

When in Rome

Hola Antonio; this is your good friend Pedro. You asked me to let you know how I found driving in England during my recent holiday there. Well it was different for sure!

I had prepared myself for driving on the left side of the road by practising at home when the roads were quiet, but I just could not get used to the steering wheel being on the wrong side; changing gears with my left hand was a real problem

There is much more traffic in England and parking was a nightmare. One day I found plenty of space either side of a pedestrian crossing so left the car there to do some shopping. When I returned I was greeted by one of those iconic bobbies; you know the ones with the pointed heads. I was amazed that he didn't speak Spanish; the second most widely used language in the world. He gave me a denuncia whilst gesticulating that unlike in Spain a car cannot be parked on a crossing

The next time I parked I managed to shuffle the car into a tight space by bumping the cars front and back as I do at home. Apparently this was a mistake as one of the drivers went loco. The good news was that when I awoke in hospital a translator had been provided free of charge by the British NHS, not that I needed telling that my lip was split and a tooth was hanging out

Such confusion

I was utterly confused by the English. After realising that dodging around pedestrians was not the done thing, I stopped to let them pass and they all waved and smiled like my friends do back home. On the other hand many drivers seemed to be angry as they were constantly flashing their headlights at me when nearing a junction. I just stopped because as you know flashing headlights means that the driver is coming through, but they would stop too, wave their arms around and then drive off whilst giving me the Victory salute; very strange

Motorway madness

Motorways were a revelation too. They are all three lanes unlike our two; mind you the inside lane was always empty except for the odd truck. I made good progress though because as soon as I settled in a metre behind the car in front it moved out of the way. On a clear stretch I managed to get the car up to 120 whereas everyone else seemed to be driving really slowly. Another bobby, this one with a white hat and no pointed head forced me to stop. He seemed sarcastic and patronising. I got the impression that I had been driving too fast as he pointed to the number 70 on the speedometer and shook his head at 120. Why would they want to drive so slowly?

Stopping at motorway services, an advert for the famous fish 'n chips caught my attention. I enjoyed it but whilst paying I tried to indicate that I was only buying mine and not everyone else's; good job I had my credit card handy. The coffee was lousy too

Lighting up

The first time that I pulled off from traffic lights I almost had an accident, so was careful at the next set where I realised that the light doesn't go from red to green but waits for an eternity on amber; what a waste of time. My first roundabout was a challenge too as I was very confused by all of these blinking orange lights on the corner of the cars which are rarely seen in Spain. I carried on round on the nearside lane as you should do only to be greeted by honking horns and invitations to shake a sauce bottle. The same happened on a smaller roundabout when I cut straight across.

What is the matter with the English; why don't they learn to drive properly?

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