

**SOME SPANISH DESTINATIONS WANT TOURISTS TO LEAVE.
THESE DEPOPULATED TOWNS ARE INVITING THEM IN**

Spain's beach towns are at a bursting point. Protests have filled streets from Barcelona to Malaga, with residents demanding that tourists go home. But away from the country's crowded coastline, depopulated rural villages are keen to pick up the slack. "For years, Spain has promoted tourism focused on the sun and beaches, but it is the villages and small towns inside Spain that showcase the authenticity of the country," says Francisco Mestre, president of 'Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España'. Modelled on the French association 'Les Plus Beaux Villages de France', the Spanish counterpart has celebrated 116 of Spain's most beautiful villages and towns over the last decade for their architecture, cultural heritage and green spaces.

Among them is Anento, a picturesque village occupying a limestone valley in the province of Zaragoza. In 10 years, it has gone from having just 100 inhabitants and 2,000 visitors a year to welcoming around 45,000 tourists annually. They go for its turquoise natural waters of the Aguallueve spring and its striking Gothic church. To maintain this momentum, two new restaurants, a hotel, agritourism flats and a tourism office have recently been built in the village, while the old football pitch has been converted into a car park for the thousands of visitors who come throughout the year. Here is another example: the story of Libros. Faced with depopulation and decline after its sulphur ore mines closed in 1956, this village located in the eastern part of Teruel now has only 114 inhabitants. Yet, the mayor has a plan to restore the village to its former glory, shifting from mining to becoming famous for its connection to literature.

It is funny though. Despite its name meaning 'books' in Spanish, the village of Libros has no library. This caught the attention of Maribel Medina, a writer from Navarre, who posted a comment on X asking why the village had no such public place. This led to books arriving in Libros from all corners of the world, from Argentina to Germany. Within a year, more than 50,000 had been sent. To house the donated books a hotel-library will be built in the coming months and there are also plans to redevelop the former mining district. Streets in the town have since been named after famous writers, and there is a project to create a literary avenue with lamps bearing quotes from books.

"Already from Medina's tweet, tourists have started to show up in the village," says Mayor Raúl Arana. "We only have two guest houses for tourists, but they are already attracting a lot of interest, so we will soon build a hotel with 20 rooms. We are getting tourists who want peace and an active holiday among the river, mountains and forests."

1. Answer these questions about the text. It is important that you use your own words whenever possible (3 points).

- How has the village of Anento changed in the last decade? (1 point)
- Describe the immediate and long-term effects of Medina's tweet on the Spanish village of Libros? (2 points)

2. Read the statements and decide whether they are true or false. Justify your answer by indicating the line and quoting evidence from the text (1 point, 0.5 each one).

- Depopulated areas share the protests of the Spanish crowded Mediterranean coastline.
- Despite the closure of the mines, Libros has always maintained its prosperity.

3. Find in the text a word or group of words that match the following definitions. (1 point, 0.25 each one).

- Encouraged (Paragraph 1).
- Legacy, patrimony (Paragraph 1).
- Attracting attention, impressive (Paragraph 2).
- Act as a storage, keep (Paragraph 3).

4. Rephrase the following sentences beginning as shown. (1 point, 0.25 each one).

- I have never been as happy as I was during the summers of my childhood in my village.
Never.....
- I'm sure she fell in love with life in the village as soon as she met its people.
She must
- "Where did you grow up?," she asked Mary.
She wanted to know.....
- Governments did not invest resources in the villages, and that is why many people moved to big cities.
If.....

5. Choose ONE of the following topics for your writing, which should be between 150 and 200 words. (4 points)

- Write a "for and against" essay on the advantages and disadvantages of living in a small village.
- You used to spend your summers as a child in the village, and you have great memories. Years later, you've returned and everything has changed. There are hardly any people left. Write an informal email to a friend explaining how you feel and how life used to be.



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