

# q travel: with BARRIE MAHONEY

'Tweeters from the Atlantic'

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## Too Fat to Die

**At last! We have finally reached the end of the celebratory season and we can get back to something that approaches normal! By normal, I mean eating the things that we should eat and not what we want to eat. The empty box of chocolates and crisp packets are finally confined to the bin, and it is time to be eating healthy meals once again; or is it?**

Despite New Year Resolutions to do better, many of us find that our obsessive natures force us into eating more of what we should avoid, to drink more when we should abstain, and that our expensive financial commitment to the gym often results in a visit to the adjacent bar. At risk of depressing readers even more, how about being faced with the idea that if we are too obese, it may not be possible to be cremated when the time comes?

Authorities in Spain's Valencia region are considering a ban on the cremation of bodies that are too fat, simply because the burning process generates too many toxic emissions. Well, I guess it is a fair point, but was not something that I had previously considered. Many of us will be aware of trying to reduce carbon emissions; for example, in the amount of flying that we may do when going on holiday or when using our cars, but have we seriously considered being too fat when we die?

According to experts in the cremation process, people who are too fat, or maybe I should be more politically correct and refer to the 'morbidly obese', generate a number of serious technical issues, which includes an excessive amount of toxic emissions. Forget fancy diets and Weight Watchers; surely that fact alone is a very persuasive reason to start losing weight?

The regional health authority in Valencia has suggested the new measures as part of new rules that are aimed at reducing air pollution from cremation, and particularly the cremation of large bodies. Other measures include a ban on cremating the bodies of people who had received treatment for cancer that used radioactive needles in the process.

In addition, a ban on cremating coffins that contain resins, plastics or other elements that could create highly toxic substances is being considered. So, if your preference is for a coffin that contains lead or zinc, or if you would like to be cremated with your best jewellery or indeed your mobile phone, just forget it. I find this rule quite depressing, since I do not intend leaving my new phone behind for any reason.

Readers will be relieved to know that the draft regulations insist that new crematoria have to be built at least 200 metres from homes, health centres, schools, parks and sports facilities. This is a very sensible idea, since the pungent aroma of a permanent barbecue would almost certainly reduce house prices.

Well, that is my contribution to healthy living for the New Year, which I am sure will help us all to follow sensible dietary guidance for the year ahead. If we really do feel unable to 'fight the flab' I guess the alternative is always burial at sea, but that has its own issues and is a story for another time.

*If you enjoyed this article, take a look at his websites: <http://barriemahoney.com> and <http://thecanaryislander.com> or read his latest book, 'Letters from the Canary Islands' and Spain' (ISBN: 9780995602731). Available in paperback from Amazon, Waterstones and all good bookshops, as well as Kindle editions.*

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