

Police Seize Cocaine Dinner Set

Police in Spain say they have arrested a man who received a postal delivery of a 42-piece dinner set made with 20kg (44lb) of cocaine.

The illicit cups, plates and bowls were dispatched in February from Maracaibo in Venezuela to Barcelona, via London.

Spain is the main European entry point for illicit cocaine.

Police say the suspect may have been recruited by Venezuelan gangsters, who would have collected the package and then extracted the illegal drugs.

Following a tip-off from their Venezuelan colleagues, Spanish officers pounced on the 35-year-old suspect - identified only by his initials, JVLL - as he received the package at his home.

It weighed about 30kg, two-thirds of which was found to be cocaine.

According to the police, parcels sent in the post are a popular method of smuggling medium-size shipments of cocaine.

The drug can be diluted within liquids. Another method is to impregnate clothing or other materials with the cocaine.

Two weeks ago, Spanish police arrested a Chilean man with a broken leg whose "plaster cast" had been made with the illegal substance.

The 66-year-old, who was detained at Barcelona airport, also carried six cans of beer and two hollowed-out stools that contained the drug. Altogether, he was caught in possession of 4.85kg of cocaine. BBC