

# La Tomatina Survival Guide



## What is La Tomatina?

If you're a seasoned traveller, you may have heard of a tiny town in Spain that throws one hell of a party; the famous La Tomatina festival. Packed with full-throttle, tomato pelting action – this is one event that you can really sink your teeth into (literally).

Travellers and locals head to the streets of a small (and virtually unheard of) town called Buñol, just a short hour trip out of Valencia. It's a massive turnout, as 40,000 partygoers step onto a narrow street and prepare to paint the walls red.

## La Tomatina History

Although La Tomatina is quite a recent development, only running for the first time in 1944 / 1945, no one seems to know exactly how the tradition came about.

Rumours of the tradition's origins range from; a practical joke on an extremely untalented musician, a food fight that arose amongst workers of side-street food stalls and local bystanders, and an incident where-by dissatisfied and aggravated locals attacked the city councilmen.

La Tomatina is one wildly good time for anyone daring and adventurous enough to attend.

... and that's enough of the boring history, because you're there to party!

## When is La Tomatina?

The battle begins every year on the last Wednesday of August at 10am with the "palo jabón". The goal is to climb a greased pole with a ham on top.

Once someone is able to drop the ham off the pole, the trucks make their entry and a blast from a water cannon signals the start of the battle.



## Rules of the Festival

There are some council rules for the safety of all La Tomatina participants:

1. The tomatoes must be squashed before throwing to avoid injuries.
2. No other projectiles except tomatoes are permitted.
3. Participants have to give way to the trucks and lorries.
4. The festival doesn't allow ripping off t-shirts.
5. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot is fired, the fight ends and no tomatoes should be thrown.

## Best place to stay at during La Tomatina

It's highly recommended you base yourself out of Valencia during the tomato festival, less than an hour from Buñol with plenty of accommodation options.

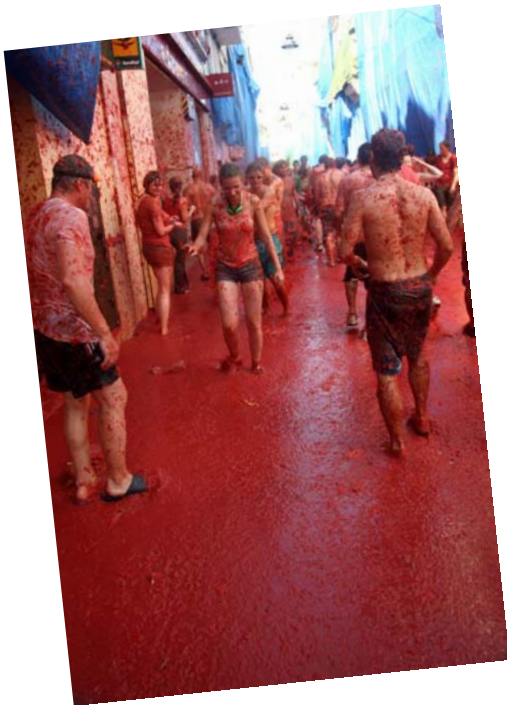
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## Top 10 La Tomatina Survival Tips

1. Arrive in Valencia at least a day before La Tomatina. Buses run all morning to Buñol, and you want to be ready by 7am to be in time to depart.
2. Arrange accommodation early, at least 6 months prior to La Tomatina.
3. Get cash out the day prior to pay for the bus transfer to Buñol. Ideally carry this in a water-proof zip-lock bag in an inner pocket.
4. Wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty (and drenched in tomatoes). If you want to get back on the bus after La Tomatina, you'll also need a spare change of clothes.

They won't let you on covered in tomatoes.

5. Wear old shoes that completely cover your feet. The streets will literally be a river of tomatoes and you won't see what you're stepping on.
6. Unless they're waterproof, leave your camera, mobile phone, electronic gear, expensive sunglasses, watches etc at the Hotel – you'll be soaked from head to toe.



7. Wear goggles to protect your eyes 😊
8. Make sure your travel insurance covers you for any possible injuries you might sustain when you're engaging that large bloke in a one-on-one tomato fight.
9. Remember it's a fun, traditional festival and not an actual competition to be the toughest fighter out there.

You'll nail plenty of people with tomatoes, but expect a good load of return fire. Think of it like paintballing with slightly softer projectiles.

10. Practice your throwing – **La Tomatina is like an hour of intense exercise!**

You'll be absolutely buggered after this, and every muscle will ache.

## Beginner's Spanish

Hello, Hi:	Hola (Suitable in both formal and informal contexts)
Goodbye :	Adiós
Beer:	Cerveza (pronounced: sairr-VAY-za)
A beer please:	Una cerveza, por favor (pronounced: Oo-na thair-veh-tha, por fa-vor)
Where is the nearest pub?:	¿dónde está el bar más cercano?



## Useful La Tomatina Information

Official La Tomatina Website - Accommodation, maps, history and lots of FAQ's

<http://www.tomatina.es/>

Wikipedia La Tomatina Entry – Everything you need to know about La Tomatina in a single page

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomatina>

La Tomatina tours and packages

<http://www.latomatinafestival.com>

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