



Living in El Puerto de Santa María & Rota

Welcome to El Puerto & Rota

El Puerto de Santa María and Rota are two charming coastal towns in the Bay of Cádiz, both offering a warm, family-friendly lifestyle and easy access to the beach, nature, and culture. These towns are popular with Sage College families who want to live by the sea, enjoy spacious homes, and still be within **15–35 minutes** of the school.

Although they differ in size and style — El Puerto being busier and more urban, Rota more intimate and tranquil — both offer **great food, green spaces, and strong local communities**. With growing international populations, particularly in Rota, and a welcoming atmosphere in both, families can settle in quickly and feel at home.

About El Puerto de Santa María

Often referred to simply as "El Puerto", this town is known for its **sherry bodegas, historic plazas, marina, and seafood restaurants**. It combines the convenience of a small city with the charm of a seaside town.

Key attractions:

- A **walkable historic centre** full of character
- A modern marina, long promenades, and child-friendly beaches
- Excellent **train connections to Jerez and Cádiz**
- A growing expat population and easy access to services

There's a strong focus on **outdoor living** — cycling along the pine-lined coastal paths, joining kids at the skatepark, or dining outdoors while the sun sets. Families are drawn to the **space, affordability, and sense of tradition** that El Puerto offers.



About Rota

Rota is a peaceful and scenic town with an old-world feel and an **increasingly international community**, due to its proximity to the US Naval Base. While quieter than El Puerto, it's popular with families who want a **safe, clean, and friendly place** to raise children.

Highlights include:

- Beautiful, well-kept beaches like **Playa de la Costilla** and **Playa de Punta Candor**
- A **lovely old town** with cobbled streets and outdoor cafés
- A strong English-speaking community, international shops, and services
- Access to **natural parks, bike trails**, and quiet, tree-lined residential areas

Families in Rota love the **small-town feel, friendly neighbours**, and the simplicity of everyday life. It's a place where you know your local baker, kids walk safely to the beach, and social life revolves around **family and community events**.



Popular Neighbourhoods



A note on housing: In both towns, rental prices are generally **more affordable than Cádiz or Chiclana**, with 3-bedroom homes typically ranging from **€700–€2,000/month** depending on location and condition. In summer, some properties convert to holiday rentals, so long-term contracts should be clarified in advance.

In El Puerto de Santa María

- **Valdelagrana** – Popular beachfront area with flats and promenades
- **Vistahermosa** – Upscale villas, golf course, green spaces, and international residents
- **Centro Histórico** – Close to shops, restaurants, and public transport
- **Fuentebravía** – Coastal zone with direct beach access and a relaxed feel



In Rota

- **Town Centre (Casco Antiguo)** – Quaint and walkable, close to the beach and cafés
- **Costa Ballena (shared with Chipiona)** – Modern, quiet urbanisation with pools and golf[1]
- **Aguadulce / El Molino** – Residential areas with space, playgrounds, and a local community
- **Around the Naval Base** – International feel, ideal for English-speaking families

I would mention that it is very quiet and sparsely populated in the winter, and very busy during the summer months.

Shops & Essentials

El Puerto

- **Mercadona Valdelagrana** –  Av. Santa María del Mar
- **Lidl El Puerto** –  Av. de la Libertad
- **Centro Comercial El Paseo** –  Calle Rosa de los Vientos, includes fashion, toys, cinema
- **Plaza de Abastos** – Traditional food market for fresh produce and fish

Rota

- **Mercadona Rota** –  Av. de la Libertad
- **SuperSol & Día** – Central locations for daily groceries
- **Rota Market** –  Calle Castelar. Fresh local fish, fruit, and vegetables
- **Base-related shops** – English-speaking services and imported products

 Sundays are a day of rest and family in both towns — most shops close, and beaches and playgrounds fill up.

Cafés, Restaurants & Local Eats

The food scene in both towns is a major draw, with excellent seafood, local wine, tapas culture, and kid-friendly spots with outdoor seating.



El Puerto

- **Romerijo** – Iconic seafood spot by the marina. Order at the window and eat outside
- **Toro Tapas** – Sherry bodega-turned-restaurant, elegant but family-friendly
- **Bar El Betis** – Great value tapas, always busy with locals
- **Pan y Picos** – Lovely café and bakery with brunch options

Rota

- **Badulaque** – Beachside café with views, ideal for coffee or sunset drinks
- **Bar La Moderna** – Central, authentic, and always buzzing
- **Sedona Bar & Grill** – American-style eatery with English menu and kids' options
- **Café Panadería La Merced** – Family-run bakery and breakfast spot

Don't miss local specialities like **fried chocos (cuttlefish)**, **tuna stews**, and **sherry vinegar-dressed salads**.



Parks, Playgrounds & Kids' Activities



The beaches in El Puerto and Rota are **at the heart of family life** — wide, clean, and ideal for year-round play, exercise, and socialising. Even in winter, families gather here to catch the sunset, ride bikes along the promenade, or grab churros by the sea.

- **Parque Calderón (El Puerto)** – Riverside park with skate area and river views
- **Parque Europa (El Puerto)** – Big playgrounds, basketball, and picnic areas
- **Parque Atlántico (Rota)** – Large shaded playground and fountains
- **Costilla Promenade (Rota)** – Beachfront area great for scooters, cycling, and evening strolls
- **Costa Ballena green zones** – Paths and gardens ideal for biking and games



Other activities include:

- **Surf and sailing schools**, especially in El Puerto and Costa Ballena
- **English and Spanish clubs** for kids
- **Football and dance academies**, many with after-school hours

Parque Infantil Costa Ballena- two playgrounds for all ages, basketball, and beach volleyball. Easy parking next to Hotel Best

Festivals & Local Life

Life in these towns is marked by a strong local identity and a calendar full of celebrations:

- **Carnival (Feb/March)** – Music, fancy dress, and parades
- **Semana Santa** – Religious processions and community gatherings
- **Spring Ferias** – Both towns host traditional fairs with dancing, food, rides, and late nights
- **Summer night markets and beach events** – Craft stalls, concerts, and outdoor movie nights
- **American holidays (in Rota)** – Some international traditions celebrated near the base

Transport & Getting Around

- **Distance to Sage College:** ~25 minutes from El Puerto, ~35 minutes from Rota
- **School bus service** – Check with Sage College for current routes
- **Train station (El Puerto)** – Direct to Jerez, Cádiz, and beyond
- **Buses and cycling paths** – Especially in Rota and Costa Ballena
- **Driving is easiest** – Most families use a car for school runs and shopping

Health, Safety & Emergency Info

Medical Services

- **Centro Médico Los Sauces (El Puerto)**

 Av. de la Constitución, 35 |  956 87 10 00



- **Hospital Santa María del Puerto**

📍 Av. del Mar, s/n | ☎ 956 00 34 00

- **Centro de Salud Rota (Public)**

📍 Calle Inmaculada Concepción | ☎ 956 00 43 00

- **Clinica Dental Doctor Rivero (Rota)**

📍 Calle Mina, 1 | ☎ 956 81 39 12

- **HLA Hospital Jerez (Private)**

📍 Av. Puerta del Sur, Jerez | ☎ 956 35 73 00

🏪 Pharmacies are easily found and show emergency rota schedules in the windows.

Service	Number
All Emergencies (Fire, Ambulance, Police)	112
Guardia Civil Cádiz	956242222
Local Police (Cádiz)	092

💡 Real-Life Tips from Families

- **You get space and sea air** – With less hustle than city living
- **Parking is easier** – Especially in Rota and residential zones
- **Spanish helps, but English is common in Rota** – Especially near the base
- **The beach becomes your second living room** – After-school dips are the norm
- **You feel part of something** – From feria dances to football games, community life thrives here