

## Bloody drivers!

I have seen this expletive mouthed a few times by expats driving in Spain. Other choice expressions too, but this is a family newspaper! Put aside the lunatics that plague the roads throughout the world, but normal driving behaviour here is shall we say, different

A statement of the bleedin' obvious is that they drive on the wrong side of the road compared to "back home". Some drivers struggle with this, others don't even think about it, but for sure I am not the only one when fresh to the country that has turned left at a T junction to be faced by flashing headlights. A few years ago whilst driving a hire car in the UK I took a roundabout anti-clockwise. The expletives from the passengers would have made a sailor blush

There is no point in moaning about how the natives drive, we are in their country so it is for us to adapt, just as we do with the closure of shops and businesses during the siesta and the fact that civil servants always want that one piece of paper that we didn't take in our suitcase of documents. Outside of the urbanisations they speak a different language too, so how can we help ourselves?

### How to fit in

Well I once worked with a Brit who was leading a client to an appointment. I was in the passenger seat and this merchant didn't indicate, cut across roundabouts and generally made it difficult for the client to keep up. When challenged about this he arrogantly replied that he was driving like a Spaniard and they would have to get used to it. Well OK, but hardly helpful, so how can we assimilate if driving like a Spaniard isn't the only way?

We can start by maintaining the same speed as other road users unless this puts us over the limit, no point in creating frustration. Leaving a sensible space between us and the car in front even when being tailgated will minimise the risk of an accident if the preceding driver does something unexpected like suddenly stop to talk to a mate through the window. Don't stop to allow a driver out, for example at a junction; this concept is so ingrained in us that we do it instinctively but it is so alien in the Spanish culture that it really does confuse them. We Brits are so polite and courteous with a rigid set of social rules that guide our interaction with each other. The Spanish don't have this, it doesn't make them rude, just different

### Roundabouts and indicators

Roundabouts is the number one cause for confusion, aided and abetted by poor or non-existent use of indicators so, to remind you, the inside (right side) lane is always the proper lane to choose irrespective of where you will exit the roundabout; the inner lanes are for overtaking only. All right all right, on some roundabouts there is just no space or time to overtake, so I mean on bigger roundabouts. You should always leave from the inside lane too and not cut across from outer lanes irrespective of what others may do

Using indicators allows other road users to learn your intentions, but we shouldn't rely on how others use them, after we have all forgot to cancel at some time, but we need to develop the habit of looking at where the wheels of the other vehicle is pointing as guide to intention, after all this is what the natives do

Cyclists are a protected species. I have always been a two-wheel fan so have no issue in principle, but they can be frustrating when selfishly riding three a breast so give them space, bite your tongue, only yell at them with the windows down and resist the temptation to deploy your windscreen washers after overtaking, oh alright then if you insist

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