

Does Alava Have A Problem With Tourism?

24th October 2019

Almost half a million people visited Alava in 2018, and around 30% were from abroad. Could you give them directions in English?

A few months ago, I read an article in the local paper that claimed that, according to figures from 2018, tourism in Alava had **flatlined** and it **quoted** a local politician who was insisting that more public funds needed to be spent on marketing the territory.

I was a little **taken aback** by this claim - tourism had in fact risen by around 1% in 2018.

In total, nearly half a million people had visited Vitoria and Alava (461,329 to be precise) with just under 800,000 overnight stays in hotels and rural accommodation. (The figures didn't include numbers for day-trippers or people staying in Airbnb or other places.)

It didn't seem to me that Alava has a problem with tourism - quite the opposite in fact.

When I came to Gasteiz in 1994, one of my first impressions of the city was that there was no tourism - and I loved it. Vitoria was a 'hidden gem' and, as far as I was concerned, the longer it stayed that way the better. But if we **fast-forward** 25 years and admire the evolution of the city - the bike lanes, the tram, the new neighbourhoods and the proliferation of street art - one thing that stands out for me is the amount of

map-**wielding** tourists you see, particularly in the town centre. Luckily, the city is far from saturated and I can't help feeling **proud** of my adopted home town. Whenever I see someone is lost or unsure, I willingly offer help and advice. When they return home I want them to tell their family and friends how friendly

Vitorianos are.

And as nearly 30% of these visitors are from abroad (that's 138,000 foreigners exploring the province), you can reasonably expect to be stopped and asked directions to a museum, restaurant or public space such as a park or square in English.

So, how would you react if someone **approached** you and asked for directions in English? Could you help them get where they want to go?

In a recent 'Coffee Saturday' event (see details and future

dates on page 2) a couple of ECP students asked us if it was possible to dedicate a future **issue** of the Weekly English Practice to giving (and receiving) directions. Here it is ;-)

Watch the introductory video (click on the link in the WEP email) and practice the dialogues. Then go to page 2, look at the examples and do the activity.

So, don't be shy. The next time you see a tourist who looks lost, give them a helping hand!

 Written by ECP coach Rob Hextall

Before you read the article, find this vocabulary in the text:

- abroad:** a different country
- to flatline:** to stop increasing/to remain static
- to quote:** to repeat someone's statement
- to be taken aback:** to be surprised/shocked
- 'hidden gem':** a wonderful place that hasn't been found/discovered by others
- to fast-forward:** to move rapidly forward
- to wield:** to hold and use (e.g. a weapon/map)
- proud:** deep satisfaction felt as a result of actions, achievements or association
- to approach:** to move nearer to something
- issue:** an edition of a publication



www.englishcoachingprojects.net
info@englishcoachingprojects.net



Let's chat about that!

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

Are there too many/too few/enough tourists in your area?

What are the positive and negative effects of tourism?

Are you a good tourist? Really? In what way?

Do you know how to give directions in English? Why/not?

Describe 2 typical tourist sights in your area (and how to get there)



Don't miss the first edition of

Cinema Nights!

Date: Friday, 25th October

Time: 19:30 to 21:30

Place: ECP Hub, C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15



Dates for your diary!

Coffee Saturdays:

5th Oct ✓
2nd Nov
7th Dec
11th Jan
1st Feb
7th Mar
4th Apr
2nd May
6th Jun

Cinema Nights:

25th Oct
29th Nov
20th Dec
31st Jan
28th Feb
27th Mar
24th Apr
29th May
26th Jun

LIVE!English presents:

COFFEE SATURDAYS!



Come and socialise in English!

First Saturday of every month

Coffee Saturdays!

Next date: Saturday, 2nd November

Time: 11:00 to 12:30

Place: Panadería Bertiz. C/Francia 23

Giving directions

Here are some useful words and phrases to use when giving people directions

Go (straight) down/up the street... Go straight ahead until...

Walk/Go along this/that street for about 200 metres.

Go down/up the steps/escalator and turn right/left at the bottom/top.

Take the first/second/third street on the left/right.

At the traffic lights... At the crossroads... At the roundabout...

Cross the road. Go round the roundabout. Go under the bridge.

You will pass a church/supermarket on your left/right.

(Just) After the pub/shoe shop take a left/right.

It's on your left/right. It's on the corner. It's opposite/in front of the big department store.

After about 100 metres you'll see a big statue, it's just after that.

Oh, you're going the wrong way!

Help the lost tourist visit your town!

1. Look at the examples above
2. Think of your home town and interesting places to visit
3. Describe how to get to these places from your home

Why not use a map, either of your own town or of a different city, and use it to practise asking for and giving directions?