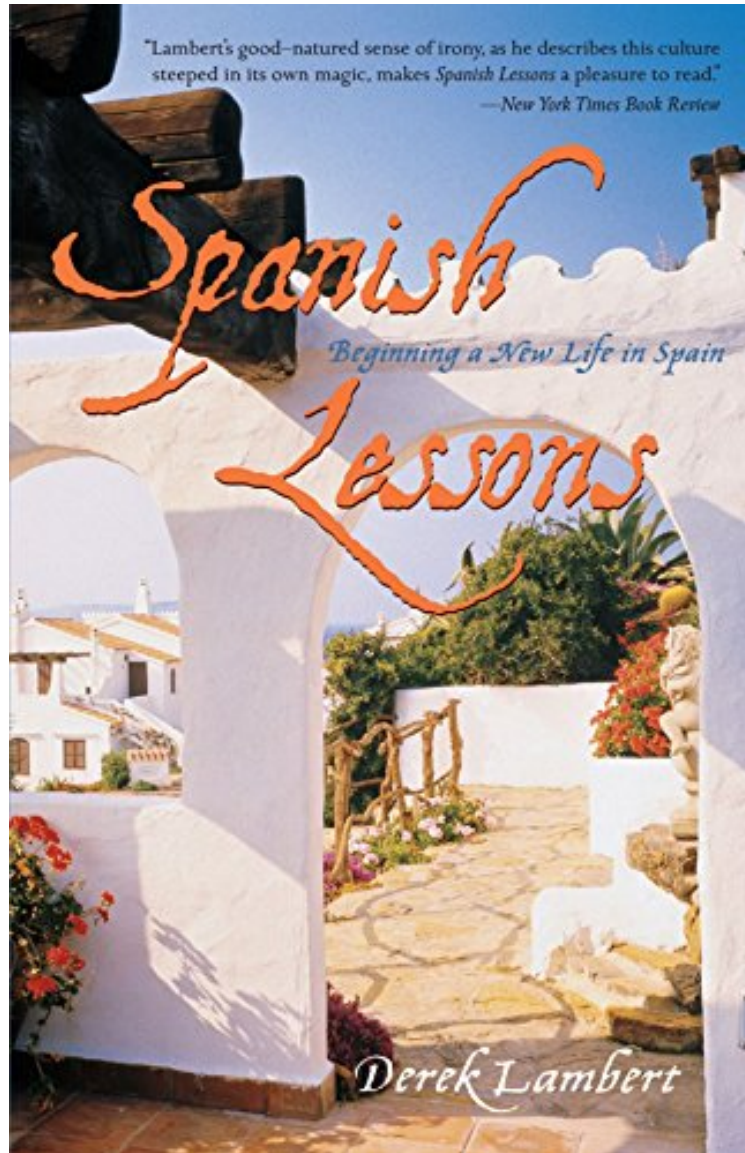


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Spanish Lessons: Beginning a New Life in Spain

Derek Lambert

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Derek Lambert : Spanish Lessons: Beginning a New Life in Spain before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spanish Lessons: Beginning a New Life in Spain:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Spain without the TouristsBy Brad4dHaving read a lot of travel books I immediately cring at books advertised to be "like Peter Mayle" because most of them are anything but!

Hurray, in *Spanish Lessons*, the spirit of Peter lives on. The ability to see the humor in a difficult situation and to enjoy, not condemn customs and habits foreign to him are well in evidence here. The book is amusing, well written and punctuated with laugh alouds. Lambert takes on the Spanish with a limited vocabulary and a house renovation job that would make most of us cringe and comes out if not the better, at least even. I enjoyed the book and its insight into life in a small Spanish village, its characters and its culture. All this and not a jug of Sangria in sight! Encore! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Mañana....* By Ignace BeausExcellent writing, evoking the experiences of real life in a marvellous country, where all too often, we will impose our hasty demanding lifestyle. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not gripping By J.P. Only read this book because it was selected by my book club - would not recommend it - does not compare to *A Year in Provence*.

In the shrewd, comical spirit of Peter Mayle and Bill Bryson, Derek Lambert discovers the charms and idiosyncrasies of Spain as he experiences the rewards and frustrations of beginning a new life there. [set as a headline] As Lambert and his wife set about restoring their moldering casita on Spain's Mediterranean Costa Blanca and learning to live the life of Spanish villagers, he introduces us to a nation far removed from the matadors, tapas bars, and sangria swillers. He uncovers the "real" Spain—a nation of passionate, eccentric, often contradictory, but always enchanting people. Unpredictable, often hilarious, and animated by colorful characters, *Spanish Lessons* presents an intimate and delightful portrait of off-the-tourist-track Spain.

From *Publishers Weekly* "We were looking for a village so ordinary that it would bring us into contact with people remote from the clichés of Spain--flamenco, sangria and bullfights." British journalist Lambert and his Canadian wife, Diane, find just the right place when they visit La Jara, an unassuming Spanish village inland from the Mediterranean shore of Costa Blanca. This lively memoir recounts their adventures finding their way among the local characters. Much of the book is taken up with anecdotes about how Lambert, Diane and their four-year-old son settle into their new home (a rundown house with a citrus grove and a garden), take on the construction of a timbered dining hall with a minstrel gallery and deal with a sly carpenter, a fey young gardener who argues with his employer about everything from fences to flowers, and a roofer who is afraid of heights. What sets this book apart from others of its genre is the author's way of dealing with his new neighbors, all of whom seem to be related to one another and determined to intimidate him. Although Lambert wants to be accepted, he has a fierce temper, and he gives as good as he gets: he bests the "sewage specialist" who claims he can find a mysterious underground leak, assaults a policeman in the brothel where he and his wife unknowingly spend the night, calls the bluff of a mean debt collector who haunts one of the men working on his house and engineers a public showdown between two feuding ancients who claim to have fought on opposite sides in the Spanish Civil War. Some of Lambert's tales seem a bit tall, but he tells them amusingly in this chronicle of a newcomer's eventful year with the feisty residents of a very ordinary village in Spain. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* London-born Lambert has written more than two dozen novels, many in the crime and espionage genres, and has also authored five volumes of autobiography. His latest effort seeks to re-create events that took place more than 20 years ago when he first moved to Spain. It may just be this distance in time that accounts for the book's lack of sparkle. Lambert's imagery is awkward, as if memory doesn't always serve and everything must then be embroidered with adjectives. When Lambert and his wife, vagabonds in search of the perfect place, choose a small town on Spain's Costa Blanca, their commitment to a trial year begins. They are quickly "adopted" by Emilio, a local with fingers in every pie and relatives in every profession. A suitable house is purchased, their small son arrives from Canada, animals are acquired, the addition of a dining room begins, and a gardener is hired. Despite Lambert's anecdotes, there's an aloofness to his narrative; the people are mere sketches, and the author himself remains an enigma. Jacket copy compares him with Peter Mayle and Bill Bryson, but it's unlikely many readers will agree. For larger travel collections only. -Janet Ross, Sparks Branch Lib., NV Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* In the tradition of *A Year in Provence* (1990) and *Under the Tuscan Sun* (1996), the author provides vivid descriptions of an entirely unique cultural landscape. Determined to try his hand at writing a novel, Lambert, a veteran foreign correspondent, decides to settle in a remote, picturesque village in the Costa Blanca region of Spain with his wife and young son. During the course of this delightfully wry narrative, they purchase an enchanting--if decrepit--house, undertake the arduous task of renovating and landscaping their property, and otherwise attempt to acclimate themselves to a thoroughly alien and exotic lifestyle. Charmed, frustrated, and continually astonished by their new surroundings, they bumble their way through their first year as *extranjeros*, eventually earning the friendship and loyalty of their initially suspicious neighbors. Chock-full of breathtaking comical escapades, and authentically colorful characters, this affectionately humorous memoir will appeal to both seasoned and armchair travelers. Margaret Flanagan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved