

Valencia



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INTRODUCTION

Valencia is a place you're bound to love. Washed by the Mediterranean, it is the capital of the Region of Valencia and is famous for its beaches and exceptional climate.

History, tradition and the future await you in this city full of contrasts. Discover traces of the remote past in the old town centre and be amazed by its avant-garde buildings. The possibilities are endless.

► SILK EXCHANGE



Here you will find one of Europe's largest centres for the dissemination of science and culture: the **City of Arts and Sciences**. You will be amazed by the avant-garde architecture of the stunning **Hemisfèric** building and by the **Oceanogràfic**, the largest aquarium in Europe. By contrast, in the streets of the old town centre, known as **Ciutat Vella**, you will find World Heritage Sites such as the **Silk Exchange**.

Valencia has a stunning natural environment. The mild Mediterranean climate invites you to enjoy the sea all year round. Its **urban beaches** are perfect for sunbathing, swimming and enjoying a drink at one of the lively terraces. If you are looking for peace and quiet, get away to one of its **unspoilt stretches of sand** and lie down amongst the dunes. To get away from it all, just take

a walk in one of the green spaces running along the former course of the Turia River or breathe in the pure air of the **Albufera Nature Reserve**, with its beautiful landscape of beaches and rice fields.

Valencia's cuisine will seduce your senses. In the area around the port and **Las Arenas** and **La Malvarrosa** beaches you will find great restaurants with sea views where you can try Valencia's most international dish: **paella**. If you prefer something more innovative, you can treat yourself in a signature restaurant.

Join us in exploring Valencia, a fascinating city full of light, and let yourself be captivated by the Mediterranean character of its people who will make you feel right at home.



DISCOVER VALENCIA

NEIGHBOURHOOD BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

▲ CIUTADELLA DE VALÈNCIA

Valencia's cultural, natural and gastronomic heritage is immense. Discover this on a tour of its neighbourhoods.

CIUTAT VELLA: THE HISTORIC DISTRICT, FULL OF LIFE

Soak up the history while enjoying the very lively atmosphere. Wander the narrow streets of **El Carmen** neighbourhood and have a drink at one of its terraces. This neighbourhood is the heart of nightlife and culture in the city centre. Within its historic town walls are such magical places as the **Torres de Serranos towers** and the **Botanical Gardens**.

For shopping go to **La Seu**, Valencia's oldest district. Most of the shops are to be found on the streets of **La Paz** and **Poeta Querol**, or in **Plaza del Ayuntamiento** square.

If you like crafts, try **Plaza Redonda** market, in the **La Xerea** neighbourhood, and come away with some souvenirs.



▲ PLAZA DEL AYUNTAMIENTO SQUARE

The **Mercado Central** market gives its name to another of the neighbourhoods in the old **Ciutat Vella** district. Here you will find produce from Valencia's vegetable fields. If you wish to sample these vegetables cooked, reserve a table at one of the area's charming restaurants. To work up an appetite, visit the **Cathedral** or the **Silk Exchange**.

San Francisco, the biggest neighbourhood in the old district, has one of the city's major cultural attractions: the **Teatro Principal** theatre.

RUZAFÁ NEIGHBOURHOOD: YOUNG AND COSMOPOLITAN

This multicultural neighbourhood, full of contrasts, is in vogue. Go out for dinner, dancing, to an exhibition... everything is possible in "Valencia's Soho".

Ruzafa Market is at the heart of this neighbourhood. Stroll around its stalls and let yourself be captivated by its colours and flavours. You will find **restaurants**, bars, taverns and terraces with something to suit all tastes.

Take a look at **San Valero y San Vicente Mártir Church** and you will understand why they call it Ruzafa Cathedral.

SEASIDE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The city's seafaring spirit is concentrated in these neighbourhoods. Valencia's urban beaches are grouped together here, with many restaurants, perfect places to try paella or fresh fish.

Enjoy one of Valencia's gems: the **El Cabañal** neighbourhood. You will love strolling past its colourfully tiled house fronts, and visiting its fresh produce market.



▲ CENTRAL MARKET



▲ BOTANICAL GARDENS



▲ SERRANO TOWERS

CULTURE

Valencia has museums to suit all tastes and the incredible City of Arts and Sciences, one of the most spectacular modern art buildings in the world.

MUSEUMS

San Pío V Museum of Fine Arts

Here you can see works by great painters such as Velázquez, Hieronymus Bosch and Goya. Its collections of medieval painters and painters of the Valencian school, such as Ribera and Sorolla, are outstanding.

History Museum

Immerse yourself in Valencia's historical past through its archaeological, photographic and virtual collections. The building that houses the museum used to be a water deposit.

"Fallas" Museum

Las Fallas is Valencia's most important festival. This museum houses the *ninots indultats*, that is, the sometimes gigantic papier mâché figures from the festival that were saved from the fire as being the best of their year.

Valencia Institute of Modern Art (IVAM)

Enjoy its permanent collections of Julio González and Ignacio Pinazo and its temporary exhibitions of painting, photography and modern art.

González Martí National Museum of Ceramics and Sumptuary Arts

Explore its extensive collection of ceramics from Manises, Paterna and Alcora. There are interesting Chinese and Japanese pieces, as well as pieces by artists such as Picasso.

Sleep with sharks, see the earth from above or go inside a DNA structure. These are some of the possibilities at the **City of Arts and Sciences**.

CITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Designed by the architect from Valencia, Santiago Calatrava, it is one of Europe's largest centres for the dissemination of science and culture. It comprises several buildings with amazing avant-garde architecture.



If you cross the **l'Umbracle**, an enormous green space with sculptures by contemporary artists, you will come to a colossal transparent glass structure – the **Príncipe Felipe Science Museum**. Following its motto, "Forbidden not to touch", it offers various interactive exhibitions.

In **L'Oceanogràfic**, the largest aquarium in Europe, you can listen to the sounds

of the sea, be surrounded by sharks, or walk amongst penguins. In the stunning **Hemisfèric** cinema, in the form of an eye, you can watch IMAX films that will reveal the mysteries of the universe to you.

The complex is completed by the **Palau de les Arts** auditorium, a building designed in the form of an immense sculpture that is a venue for opera.

TASTING VALENCIA

Savour a plate of **paella** and a good wine as you're caressed by the Mediterranean breeze. By the port and **Las Arenas** and **La Malvarrosa** beaches you will find fantastic restaurants overlooking the sea.

In the Albufera area, you should try **all i pebre** (garlic and paprika) – a potato, paprika, garlic and eel stew – or **suquet de peix**, a typical fish casserole with different types of fish and a light sauce.

Don't forget to taste **horchata**, a delicious drink made from tiger nuts, accompanied by **fartons**, which are soft pastries sprinkled with sugar.

Something more innovative? Look for one of the signature Mediterranean cuisine restaurants. Some have Michelin stars.

Market cuisine is very popular in Valencia. The **Central Market**, a modernist gem, offers produce from Valencia's vegetable fields and the sea. Stroll around its traditional stalls and delicatessens and admire the light shining through its domes and stained glass windows. The historic **Colón Market** will surprise you with its offer of cuisine. Enjoy a gourmet tapa or try its tastings or workshops.



VALENCIA THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS

Whenever you choose to visit Valencia, you will find endless activities to enjoy. Here are just a few.

SUMMER

If you like music, there are many festivals to enjoy in the Region of Valencia during the summer. **Benicàssim International Festival (FIB)** is one of the biggest independent music festivals in Spain. **Low Festival** and **Arenal Sound** also have great selections of *indie*, *rock* and electronic music.



AUTUMN

9 October is **Region of Valencia Day**. Join the parades, processions and dances throughout the city.

Treat yourself in October at the **Valencia Cuisine Open-Restaurant Week**, a mouth-watering initiative in which the best restaurants offer exquisite set menus at irresistible prices.



WINTER

Valencia's biggest festival takes place in March: **Las Fallas bonfire festival**. Some 400 enormous figures, of a strongly satirical and critical kind, fill the streets in this festival declared to be Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.-



La cremá is the most popular moment: the figures that are displayed in the streets are burnt on the night of 19-20 March. The smell of gunpowder from the *masclatás* (firecracker shows) is everywhere, along with bands playing music and regional costume parades.

SPRING

In May you can buy craft ceramics at the **L'Escuraeta Market**, in **Plaza de la Reina** square.

Do you want to discover Valencian folklore? Don't miss the traditional **dansà** that takes place on the evening of the second Sunday in May as part of the festival of the **Virgin of Los Desamparados**, the patron saint of Valencia.



▲ LAS FALLAS BONFIRE FESTIVAL

BEACHES AND NATURE

Take a plunge at one of Valencia's beaches. **Las Arenas, La Malvarrosa** and **El Cabañal** beaches are 15 minutes from the city centre. If you are looking for beaches in a more natural setting, ten kilometres away you will find more unspoilt ones, surrounded by sand dunes and dense vegetation. Some of the most famous of these beaches are **L'Arbre del Gos, El Saler** and **La Devesa**.

Visit the **Albufera Nature Reserve**, a navigable wetland area with a great biodiversity of flora and fauna. Enter the amazing **Don Juan Cave**, in Jalance, with stalactites and stalagmites in underground spaces that have such evocative names as **Lake of Desires** and the **Devil's Grotto**. Or follow the **Hanging Bridges route** in Chulilla and go hiking in the beautiful surroundings of the **Turia River canyon**.

EL SALER BEACH

CITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Photo: MarkBliza/123rf.com

VALENCIA WITH THE FAMILY

Valencia is a perfect city to enjoy with the kids. Take them on a boat ride in the **Albufera Nature Reserve**, see them smile at the **Lead Soldier Museum** or enjoy the outdoors at a **Gulliver-themed** park, full of jumping ramps and slides.

At the **City of Arts and Sciences** the kids can have fun learning: see the animals that live in the **L'Oceanogràfic** and interact with learning activities in the **Arts and Sciences Museum**.

Another great place for the family is **Terra Mítica** (Benidorm). Near Valencia, this theme park offers fun and attractions for all ages.

THE HIDDEN CITY

If you have more time, we suggest a visit to other lesser-known places in Valencia.

PARKS AND GARDENS

Stroll around and relax in one of the pleasant spots in **Turia Gardens**, one of the largest city parks in Spain, with recreational and sports areas.

At the historic and luxuriant **El Real Gardens, Moorish** in origin, you can admire the numerous sculptures and fountains.



SECRET MUSEUMS

Get pleasantly surprised by museums such as the **College of the High Art of Silk**. They will explain to you the importance of Valencia on the Silk Road. The city was the nerve centre of silk manufacture from the 8th century.

At the **Valencia Museum of Ethnology** you can see how Valencian society has changed over the years.

Soak up the art at the **Cathedral Museum of Valencia**, with canvases by Goya, Llanos and Almedina.

If you like literature, at Malvarrosa Beach you can visit the **Blasco Ibáñez House-Museum**, where this Valencian writer lived. The **La Almoína Archaeological Museum** is a large underground space revealing the most monumental elements of the city's Roman, Visigoth and Arab history.

MONUMENTS

Valencia is full of amazing monuments. Next to the Central Market you will find **Los Santos Juanes Church**, originally a mosque. See Antonio Palomino's Baroque frescoes covering the vault and walls.

Visit the home of illustrious 19th century figures at **Cervelló Palace**. The facade retains its original Neoclassical appearance and is flanked by two towers and balconies at two levels.

Tinglados del Puerto is a great place to go for a walk. This emblematic complex of buildings is a true architectural gem and an essential icon of the city.

VALENCIA'S ROOFTOPS

For a full panoramic view of Valencia, get away to the **Pico Garbí Viewpoint**, in the Calderona mountains, some 30 kilometres from Valencia.

EXPERIENCE VALENCIA'S NIGHTLIFE

Do you like going out at night? In Valencia you have a lot to choose from.

Stroll around the oldest streets in Valencia, in the **El Carmen** neighbourhood. You are sure to find a place you like, a terrace to sit at or a restaurant to have dinner.

The most alternative places are in **Ruzafa**. Find a sophisticated bar where people go for drinks after work, or dance to 80s music at a club with personality.

The **Marina de Valencia** has the most chic atmosphere. Bars, restaurants and clubs with a feeling of luxury where you can relax next to the sea.

TOURS AND WALKS

If you visit Valencia during the **Fallas** festival, you can spend a whole day seeing some of the spectacular papier-mâché figures. In the centre, go to see the Fallas figure in the Town Hall square. It is not entered in the contest but is one of the most spectacular figures. From there you can go on to see several Fallas figures, close to each other.

Are you interested in the **Silk Road**? Visit the **Velluters** neighbourhood, nowadays known as the El Pilar neighbourhood, and see the **Silk Exchange** and the **College of the High Art of Silk**. In the vicinity you will discover buildings with centuries of history that are well worth a visit,

such as **El Pilar Church** and the **Old General Hospital of Valencia**, now a public library.

Touring Valencia by bike is very easy, thanks to more than **120 kilometres of bike lanes** and the old Turia River bed, now a garden crossing the city centre. There are many possible routes. Start at the **City of Arts and Sciences** and go as far as the rice fields and the lagoon at **La Albufera**, wafted by the salty smell of the sea. Or follow the **Vía Augusta** Way, the old Roman road near the coast, as far as the **Marjal dels Moros**, where you can watch an unforgettable sunset.

WHAT TO VISIT NEAR VALENCIA

If you have time, you can enjoy the following destinations close to the city.

HUERTA DE VALENCIA REGION



You can visit this area on foot or on horseback. You can take part in picking vegetables, learn to cook a paella, and then enjoy eating it.

EL PUIG MONASTERY

Visit the **Museum of Print and Graphic Arts**, a Renaissance-style religious building with four defensive towers.

SAGUNTO

More than 2,000 years old, the city of Sagunto boasts many places of interest. Highlights are the **Roman ruins** and **Sagunto Castle**.

VALENCIA WINE ROUTE

The **Utiel-Requena** region is famous for its wines. Discover the vineyards that dot its rocky landscape. Visit a winery and taste wine from Valencia.

MANISES



The charming city of Manises is famous for its ceramics. You can visit the **Ceramics Museum**, housed in an 18th century building decorated with beautiful tiles, and see monuments like the **Els Arcs** aqueduct.

HOW TO GET THERE

TRAIN

High-speed trains connect the city with Madrid, Cuenca and Albacete. In addition, long-distance trains connect Valencia with the main Spanish cities.

AIRPORT

Valencia Airport, also known as Manises Airport, connects the city with the main national and international destinations.

CAR

Valencia has a modern road network making it easy to reach. The AP-7 Mediterranean motorway, which runs from north to south along the Levante coast, connects with the European motorway network and the A-23 Sagunto-Somport and A-3 Madrid-Valencia motorways.

VALENCIAN: CO-OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Two languages coexist in Valencia: Valencian, the Valencia Region's own language, and Castilian Spanish, the official language of the Spanish State. Most of the signs and signals are in both languages.

GETTING AROUND IN VALENCIA

The urban buses, trams and the underground reach all points of the city. Valencia is very good for getting around by bicycle. For nearby destinations, use the local trains.



MORE INFORMATION:

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