

# Gibraltar



When travelling by road to the British colony of Gibraltar, you can see this geological giant from afar but there are no road signs until the last minute. Seems bizarre, but this is a reminder that Spain still wants the 'Rock'. Gibraltar has been sought after since time immemorial for its strategic position guarding the entrance to the Mediterranean. It is one of the two Pillars of Hercules, split from the other, Jebel Musa in Morocco, that marked the edge of the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans.

This vast limestone ridge, 5km long and up to 1.6km wide, rises to 426m, with sheer cliffs on its northern and eastern sides. Along its lower western reaches clings a town of 30,000 inhabitants who are a mesmerising cultural melange of British, Jewish, Genoese, North African, Portuguese, Spanish, Maltese and Indian. Together these engaging people have created a thriving economy.

Gibraltar offers the visitor a terrific agenda. Get into its natural world and discover its animals, plants and caves, and the sea around them, which is home to dolphins and is visited by other creatures of the deep. Visit the military installations and mull over their old-fashioned names. Seek out the hidden nooks of quaint Gibraltar Town with its red letter boxes and phone booths. A pint at one of its quirky pubs is a fitting finale.

## HIGHLIGHTS

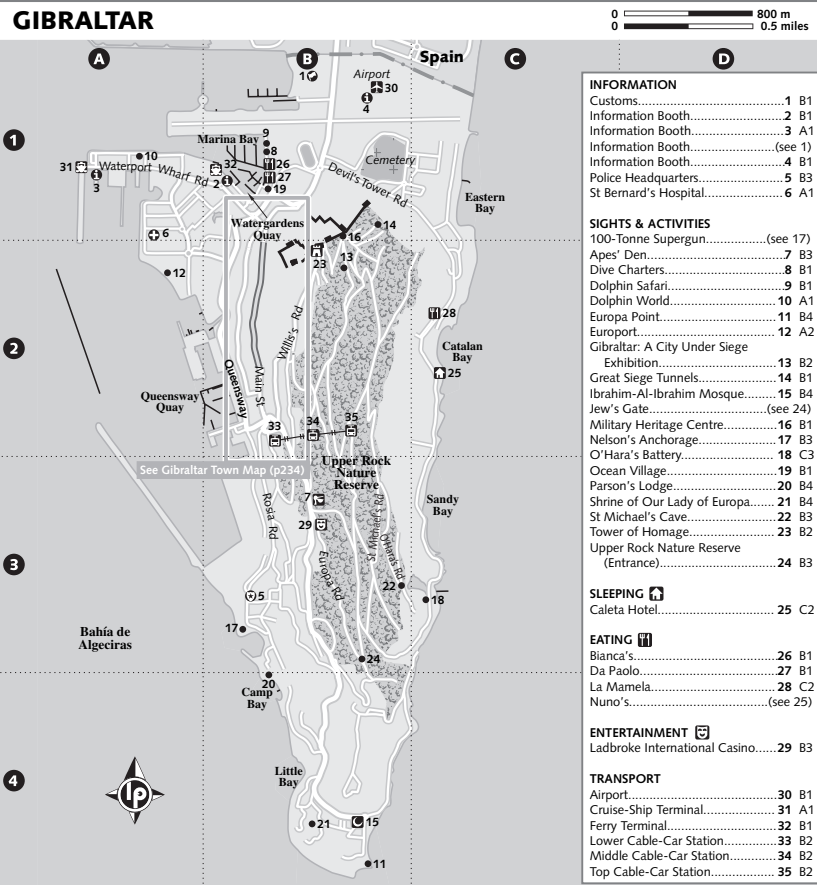
- Enjoy refreshments and a Mediterranean ambience in a quasi-English setting at one of the cafés on Grand Casemates Sq in **Gibraltar Town** (p237)
- Whizz up to the top of the Rock in the **cable car** (p233) for smashing views of the Strait of Gibraltar, Morocco and the Bahía de Algeciras
- Get acquainted with Gibraltar's most unusual inhabitants at the **Apes' Den** (p233)
- Marvel at British ingenuity as you explore one of the best defence systems in the world in the **Upper Rock Nature Reserve** (p233)
- Seek out **dolphins** (p236) and whales in the Bahía de Algeciras
- **Dive** (p236) to the depths and discover the Rock's shipwrecks and fascinating marine life



■ POPULATION: 29,000

■ GIBRALTAR AV DAILY HIGH:  
JAN/AUG 15°C/24°C

■ ALTITUDE RANGE: 0M–426M



## HISTORY

Almost every square metre of Gibraltar can tell a tale as far back as the days of the last Neanderthals, as skulls discovered in 1848 and 1928 testify. The skull discovered in 1848 was that of a female; a find that predated the discovery of a male skull in Germany's Neander Valley by eight years. (The latter discovery inspired the anthropological term 'Neanderthal man', although 'Gibraltar woman' surely had the fairer claim.)

In historic times, Gibraltar's strategic position has made it an irresistible proposition to everyone from the Phoenicians on. Both the Phoenicians and the ancient Greeks left traces here, but Gibraltar really entered the history books in AD 711 when

Tariq ibn Ziyad, the Muslim governor of Tangier, made it the initial bridgehead for the Islamic invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, landing with an army of some 10,000 men. The name Gibraltar is derived from Jebel Tariq (Tariq's Mountain).

The Almohad Muslims founded a town here in 1159 and were usurped by the Castilians in 1462. Then in 1704 an Anglo-Dutch fleet captured Gibraltar during the War of the Spanish Succession. Spain ceded the Rock of Gibraltar to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, but didn't give up military attempts to regain it until the failure of the Great Siege of 1779–83. In the aftermath of the capture of the Rock, most of the resident Spanish population fled and

## GIBRALTAR'S FUTURE

The immediate future looks fairly rosy on the Rock. The economy is thriving, new talks have begun with Britain over modernising the colonial relationship, and relations with Spain continue to improve, though the thorny issue of sovereignty lies unresolved.

Over the last two years, Gibraltar's economy has continued to perform well, with around 8% annual growth in real terms. There are now 16,000 jobs in Gibraltar's economy mainly concerned with shipping, tourism and financial services. It is a real working port with over 9000 ships passing through annually. Investment on the Rock continues apace with a huge luxury, residential and commercial waterfront development on the western side of the Rock, Ocean Village, well under way, and a recently sealed deal with the same company to take over Marina Bay and update and regenerate the whole area. The idea is to create a world-class marina to rival Sotogrande and Puerto Banús (along the coast in Spain), to improve the visual appeal of the Rock, to provide luxury housing and to stimulate economic growth. A new Monaco in the making!

With regards to Old Blighty, discussions are taking place to modernise Gibraltar's constitution so that Gibraltar will remain British but in a noncolonial relationship. On a practical level, Britain's Ministry of Defence has handed over 40% of its land on Gibraltar to the Gibraltar government, thus releasing land for new homes and businesses.

And so to the big issue, relations with Spain. Shortly after the new Socialist government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero came to power in Spain in early 2004, Spain and Britain agreed to put Gibraltar on the back burner for a while. But the August 2004 tricentennial celebrations in Gibraltar upset the apple cart. During the celebrations, Gibraltar was given a 21-gun warship salute by the British HMAS *Grafton*, and both the British defence minister, Geoff Hoon (representative of a government backing the Iraq invasion), and Princess Anne (representative of British royalty and thus the 'occupier') were guests, all seen by the Spanish government as provocative. Things have thankfully moved on since then.

In December 2005, the governments of the UK, Spain and Gibraltar set up a new, trilateral process of dialogue where all decisions or agreements reached must be agreed by all three participants. The three sides have met several times, and real progress has been made. Valuable decisions reached include Spain's removal of restrictions on cruise ships sailing directly between Gibraltar and Spanish ports, and also the removal of the ban on Gibraltar-bound civilian air flights diverting, if at all necessary, to nearby Spanish airports. Further subjects discussed include the possibility of expanded use of Gibraltar's airfield, and a normalisation of telephonic communications between Gibraltar and Spain.

However, tricky topics remain. Britain has strategic military installations on Gibraltar including radar systems and a submarine station. The Ministry of Defence 'owns' and operates Gibraltar airport and more land around the Rock. Spain still wants outright sovereignty of Gibraltar, and Gibraltarians want self-determination and to retain British citizenship. Joint sovereignty, for the moment, doesn't seem to be the way ahead.

Few foresee a change in the status quo. However, the tripartite talks are thrashing out some of the practical problems that have hitherto created huge tensions between the three parties involved.

settled in what is now called the Campo de Gibraltar, the area around the Bahía de Algeciras (or the Bay of Gibraltar), incorporating towns such as San Roque, Algeciras and La Línea de la Concepción.

The British brought in Genoese ship repairers in the 18th century. Subsequently, Britain developed Gibraltar into an important naval base, and during WWII it became a base for allied landings in North Africa. The British garrison

was withdrawn in the early 1990s but the British navy continues to use Gibraltar's facilities. The constant shipping services and the free-port status only strengthened the relationship between the local population and Britain and continues to attract investment today.

In 1969 Francisco Franco closed the Spain-Gibraltar border (infuriated by a referendum in which the Gibraltarians voted by 12,138 to 44 to remain under British sover-

eignty). The result was the complete severing of cross-border relationships and the seemingly irrevocable polarisation of attitudes and sentiments in Gibraltar and Spain. The same year a new constitution committed Britain to respecting Gibraltarians' wishes over sovereignty, and gave Gibraltar domestic self-government and its own parliament, the House of Assembly. In 1985, just prior to Spain joining the EC (now the EU) in 1986, the border was opened after 16 long years, bringing a breath of fresh air to the Rock.

Today, tourism, the port and financial services are the mainstays of Gibraltar's economy. Of Gibraltar's civilian population, about 77% are classed as Gibraltarians, 14% as British and 9% as other nationalities. A substantial percentage of those of other nationalities are Moroccans, many of whom are on short-term work contracts.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

For six years, Gibraltar has been governed by the centre-right Gibraltar Social Democrat Party, led by Peter Caruana. The main opposition is the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party, led by Joe Bossano. Caruana willingly talks with Spain about Gibraltar's future, but fiercely opposes any concessions over sovereignty.

Over the years, when Spain has wanted to exert pressure on Gibraltar, it has employed methods such as extra-thorough customs and immigration procedures, which cause hours-long delays at the border. Spain has proposed a period of joint British-Spanish sovereignty leading to Gibraltar eventually becoming the 18th Spanish region, with greater autonomy than any of the others.

Successive British governments have refused to give way over Gibraltar's sovereignty, but in March 2002 Spain and Britain came to a broad agreement about sharing sovereignty. The agreement was backed by the 15 member states of the EU but Gibraltar was not represented – and the Rock reacted angrily to this European support for a deal over Gibraltar, allegedly set up by Britain's prime minister Tony Blair and his Spanish counterpart José María Aznar, who were great chums at the time.

In response, an estimated 20,000 Gibraltarians took to the streets on 18 March 2002 in a peaceful but passionate demonstration of their commitment to retaining British

nationality. On 7 November 2002, the Gibraltar government held a referendum asking its people whether Britain should share sovereignty with Spain over Gibraltar. Gibraltarians rejected the idea resoundingly. Both Britain and Spain said they would not recognise the referendum, but the British government reiterated its position that it would not relinquish Gibraltar's status against local wishes.

As Gibraltar celebrated 300 years of British rule in 2004 it was obvious that most Gibraltarians no longer viewed Britain as the mother country. Although they still adore British traditions, they also adore their own particular way of life.

## LANGUAGE

Gibraltarians speak English, Spanish and a curiously accented, singsong mix of the two, slipping back and forth from one to the other, often in midsentence. Signs are in English.

## ORIENTATION

To reach Gibraltar by land you must pass through the Spanish frontier town of La Línea de la Concepción (p226). Just south of the border, the road crosses the runway of Gibraltar airport, which stretches east to west across the neck of the peninsula. The town and harbours of Gibraltar lie along the Rock's less-steep western side, facing the Bahía

## VISAS & DOCUMENTS

To enter Gibraltar you need a passport or, for those EU nationalities that possess them, an identity card. Passport holders from Australia, Canada, the EU, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and the USA are among those who do not need visas for Gibraltar. For further information contact Gibraltar's **Immigration Department** (Map p234; ☎ 51725; Joshua Hassan House, Secretary's Lane). There is another office in the **Police Headquarters** (Map p229; ☎ 46411; rgpimm@gibgibtelecom.net; New Mole House, Rosia Rd).

Those who have a UK Multiple Visa (valid for one year or more) are eligible to enter Gibraltar without needing a second visa. For those intending to return or travel to Spain after visiting Gibraltar, a valid Schengen visa is essential to ensure re-entry to Spain.

**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

**New Year's Day** 1 January  
**Commonwealth Day** March (second Monday)  
**Good Friday** 6 April 2007, 21 March 2008  
**Easter Monday** 9 April 2007, 24 March 2008  
**May Day** 1 May  
**Spring Bank Holiday** May (last Monday)  
**Queen's Birthday** June (Monday after the second Saturday)  
**Late Summer Bank Holiday** August (last Monday)  
**Gibraltar National Day** 10 September  
**Christmas Day** 25 December  
**Boxing Day** 26 December

de Algeiras. From Grand Casemates Sq, just inside Grand Casemates Gate, Main St with all the shops runs south for about 1km.

**INFORMATION****Bookshops**

Good places to stock up on English-language reading material include the following:

**Bell Books** (Map p234; ☎ 76707; 11 Bell Lane)

**Gibraltar Bookshop** (Map p234; ☎ 71894; 300 Main St)

**Electricity**

Electric current is the same as in Britain, 220V or 240V, with plugs of three flat pins.

**Emergency**

The police wear British uniforms.

**Emergency** (☎ 199) For the police or an ambulance.

**Police Headquarters** (Map p229; ☎ 72500; Rosia Rd)

In the south of the town at New Mole House.

**Police Station** (Map p234; ☎ 72500; 120 Irish Town)

**Foreign Consulates**

Fourteen countries, mostly European, have consulates in Gibraltar. Tourist offices can provide you with lists of these.

**Internet Access**

**PC Clinic & Computer Centre** (Map p234; ☎ 49991; cnr Convent Pl & Governor's St; per hr £3; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri)

**Internet Resources**

For useful Gibraltar-specific websites try the following:

**www.gibraltar.gi**

**www.gibraltar.gov.uk** Maintained by the government of Gibraltar.

**Medical Services**

**Primary Care Centre** (Map p234; ☎ 72355; ICI Bldg, Grand Casemates Sq)

**St Bernard's Hospital** (Map p229; ☎ 79700; Europort) Offers 24-hour emergency facilities.

**Money**

The currencies in Gibraltar are the Gibraltar pound and the pound sterling, which are interchangeable. You can use euros (except in payphones and post offices) but you'll get a better value if you convert them into pounds. Exchange rates for buying euros are a bit better here than in Spain. You can't use Gibraltar money outside Gibraltar, so it's worth requesting change in British coins and changing any unspent Gibraltar pounds before you leave.

Banks are open between 9am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday. There are several (with ATMs) on Main St. There are also exchange offices, which are usually open longer hours.

**Post**

**Main post office** (Map p234; 104 Main St; ☎ 9am-2.15pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat mid-Sep-mid-Jun)

**Telephone**

To phone Gibraltar from Spain, precede the five-digit local number with the code ☎ 9567; from other countries dial the international access code, then ☎ 350 (Gibraltar's country code) and the local number. It costs €0.11 plus €0.12 per minute to phone Gibraltar from a private line anywhere in Spain. Calls from a phone box cost 50% more. Mobile-phone numbers are all eight-digit numbers beginning with a ☎ 5.

In Gibraltar you can make international as well as local calls from street payphones. To make a call to Spain, just dial the nine-digit number. Calls to Spain from a private line cost 15p per minute from 8am to 8pm, 11p per minute from 8pm to 8am and on weekends and public holidays. Calls to Spain from a phone booth cost 25p per minute.

To make a call to any other country, dial the international access code (☎ 00), followed by the country code, area code and number.

**Tourist Information**

**Gibraltar Tourist Board** (Map p234; ☎ 45000, 74950; www.gibraltar.gov.gi; Duke of Kent House, Cathedral Sq; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Very helpful with plenty of free information sheets and brochures.

**Information booths** airport (Map p229; ☎ 73026;

☎ Mon-Fri, mornings only); coach park (Map p229; ☎ 78198;

Waterport Wharf Rd; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat);

cruise-ship terminal (Map p229; ☎ 47670; ☎ only when a cruise liner is in port); customs (Map p229; ☎ 50762;

Frontier; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat)

**Tourist office** (Map p234; ☎ 74982; Grand Casemates Sq; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun & public holidays)

**SIGHTS**

Most of the interesting things to see are on the upper parts of the Rock or in Gibraltar Town on the Rock's western shore.

**Upper Rock**

Naturally, the most impressive feature of Gibraltar is the Rock itself, a huge pinnacle of limestone, with sheer sides rising some 426m. Most of the upper parts of the Rock are a nature reserve with spectacular views. Tickets for the **Upper Rock Nature Reserve** (adult/child/vehicle £8/4/1.50, pedestrians excl attractions £1; ☎ 9.30am-7pm, last visit 6.45pm) include entry to St Michael's Cave, the Apes' Den, the Great Siege Tunnels, the Military Heritage Centre, the Tower of Homage and the 'Gibraltar: A City Under Siege' exhibition. The upper Rock is home to 600 plant species and is ideal for observing the migrations of birds between Europe and Africa (see the boxed text, p220).

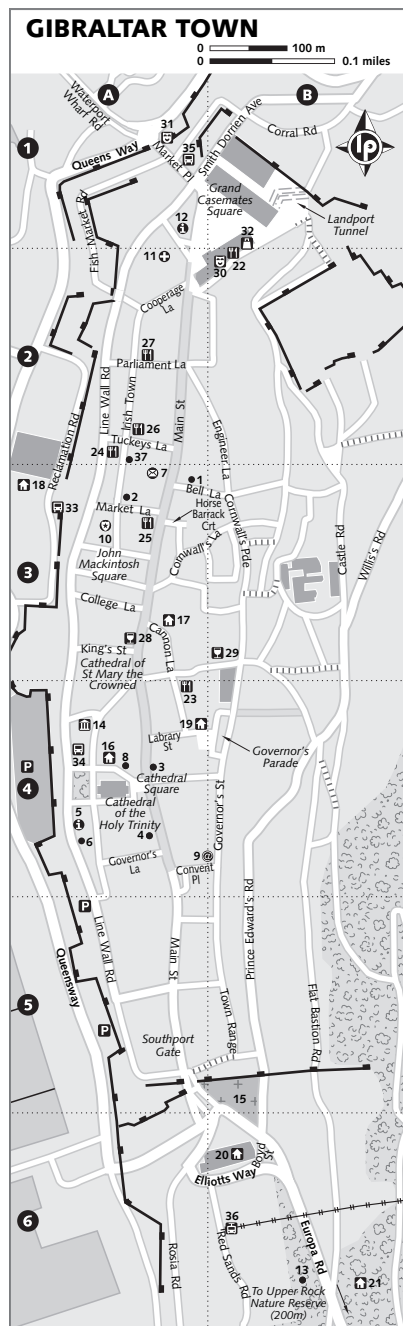
The Rock's most famous inhabitants are the tailless Barbary Macaques, the only free-living primates in Europe. Some of the 240 apes hang around the **Apes' Den** near the middle cable-car station; the others can often be seen at the top cable-car station and the Great Siege Tunnels. Legend has it that when the apes (which may have been introduced from North Africa in the 18th century) disappear from Gibraltar, so will the British. When numbers were at a low ebb during WWII, the British brought in simian reinforcements from Africa. Recently, however, their numbers have been increasing rapidly and a range of control measures from contraceptive implants to 'translocation' to European zoos have been implemented. Summer is the ideal time to see newborn apes, but keep a safe distance to avoid their sharp teeth and

short tempers for which they are well known. For those who are nervous around animals or who are with very small children it may be worth considering a guided tour as the official guides know the moods and habits of the apes. Gibraltar's **Ornithological & Natural History Society** (☎ 72639) is happy to provide details about the apes.

To reach the Apes' Den and the upper Rock take the **cable car** (see p239). At the top station there are breathtaking views over the Bahía de Algeiras and across the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco if the weather is clear. You can also look down the sheer precipices of the Rock's eastern side to the biggest of the old water catchments, which channelled rain into underground reservoirs.

About 15 minutes' walk south down St Michael's Rd from the top cable-car station, O'Hara's Rd leads up to the left to **O'Hara's Battery**, an emplacement of big guns on the Rock's summit. A few minutes further down (or 20 minutes up from the Apes' Den) is the extraordinary **St Michael's Cave** (St Michael's Rd; admission £2; ☎ 9.30am-7pm), a huge natural grotto full of stalagmites and stalactites. In the past, people thought the cave was a possible subterranean link with Africa and, needless to say, its size is impressive. Today, apart from attracting tourists in droves, it's used for concerts, plays and even fashion shows. For a more extensive look at the cave system the **Lower St Michael's Cave Tour** (£5; ☎ Wed after 6pm, Sat after 2.30pm) is a three-hour guided adventure into the lower cave area, which ends at an underground lake. This tour involves scrambling and minor climbing with ropes, so a reasonable degree of physical fitness and appropriate footwear are essential. The cave is in its original state but is fully lit. Children must be over 10 years old. Contact the tourist office (left) to arrange your guide.

About 30 minutes' walk north (downhill) from the top cable-car station is Princess Caroline's Battery, housing the **Military Heritage Centre**. From here one road leads down to the Princess Royal Battery – more gun emplacements – while another leads up to the **Great Siege Tunnels** (or Upper Galleries), a complex defence system hewn out of the Rock by the British during the siege of 1779–83 to provide gun emplacements. They constitute only a tiny proportion of more than 70km of tunnels and galleries in the Rock, most of which are off limits to the public.



However, new Ministry of Defence Tunnel Tours can now take you through the WWII caves (tours £2) where the Allied invasion of North Africa was planned. Contact the tourist office for details.

On Willis' Rd, the way down to the town from Princess Caroline's Battery, you'll find the **'Gibraltar: A City Under Siege' exhibition**, in the first British building on the Rock (originally an ammunition store), and the **Tower of Homage**, the remains of Gibraltar's Islamic castle built in 1333. The tower has been undergoing extensive renovations for a couple of

years and at the time of writing there was no date set for its opening (check with the tourist office for up-to-date information).

## Gibraltar Town

Gibraltar's town centre generates an engaging midmorning Mediterranean buzz, although there is an emphatically British flavour about the shops, pubs and restaurants that line either side of the pedestrianised Main St. A Spanish lilt in the air and the fairly regular sight of Moroccans in traditional dress are reminders that this little slice of Blighty is still part of Mediterranean Europe and was a Muslim stronghold for over seven centuries and a Spanish one for 240 years.

Nowadays, the entire Rock reflects 300 years of British military and bureaucratic administration, literally bristling with the often antique remnants of British fortifications, gates and gun emplacements. The *Guided Tour of Gibraltar* booklet by TJ Finlayson is rewarding if you want to delve into details of the British heritage. It's available from the Gibraltar Museum for £2.

To get acquainted with Gibraltar's cultural melange and volatile history visit the **Gibraltar Museum** (Map p234; ☎ 74289; Bomb House

Lane; adult/child under 12yr £2/1; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) which contains an extensive, if in some cases odd, assortment of historical, architectural and military displays dating back to prehistoric times. Highlights include a well-preserved 14th-century Arab bathhouse and a cast of the 100,000-year-old female skull discovered in Forbes Quarry on the Rock's northern face in 1848 (the original is now in the Natural History Museum in London).

A more poignant lesson in history can be found in the atmospherically overgrown **Trafalgar Cemetery** (Map p234; Prince Edward's Rd; ☎ 9am-7pm), just south of Southport Gate. The graves are those of British sailors who died at Gibraltar after the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). Further south, **Nelson's Anchorage** (Map p229; Rosia Rd; admission £1; ☎ 9.30am-6.15pm Mon-Sat) pinpoints the site where Nelson's body was brought ashore from HMS *Victory* – preserved in a rum barrel, so legend says. A **100-tonne Victorian supergun**, made in Britain in 1870, commemorates the spot. A little further south is **Parson's Lodge** (Map p229; Rosia Rd; adult/child £2/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), a gun battery atop a 40m cliff. Beneath the gun emplacements is a labyrinth of tunnels with former ammunition stores and living quarters.

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## SMUGGLERS' COVE

Once a den of smugglers who supplied the mountain bandits of Ronda with contraband, Gibraltar in the 21st century has continued to receive complaints from the Spanish authorities about the smuggling of physical goods and also about the alleged laundering of illicit funds that end up invested in construction or property in Spain.

Thanks to Gibraltar's VAT-free status, goods such as electronics, chocolates and cigarettes cost less than in Spain, but the much greater availability of electronics and chocolate in Spain in recent years has greatly reduced the demand for smuggled goods. Gibraltar has also dealt tobacco smugglers a major blow by banning from its waters the superfast motor launches used by the smugglers. But to combat smuggling of cigarettes across the land border, customs checks can still be very lengthy and customs police are constantly rotated in an attempt to thwart underhand deals.

Spain continues to complain from time to time – such as during the Ballena Blanca (White Whale) case, which in 2005 brought the arrests of over 40 people allegedly connected with a Marbella-centred network laundering the proceeds of international organised crime – that Gibraltar fails to assist in efforts to combat this kind of thing. The Gibraltar authorities maintain that despite the tax advantages enjoyed by offshore companies registered on the Rock, its financial regulatory system is rigorous enough to prevent money laundering. In 2002 Gibraltar committed itself to make its regulatory system more transparent, and although Gibraltar is recognised as a tax haven, it is not on the list of 'uncooperative' tax havens produced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD). Gibraltar's tax-haven status is in any case due to come to an end by 2010.

History aside, take some time to meander through the **Alameda Botanical Gardens** (Map p234; Europa Rd; admission free; ☞ 8am-sunset), the lushly overgrown scene of Molly Bloom's famously deflowering in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

### Europa Point

The southern tip of Gibraltar is known as **Europa Point**, the location of Gibraltar's first lighthouse, sacked by the infamous corsair (pirate) Barbarossa. It is also the site of the Christian **Shrine of Our Lady of Europe** (Map p229; ☞ 71230; ☞ 10am-1pm & 2-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-1pm & 2-7pm Sat & Sun), whose 15th-century statue of the Virgin and Child was miraculously unscathed during the pirate's devastating attack. Nearby, a symbol of the racial and religious symbiosis of Gibraltar's past and, to some degree its present, is the **Ibrahim-Al-Ibrahim Mosque**, opened in 1997. It was built at the behest of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to cater for all the Moroccans working on the Rock and is said to be the largest mosque in a non-Islamic country.

## ACTIVITIES

### Dolphin Watching

The Bahía de Algeciras has a sizable year-round population of dolphins and visiting dolphins. At least three companies run dolphin-watching trips that are really fun. From about April to September most outfits make two or more daily trips; at other times of the year they make at least one trip daily, depending on the weather and numbers. Most of the boats go from Watergardens Quay or the adjacent Marina Bay, northwest of the town centre. Trips last 1½ to 2½ hours and the cost per adult is around £20. Children go for around half price. You'll be unlucky if you don't get plenty of close-up dolphin contact, and you may even come across whales. Two possibilities for trips are **Dolphin World** (Map p229; ☞ 54481000; www.dolphin-safari.gi; Ferry Terminal, Waterport; adult/child under 12yr £20/10) and **Dolphin Safari** (Map p229; ☞ 71914; Marina Bay; adult/child under 12yr £20/15) – you need to book.

### Diving

Around the Rock there is also some surprisingly good (and reasonably priced) diving. The Rock has its own unique sea life and underwater landscape, with many wrecks.

There are at least three dive companies. **Dive Charters** (Map p229; ☞ 45649; www.divegib.gi; 4 Admiral's Walk, Marina Bay) runs a variety of dives from £30 to £50, plus £10 for equipment, including an exciting night dive.

### Beaches

To escape from the town for a spot of sunbathing take bus 4 from Line Wall Rd (every 15 minutes) to **Catalan Bay**, a tiny fishing village on the eastern side of the Rock. Its early inhabitants were Genoese and reputedly had red hair.

## TOURS

Taxi drivers will take you on a 1½-hour 'Official Rock Tour' of Gibraltar's main sights for £16 per person (minimum four people) plus the cost of admission to the Upper Rock Nature Reserve. Most drivers are knowledgeable. Many travel agents run tours of the same sights for £12.50.

**Bland Travel** (Map p234; ☞ 77012; 81 Irish Town), **Parodytur** (Map p234; ☞ 76070; Cathedral Sq) and **Exchange Travel** (Map p234; ☞ 76151; 241 Main St) offer guided day trips to Tangier for £45 including lunch.

## SLEEPING

**Cannon Hotel** (Map p234; ☞ 51711; www.cannonhotel.gi; 9 Cannon Lane; s/d with shared bathroom incl breakfast £25.50/37.50, d incl breakfast £46) An attractive small hotel with 18 rooms right in the main shopping centre of Gibraltar Town. Rooms are modestly kitted out with pine furnishings and some overlook an appealing patio. A great location within walking distance of all the major sights and good value for money.

**Herald Travel Lettings** (Map p234; ☞ 712350; www.gibraltar.gi/herald; Suite No 1E Ocean Heights; apt £40-75; ☞) Good apartments from studios to two bedroom in a block just a minute or two from Grand Casemates Sq. There are cheaper prices by the week and month; weekly cleaning and use of a communal swimming pool are extra bonuses. Free street parking is plentiful nearby.

**Queen's Hotel** (Map p234; ☞ 74000; www.queens-hotel.gi; 1 Boyd St; s/d incl breakfast £50/65; ☞ ☞) A large, pink, modern monstrosity, Queen's Hotel is not the most attractive sight. However, rooms have recently been spruced up and it does offer good discounts of 20% to students and travellers under the age of 25.

**Bristol Hotel** (Map p234; ☞ 76800; www.gibraltar.gi/bristolhotel; 10 Cathedral Sq; s/d without sea views £49/64, s/d with sea views £62/79; ☞ ☞ ☞) This hotel, with its pretty walled garden and swimming pool, is centrally located. Many of the 60 recently refurbished rooms have lovely sea views. Parking is available but you must request it when booking your room.

**Caleta Hotel** (Map p229; ☞ 76501; www.caletahotel.gi; Sir Herbert Miles Rd; d with/without sea view £140/125; ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) Gibraltar's best four-star hotel in a wonderful location overlooking Catalan Bay (five minutes from town). On the edge of a rocky outcrop the cascading terraces have panoramic sea views, and a host of gym and spa facilities make this a truly posh option. It does special deals.

**Rock Hotel** (Map p234; ☞ 73000; www.rockhotel.gibraltar.com; 3 Europa Rd; d with/without balcony £180/175; ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) Built by the Marquis of Bute in 1932 this institution has hosted the likes of Winston Churchill and Noel Coward. The Rock Hotel was recently modernised and the lavish service includes bathrobes, CD players and free parking.

**O'Callaghan Elliott Hotel** (Map p234; ☞ 70500; www.o-callaghanhotels.com; 2 Governor's Parade; d £230-260, ste £300-600; ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) Located in a leafy square the O'Callaghan Elliott has sumptuous rooms, fittings and furnishings and a range of facilities such as a gym and rooftop pool plus a gorgeous rooftop restaurant. Its new Hollywood-style entrance, balconies and restaurant come courtesy of recent Irish investment.

If you feel daunted by Gibraltar's prices, there are economical options in the Spanish frontier town of La Línea de la Concepción (p226).

## EATING

Most of the many pubs in Gibraltar do typical British pub meals. However, there's plenty more scintillating food to be had around town. Start with the cafés and restaurants on the lower levels of the former barracks surrounding the main square, Grand Casemates.

**Clipper** (Map p234; ☞ 79791; 78B Irish Town; mains £3.50-6, roast £4) One of the best and busiest pubs, all varnished wood with full-on football and a cracking Sunday roast. Vegetarians should go for the tasty Greek salad wrap. Friendly service.

**Figaro** (Map p234; 9 Market Lane; mains £4-8) More commonly referred to as the 'Tea Room', this neat café-cum-restaurant serves up traditional scones, jam and cream and it does some good lunchtime specials too.

**Café Solo** (Map p234; ☞ 44449; Grand Casemates Sq 3; pastas £6-9) With tables inside, and out on the square where there is always a buzz, this is a good place to stop for coffees and a variety of pastas with tantalising fillings and sauces.

**Cannon Bar** (Map p234; ☞ 77288; 27 Cannon Lane; mains £5.50-9.50, fish & chips £5.50) Justifiably famous for some of the best fish and chips in town, and in big portions. It also does steak-and-kidney pie and salads.

**Star Bar** (Map p234; ☞ 75924; 12 Parliament Lane; breakfast £3.50-5, mains £5-11; ☞) 24hr) Gibraltar's oldest bar, if the house advertising is to be believed, the Star Bar is still one of its best having won the Golden Egg Award at least five years in a row. Hearty main dishes include lamb chops, Irish fillet, and hake in a Spanish-style green sauce.

**House of Sacarelo** (Map p234; ☞ 70625; 57 Irish Town; daily specials £7-11.50; ☞) closed Sun; ☞) A chic place in a converted coffee warehouse that has a good range of vegetarian options and some tasty homemade soups. You can linger over afternoon tea (£3.50) between 3pm and 7.30pm. It also hosts regular art exhibitions.

**La Mamela** (Map p229; ☞ 72373; Catalan Bay; mains £5.50-13.50) An excellent and atmospheric fish eatery located right on Catalan Bay at the southern end of the beach. Dust the sand off your feet and sit down to a range of hearty paellas and fish stews. Meat fans can enjoy a peppercorn steak.

**Nuno's** (Map p229; ☞ 76501; Caleta Hotel, Sir Herbert Miles Rd; mains £11-15) A top-class, formal Italian restaurant in the Caleta Hotel with fabulous terrace views. Delicious homemade pastas and risottos, or tender leg of lamb roasted for seven hours, are accompanied by an extensive wine list. Come here for a stylish and romantic evening meal.

At Marina Bay, a little out of the centre, there's a line of pleasant waterside cafés and restaurants including **Bianca's** (Map p229; ☞ 73379; 6-7 Admiral's Walk, Marina Bay; mains £9-12), which has fairly exotic flavours and is a huge local favourite for an early-evening drink. Nearby **Da Paolo** (Map p229; ☞ 76799; Unit B, The Tower, Admiral's Walk; mains £12; ☞) closed

Sun) is slightly more formal and serves international cuisine with flair: choose from the likes of lobster bisque, veg tartlets and seafood crepes.

There are more restaurants on the waterfront at Queensway Quay.

## DRINKING

There are drinking dives, haunts and respectable places all over the lower Rock but here are a couple of special ones.

**Get Joost Smoothie Bar** (Map p234; 240 Main St; €3.50) Australian-run bar serving fresh juice and energising drinks with fantastic fruit and veg combos. All Australians know what a smoothie is and the objective here is to let Europe know too.

**Three Roses Bar** (Map p234; ☎ 51614; 60 Governor's St; ☎ 11am-late) This is Gibraltar's unofficial 'Scottish Embassy', with Scottish drinks a speciality.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Several of Gibraltar's pubs put on live music from pop to rock, jazz to folk. Grand Casemates Sq is really the centre of the action with many of its daytime bistro-cafés becoming bars at night. **Lord Nelson's** (Map p234; ☎ 50009; Grand Casemates Sq 10) kicks on until later than most with live music starting as late as 2am. Just outside the square by the town walls, the **UnderGround** (Map p234; ☎ 40651; 8 West Place of Arms) has two dance floors and an open-air terrace.

Concerts and other performances are staged in the atmospheric venue of **St Michael's Cave** (Map p229; St Michael's Rd); check with the tourist offices for details. The **Ladbroke International Casino** (Map p229; ☎ 76666; 7 Europa Rd) offers casino gaming and slot machines, and also has live entertainment, a disco and restaurant. No membership or passport is needed and smart casual wear is accepted.

## SHOPPING

Gibraltar has lots of British high-street chain stores, and Morrisons supermarket (in the Europort development at the northern end of the main harbour). **Gibraltar Crystal** (Map p234; ☎ 50136; Grand Casemates Sq) produces elegant glassware on its premises and gives free demonstrations. Shops are normally open 9am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday and until 1pm Saturday.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

The border is open 24 hours daily. Give yourself ample time if you are heading out of Gibraltar to catch a bus from La Línea. Vehicles and pedestrians are delayed from crossing the airport runway for a minimum of five minutes when flights are landing or taking off – there are two to three flights a day. You may also be delayed passing through Spanish customs, where bag searches are usually perfunctory, but may be time-consuming.

### Air

At the time of writing, the only flights serving Gibraltar Airport (☎ 73026) were to/from the UK. **GB Airways** (☎ 79300; www.gbairways.com; Gibraltar Airport) flies daily to/from London Gatwick and Heathrow airports. **Monarch Airlines** (☎ 47477; www.flymonarch.com; Gibraltar Airport) flies daily to/from London Luton and Manchester.

### Boat

There is only one ferry (adult one-way/return £23/41, child one-way/return £11.50/20, car one-way/return £46/92, 70 minutes) a week between Gibraltar and Tangier (Morocco) departing Gibraltar at 6pm on Friday. The ferry leaves from the terminal in front of the coach park. In Gibraltar, you can buy tickets for the ferry at **Turner & Co** (Map p234; ☎ 78305; turner@gibnynex.gi; 67 Irish Town). Booking ahead is advised. Ferries to and from Tangier are more frequent from Algeciras (p226).

For information on the Gibraltar–Tangier and Algeciras–Tangier ferries, see www.frs.es.

### Bus

Buses from Spain do not terminate within Gibraltar itself, but the bus station in La Línea de la Concepción (p227) is only a short walk from the border, from where there are frequent buses into Gibraltar's town centre (see Map p234).

## GETTING AROUND

The 1.5km walk from the border to the town centre is entertaining, not least because it crosses the airport runway. A left turn (south) off Corral Rd will take you through the pedestrian-only Landport Tunnel (once the only land entry through

Gibraltar's walls) into Grand Casemates Sq and on to Main St.

All of Gibraltar can be covered on foot and much of it (including the upper Rock) by car or motorcycle, but there are other options worth considering. The late 18th-century 'Mediterranean Steps' that link paths up to O'Hara's Battery, the highest point of the Rock, are closed as they're considered to be dangerous. The route started at Jew's Gate, the entrance to the Upper Rock Nature Reserve.

### Bus

Buses 3, 9 and 10 go from the border into town about every 15 minutes on weekdays, and every 30 minutes on Saturday and Sunday. Bus 9 goes to Market Place (Grand Casemates Gate). It runs between 7am and 9pm Monday to Saturday and from 9am to 9pm on Sunday. Bus 3 goes to Cathedral Sq and the lower cable-car station and then on to Europa Point. It runs between 6.25am and 9pm Monday to Saturday and from 8am to 9pm on Sunday. Bus 10 goes from the border to Europort (with a stop at Morrisons supermarket), then via Queens Way to Reclamation Rd near the town centre. Bus 4 connects Catalan Bay on the Rock's eastern side with the centre and Europort. All buses cost adult/child/senior 60/40/30p per trip.

## Cable Car

An obvious way to explore Gibraltar is via the **cable car** (Map p229; ☎ 77826; Red Sands Rd; adult one-way/return £6.50/8, child one-way/return £4/4.50; ☎ 9.30am–5pm Mon–Sat). Tickets at the prices shown do not include admission to the attractions on the upper Rock (see p233). For the Apes' Den, disembark at the middle station. You can get back on to go up to the top station. The operation of the cable car may be halted during periods of bad weather, especially if wind speeds are very high. The cable car runs every few minutes, with the last cable car going down at 4.45pm.

## Car & Motorcycle

Gibraltar's streets are congested and parking can be difficult. Vehicle queues at the border often make it less time-consuming to park in La Línea, then walk across the border. To take a car into Gibraltar you need an insurance certificate, registration document, nationality plate and a valid driving licence. You do not have to pay any fee: some people driving into Gibraltar have been cheated of a dozen or so euros by con artists claiming you need to pay to take a vehicle across the border. In Gibraltar, driving is on the right, as in Spain. There are car parks on Line Wall Rd and Reclamation Rd (Map p229), and at the Airport Car Park on Winston Churchill Ave; the hourly charge at these car parks is 80p.

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