

Dynamic Note #10: October 2023

The promotion of Alicante at international level

The objective of the **dynamic notes of Alicante: Open for Business** is to evaluate and publicize, in a thematic way, the elements available and the **features that define Alicante** and that may be of interest for the location and investment of **companies, entrepreneurs and highly skilled professionals**.

After analyzing the image of the city and the province of Alicante through different indicators of opinion, web search, various reports on the national perception of it, indicators that reflect the interest in it and trendings associated with its brand internally and nationally, now we will analyze its projection and competitiveness from an international perspective when it comes to attracting investment and talent. To do this, we will focus on the analysis of the brand from the tourist point of view, from the point of view of travelers and nomads who decide to make a short or long stay in our lands.

Tourism is the sector that best reflects how competitive is the brand we export abroad, so the perception of the tourist and the opinion of the nomad who decides to stay in our neighborhoods is key to understand what are the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the city in foreign eyes, understanding the reason for their stay or possible future permanent residence. Therefore, this feedback is necessary in order to obtain the closest image to a reliable reality of our city.

Throughout the informative notes and bimonthly reports presented since 2022, different indicators at micro and macroeconomic level have been discussed with the aim of presenting the 'reality' of the province in a measurable way to see in what competitive position Alicante is in when it comes to attracting investment. In order to complete this study, the analysis of this 'reality' will be carried out through indicators of the opinions of these nomads who have visited us or intend to settle in Alicante, to verify that this 'reality' coincides with the 'perception' that is held abroad of the city and our province.

This note will be complemented with the dynamic Note 9 on the promotion and image of Alicante at national level and the bimonthly report 5 on the communication policy of the province of Alicante.

Perception of the digital nomad and the international visitor to Alicante

Alicante is considered one of the favorite destinations for the Expat community worldwide. This is attested by its **high positioning in several pages and forums where these nomads gather and community**, such as expat.com, expatexchange.com, glocals.com, Nomadlist.com or Internations, among others. Within the nomadic and international collective we find that **Alicante has an excellent image to be visited and has a high valuation when considering establishing a residence there in the long term**. In most of the indicators of technological platforms or specialized in this type of

communities that compile information and opinions of interest, Alicante is placed as one of the great destinations.

For example, Alicante is selected in 2020 by Internations, the number one expat community in the world, as **the second best city to live in its annual 'Expatriate City Ranking 2020' reports**, studying different indicators about the city (Table 1). Although it is true that for the 2021 and last year's edition Alicante is no longer in the top 50, its absence is justified for two reasons: firstly, as they comment in the 2021 report, the first pandemic year meant the great global drop in economic activity, affecting the movement of nomads especially towards those tourist cities specialized in sun and beach tourism; secondly, for the year 2022 they focus mainly on the analysis of the main cities of each region and country, so Alicante is displaced in this type of analysis compared to Valencia, for example.

Although the ranking is not up to date, it helps us to evaluate the things for which Alicante was positively evaluated and the things it has been doing well since then, as verified in the different informative notes. For example, it **was placed in an intermediate-high position in the category of quality of life and urban working life, a position maintained for the year 2022 compared to its national and international competitors** in terms of GDPpc, average income, climate or population density, among others. It ranked in the **top 2 in local cost of living, in accommodation and in finance and housing**, while by 2022 it is **one of the cheapest cities in terms of housing rent, hotel stay or Airbnb among the competitors detected**. And in pending subjects with negative note as in cleanliness it has also improved, albeit slightly, as we saw in the September briefing note. Therefore, **the Alicante phenotype** collected by this report **has remained stable and even improved in certain aspects**.

This high valuation of Alicante's image among international travelers **is endorsed by the** main website and technological platform for **digital nomads**, Nomadlist.com. Extracting data from this platform, **the city is in the first quartile of the vast majority of the most relevant indicators of the platform**. Specifically, it continues to be among the top destinations in **terms of nightlife; the most democratic places to visit; the easiest to socialize in; the destination with the greatest potential outside the top 100 most popular; the most valued cities to decide to retire in; of the most valued destinations to live in Europe; with the best working environment and attractiveness for digital workers; of the best environments to create your business; idyllic place to live as a family and as a woman; within the best places to travel again (rising from quartile 2 to 1 this year); and ideal place for long stays**. In addition, it has risen from the third quartile to the second as one of the **most valued places on the page** and has appeared for the first time in the second quartile of **destinations with the most affordable housing prices, Airbnb and Hotels**.

Origin of international interest in the province

In terms of where **online searches related to Alicante are most frequently performed** through Google Trends (Table 3), **Spain itself is the main focus of interest for the city of Alicante**. On the side of international interest, the Nordic countries and the **colder regions of Europe**, such as **Iceland, Norway, Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands** and the **United Kingdom** stand out. It is worth mentioning that online searches show that Alicante as a city hardly raises interest in North America compared to its main European neighbors, however, it does **raise a relatively high interest in Africa**

(Morocco, Algeria), **in Asia-Pacific** (South Korea, Australia) and **in Latin America** (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico). These results extracted from Google data are almost identical for the time period of one year and the last three months of summer 2023.

If we look at the data of foreign tourist demand in the Valencian Community, last year we obtained that **almost 60% of the total of international tourists said they visited Alicante instead of Valencia or Castellón**. Although this year this type of data is not yet updated, we can see that the **trend is still strong**, as **most international tourists arrive via Alicante-Elche Airport** (Table 4, almost 3.5 million tourists in cumulative terms until August 2023 compared to just 1.5 million at Valencia airport or 1.6 million tourists arriving by road). By **nationality** (Table 5), of the **almost 3 million foreign tourists** that Alicante has received in the accumulated 2023 to August, **English tourists** stand out (about 1.1 million from the United Kingdom), those from the **Nordic countries** (about 400,000) and the **French** (about 300,000). Unfortunately, so far this year the Frontur-Egatur data are not as disaggregated as in previous years to be able to analyze the rest of nationalities. However, for 2022 data, for the 5,556,412 foreign tourists arriving to Alicante, 35.1% were from the United Kingdom, 12.9% from France, 7.8% from Belgium, 6.9% from the Netherlands, 5.6% from Sweden, 5.4% from Germany, 5.3% from Norway, 3.6% from Ireland, 3.1% from Poland and 2.8% from Switzerland.

This dominance of Alicante by foreign interest in the past year is also reflected in the figures for the cumulative 2023 in overnight stays (Table 6). While **Valencia has** around **9.6 million** overnight stays in the accumulated 2023 (with an annual variation rate of 13.6%) and **Castellón** reaches just over **2.3 million** for the same period (growth of 70.1%), **Alicante stands out with almost 30 million overnight stays**, almost **tripling the capital of the Autonomous Community** (growth rate of 21%). In addition, it is noteworthy that **most of these overnight stays are in non-market accommodation**, i.e. **second homes** easily associated with English, German and English tourists, which endorses the opinions expressed in previous sections on **the idyllic location of our city for long-term residence or retirement**. In terms of spending, **Alicante also ranks as the destination in the Valencian Community with the highest total tourist spending** (more than 3,525.7 million euros in total), exceeding by more than twice the data obtained by Valencia (about 1,313.1 million) and leaving far behind Castellón (204.8).

International promotion of the province of Alicante

As last year, and going to Google Trends trends associated with the search for Alicante on the web, we find that the **main international queries related to the city** continue to be related to the **Bonfires of Alicante** or San Juan, its varied **gastronomic offer**, with special emphasis on the **restoration near the coast**, on its **main beaches** and the **huge catalog of musical entertainment, festival and concerts** offered by our province and city. **Interest in sports and traditional festivals** in the city continues to grow. The following are some of the examples of international tourism promotion activities carried out by Alicante:

- **Alicante joins the world's largest cruise industry trade association:** the Alicante City&Beach Tourist Board joined CLIA, allowing participation in forums, international events, communication actions and access to sector studies to boost the promotion of its tourism in all participating regions.

- **Alicante inaugurated the twentieth edition of the international film festival** as one of its main strategies to promote its leisure at national and international level.
- **The number of concerts and festivals presented at FITUR, Alicante Loves Music, triples:** the aim is to deseasonalize Alicante's leisure offer by diversifying tourism. The promoters estimate a direct impact of more than 40 million euros produced by the more than 7 festivals hosted by the city this year.
- **Performance of great artists of international stature** (Tom Jones, Alejandro Sanz, Sabina, Pablo Alborán, Bob Dylan) in the Goldest Legends Concerts, a series of twelve performances on the **eve of the Bonfires**.
- **Gastronomic promotion:** participation in the tour of the 1,001 Flavors of the Institute of Tourism (Itrem), international fair Alicante Gastronomic in IFA, among others.
- **Alicante expands its international tourism promotion through specialized markets:** actions will be carried out focused on different international markets such as the British, Norwegian, Czech and Japanese. The initiatives are very diverse and seek to highlight the multi-product offer (language, sports, historical and cultural tourism) of Alicante.

Table 1. Reputation and reputation of Alicante as the best city to live in

Ranking	Position
Global position	2°
Quality of urban life	19°
Security and politics	39°
Health and environment	6°
Leisure and climate	7°
Transportation	46°

Settling in	1°
Local friendliness	6°
Feeling welcome	2°
Friends and socialization	2°
Local language	11°
Urban working life	39°
Work and career	54°
Occupational safety	40°
Work-life balance	29°
Finance and housing	2°
Finance	1°
Housing	3°
Local cost of living	2°

Table 2. Reputation of Alicante among NomadLisT users

Ranking	Quartile
Places with more <i>likes</i>	Q1
Place with the best nightlife	Q1
More democratic places	Q1
Hidden gems outside the top 100 most popular sites	Q1
Place with ease of friendship	Q1
Top Rated Places	Q2
Best place to retire	Q1

Most attractive places for digital workers	Q1
Best place to live in Europe	Q1
Safer place for women	Q1
Best place to live as a family	Q1
Places with the highest rate of return	Q1
Best place for Expats	Q1
Best place to build your business	Q1
Cleaner places	Q1
Best place for long stays	Q1
Places with cheap Airbnbs	Q2
Places with cheap hotels	Q2

Table 3. Location in which the Alicante search was most frequently used

Location	Interest in Alicante last 12 months¹	Interest in Alicante summer months
<i>Spain</i>	100	100
<i>Iceland</i>	20	18
<i>Norway</i>	10	8
<i>Ireland</i>	9	8
<i>Belgium</i>	8	7

¹ The values are calculated on a scale from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the location with the highest frequency of searches as a proportion of the total number of searches performed in that location, while values of 50-0 indicate locations where the popularity of the term is half that of the maximum value.

<i>Sweden</i>	6	6
<i>Netherlands</i>	5	5
<i>United Kingdom</i>	5	5
<i>Algeria</i>	4	5
<i>Switzerland</i>	4	4
<i>Finland</i>	4	3
<i>Denmark</i>	4	3

Tourists by means of transportation, accumulated through August 2023.

	Tourists	% Year-on-year change	Cumulative 2023	% Year-on-year change
<i>Airport</i>	804.201	9,9	5.309.108	18,8
<i>Alicante-Elche Airport</i>	504.288	12,8	3.433.060	21,0
<i>València Airport</i>	228.128	7,4	1.522.539	14,6
<i>Road</i>	430.950	42,9	1.628.550	33,9

Table 5. Accumulated tourists of the main foreign markets and by reason for travel, up to the second quarter of 2023

	2nd quarter 2023	% Variation 2023-22	Cumulative 2023	% Change 2023-22

<i>Total</i>	1.916.110	19,8	2.965.614,5	29,0
<i>United Kingdom</i>	702.432	10	1.054.563	22
<i>Nordic Countries</i>	233.388	-11	383.163	12
<i>France</i>	179.210,1	21,4	279.476,9	23,4

Table 6. Accumulated overnight stays of the main foreign markets, up to the second four-month period of 2023

	2nd quarter 2023	% Variation 2023-22	Cumulative 2023	% Change 2023-22
<i>Total</i>	17.270.477	13	28.922.947	21
<i>In market lodgings</i>	8.367.132	15	13.393.848	18
<i>In second homes, relatives, friends and others</i>	8.903.345	10	15.529.100	23

Table 7. Cumulative spending in the main foreign markets, through the second quarter of 2023

	2nd quarter 2023	% Variation 2023-22	Cumulative 2023	% Change 2023-22
<i>Total (millions)</i>	2.197,2	19,4	3.525,7	27,1
<i>Half a day</i>	127,2	6,1	121,9	5,3

Sources consulted:

- Trivago
- Nomad List
- InterNations
- Frontur
- Egatur
- Turisme GVA
- INE
- Chamber of Commerce