

## Signs of the times

Most road signs that you see in Spain are common throughout Europe so cause we expats no confusion. Roundabout signs even tell us which way to go around them, but I can't be the only one who has got this wrong in both countries!

The word "Stop" is universally used even in those countries where the word does not form part of the native vocabulary. This has been hispanicised to "estoppey" here over the more common "pera" for wait

Roads are given letters indicating their seniority just as in the UK, so an "E" indicates that the same route passes through many European countries such as the E15 which travels through the whole Mediterranean area. "A" is for autovia (motorway), "N" is a National road such as the ubiquitous N332. CV is a regional road in Valencia and MA belongs to Malaga region.

An interesting quirk here is that there are indicators or as we wrinklies might call them, milestones, showing a number such as KM 157. This is the distance from the beginning of the road and frequently forms part of an address in non-urban areas. Mind you with the constant re-routing and re-designation of roads I have never found them very reliable

Other oddballs are the white diamonds with yellow inside often used at road works which indicate that you have priority over vehicles in other carriageways or those trying to enter the road



Unless I am mistaken, when I lived in the UK, blue speed signs showed the minimum speed at which you should travel. Here it is the maximum recommended speed, for example when hurtling around a bend



On multiple lane roads where slow traffic may be encountered you may see this sign which means that to be in this lane you must travel at least at the speed indicated. Where the numbers are enclosed by a red circle, this is the minimum speed limit per lane



This little baby is shown on motorways and indicates a lay-by if you need to stop for a fag or picnic. No definitely not! It is for emergency use only as the hard shoulders are notoriously narrow



Not so many years ago Spain was, and to an extent still is, criss-crossed by trails used to move cattle, sheep and goats around, sometimes over extended distances to market. These trails are called cañadas and their presence is still shown by a red warning triangle showing the famous emblem of Spain's female counterpart- still with horns!



Cats' eyes which dazzle UK drivers using high beam are not common here but are frequently substituted for white reflective poles, often covered with road dirt as they are not self cleaning as cats eyes are

Everyone's favourite subject is roundabouts, so it is worth repeating that not only must we go around them in the right direction but to treat them as if they were a straight road in terms of lane use. Imagine driving down a dual carriageway in the left hand (overtaking) lane and you want to turn right. Now unless you are a posing boy racer or have a death wish you would come over to the right lane before executing your turn. Doesn't it make sense to do the same on a roundabout? If you are in the left lane and wish to exit the roundabout you have to cross the right hand lane to do so. If

another vehicle is there you will cut him up, hit him or go around again. You choose; so always remain in the right hand lane unless overtaking

Enjoy your motoring and remember that although indicators are seldom used by the natives they serve to advise other road users of your intentions, so keep the habit ingrained from driving “back home”

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