

XMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

1 - Who is the odd one out: Indira Gandhi, Mother Teresa, John Wayne, Chiang Kai-Shek, and why?

Chiang Kai-Shek: the others are all current airport names - in India, Albania and the USA respectively. In 2006 the Taiwan authorities changed the name of what was then Chiang Kai-Shek airport to its current name, Taipei International.

2 - Barcelona is accepted as one of the best football teams in Europe. But which British team has a 100% record against them in European Club Competition; having beaten them on the only four times they have played?

Dundee United (yes, really - they beat mighty Barcelona home and away in both 1966 and 1987).

3 - Hadrian's Wall divides Scotland and England. Hadrian was of course a Roman Emperor. But if he was born now, what nationality would he be (Clue: Not Italian!)

Hadrian was born in Italica, just outside Seville. So he would have been Spanish!

4 - Why are British cats luckier than continental ones?

Two extra lives! British cats 'have nine lives'. In France, Spain, & Italy...they have seven, according to common phrases in each country!

5 - Vercelli (featured on our Portofino/Cinque Terre holiday) exports its rice worldwide. There are even paddy-fields - Italy is the land of risotto as well as pasta. But who eats more rice - the Italians, the Chinese, or the Japanese?

The Chinese eat more rice than the Italians or the Japanese....after all, the population of China is about 1.3 billion :)

6 - The only nation to have won at least one gold medal at every modern summer Olympics is...?

Great Britain. Though in 1896 they competed together with Ireland (South as well as North).

7 - The Pyrenees' Little Yellow Train passes by the 'monosyllabic' villages of Err, Llo, and Ur. So called because...?

Historically, this area was Catalan, and only became French following the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1658. The King, Louis XIV, sent his civil servants down to assess the area. They found the Catalans speaking a language they didn't understand, and unpronounceable village names. So they shortened them to the first syllable..!

8 - Which two Caribbean Islands take their name from Spanish Monasteries? And who gave them their names?

The islands were named by Columbus. The French island of Guadeloupe is called after Extremadura's Guadalupe Monastery, featured in our holiday to Estoril, Merida, and the Land of the Conquistadors. The volcano-stricken Island of Montserrat takes its name from the great Catalonian monastery of the same name.

9 - 'The English Patient' was partly filmed near the Oasis of Tozeur where we will stay on our Tunisian Holiday. But which film character's home village set was in the trogodlyte town of Matmata (where we also stay)?

Luke Skywalker, in Star Wars. Matmata was the location used for filming his home on the desert planet of 'Tatooine'. Tataouine is in fact the name of a nearby town.

10 - Seville is famous for its oranges. Byron famously called it 'a city of oranges and women'. But, talking of Spanish fruit: what is a 'Granada'?

It is a pomegranate, though the derivation is actually nothing to do with Granada. Incidentally, Granada is also the Spanish for a 'grenade'!

11 - What is the link between Galileo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Marco Polo?

They are all Italian Airports. Venice airport, featured on our new Holiday including the Slovenian and Croatian coasts and countryside, is called after Marco Polo. Rome's Fiumicino Airport is called after Leonardo da Vinci. And Pisa's is Galileo Galilei – we go there for the Tuscan Coast, Corsica, and our new holiday to Elba; as well as Walking in Tuscany & Liguria.

12 - Four of these words mean a small coffee with milk. The other four mean a mobile phone. Can you put them into their set of four? Un telefonino, un tallat, un movil, une noisette, un macchiato, un cortado, un portable, ein Handy. Bonus points for knowing which languages they are!

Coffee: Cortado (Spanish), Noisette (French - literally, a nut), Macchiato (Italian), Tallat (Catalan). Mobile Phone: Portable (French), Telefonino (Italian - a 'little phone'), Movil (Spanish), Handy (German - a word imported from English).

13 - Signor Capello (no relation, but there is something in the name) has just built a hotel on the Parco della Vittoria in Milan. Even his best friends don't want to go there. Why?

Parco della Vittoria is the equivalent of Mayfair on an Italian Monopoly Board....! Capello is Italian for the Hat, one of the Monopoly pieces! Milan can be visited from the base of our Lake Maggiore Holidays.

14 - How many official languages does Spain have?

Well, most books will say four: Castilian Spanish, Gallego (similar to Portuguese, spoken in Galicia); Catalan, and Basque. But the Catalan Regional Parliament recently also gave official status (within Catalonia) to Aranese, a Gascon/Occitan language spoken close to the French border, in the Pyrenees. So the correct answer is probably four and a bit!

15 - A - the longest river in Spain is not the longest river in Spain.

B - the highest mountain in Spain is not the highest mountain in Spain. Can you explain?

The Longest River wholly in Spain is the River Ebro, which reaches the Mediterranean just to south of Tarragona. But...the River Tagus (Tajo in Spanish) rises in Spain, and is longer than the Ebro if you include the Portuguese Section - it reaches the Atlantic at Lisbon. The highest mountain in mainland Spain is Mulhacen in the Sierra Nevada. But Mount Teide, in Tenerife, visible from the hotel we feature for both Walking in Tenerife and Tenerife - Island of Contrasts is higher!

16 - In which country is the Westernmost point of the EC?

The Westernmost point of the EC is in France, in Guadeloupe, one of the French Overseas Territories! This has sporting implications too. Each year the French Soccer Cup features a few matches between teams in the Overseas Territories and those from the mainland. Two years ago the lucky team was Poissy, who are from outside Paris and play in the CFA Amateur League. They were drawn to play away in Martinique, in the French West Indies, all expenses paid. The coach, however, was a bit of a spoilsport – he warned the players not to sunbathe or swim, because (he said) it would fatigue them! Mind you, they won 2-0 and qualified for the next round...

17 - Which Museum is Barcelona's Most-Visited (Clue: it's not the Picasso Museum!)

The museum at the Football Club (F C Barcelona).

18 - Which is Europe's Highest Capital City?

Many people say the answer is Madrid, 667m (2188ft) above sea level. But little Andorra's capital, Andorra-la-Vella is over 300m higher, standing at 1000m above sea level.

19 - In early April 2011, in Rugby's Heineken Cup Quarter Finals, two French teams played their 'home' games outside France. In which country did they play?

Spain. Two of the French teams (Biarritz and Perpignan) played their matches across the border in Spain! Perpignan played at the Olympic stadium in Barcelona, and Biarritz's home for the day was at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian. Both Catalonia and the Basque country straddle the modern-day border.

20 - In which EC country is Donostia?

Spain. We may know it better as San Sebastian, but in the Basque language it is Donostia.

21 - Which of these is correct French? La Reine Elizabeth, Le Reine Elizabeth, La France, Le France. All of them are correct. La Reine Elizabeth is of course our Queen, Le Reine Elizabeth is the name of the Montreal Hotel where John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their love-in in 1969. La France is of course the country; but it is perfectly correct to say 'Le France' when you are referring to the ocean liner of that name, or to a cafe or restaurant. The historic Sea Lodge in Perpignan, previously the city's maritime and mercantile court, now houses a restaurant called 'Le France'.

22 - If you drive northwards from Verona in Italy, passing Innsbruck in Austria, do you arrive at Monaco?

Yes, but only if you are speaking Italian. Munich is called Monaco in Italian! To avoid confusion, Italians refer to Monaco as Monte Carlo, even though strictly speaking Monte Carlo is just a part of the principality of Monaco, featured in our Monte Carlo & the Riviera of Flowers Holiday.

Supplementary Question: is Monte Carlo the Capital of Monaco? Answer: No, it doesn't have a capital!

23 - Spanish Nicknames. Why is Francisco's nickname 'Paco'?

Francis is Pater Comunitas, the Father of the Franciscan Community. Pa Co.

24 - What is the link between a horse's rear end and the design of the space shuttle?

Railway track gauge. The Roman Roads gathered ruts caused by chariot wheels. The chariot wheels were 4 ft 8½ inches apart, to allow for the rear end of two war-horses. That same 4ft 8½ inches is the standard railway gauge in the UK and 60% of the rest of the world. When the space shuttle was designed, the boosters were limited in size so that they could be transported by rail through a railway tunnel in Utah. So the width of two horses' rear ends really did affect the design of the space shuttle! At Latour de Carol railway station, on our France, Spain, Andorra & the Pyrenees holiday, you will see the standard gauge lines of SNCF, the wider gauge lines of Spain's RENFE and travel on the one-metre wide narrow-gauge 'Little Yellow Train' mountain railway.

We hope you enjoyed it. Everything is believed correct, but of course sorry if any errors have occurred. Any corrections should be emailed to tony@preferredts.com. Likewise, if you have any favourite quiz questions you would like to offer us for future inclusion, please email those too!