we are not sure what it is. Its some type of church / hospital. We think it may be a hospital for retired solders?

We cycled around Cartagena and it certainly had a nice feel about it. The old quarters with tiny streets, cafes, bars and historic monuments had an authentic appeal. Down on the port, we could see an AIDA cruise ship in dock along with half a dozen container ships. Then in the middle a couple of catamarans offering the booze cruise and loud music. Half to say though, the port area was very clean and tidy and they had certainly done their best to make it appealing. We cycled up Torre Hill and despite the pumping buckets of sweat to reach the top, the views from the top were amazing. The 360 view across the city allowed



you to see all the different roman ruins - the amphitheater, the castle, the bullring are just a few. The ride down with the ocean breeze rushing passed was pure heaven.

We called at the bank and what a palaver. The number pads were in reverse order, so Craig couldn't remember his number. He remembers it by shapes but the shape had changed its starting point and oh boy, it did it mess him up. He scratched his head and air punched the number in hope he could remember it. The best bit, I got shouted at for not remembering it...yeah right! Eventually, we got our cash.

On the way back we spotted an escalator in the middle of the street? It was in the most bazaar place, next to some waste land? Then we went by the military Arsenal, and the General Captains building which are still in use, as well as the underwater archaeological museum.

Back in Vin and we decided to move. Sleeping on a dingy street doesn't have the same appeal as an ocean view. Craig has an eye for spotting great wild camping spots and he had his eye on something near the port. We travelled along the coast road

towards the port. At the port, we carried on and through a tunnel. Then OMG look at that! We parked up and gawked at the view. The most beautiful bay with picture perfect waters. We on the headland admiring the view and as we looked around we started spotting castles. Then a fort then a gun turret. Blinkinek this place is littered with ruins that you can't see from the city and nor are they in the guide book. As we walked around we found more and more war bunkers and shelters. They were massive and it just completely fascinated us. Everything was built behind a mound and in the same dirt, so it was well hidden. We were certainly pleased with our find and couldn't believe how lucky we were to be eating steak and chips on a world war sight overlooking a spectacular bay - Cala Cortina.

Our lucky find didn't turn out to be so lucky after all. By 1am our dreams were shattered in more ways than one. Kids playing football, climbing up lamp posts, sniffing poppers and doing hand break turns on a gravel car park. They didn't bother us but their noise kept us awake and so come 1am we moved. We drove to a small piece of land at the side of the bull ring.





CARTAGENA TO LOS NAREJOS

FRIDAY 19 JUNE

We woke to a load of shuffling. I peered out the window and noticed two unsavory characters. I blinked a few times and once my eyes kicked in, I could see we were parked at the side of an entrepreneurial car park. The cars were coming thick and fast, so we jumped up, got dressed and headed off before we got blocked in.

As Craig drove down the motorway I could feel my cheeks wobble. Hitting speeds of 70 kmph when your half asleep is like hitting g-force. My whole face pinned to my headrest...now is not a time to dribble.

We debated the turn off and opted not to go to La Manga. We'd heard it was too built up and not that great, so we opted for Los Alcazares. Driving along the front and it looked quite nice, so we pulled in and stopped just out of town at Los Naregos. There were plenty parking options, so we went for a quiet street just set back from the beach. As we got out of Vin, a Spanish chap pointed at the tree in front of us and blurted out something that ended in insecto. Ahh, insects, Gracias. We looked up but

couldn't see anything then Craig spotted them. They were tiny black beetles and the tree was infested with the little buggers. Oooooeeerrr, I don't fancy any of those bugs dropping on the roof and taking a refuge in Vin. With that we moved to the side street.

To be honest, we are tapped out on beaches. They are lovely and have their place but there is never anything spectacular to see or do at a beach. But, with little sleep and a swift exit this morning meant we just went on auto pilot to the next place. We got out the bikes and went for a cycle.

This section of coast has the most beautiful white sand we have seen this year. It stretches for 7km with calm, shallow waters to paddle your feet. Technically, the waters are more of a lagoon as opposed to sea because there is a thin stretch of land (La Manga) that runs parallel with the coast. A nice promenade and lots of tiny but old fashioned brick seafront villas. Craig quite liked the architecture as it made it different b from every other coastal town but I personally think it looked run down. One street inland and the shops, bars and cafes. It wasn't too developed and looked like it catered more for Spanish holiday makers or as a weekend retreat for the well too do.

At the end of the 7km stretch we carried on in to a national park. Not sure why it was a natural park other than an excuse not to tend the land and leave the weeds to grow wild. After a kilometer, a fence...the airfield. OK, think we should turn around! We noticed a small campsite and wandered in for a toot. It was right on the beach but it was tatty and unloved. For €17 per night you got a concrete pitch and camper

services. Needless to say, it wasn't busy with half a dozen vans at most but we did notice a GB plate tucked in a corner. Poor sods, I bet they booked on the net and travelled all the way to this. I'd be gutted. For sure they didn't pass by and think, ahh what a wonderful camp site, lets stay here.

The rest of the day was spent planning and it all started with this....Craig, I am bored of the beach, lets go and do something more adventurous. Lets take risks.

Take risks! Jesus, I went outside last night armed with a bloody rolling pin to fend off potential pests.

Oh yeah, I forgot about that. What happened?

I thought I heard someone spraying paint, so I got up to send um off.

Did you see anyone?

Nah, but that's not the point and some bloody use you'd be. You were in noddy land.

Well don't change the subject...lets go take a risk. How about China?

China...yeah right

OK, Norway.

Craig rolled a fag and went for a walk. I could see him pacing up and down. Then all of a sudden he started to break dance. What the hell is he doing in the middle of the street? PMSL he'd walked in to the insect tree and the bugs dropped on his head. Best dance he's done all year!



With that Craig went quiet, grabbed his laptop and went and sat on the bog for several hours. I left him to his own devices just glancing over every so often. Yes, he's finally taking me serious on Norway. Remember when I planted the seed a few months ago? Well, the seed is starting to bed in. I could see him looking at potential routes and crossings.

I read up bits and bobs in and around Europe.

By 6pm Craig's arse was numb but 3 hours on a loo, no wonder. But he was quick to show me the route he'd planned from Spain to Norway via Austria, France and a few other countries. It got us talking and by 10pm we were shattered. Did we have a plan, did we heck. Craig still wanted to go to Greece and I wanted to go to Norway. We couldn't be further apart! We called it quits for the day and went to bed dreaming of adventure...where that will be, we have no idea but what a nice problem to have. Where will we head to next?



2

OLAH! & OUR HOT SPOTS & SECRET PLACES



Olah!

OLAH TIME AGAIN.

Not a lot this week, Yeah, I look a dick in Joanne's sun hat but have to do my best to cheer her up. We're missing our little dude. I got my own back with the cover tho'

This week, the "3" internet connection did my head in. It is so slow but yet seems to work fine on certain things. I had another look to find solutions and nothing for it, I wiped the iPad and reinstalled everything. It's made things a little faster but still not great. I fixed a kitchen cupboard as the locking catch snapped. (Joanne didn't close it before we set off moving, she's good at that) I had to nick one off our other cupboards that wasn't heavily laden and glued the bust one for the lighter cupboard.

I bought another bucket as she wanted a smaller one as it was cuter. Top Tip is visit a pound shop before leaving the UK and buy lots of glue, tape, etc. etc. It does come in handy. Get the buckets abroad though. ;-)



OUR TOP 10 DESTINATIONS THIS TRIP



1. SEVILLE

Not just oranges! A fantastic atmosphere in an ancient and charming city.

6. ALVOR

Quaint old Portuguese town with a great beach and good relaxing feel.



2. EL CHORRO

A pathway carved out of a sheer cliff for the King of Spain. Just brilliant

7. MAFRA

This palace doesn't look much from outside but inside, it just breathtaking.



3. SALAMANCA

The pink Spanish city full of old charm and character. Like going back in time

8. EVORA

Lovely, old, cobbled streets steeped in history. The bone chapel is amazing

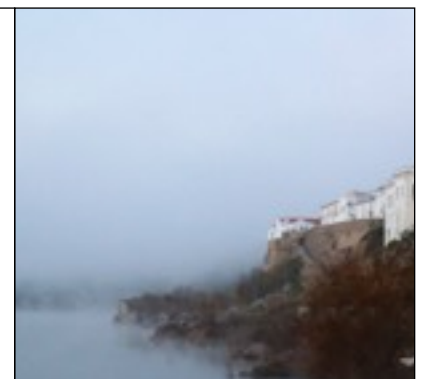


4. EL ROCIO

Enter the wild west in this town where everyone still rides on horseback.

9. MERTOLA

Quaint hill top village with stunning countryside views.



5. BELEM, LISBON

A borough of Portugal's capital, blessed with tradition and monuments.

10. LAGOS

Old fishing port with plenty character and charm



OUR TOP 10 HIDDEN GEMS THIS TRIP



1. PRAIA DO MARINAH

Mini coastal garden right on the headland with stunning views

6. PRAIA DO ALMARGEM

Quaint old Portuguese town with a great beach and feel.



2. PRAIA DO ARRIFES

Perched on the edge of a cliff with stunning views across the coast

7. CAPIEIRA

Small village high in the Andalucia Sierras. Stunning views.



3. CALA CORTINA

Most spectacular bay with crystal clear waters surrounded by WW2 shetters

8. LA HIGUERA

Unspoiled part of the Spanish coast line with lovely beaches and cave formations



4. LA AZOHIA

Authentic and simple fishing village in undeveloped pa

9. PRAIA DO AMADO

A head land with lots of bays, all offering something slightly different.



5. PRAIA DO CARVELHO

Amazing cliff garden with your own beach and rock caves

10. ISLA DE FARO

Very small slitter of land with beach on both side. Relaxing and simple.

