NEWS LESSON

Would You Pay Thousands for a Balcony View?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What would you pay for a perfect view of a special event?
2. Would you rather be close to the action or comfortable nearby?
3. When can an event start to feel more for visitors than local people?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**average**	☐	A	come together in one place
2	**property**	☐	B	groups of people walking slowly together in a line
3	**customers**	☐	C	something that many people want to have
4	**product**	☐	D	the usual amount, not very high and not very low
5	**processions**	☐	E	a building or land that someone owns
6	**decorated**	☐	F	people who buy things or pay for a service
7	**desirable**	☐	G	made to look nice with extra things
8	**gather**	☐	H	something that people make and sell

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

During Holy Week, some people rent a balcony above the route. The streets are free, but you wait three hours behind a wall of people.

1 Imagine paying €9,000 to watch people walking through the streets. It sounds impossible, but during Holy Week in Seville, Spain, some of the best balconies cost almost that much to rent for the celebrations.

2 Holy Week, known in Spanish as Semana Santa, is the biggest event of the year in Seville. Religious groups carry large decorated images through the streets, and crowds gather to watch them pass. Some people come because of their faith. Others come for the music, the history and the atmosphere.

3 The streets fill up early and can become extremely crowded. A balcony above the main route gives you a clear, comfortable view without standing for hours among other people. Some property owners rent out these spaces to visitors, and special packages may include food and drinks, which makes the experience even more expensive.

4 In March 2026, local property professionals reported that central balconies were renting for an average of around €6,000 for the whole week. Particularly desirable places, sometimes with catering included, could reach almost €9,000. These are prices for the week, not the price of standing outside for a few minutes, and the highest figures were for particular locations or packages, not for every balcony.

5 Some people say that owners should be free to rent their property for whatever customers will pay. A balcony is private, nobody has to take the offer, and owners have every right to make a profit from a space they already own.

6 Others worry that an important religious and cultural tradition is turning into an expensive product. They fear that ordinary residents will be pushed away from the best places in their own city, and that the celebration will slowly start to feel like a show for visitors.

7 Of course, people can still watch many processions from the public streets without paying anything. But crowds, limited space and long waits make the experience very different. Arriving three hours early to stand behind a wall of people is not the same as sitting down with a good view and a plate of food.

8 So the story raises an interesting question. Should the best seats in the house at a shared tradition always go to the person who can pay the most?

Sources: Europa Press. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The city council has limited balcony rental prices. T F NG
2. Holy Week is the biggest event of the year in Seville. T F NG
3. Nobody can watch the processions without paying. T F NG
4. The quoted prices cover the whole week, not a single procession. T F NG
5. The writer says that every balcony costs about €9,000. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

atmosphere **catering** **crowd** **faith** **festival** **residents** **route**

1. The old streets, the music and the candles gave the night a magical _____ .
2. Many _____ of Seville cannot afford the best places in their own city.
3. The price of the balcony includes _____ , so you get lunch and drinks while you watch.
4. Some people go to the processions because of their _____ , not only for the show.
5. We arrived early to get a good place on the _____ the processions follow.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Last spring, we _____ for three hours behind a wall of people. (STAND)
2. Holy Week _____ as Semana Santa in Spanish. (KNOW)
3. In March 2026, local professionals _____ the average prices. (REPORT)
4. Some fear the celebration is _____ into a show for visitors. (TURN)
5. People can still watch many processions without _____ anything. (PAY)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some linking words show a contrast (although, however), some show a reason (because) and some show a result (so). Read the whole sentence before you choose.

although	because	despite	however	instead	so	therefore

1. _____ the streets are free, many people wait for hours.
2. Many owners rent out their balconies _____ visitors will pay a lot.
3. The streets are very crowded, _____ some visitors pay for a balcony.
4. Some people think owners can charge what they want. _____ , others say the tradition belongs to everyone.
5. Many families cannot pay for a balcony. _____ of sitting down, they stand in the street.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What should remain open to everyone during a major local celebration?
2. Does renting out a balcony change a neighbourhood tradition?
3. Would you choose a free crowded view or a quiet expensive one?

9 Role-play: who gets the balcony?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the balcony owner

A travel company wants to rent your balcony for Holy Week at a very high price. A neighbour's family has watched from it for years. Listen to the neighbour, then decide: sell it to the company, keep it for the family, or find a compromise.

Student B · the neighbour

Your family has always watched the processions from your neighbour's balcony. Ask to use it again this year. Explain why it matters to you and offer something in return.

Useful phrases

I was hoping to ask you a favour.
We've always watched from here.
I'd love to say yes, but it's a lot of money.
What if we shared the week?
I'm afraid I can't do that.
Could we find a compromise?

Afterwards, tell the class: who got the balcony, and was it a fair decision?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 E · 3 F · 4 H · 5 B · 6 G · 7 C · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 NG · 2 T · 3 F · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 atmosphere · 2 residents · 3 catering · 4 faith · 5 route

6 Verb forms

1 stood · 2 is known · 3 reported · 4 turning · 5 paying

7 Language focus

1 Although · 2 because · 3 so · 4 However · 5 Instead

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