



FACULTAD DE TURISMO Y FINANZAS

GRADO EN TURISMO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN AYAMONTE

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TÍTULO:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN AYAMONTE

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RESUMEN:

This study is based on a specific location in the southwest corner of Spain, with unique qualities for the development of tourism. It's a coastal town called Ayamonte, where the main tourist motivation is sun and sand tourism, although it has other attractions to offer. These complementary attractions are its gastronomy, historical buildings, sports facilities, culture and traditions.

Este estudio está basado en una ubicación específica en la esquina suroeste de España, con cualidades únicas para el desarrollo del turismo. Es un pueblo costero llamado Ayamonte, donde la motivación turística principal es el turismo de sol y playa, aunque tiene otros atractivos que ofrecer. Estos atractivos complementarios son su gastronomía, edificios históricos, instalaciones deportivas, cultura y tradiciones.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Sun & Sand Tourism; Tourist Attractions; Transport; Gastronomy; Impacts

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of tourism in Spain was part of the motivation for doing the study on a destination in this country. During 2017, 81,8 million international tourists visited Spain according to the National Statistics Institution. This is an important amount of visitors, seeing as in 1998 there were 20.2 million. In 2016, tourism represented 11.2% of the Gross National Income, created 2.6 million jobs and was 13% of the total employment in the country (INE, 2019).

As we can observe, tourism in Spain has experienced extreme growth in the last 19 years. This tourism boost in Spain is what awoke the interest to base this study on tourism development in this country. The location of Ayamonte was specifically chosen because of its natural beauty, its unique proximity to Portugal and the man-made tourist attractions it has developed over the years.

This study reveals the evolution of Ayamonte in terms of tourism facilities, tourist arrivals and total population. It also includes the most important tourist attractions to be found in the town, both natural and man-made.

In order to begin this study, it was necessary to determine the history and origin of tourism activity in this town. After completing the research on history and the first steps within the tourism industry, an inventory of the main tourist attractions was undertaken.

Transport is an important part of tourism, seeing as tourists use it to reach the destination, and move around in it. Ayamonte's most unusual passenger transport is the ferry that crosses the Guadiana River over to Portugal. There are many other means of transport, which are described in the study.

Information about the local gastronomy has been added, including its key ingredients, the main industries and some typical dishes. It's interesting because of the combination of products from the land and sea, and the influences it has absorbed from different cultures.

Throughout this study we have discovered the remarkable economic importance of the tourism industry in the town. The main activity is, without doubt, the sun and sand tourism, although different attractions have been added over the years of development to complement it.

The fact that tourism is the main economic motor of the location, leads us to analyse the consequences and effects that this produces. These effects are the so-called impacts that tourism has, which are socio-cultural, environmental and economic.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to put together a detailed description of tourism in Ayamonte. In order to do so, it was necessary to set a series of objectives:

- a) Research Ayamonte's history.
- b) Make an inventory of natural and man-made tourist attractions.
- c) Analyse means of transport
- d) Look into the characteristics of the local gastronomy.
- e) Analyse the main socio-cultural, environmental and economic impacts of tourism on the location.

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION USED

To complete this study on tourism in Ayamonte, various methods have been used for collecting data. Newspaper articles have been the main source of information, along with Isla Canela S.A.'s official web page to complete the historical framework of the town.

The information regarding the tourist attractions was gathered from various sources.

The material used for the segment on natural resources was collected from Isla Canela S.A.'s official website, climate-data.org, Google maps and newspaper articles. Specialist books on tourism have been used to complement the information.

The basic information used to draft the section on manmade attractions was extracted mainly from the company's own webpages such as the Sports Board, Isla Canela Golf Course and Costa Esuri Golf Course.

The transport section was elaborated combining information from different transport companies, from the local bus station, and the local Tourist Office.

Data from the Ayamonte website was used throughout the whole project, as it contains cultural, economical, statistical, social and environmental information about the town.

The local tourist office has been contacted via email during the whole process of the study. They have supplied a very useful "Guide to Ayamonte" and other information regarding some of the tourist attractions.

The local Sports Board was also contacted in order to obtain information about one of the football stadiums.

Information about the local gastronomy was found in a specialized book on Andalusia's gastronomy and complemented with the Ayamonte town hall's web page. An important part of the local gastronomy is the canning industry. The different factories in the town have been described, using information from a book based on Ayamonte's history and heritage from the local library.

Finding information about the first tourism installations in Ayamonte has been a hard task, as most of the information isn't readily available, and most of it isn't even registered. In order to obtain some in depth information, an interesting interview took place on the 19th May 2019 with a member of the family who founded one of the first hostels in Ayamonte. Data was gathered regarding tourist accommodation between the 1950's and 1970's.

Finally, the director of the golf course supplied detailed information about the annual number of visitors to complete our research on golf activity in Ayamonte. An interview on May 24th 2019 with the director of Hotel Golf Isla Canela added the necessary information to complete the study.

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORY OF TOURISM IN AYAMONTE

2.1 THE ORIGIN OF THE TOWN

Ayamonte is a town located in the South West corner of Spain in the province of Huelva, Andalusia. It's at the mouth of the Guadiana River, right on the border of Portugal. It has a total extension of 141,57 km².

There are three possible origins of its name:

- The Iberians could have settled in the high area of the town, named it Aya, and dominated the rest of the territory reaching the mouth of the river until the Tartessos arrived and called it Aya Montis.
- There is also the possibility that the Punic Greeks settled in the area, because of the location of the town. This culture could have lead to the word 'Anapote' or 'Anapotanema', which means fortress over the river.
- A group of Arabs named Ayud or Ayad, could have also given the town the name it has today.

The only certain information about the name of the town, is the roman designation of 'Ostium Fluminis Anae' (opening of the river Ana).

The date of the town's first population hasn't been discovered, but there have been findings of archaeological remains, such as arrowheads and utensils, which are exhibited at the archaeological museum of Huelva. Also, in the urban area, a Phoenician necropolis has been discovered, from the VIII century B.C.

Around 1239, King Sancho II of Portugal conquered the land until in 1335, it fell into the hands of Alfonso XI of Castilla. It's not until 1521 that the Marquisate of Ayamonte was created.

During the XVI and XVII centuries, it became one of the most important urban areas of the whole coast of Huelva. During the XIX century, the shortage of agricultural and livestock products forced the locals to develop fishing as the strongest economic activity (Información Turística Ayamonte, 2019).

Figure 2.1. shows Ayamonte's population distribution and location on the map.

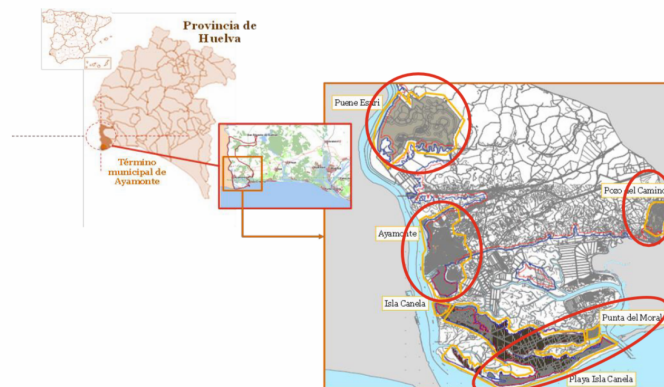


Fig. 2.1. Population Centres in Ayamonte

Source: Ayamonte Town Hall's Sustainable Development Integrated Strategy

Ayamonte's population is very dispersed. It's distributed over 6 centres, which are Ayamonte, Pozo del Camino, Punta del Moral, Puente Esuri, Isla Canela beach and Isla Canela. In figure 2.1 we can observe the exact location of Ayamonte and its population centres on the map. The total population in 2018 was 20.833 (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte, 2019)

Figure 2.2. shows a graph with the total population fluctuations from 1996 to 2018, and the quantity of men and women in that same period of time.

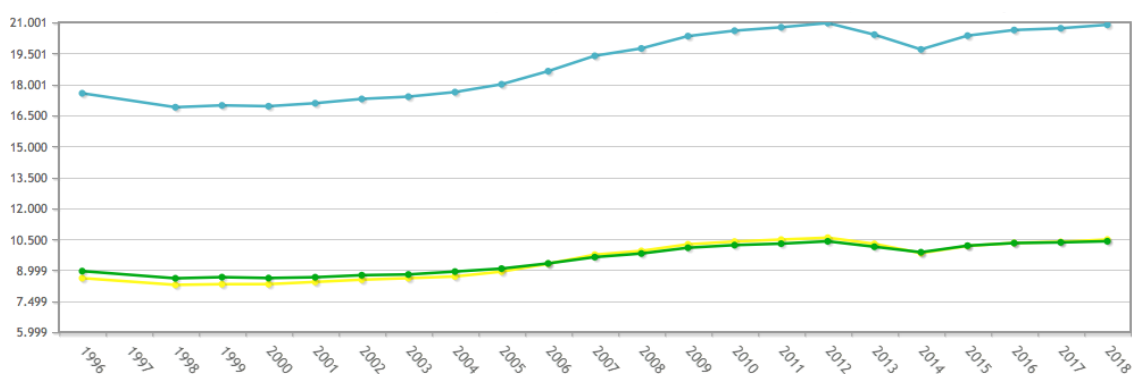


Fig. 2.2. Ayamonte's Total Population

Source: Own elaboration using data from the National Statistics Institution

The blue line on the graph indicates the total population, the yellow line represents the total of men, and the green is the total number of women. As we can observe, the population has increased since the first year the data was collected, although between 2012 and 2014 it experienced a fairly strong decrease. The total number of men was slightly lower than the women for the first 10 years, and after that, it has remained almost equal.

It's also worth mentioning, that in 2018, Ayamonte had 2.676 foreign residents, and 31.02% of them were Portuguese (Junta de Andalucía, 2019).

2.2 TOURISM IN AYAMONTE

The earliest data collected was obtained from an interview with a member of the founding family of one of the first hostels in Ayamonte. According to this information, during the 1950's, there were houses called 'Fondas', rented out rooms. The two houses that we have knowledge of are: 'La Fonda Colombina' on Juan de Zamora road, and 'La Fonda de Ramona' on Huelva road, which belonged to the interviewee's grandmother. This was the only official type of tourist accommodation at that time.

The first hostel in the location was created in 1965, called 'El Hostal del Pan' and belonged to the interviewee's father. It was a building with a bread shop on the ground floor and a hostel above it. There were rooms with a small private bathroom, which included a shower. Some of the rooms didn't have their own bathroom, so three or four rooms shared one. This hostel was open until 1970.

One year after the 'Hostal del Pan' was founded, Ayamonte opened the doors of the Parador. It's an hotel built on the remains of a Castle in the highest part of the town with a beautiful view of the Guadiana River (Paradores Hoteles y Restaurantes 1928, 2019).

This hotel belongs to the chain 'Paradores de Turismo de España S.A.'. The company celebrated 90 years since its formation in 2019. Its main purpose is to promote the best image of Spain, protect its historic and cultural heritage, develop local economy and

protect the environment. The company currently owns 97 establishments all over the country (Paradores Hoteles y Restaurantes 1928, 2019).

During the early 1960's, Isla Canela, the coast of Ayamonte, was declared a National Centre of Tourist Interest thanks to the Ayamonte Municipal Residential Development Company (CUMASA) (Isla Canela S.A, 2019).



Fig. 2.3. Isla Canela’s First National Centre of Tourist Interest Poster. 1964

Source: Isla Canela S.A. official web page.

Ayamonte and Isla Canela continued to grow, until in the 1980's, Isla Canela S.A was formed and built the first residential complex. It was also in this period of time that the Portuguese and Spanish government decided to build a bridge that would join the two towns of Ayamonte and Vila Real de Santo Antonio to have easier access from one country to the other. Around 1.500.000 people a year crossed the border using a ferry that connected Ayamonte and Vila Real de Santo Antonio. The fact that the only means of transport to get from one country to the other was using this ferry which caused congestion and hours of waiting for people using it, was the reason for the bridge to be designed (González, A., 1981).

In the early 90's, Isla Canela S.A completed the first hotel the Hotel Barceló Isla Canela and also the first golf club, Isla Canela Club de Golf. The 666 metre long international bridge joining Spain and Portugal was opened on the 22nd August 1991. It was also in the early 90's that the first Tourist Office in Ayamonte was created (1994) (Andalucía, 2019.) (Guardiola,N, 1991).



Fig. 4.1. International bridge

Source: : huelvabuenasnoticias.com (2018)

Another event worth mentioning is the extension of the A 49 motorway from Seville, capital of Andalusia, to Portugal in 2001. This makes connections from Ayamonte to Portugal and the interior of Spain easier (Landeró, J., 2017).

All of these events show how Ayamonte has developed over the years. It has grown in tourist accommodation both in the town and on the coast, created tourism activity and improved its transport services.

In terms of tourist accommodation, the infrastructures currently offered to tourists are: a total of 3.380 hotel beds distributed between 10 hotels, 5 hostels that sum a total of 170 beds; and 234 tourist apartments with different capacities including Isla Canela Golf Club and the coastal area. There are 2 golf courses, Isla Canela Golf and Costa Esuri Golf Club, both with 18 holes (Junta de Andalucía, 2019) (Información Turística Ayamonte, 2019).

CHAPTER 3: TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN AYAMONTE

“A tourist attraction is a focus for recreational and, in part, educational activity undertaken by both day and stay visitors that is frequently shared with the domestic resident population. Every region and every town boasts at least one attraction, adding to its appeal as a destination”. (Fletcher,J., Fyall,A., Gilbert,D., Wanhill,S., 2013).

This chapter analyzes the different tourist attractions Ayamonte has to offer. They have been divided into natural and man-made attractions.

3.1 NATURAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN AYAMONTE

“Natural attractions include the quality and resources of the landscape, the characteristics of climate in the area, vegetation, forests and also wildlife. These elements could be potential attractions for tourists to visit a destination depending on their quality and management.” (Fletcher,J., et al., 2013).

The three natural elements that make the town unique and attract tourists are the coastline of Ayamonte, the climate’s characteristics and finally its location on the map.

3.1.1 The Coast of Ayamonte.

The coast of Ayamonte, Isla Canela, consists of 7 km of white sandy beaches in the western corner of the Costa de la Luz: literally ‘Coast of Light’. To the South we have the Atlantic Ocean, to the West, the mouth of the River Guadiana, to the East, Carreras, a coastal inlet and to the North, an area of marshland named “Las Marismas de Isla Cristina”. The marshland is a beautiful landscape made up of swamps, channels and inlets (El Periódico Extremadura, 2019).

As the Guadiana River flows into the Atlantic Ocean close to Isla Canela, the water has a pleasant temperature. The beaches are very wide, have access for the disabled and civil protection (Huelva Buenas Noticias, 2017).



Fig. 3.1. Image of Isla Canela Beach

Source: : Ayamonte Tourism Office web page. Photographer: Toño Méndez.

In 1964, Isla Canela was declared a National Centre of Tourist Interest, and still holds the status today. Isla Canela S.A purchased the lands in 1985, and to this day, has built over 4.000 apartments and 5 hotels (Isla Canela S.A., 2019).

Isla Canela is not only a coast with exceptional natural characteristics, but it also has many facilities for tourists to enjoy. You can find a marina, with 231 berths, a boathouse area, a fuelling station, a shopping centre, an 18-hole golf course, 7 beach bars and many restaurants.

Isla Canela was awarded the Blue Flag in 2018. The European Environment Education Foundation grants this award every year to the coastlines that meet all the requirements. It bases its criteria on the quality of the water, the environmental education and management, security, services and installations. The beaches of Isla Canela hadn't achieved this award for 2 decades (Huelva Hoy, 2018).

It's also worth mentioning Punta del Moral, a small neighbourhood of Isla Canela with a total population of 1200. Their main economic activity is the fishery sector, mainly using trawlers, although the coastal area is focused on tourism activity.

In Punta del Moral we can observe two areas with different characteristics. On one hand, the coastal area with its modern tourism installations. On the other hand, the inner neighbourhood, which is a traditional fishing village that has stranded boats by the Carreras River.

An important element in Punta del Moral is the 'Mojarra' estuary. In the XIX century and beginning of the XX century, locals from Ayamonte gathered shellfish when thunderstorms rendered fishing in the sea impossible (Moreno Flores, M.A. 2004).

3.1.2 Climate Characteristics

The yearly average temperature of Ayamonte is 17.5 °C, and the precipitation is approximately 482 mm.

The Ayamonte climate table (figure 3.2), gathers detailed monthly information about the town's climate. The top row represents the months of the year, and the left column depicts the average, minimum and maximum temperatures and the average precipitation (Datos Climáticos Mundiales, 2019).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Average Temperature (°C)	11.3	12.2	13.8	15.7	19	21.4	24	24.5	22.5	18.9	14.8	12.1
Min. Temperature (°C)	7.6	8.5	9.8	11.2	14.8	16.6	18.9	19.4	17.8	14.5	10.7	8.4
Max. Temperature (°C)	15	16	17.9	20.2	23.3	26.3	29.2	29.6	27.3	23.4	19	15.8
Precipitation	71	55	53	38	26	12	1	1	18	59	73	75

Fig. 3.2. Ayamonte's Climate Table

Source: Own elaboration using data from es.climate-data.org

By observing this climate table, we can see that the hottest months of the year are July and August, with average temperatures over 24°C, and maximum temperatures over 29°C. The lowest temperatures of the year are from December to February, with average temperatures between 11.3°C and 12.2°C. For a clearer comparison of the average monthly temperatures over the year, we have inserted a graph below.

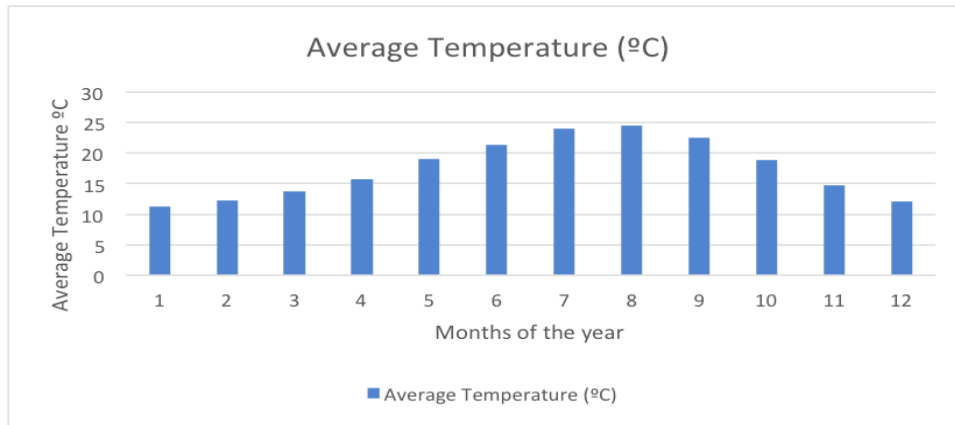


Fig. 3.3. Ayamonte's Average Temperature Graph

Source: Own elaboration using data from *es.climate-data.org*

This graph represents the months of the year on the horizontal axis, and the temperature in degrees Celsius on the vertical axis. As we can observe, the fluctuations are very smooth and the location presents mild temperatures throughout the whole year, influenced by the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean.

With regards to the rainfall, the month with the highest level of precipitation is December with an average of 75 mm, followed by January with 71 mm. It's in the months of July and August when the town is almost completely dry with an average precipitation of 1mm. In figure 3.4., we can observe the rainfall levels of Ayamonte over the year.

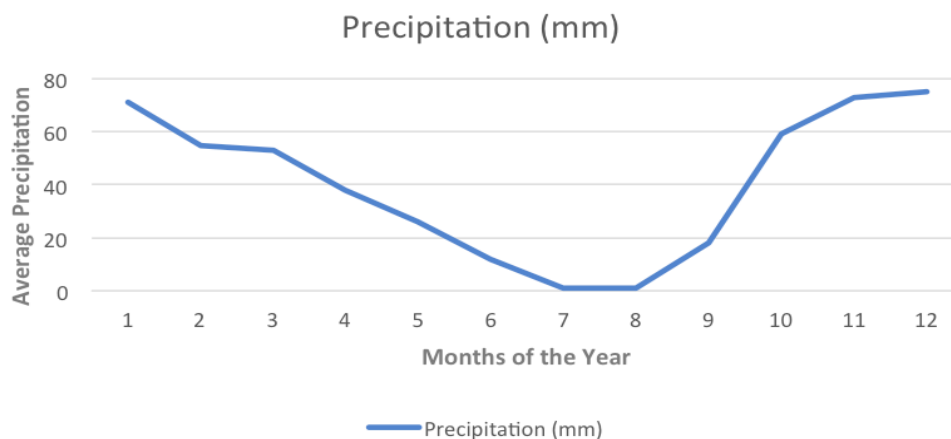


Fig. 3.4. Ayamonte's Average Precipitation Graph

Source: Own elaboration using data from *es.climate-data.org*

The precipitation graph shows the rainfall levels in millimetres in each month of the year. As we can see, there are very extreme variations between one month and another.

In general terms, this location has mild temperatures all year round, due to the influence of the Atlantic Ocean, and very low rainfall levels, although they rise slightly during the winter.

To sum up the information analysed, it can be said that the warm temperatures and low rainfall in summer, together with the wide sandy beaches, make Ayamonte an ideal Sun and Sand destination.

3.1.3 Location

Ayamonte is a coastal town located in the South West corner of Spain, in the province of Huelva, which is one of the 8 provinces of Andalusia. It's separated from the neighbouring Portuguese town called Vila Real de Santo Antonio by the Guadiana River. To the South is the Atlantic Ocean, where the coastline is formed.



Fig. 3.5. Ayamonte's Location on the map

Source: Google Maps

3.2 MAN-MADE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN AYAMONTE

Man-made attractions are products and services offered to tourists, created to add appeal to a tourist destination. Ayamonte is mainly a Sun & Sand tourism destination, but to complement it, many man-made attractions have been developed over the years. In this chapter, the main and most important attractions that it has to offer its visitors are highlighted and analysed.

3.2.1 Sports Facilities

Sun & Sand tourism is a very popular tourist attraction. To relax on a beach is a strong motive to travel for many people. However, nowadays tourists have become more demanding, wanting lower prices and a higher quantity and quality of products and services. This has forced Sun & Sand destinations to come up with and add complementary activities and attractions for tourists to enjoy.

Ayamonte, over the years, has developed different services for tourists both in the town centre and on the coastline. This section of the study focuses on the attractions for tourists who like to stay active on their holidays.

- Golf

Golf courses in destinations with a nice climate are a good way to fight seasonality, as it can be played at any time of the year. Isla Canela S.A opened Ayamonte's first golf course in 1993 with 9 holes and it grew to reach 18 holes 3 years later. It's situated on the edge of a marshland, which creates natural obstacles around the course (Isla Canela Golf, 2019).

In 2006 Costa Esuri Golf Club was founded, also with 18 holes. It's situated in the residential area called Costa Esuri on the outskirts of the town close to the A49

motorway and has outstanding views of the Guadiana River and Portugal (Turismo Huelva, 2019).

Figure 3.6. was elaborated to analyze the development of golf activity in Isla Canela using data obtained from the director of the golf club. The table shows the number of golfers who have attended the course annually from 2006 to 2018. The fluctuations in the number of golfers are due to different causes, which have been clarified in an interview with the director of the Isla Canela Golf Hotel.

Years	Number of Golfers
2006	28.000
2007	25.000
2008	23.500
2009	20.050
2010	19.900
2011	20.150
2012	21.000
2013	21.500
2014	22.500
2015	24.000
2016	26.000
2017	27.000
2018	29.000

Fig. 3.6. Annual golfers in Isla Canela Golf

Source: Own elaboration using data collected from the Director of Isla Canela Golf Course.

Figure 3.7. depicts the information from the table above in graphical format. It shows the fluctuation in the total number of golfers at the course over the years. These results were the main reason for conducting an interview with the director of the Isla Canela Golf Hotel. He explained the reason for the variations from one year to another, and also supplied valuable information regarding the golf accommodation offered and the golfers that use the facilities.

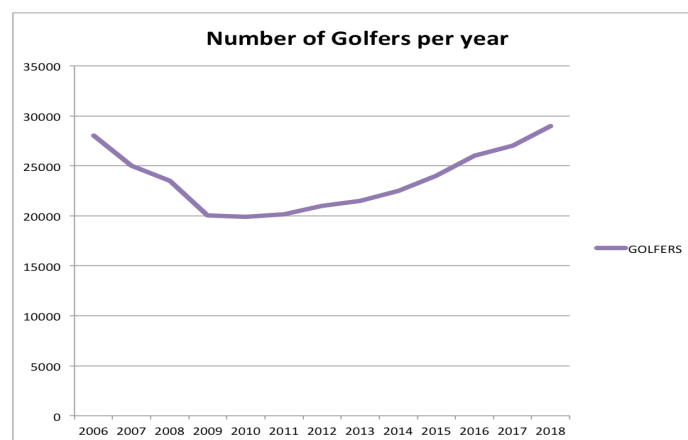


Fig. 3.7. Annual golfers in Isla Canela Golf Graph

Source: Own elaboration using data collected from the Director of the Isla Canela Golf Course

As the director of the hotel described, there has been a continuous decrease in the number of players between 2006 and 2009. This was due to an economic crisis around 2009 and also terrorist attacks taking place in some of the countries, that players originate from.

After this strong decrease, during the years of 2011 and 2012, the golf club experienced a gradual rise of the number of golfers. The fact that it was growing slowly was due to the fact that the hotel remained closed during these two years. With the opening of the hotel in 2013, making accommodation available, activity in the golf club began to increase with more intensity. Isla Canela Golf Hotel has 58 rooms and also offers 81 apartments.

There are 3 key factors that attract tourists to this golf course in particular. First of all, the good weather conditions all year round. Secondly, it is well maintained assuring the good quality of the course, which is also fundamental. And finally, the accommodation service gives the golf tourists a place to stay. Isla Canela Golf Hotel is crucial for Ayamonte, as for many years it has been the only 4 star hotel to open all year round. In 2018, the hotel Melia Atlántico opened until the end of November because they offered golf packages for Isla Canela Golf to their guests.

The golf course's clients don't necessarily stay at the hotel. Some of them book a package including hotel or apartment accommodation and golf, but others are people with second residences in the town or they choose to stay in another hotel. There is an option for those who wish to play frequently to pay an annual subscription as opposed to paying for individual sessions.

Isla Canela Golf's main clients are tourists. This brings golfers from different parts of the world. Danish is the most common nationality, followed by Swedish, French, Dutch, British, Finnish and German.

Over the course of a year, there are high and low seasons, and also periods of time that attract players of a different type and age.

Between mid September and mid May, the majority of the players are golf tourists that come from locations with bad weather at this time of year. Around 80% of these players are over 65 and travel specifically to play golf. In other words, golf is the main tourist attraction for these travellers.

From November to March, the Isla Canela Golf Hotel is the only hotel open in the area. It is for this reason that during these months the hotel receives tourists who visit Ayamonte and need a place to stay. These tourists don't necessarily play golf, but might do occasionally.

The high season in Ayamonte starts in July with the beginning of the school holidays, and ends mid September. The Isla Canela Golf Hotel mainly receives families who don't usually play golf. It's during these months when the golf course receives more players that either stay in other hotels or that own second residences.

- Water Sports

Water sports are also very popular in Ayamonte. There are 3 kitesurfing schools: Poniente Kite Isla Canela, Isla Canela Kitesurf Paradise and Kite Addiction. There are also two sailing schools: Kanela Sailing School offering dinghy sailing from the beach and Faro Sailing School offering Royal Yachting Association accredited cruising courses mainly to English tourists.

Tourists and locals can enjoy sports such as paddle surf, surf, kite surf, kayaking, and sailing. The schools offer courses from basic to advanced levels, or also rental of equipment to practice on your own. An interesting activity to do is an organised tour on kayaks or paddleboards around the marshes that surround Isla Canela.

Since 2017, the first round of the Spain Kiteboarding league is held in Isla Canela. The event includes the competition for the high level riders and also some initiation courses for children. This sports event brings kitsurfers and visitors to Ayamonte from all over the world (Spain Kiteboarding League, 2019).

- **Football Stadiums**

Other sports facilities that attract visitors, are the two football stadiums. The football stadium Ciudad de Ayamonte has a football pitch of 100 x 63 metres. Matches are often played and bring visitors, mainly from towns nearby, as spectators.

The Blas Infante stadium consists of a grass football pitch of 105 x 68 metres, a synthetic athletics track with 8 lanes, a throwing field and horizontal and vertical jump areas. The installations also boast a fitness room which can be used by locals or tourists for 2€ a day, and the track can be used for 1.20€ a day. (*Information collected from the local Sports Board*).

Some visitors may travel to the location because of the events that take place at the sports facilities of the town. In 2017, at the Blas Infante Football Stadium, the National Falconry Encounter took place for the first time, and is still celebrated annually. There are also there are other events that occur every year, such as a 10 mile race that goes from Ayamonte to the neighbouring Portuguese town of Vila Real de Santo Antonio, a special Bike day where people can watch exhibitions and go on a bike ride, etc. (Huelva Costa, 2017) (Turismo Deportivo Ayamonte, 2019).

- **Sports Competitions**

Sports competitions are an effective strategy to fight seasonality, as they can take place all year round. Many locals participate in the events that occur in the town, but visitors may join in, usually bringing friends and family along.

Some of the most popular sports competitions in Ayamonte include the first round of the Spain Kiteboarding league, which was mentioned above, the national Madison Beach Volley Tour and the Isla Canela Triathlon (Europa Press, 2019).

3.2.2 Other Attractions

- **Ayamonte's Marina**

In Ayamonte there is a Marina with 317 berths on floating pontoons, an access channel and a dry dock. It's located in the town centre and is used by tourists and locals who visit the town by boat (Turismo Deportivo Ayamonte, 2019).



Fig. 3.9. Ayamonte's Marina

Source: www.andalucia.org

A project to make improvements to the dock and the urban surroundings began in 2018. The total cost of the project is 5.2 million € (S.P., 2018).

The improvements of this marina will include a boatyard, which as well as improving the installations, will create 8 jobs. There will also be a renovation of the surrounding area aimed at boosting tourist attraction (Diario de Huelva, 2018).

- **Vía Verde**

Another interesting man-made item is the “Vía Verde”. It’s a disused railway infrastructure that has been converted into hiking and cycling paths. In Spain there are more than 2700 km of these paths. The Spanish Railway Foundation directs this operation (Vías Verdes. 2019).

The Ayamonte route connects various tourist destinations in the province of Huelva via the coastal “Via Verde”, traced along the old railway track that was closed down in 1987 after being in service for more than 50 years. This path is used to jog, walk and cycle.



Fig. 3.10. Ayamonte’s Vía Verde

Source: Own elaboration

Around 100 metres away from the start of this path is the Eco museum of “El Pintado” mill, a hydraulic mill that has been restored for people to visit with a picnic and fitness area outside (Tierras del Descubrimiento Huelva La Luz. 2019).

- **Teatro Cardenio**

The project of building a theatre & cinema installation in Ayamonte began in the 1950’s. The frontage is neoclassic and the two columns added to it are ionic (Moreno Flores, M.A. 2004).

- **Congress Centre**

There is a Congress Centre located close to the marshlands that surround Ayamonte. There isn’t much information about this infrastructure, however seeing as it has not yet been in use or even inaugurated.

An interview was carried out with the Mayor Alberto Fernández on the 8th of February 2017. He explained that the facilities include many offices and areas to carry out meetings, as well as three large main halls with different capacities and equipped with the latest technology. The construction of the Congress Centre began in 2006 and was 95% finished in 2017. The total investment came to 13 million euros (Conexo, 2017).

- **La Casa Grande**

Don Manuel Rivero ordered the construction of this building in the XVII century. It’s a beautiful building made of stone masonry, with big windows and balconies.

Nowadays, the building belongs to the town hall, and one of the areas inside it is used as a library, and another has been equipped with a stage and seating area for exhibitions and events.

A very important event, which takes place in this building, is the National Painting Award. Locals and many painters from other towns and cities participate in this competition. Every September, the painting awards are handed out in the 'Casa Grande' (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*).

- **Town Hall**

This building is located by the Plaza de la Laguna. It contains offices that date from mid XX, and also an older part structured as a house with the typical characteristics of a house from the area of Cádiz. The building was purchased by the Town Hall in 1928 (Moreno Flores, M.A., 2004).

- **The Canela Tower**

The tower of 'Canela' was strategically situated in the centre of Canela Island to be able to dominate both the coastline and the Guadiana River. It's a military construction that had the main aim of defending the coast from the possible invasion of pirates. (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*)

- **La Plaza de la Laguna (Lagoon Square)**

The 'Plaza de la Laguna', situated by the Town Hall, is one of the oldest in the town. It was named after the lagoons that used to form in the area because of the Guadiana River's overflows. Before its current name, it was called 'Plaza de la Constitución'. The architect Jose María Pérez Carasa created it in 1941. Palm trees and benches with typical andalusian tiles on them surround the square. One of the main decorative elements is the representation on tiles of a painting called *La Pesca del Atún (Tuna fishing)*, by Joaquín Sorolla. This famous Spanish painter was born in Valencia in 1863. After completing his studies, he spent 8 years travelling around Spain painting people and situations from each corner of the country. This collection is called 'Visión de España' and its purpose is to illustrate the picturesque characteristics of different areas (Moreno Flores, M.A., 2004) (Muller, P. 2019).



Fig. 3.11. Old Image of the Plaza de la Laguna

Source: *todocolección.net. Ayamonte – Plaza de la Constitución*



Fig. 3.12. Current Image of the Plaza de la Laguna

Source: *Own elaboration (02.06.19)*

- **La Plaza de España (Spain Square)**

The Plaza de España was built in 2006 in the area where the old zoo was located next to the Prudencio Navarro Park. In this Square we can find a children's play area, and also an exercise area for adults (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*).

- **La Plaza de la Coronación (Coronation Square)**

Another square in Ayamonte is the Plaza de la Coronación, which was built in commemoration of the Virgin of the Angustias, patroness of the municipality since 1992. In the centre of the square there is a beautiful fountain from the 1960's decorated with typical Andalusian tiles and decorative figures. (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*)

- **El Paseo de la Ribera**

El Paseo de la Ribera dates back to 1923. It's located by the Coronation Square and is close to the town's marina. It's decorated with palm trees, benches with beautiful Andalusian tiles, and 4 fountains, one in each corner of the square (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*).

- **Religious Installations**

Ayamonte has a variety of religious facilities, which are: the Hermitage of San Sebastian, the Chapel of El Socorro, the Chapel of San Antonio, the Convent of Santa Clara, the Temple of La Merced, the Church of San Francisco, the Church of Las Angustias and the Church of El Salvador. (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*)

The oldest church in the town is 'El Salvador', which was built in 1400 on the foundations of an old mosque. In the tower of this church there is still an old hand-wound-clock, which tells the time with bell chimes. This clock was the only one that controlled the time in the town for many years. (Moreno Flores, M.A., 2004)

- **Prudencio Navarro Park**

The Prudencio Navarro Park is located in the centre of Ayamonte. This park is famous for housing the town's zoo, which has been there for around 45 years. The zoo has always attracted locals and tourists, but has experienced some difficulties over the past 4 years and will soon be closed.

The earliest information that the Tourism office has is that in 1967 the town already had a zoo and it was named after Prudencio Navarro because of the hard work he put in to the new park where the zoo is located. It had wild animals such as lions, tigers, fallow deer, birds, monkeys and bears. It is said that it began with animals left behind by a visiting circus. It has always been free to visit as the town hall took care of all costs.

Over the years, the public has become increasingly concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of animals held in captivity. It was for this reason that in 2009, the whole zoo was redesigned and the animals were moved from the small concrete cages they lived in into new and better installations. Each compartment was equipped with a small pond, trees and green areas and the monkeys also had ropes to hang from. In addition to the renovations made to the animals, living areas, some other species were added such as zebras, peacocks and turtles (Huelva Ya, 2015).

According to the town hall, the zoo is an important tourist attraction for Ayamonte and thousands of people visit it annually. Even though improvements were made, members of the public still continued to question the welfare of the animals and the conditions they were kept in. The animals were showing signs of malnutrition and repetitive and purposeless motor behaviours, typical in animals held in captivity. In 2015 approximately 15.000 signatures were collected in favour of closing the zoo to end the animals' suffering. On the 14th November of this year it was finally decided that the zoo would be closed (Landeró, J. 2018).

The animals in the zoo will be transported to different parts of Spain where they will live in better conditions, thanks to the agreement between the town hall and the association Animals Feel (La Vanguardia 2019).



Fig. 3.13. Photo of the Zoo

Source: Own elaboration (04.05.19)



Fig 3.14. Photo of the Zoo

Source: Own elaboration (04.05.19)

- **Summer Cinema**

During the months of July and August a screen is put up in Isla Canela on the beach and another in Punta del Moral area. Films are projected once a week in July and twice a week in August. It's organised by Isla Canela S.A. and the town hall. The cinema sessions start at approximately 22:15, and are completely free. A list of different films is published each year, and they are always suitable for all audiences (Ayamonte.org 2018).

Watching films on the beach in the evening just after the sunset is a great activity for all members of the family to enjoy. The summer cinema is good for the beach bars close by, as it brings both locals and tourists to the beach at an unusual time. Before, during or after the film, people occasionally stop for a drink or something to eat.

3.2.3 Culture and Traditions

The culture and traditions of a tourist destination are also attractions. Ayamonte has many elements and festivities that form the cultural identity of the town such as monuments, festivals and traditional celebrations. The Town Hall runs a webpage where each month you can find a tourism newsletter with details of every event or activity taking place in the town.

- **The Three Wise Men Parade**

On the 5th of January every year, Ayamonte celebrates the biblical scene of the moment when the Three Wise Men bestow the baby Jesus with gifts. It begins with the arrival of the three Kings on the ferry from Vila Real de Santo Antonio. Then, accompanied by shepherds, they parade around the town sat on decorated floats throwing sweets and small gifts for people to catch (Huelva Buenas Noticias, 2019).

- **Carnival**

In 1936, with the Spanish Civil War, carnival manifestations were banned. After this period, different locations gradually began to bring back these celebrations. It wasn't until 1975 when Ayamonte revived carnival with the name 'Fiestas de la Alegría' (Joyful Festivities). Carnival is considered one of the most important cultural and artistic celebrations in the province of Huelva (Huelva Buenas Noticias, 2015).

During the celebration, a traditional carnival music competition takes place in the local theatre. Groups of men present the songs that they have composed about current topics or news and are mainly comical. There are singers with different voice tones, percussion instruments and kazoos.

Another part of the tradition is to dress up in costumes on the designated days to do so, called 'Pasacalles'. During Carnival festivities, a tent is put up in the town centre with live music in the evenings, and the streets of the town are filled with colour, confetti and glitter.

On the last day of Carnival, there is a colourful parade of groups with different costumes, both on floats or dancing in front of them, accompanied by a band playing lively music. This parade goes around the town in the afternoon for people to enjoy watching it.



Fig. 3.15. Carnival Poster 2015

Source: Andalucía Información

- **Semana Santa**

The religious tradition during the Easter holidays called Semana Santa, is one of the main cultural attractions of the town. It's declared a National Tourist Interest and its origins go back to the XVI century (García B., 2019).

From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, daily processions take place in the town. It's a very important annual tradition.

Sculptured effigies are carried through the streets, accompanied by, often hundreds, of penitents in traditional costume and with a band playing processional marches with wind and percussion instruments.

These religious effigies are carried by 'costaleros' and are heavily decorated with flowers and candles.

Each day, the procession depicts the biblical Easter story. It's a very old tradition, still celebrated in most of Andalusia and hundreds of tourists flock to see this. Ayamonte in particular, receives many tourists during Holy Week due to its proximity to the beach and its warm temperatures at this time of the year, however the processions are a unique complementary attraction. This religious tradition is a good way to discover the old parts of the town with its narrow streets and typical Andalusian houses.



Fig. 3.16. Semana Santa Procession

Source: *Huelvaya.es*

- **Romería de la Cruz**

Every year, from the 3rd to the 5th of May, a pilgrimage is celebrated, in Spanish, 'La Romería de la Cruz'. This kind of traditional religious ceremony is a manifestation of faith towards the Virgin. Prayers and penances are the main elements of these religious celebrations. Small tents are put up in an area of Ayamonte's countryside called 'El Parral', where people stay for this period of time (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte. 2019).

- **Fiesta El Salvador**

Every year in the month of August, the neighbourhood of Ayamonte, 'La Villa', celebrates a festivity in honor of St. Salvador. There is a tent set up near the Salvador church where live music is played and people can eat and drink.

This part of the town has typical Andalusian houses, and is the oldest neighbourhood in the town. (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*).

- **Un Paseo Por el Arte**

A more recent cultural event celebrated is an art exhibition on the streets of the town centre, which takes place in August. The first edition of "un Paseo por el Arte" (a stroll through art) was held in 2013. Painters, Sculptors and Photographers exhibit their works of art for people to see. During the Stroll through Art in the warm month of August, the streets of the town become a beautiful art gallery to walk through (Ayamonte un Paseo por el Arte. 2019).

- **Ayamonte International Music Festival**

This festival has been celebrated in Ayamonte since 1984. It takes place in the 'Patio de la Jabonería', a small palace from the XVI century, which was the home of the Marquis of Ayamonte. This building has an important historical value, as it dates back

to the golden age. It's been restored and nowadays is used for the celebration of cultural events in the town. This festival happens every year in August and combines live acts of all kinds of different musical styles (Patio de la Jabonería, 2019).



Fig. 3.17. Image of International Music Festival 2018

Source: infonuba.com

- La Fiesta de las Angustias

An interesting Andalusian tradition takes place within the first week of September called "la fiesta de Las Angustias". The celebration is in honour of Saint Angustias, patroness of Ayamonte. It's celebrated from the 5th to the 9th of September in the town's designated fairground (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte, 2019).

During this festivity, people enjoy listening to 'flamenco' music and wear typical Andalusian 'flamenco' costume in tents that are put up for the occasion where you can eat, drink and dance.

On the 7th, a traditional offering takes place in honor of the patroness of the town. People present tuberose, a special type of flower, at the feet of the Virgin on the steps of the 'Angustias Church'. More than a thousand people attended this event in 2017. The following day, the effigy of the Virgin will be carried through the streets of Ayamonte in a procession, accompanied by a music band. At the end of the religious procession, a beautiful firework display takes place (Huelva Ya, 2017).

CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORT IN AYAMONTE

Transport is indispensable for the tourism industry. Tourists use it to reach their destination, it's also necessary to move around within the destination and sometimes transport itself is the actual tourism attraction or activity (Fletcher, J., et al. P. 417).

Seeing as Ayamonte is so close to Portugal, it's important for it to have good connections. Also, as a tourist destination, tourists need to be able to access the town easily and also move around within it. This study has looked into all means of transport in Ayamonte and classified the information gathered below.

7.1 TRANSPORT AS TRANSIT

One of the elements that tourists take into account before deciding where to travel to is the method of transport they can use to reach this destination. Tourists will try to find the most comfortable, fastest and cheapest means of transport.

The most popular modes of travel in Spain are by plane (36,62 million passengers), followed by the AVE high-speed train (21,10 million) and long distance bus journeys (16,46 million) (Hosteltur, 2018).

7.1.1 Transport by Plane

One of the options is flying to one of the closest airports to Ayamonte, which are Faro and Seville Airports.

The closest airport is in Faro, which is 66.7 km away. Travellers can book a private transfer (from approximately 32€), a taxi or take a coach to get to Ayamonte. There are 4 coaches running per day in Summer, and only 2 in Winter and the ticket costs 12.00€ (Get Transfer, 2019)(EVA Transportes, 2019).

From Seville Airport, which is 151 km away, you can also book a transfer (from 98€) or a taxi, however there are no direct coaches from the airport. The only way is to take the EA bus (4€) from the airport to the bus station, in the centre of Seville, and then take another one from there to Ayamonte. The regular coach from the station to Ayamonte runs 5 times a day on week days and 7 times at the weekend and costs 14.41€ (Damas.S.A. 2019).

7.1.2 Transport by Train

There isn't a train station in Ayamonte anymore, however the two closest ones that travellers can use are in Vila Real de Santo Antonio in Portugal (14.2 km away) and in Huelva (52.8 km away). From both stations, you can take a coach or a taxi, but from the Portuguese one you can also take the ferry.

7.1.3 Transport by Ferry

Another option, is to cross the border from Vila Real de Santo Antonio in Portugal using the ferry. It's a very cheap option, 1.20€ for foot passengers, and for a slightly higher price, cars and motorcycles can be transported too. The timetable changes slightly in Summer. During the months of July, August and September, the ferry runs every 30 minutes from 9:30 until 21:00, however the rest of the year it leaves every hour from 10:00 until 19:00 (Transporte Fluvial Guadiana, 2019).



Fig. 4.1. Ferry at Ayamonte Commercial Quay

Source: Huelva Ya

7.1.4 Transport by Car

It's also possible to drive to Ayamonte, using the A 49 motorway that was extended from Seville to Portugal in 2001, crossing the international bridge. Nowadays, an average of 9.500 people cross this bridge per day (Huelva Ya 2018).

The increase of transport by car has been one of the key factors for the boost of national tourism. The ownership of a private vehicle to travel as opposed to other means of transport has a series of advantages:

- Taking control of the itinerary and stops.
- Choosing the departure time.
- Having the possibility of taking plenty of luggage.
- Having the possibility of using the vehicle as accommodation.
- Privacy.
- Having freedom of mobility at the destination.
- Generally, lower costs.

(Buhalis,D. et al.1998. *Introducción al Turismo*. Madrid, España. P. 12 & 122)

7.2 TRANSPORT AT THE DESTINATION

Everything in Ayamonte town centre is within walking distance and part of it is pedestrianized. However, the beach, the shopping centre and some restaurants are further out. Having said this, for tourists who don't know the area, it's necessary to have a means of transport to enable easy access to the different parts and attractions of the destination.

7.2.1 Taxi

The fastest and easiest way to move around the town is by calling a taxi. There is a taxi rank in the town centre, and it costs between 4-5€ to get anywhere within the town and a ride from the town centre to the beach can cost between 10-12€, depending on which area of the beach you visit.

7.2.2 Local Bus

In the town there is a local bus, which has a route that covers all parts of the town. The bus leaves the station every 45 minutes from 8:30 to 14:30 and from 16:45 to 18:15 on weekdays, on Saturdays the bus only runs in the mornings from 10 until 13:45.

There is also a bus that has a route from the town to the furthest eastern point of Isla Canela beach, Punta del Moral. This bus has different timetables depending on the time of the year. From the 3rd of September to the 28th of June there are 11 buses per day on weekdays that leave the station approximately on the hour, 9 buses on Saturdays and 8 buses on Sundays. During the Summer months there are buses leaving on the hour until 00:00 starting 7:00 on weekdays, 8:00 on Saturdays and 9:00 on Sundays. The change of timetables in the Summer season is due to the increased number of tourists using the service in this period of time. (*Information gathered at the local Bus Station*).

7.2.3 Cycling

Cycling is the most sustainable way of moving around, as it isn't fuelled and doesn't have a major impact on the environment. The cycle lane was created in 2012 and is around 15 km long. The route starts in the town centre, reaches Isla Canela one end, follows the coastline and goes back to town from the other end of the beach. There are companies who rent bikes to tourists and there are plenty of bike racks, in town and at the beach, to leave bikes (Isla Canela S.A., 2019).



Fig. 4.2. Ayamonte's Cycle Lane

Source: Isla Canela S.A.

7.3 TRANSPORT AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION

In this case, it's the transport itself that attracts tourists and is the main entertainment. It doesn't necessarily need to take you from one place to another, the purpose is to enjoy the ride.

- Tourist Train

In Ayamonte there is a tourist train that gives rides along the coastline of Isla Canela to enjoy the beautiful views. Many tourists of all ages use this attraction that runs from June to September and at Easter, depending on the weather. The train ride costs around 3.50€ (*Information gathered at the local Tourist Office*).



Fig. 4.3. Isla Canela's Tourist Train

Source: trenesturisticos.sacatuentrada.es

- River Cruise

Another activity for taking in the beautiful views whilst using transport is Ayamonte's river cruise. It departs from the commercial quay, which is located in the town centre and takes tourists on a two and a half hour ride along the Guadiana River (Codina M., 2019).



Fig. 4.3. Ayamonte's River Cruise

Source: <http://sobrehuelva.com> (2010)

CHAPTER 5: GASTRONOMY

Ayamonte's gastronomy has several influences from the different cultures that have passed through this land: Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs and Portuguese. It combines products from both the sea and land (*Ayamonte Guide from Tourist Office*).

The province of Huelva is the origin of one of the most exquisite delicacies in Spain, its cured ham. The province's gastronomy is very diverse and as well as its famous cured ham, the Atlantic Ocean is a natural supplier of other rich ingredients, such as fish and seafood.

Huelva's gastronomy is also famous for its prawns. They can be the main ingredient of a dish, or be used to complement other dishes (Eslava,J., 2003).

An important economic element of the gastronomy of Ayamonte itself is the canning industry. There are various factories in the town: 'Pesasur' and 'Concepción' which mainly preserve mackerel and sardines. 'Etnomaya', 'Pesasur', and 'Amorós', all fish salting factories that use the traditional method of pressing and packaging in wooden casks (Moreno Flores, M.A., 2004).

The gastronomy in Ayamonte is typical of a fishing town, based primarily on ingredients from the sea. The key elements are its tuna and rice dishes. The dried salted tuna prepared in the location is hailed to be the best in the country.

Ayamonte receives the famous Spanish cured ham thanks to its proximity to the 'Sierra de Aracena' in Huelva's mountain range, where it's produced. Local restaurants serve a selection of the best products of Huelva's gastronomy.

Some of the typical local dishes are:

- Fried cuttlefish.
- 'Arroz a la marinera' (*Rice with Seafood*).
- Bacalao a la Bras (*Traditional way of cooking codfish in Portugal*).
- Clams.
- 'Atún encebollado' (*Tuna cooked with onions*).

(Información Turística Ayamonte.info., 2019)

CHAPTER 6: TOURISM IMPACTS ON THE TOWN

- **Socio-cultural Impacts**

The interaction of tourists and locals creates inevitable socio-cultural impacts. Tourism moves people with one culture and background to places with another (Fletcher, J., et al., 2013).

According to S. Page and J. Connell, there are four factors that shape the effects that the tourism industry can have on a destination:

- The types and numbers of tourists: the higher the volume of tourists, the higher the impact on the locals at the destination will be.
- The importance of the tourism industry: If the town's economy relies on tourism, the impact will be higher than if it has an economy based on a mixed industry.
- The size and development of the tourism industry: If the destination is too small for the number of tourists it receives, the impact will be higher.
- The pace of tourism development: In the case of a rapid growth in terms of tourism, the social impacts are likely to be higher.

(Page, S., Connell, J., 2009)

- **Environmental Impacts**

The environment suffers an inevitable change, either directly or indirectly, from the tourism activity. The environment is a key ingredient of the tourism product, therefore it needs to be cared for and preserved (Fletcher, J., et al., 2013).

- **Economic Impacts**

The economic impact on a tourist destination takes into account direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism. The study of the economic impact of a destination aims to discover the economic benefits from tourism, in monetary terms (UNWTO, 2019).

All of these impacts are the consequences of masses of tourists temporarily co-existing in a destination. There is a wide range of impacts and they can either be positive or negative.

The tourism industry has become a very important economic motor for Ayamonte. In Summer, the town receives around 60.000 tourists, which is almost 3 times the total population of the town. The important weight of tourism on the town inevitably brings a series of impacts which affect three main areas: the local society, the environment, and the economy.

86% of the tourists that visit the town are national, and only a 14% are international, mainly from the United Kingdom (Huelva Ya, 2014).

The tourist office supplied information regarding the number of visitors that the town receives annually. In 2010, which was the earliest data collected, there were 34.368 visitors. This figure was obtained by summing the number of people who visited the tourist office and other information points around the town. The latest data available is that in 2018, the town received 35.065 tourists.

9.1 NEGATIVE IMPACTS

9.1.1 Socio-cultural Impacts

- The distribution of the population centres in the municipality is very dispersed, causing difficulties in the local organization of services, especially transport. The lack of an optimal public transport service forces the population to own and use private vehicles.
- Noise pollution is one of the problems that affect the local population, caused by the clustering of people in the main leisure areas. The main area with noise pollution is the town centre (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte. 2019).
- Overcrowding occurs when the volume of tourists exceeds the capacity of an environment. (Page,S., Connell,J., 2009) This phenomenon happens in Ayamonte during the high season, causing traffic congestion, lack of parking spaces in the town centre and a risk of negative host-guest relationships.

9.1.2 Environmental Impacts

- The main environmental issue in the town is the generation of waste. For example, in 2015, 13.685 tons of waste was collected. This is a threat to the environment of the coastal area (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte. 2019).
- Water is another natural element affected. The overexploitation of aquifers damages the quality of the water, reducing the possibility of its usage. It's important to highlight this issue, as the town has long periods of dryness.
- The marshland area that surrounds Isla Canela has been affected by human activity and the fast growth of urban development in the coastal area (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte. 2019).
- The traffic congestion mentioned in the socio-cultural impacts also affects the environment, as the excessive amount of cars circulating in the town causes extra pollution in the area.

9.1.3 Economic Impacts

- The economic system of the town encourages the atomisation of businesses. Figure 6.1 100% illustrates that local businesses are micro enterprises.

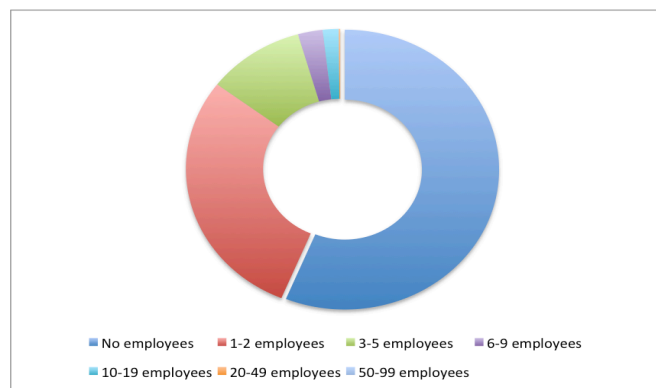


Fig. 6.1. Amount of Businesses According to the Number of Employees 2014

Source: Own elaboration using data from Ayamonte's Sustainable Development Integrated Strategy.

- One of the main economic issues in the town is the focus on the tourism industry, which is causing the loss of other traditional ones. In order to compare the value of each economic sector, a table is presented that contains the value of each index (figure 6.2). The table reveals how the tourism index is far higher than all the others. It is, in fact, the third highest of the province of Huelva. This index is obtained according to the taxes or fees that correspond to tourism activities and accommodation. The value indicates the participation of the location on a national basis of 100.000 units (100.000 = the total collection of the tax or fee) (Ayuntamiento de Ayamonte. 2019).

Industrial Index	Commercial Index	Catering and Bars Index	Tourism Index	Economic Activity Index
12	34	36	164	20

Fig. 6.2. Ayamonte's Economic Indexes

Source: Own elaboration using data from Ayamonte's Sustainable Development Integrated Strategy

This comparison shows that tourism is the fundamental pillar of the local economy. The economic dependence on Sun and Sand tourism, which is a seasonal type of tourism, causes an abundance of temporary work contracts. This makes working conditions in the town seasonal and unstable. 97.03% of all work contracts in Ayamonte are temporary. One of the causes for this outstanding amount is that more than 50% of local hotels close from December to Easter.

- The fact that Sun & Sand tourism is the main economic activity has, in turn, boosted the local construction industry, which creates accommodation and other facilities for tourists. The service industry represents 86.25% of all establishments and 9.12% are related to construction. Together they add up to more than 95% of all establishments.
- The percentage of the service industry is very high for a location with a seasonal tourism; this causes lack of clients during the low season months, and congestion in the high season.

9.2 POSITIVE IMPACTS

The negative impacts, as a consequence of the tourism activity in the town, leads to the need to create strategies and solutions. This results in an improvement in the quality of installations provided and of the environment, which locals as well as tourists will enjoy.

The strategy 'Ayamonte Mira al Río' was presented at the International Tourism Fair in 2019 (Fitur). Its main purpose is to improve the sustainable mobility of the location. The local council aims to develop respectful actions for the environment and reduce the emission of CO₂. Some of the renovations include new connexions for road traffic, pedestrian walkways by the river, the extension of the cycle path, new parking areas and new multifunctional spaces (Europa Press, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Having examined the information in terms of tourism at the location, a SWOT analysis has been elaborated. It shows the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It will be used to highlight the aspects of the location that need to be improved or strengthened.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coastline - Tourist Attractions - Events, Festivals and Cultural Elements - Weather - Gastronomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seasonality - High reliability on tourism industry - Noise pollution - Overcrowding - Waste - Damage to natural resources - No airport or train station close enough to the location. - Public Transport
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congress centre - Water park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun & Sand destinations nearby

Fig. 7.1. SWOT Analysis

Source: Own elaboration

- Strengths

As we can observe in the SWOT Analysis, Ayamonte has various strong points. It has been awarded with the Blue Flag. The beaches have all the infrastructures tourists may need, including sporting activities, bars and bike rentals. The exceptional weather in Summer and mild temperatures during the rest of the year, along with the quality of the coastline, are two key factors in attracting tourists.

The various events, festivals and cultural elements of the town are also important tourist attractions for the location.

- Weaknesses

The main weaknesses that have been discovered in the study are very diverse.

One of the main issues is the strong seasonality that the location experiences. As a Sun & Sand tourist destination, most of its arrivals occur in the summer season. This leads to an increase of employment in this time period, but a decrease during the rest of the year. It also makes work unstable, as most of the Summer contracts are temporary.

Tourism is one of the main economic motors of the location, which leads to another important weakness: the high dependance on the tourism industry. This can be a problem due to other industries in the location being taken over, such as the industrial activity.

Another observation that has been made is how the natural environment has suffered many negative impacts. The main issues are noise pollution, overcrowding, the generation of tons of waste and damage to natural resources: mainly water and the marshlands. These impacts have led the town to an awareness of the need to create strategies, in order to reduce these impacts resulting from the arrival of masses of tourists.

The last weakness mentioned in the analysis, is the lack of optimal public transport.

On one hand, there isn't an airport or train station close enough to the location, making connexions to the destination more complicated. The coach timetables don't cover the whole day, and taxi rides from the closest airports are very expensive. On the other hand, the local transport during the low season is fairly limited, which is an issue for locals as Ayamonte's population is fairly dispersed.

- **Threats**

Ayamonte is the occidental end of Huelva's coastline ('Costa de la Luz'). Ayamonte has direct competitors in terms of Sun & Sand tourism, which are the rest of the beaches in the province. These beaches all have similar characteristics and services and are within the same area.

Another area that competes with Isla Canela is the neighbouring Portuguese Algarve with its white sandy beaches, which are very near and accessible. The Portuguese is a well-established, well-marketed tourist destination and in many cases offers superior quality installations and services.

- **Opportunities**

As mentioned previously in the study, the Ayamonte Congress Centre has yet to be inaugurated and used. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all kinds of events at any time of the year, and would bring visitors to the town and fight seasonality.

Another opportunity for a destination with good weather conditions and green areas is to build a waterpark. Building a waterpark in the location could be a good differentiation strategy, to compete against the other coastal tourist destinations close by.

In conclusion, Ayamonte is a Sun and Sand tourist destination with exceptional resources and a unique location, fighting against seasonality. It has developed many tourist attractions and is implementing strategies in order to achieve a more sustainable tourism.

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Interviews

- Interview with a family member of the founder of the first hostel in Ayamonte. 19.05.19.
- Interview with the director of Hotel Isla Canela Golf on 24.05.19.

ANNEX

– Interview with the director of Hotel Isla Canela Golf

- ¿Podría explicar las oscilaciones del número de jugadores en la gráfica? / Could you explain the fluctuations of the number of players on the graph?
- ¿Cuál es la edad media de los jugadores? / What is the average age of the players?
- ¿Cuales son las nacionalidades más populares? / Which are the most common nationalities?
- ¿Supone el turismo un gran impacto para la empresa? / Does tourism have a big impact on the company?
- ¿Existen grandes diferencias en cuanto a cantidad de jugadores a lo largo del año? / Are there big differences in terms of number of players over the year?

