

# Malaga

Take the  
plunge



Simply Diving ([www.simplydiving.com](http://www.simplydiving.com)) in **MALAGA** is one of many companies offering plucky sightseers the chance to rub scales with local ocean-dwellers in the Costa del Sol, where the corridor between the Mediterranean and Atlantic enriches the fauna and vegetation. "On a regular underwater tour we can expect to see vast schools of boxfish, damselfish and anthias, as well as pipefish, octopus and cuttlefish," explains the firm's dive-operations manager, Simon Bell.

After an initial session in a pool, those wanting to follow in the flippery footsteps of Jacques Cousteau (iconic sea-life explorer) can take to the sea. Despite the creepy sounding conger eels, rays and spider crabs you might meet, the watery world is actually a tranquil and safe retreat. "With its rapid growth in popularity comes an increase in the levels of safety in the sport," Simon explains. "It is widely reported that scuba diving now has even less accidents per-annum than cheerleading!"



Above: Simon and his diving partner Miguel, dressed in their best business suits, get ready for another strenuous day in the office

## Spotlight on a diving devotee:

Simon Bell [far left] has had a passion for scuba diving since he was a teenager, and when working in London became too much, he took the plunge and became an instructor. "I gave it all up and headed to Mexico, and haven't looked back since!" the 34-year-old smiles. Despite having more than 1,600 dives under his belt Simon, now based in Malaga, still gets excited every time he dives. "It's hard to put such a magical experience into words," he says. "In Mexico we regularly swam with giant manta rays, some were 16ft wide, but they were the most gentle creatures you could ever hope to meet." Being a PADI-qualified instructor means Simon has rarely seen any scary moments, though a night-diving session got a little interesting when the weather turned. "We found ourselves in a very nasty current," he recalls. "Luckily we were well-trained enough to surface safely." The 1,599-odd other dives have still been dramatic but for all the right reasons, in fact dives with Simon are a calming, uplifting experience. "My top tip to anyone attempting scuba diving for the first time would be to relax, relax and then relax some more!" he says. "I often tell my students that scuba diving is really just underwater yoga. It's all about slow, deep breathing and taking it nice and easy."

Photography: Alamy, Getty

# Madrid

A giant  
leap!



For the perfect bird's eye view there's only one option: skydiving. And what better place to witness the bustling Spanish capital than from 10,000 feet? With perfect conditions, **MADRID** is a great place to jump, dive and land in, and with a tandem skydive you don't need any experience, just a smidgen of courage to take that leap of faith.

"After some brief but comprehensive ground training you'll be taken to a higher altitude in a plane and strapped to the chest of a fully qualified Tandem Master," explains an instructor at Extreme Sports Cafe ([www.extremesportscafe.com](http://www.extremesportscafe.com)). "The 45-second free fall will change you forever!"

And since the jump is captured on camera, you'll be able to prove to your doubting relatives that you really did it! →

