

Urban myths

Some stories become “urban myths” which sometimes but not always contain a grain of truth. For example, many young men arrange to have their stag weekend in Nottingham because legend has it that females outnumber us chaps by at least 3:1. Well this was the case during WW2 when many men went off to war, but was certainly not the case when I was growing up there as a teenager in the 1960’s, but the myth persists and the stags are disappointed.

Some boys and men also become surprised to discover that the anatomy of Oriental women is the same as their Occidental sisters and that what legend has placed in the horizontal is most definitely in the vertical

Where I live in rural Spain, we are surrounded by orange and lemon groves. On arrival here, a fellow Brit advised me with total conviction that we are allowed to pick 100 pieces of fruit per year. Really, who’s counting?

This leads me to consider the amount of information/legend/rubbish that is given by your average “bar room lawyer” as the absolute truth regarding motoring and vehicles in Spain so take a look at some of these myths.

Common misconceptions

There is no minimum or maximum age of vehicles for import purposes. The regulations may vary depending upon a car’s age, but it does not matter how old it is. I have registered vehicles over 50 years old and brand new ones, each vehicle has to be dealt with on its merits

The Spanish will soon be banning right hand drive cars, especially post Brexit. Really? I imagine that the Irish may have something to say about this

The oft repeated tale about homes on wheels is that the door must be on the right hand side i.e. that facing the kerb when normally parked. Now I can’t deny that jumping out of the door when it is on the side of the traffic is potentially suicidal, but this applies wherever the door is, so yes you can have a door on the left side of your motor home or caravan

Right hand drive motorhomes cannot be registered in Spain because the view from the driving position is inadequate. Not true, such vehicles can be imported. What cannot be re-registered are RHD trucks and vans; this may or may not be due to safety concerns, but the line is drawn on the categorization. Registration documents define vehicles for normal use as category M1. Commercial are category N1. I remember this by recalling that N means no.

Mixed category vehicles

Certain vehicles such as the Peugeot Partner or Citroen Berlingo are classified as mixed use, “mixto” in Spanish, as they can serve dual purposes. Both mixtos and commercial vehicles are inspected at the ITV stations twice as often as M1 vehicles. Those of you who are annoyed about this can visit a main dealer and ask if the classification on their vehicle can be changed, if so your ITV card will be amended and the inspection frequency lessened

Driving licences

In order to hold a Spanish driving licence, the driving test must be taken here. Er-no. Linked to this is the myth that there is no need to exchange your UK licence if you spend time in both countries. This is true, but if you are a Spanish resident the licence must be exchanged within two years of gaining residency. The present UK licence is an EU licence so recognised throughout the union. It seems improbable that post Brexit the ability to exchange your UK licence for a Spanish one will disappear, but if you live here it may be worth considering changing it sooner rather than later

One story that is not a myth is that flip-flops cannot be worn whilst driving. This IS true in that you must wear footwear that cannot slip off. Incidentally you cannot drive bare chested either but I imagine that not too many ladies do this

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