

Gastronomy Guide
Region of Valencia 🇪🇸



Savour the
essence of the
Region of Valencia



MEDITERRANEAN
ATTITUDE

Dishes, products and recipes.



Welcome
to the Region
of Valencia





/Savour the Region of Valencia...

...and discover its essence in each dish

On your next visit, discover the essence of the Region of Valencia in every dish. Close your eyes and with each bite try to feel some of the history, culture and Mediterranean passion present in each recipe. Almost without realising it, your taste buds will enjoy a rich legacy of products and culinary techniques honed over the centuries in traditional dishes; slow-cooked wisdom passed down from generation to generation. Paellas, fideuás, cocas, sweet potato pies... have evolved in the hands of young Valencian talent towards a creative cuisine that is as exquisite as it is surprising.

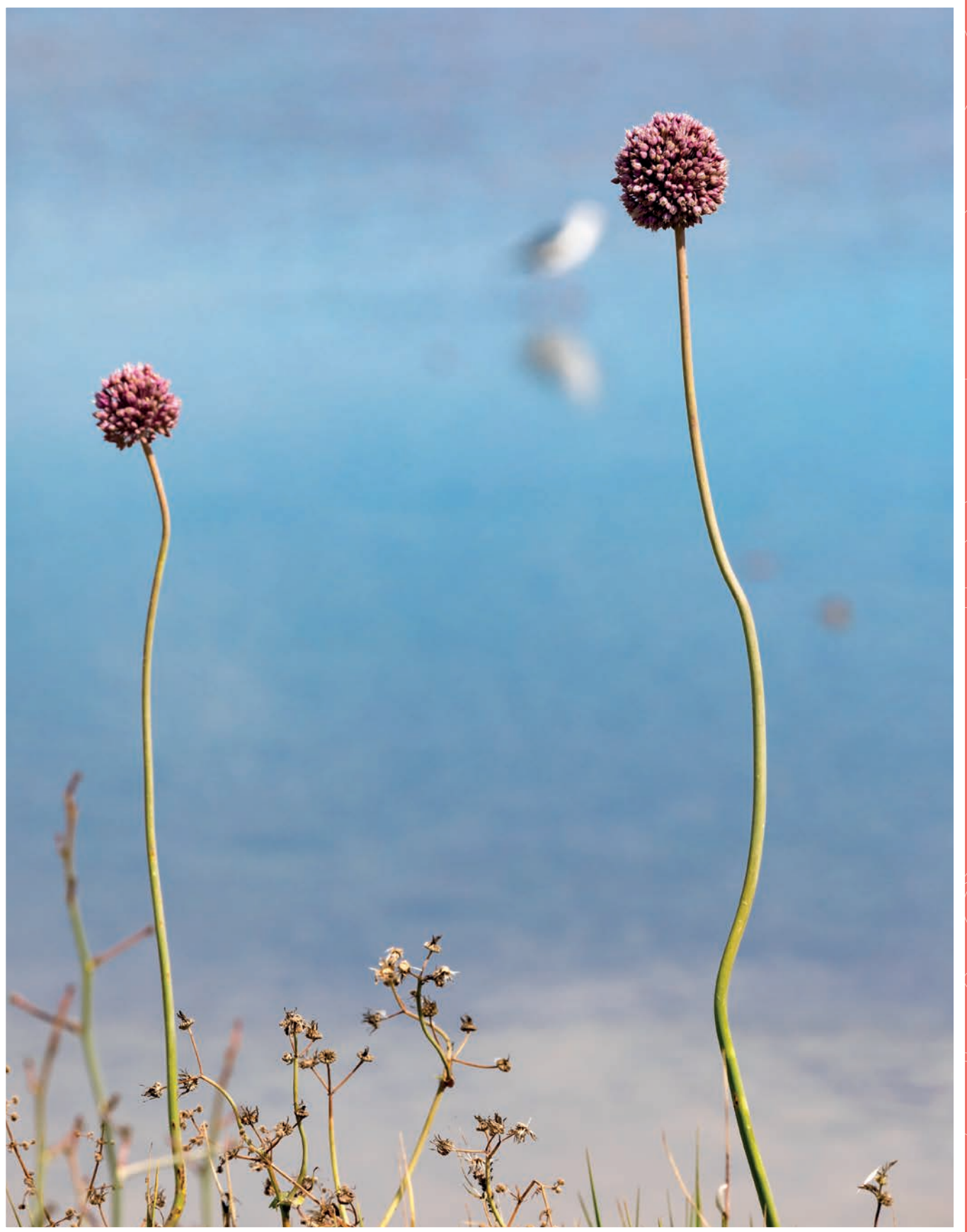
Red prawns from Dénia, artichoke from Benicarló, *turrones* from Xixona and Alicante, nisperos from Callosa d'en Sarrià, rice from l'Albufera... outstanding products that enhance the flavour of

each dish and become a more than justified reason to enjoy a gastro getaway.

Following the wine tourism routes of Alicante, Utiel-Requena, Valencia and Castelló, you will be able to discover the Region of Valencia's exceptional wines. You will fall in love with not only its reds, whites, cavas and sweets, but also the passion and dedication of the winemakers.

Produce from the land and sea, centuries-old techniques, traditional recipes, wineries, routes around wine and oil, and numerous gastronomic experiences all await you in the Region of Valencia. The table is set, it just needs you!





Contents



06. **Gastronomy**

- |
- 08. Exquisit Mediterrani
- 09. Suns and stars
- 10. Rice cuisine
- 12. Produce protected by designations of origin and other unique products
- 16. Mediterranean dishes
- 18. Desserts and sweets

20. **Oenology and wine tourism**

- |
- 22. The Region of Valencia's designations of origin
- 24. Wine tourism routes to really experience it

26. **Oil, culture and experiences**

- |
- 28. Oleotourism

30. **Fishing tourism, a marine immersion**

32. **Guardians of tradition**

- |
- 34. Historic markets
- 35. From the museum to the table

36. **Traditional recipes**

44. **Shopping**

48. **Region of Valencia Tourism Centres (CdT)**

50. **The 10 pillars of gastronomy in the Region of Valencia**

52. **Practical information**





THE
Gastronomy
IN THE
REGION OF VALENCIA



The Region of Valencia's cuisine is the result of an amalgamation of cultures that settled in this territory throughout history, as well as the influence of the trade favoured by its privileged proximity to the *Mare Nostrum*, or Mediterranean sea. Not only did goods from distant lands arrive at its ports, but also important cultural knowledge that enriched its stews and expanded its culinary techniques.







Cuisine

The Region of Valencia's gastronomy has been forged naturally and gradually over the centuries, giving its local produce a leading role. Each of the delicacies that this part of the Mediterranean has to offer has a genuine character, linked to its geographic location, its particular climate and the care with which its growth is monitored. Thanks to these unique features, a surprising magic emerges from the stoves, and innumerable recipes are born that reflect the people's way of life and cultural exchange.

The **Exquisit Mediterranean** brand was created to protect all this wealth; identifying companies, associations, institutions and gastro events that, with their work, passion and know-how, make the Region of Valencia's cuisine a unique, one-of-a-kind experience. This cachet not only recognises respect for the product, but also the techniques that have crossed the Mediterranean and are part of humanity's culinary heritage.



EXQUISIT
mediterranean



Mediterranean diet

Directly related to the idiosyncrasies of the Valencian people and their particular way of understanding gastronomy is the **Mediterranean Diet**. Declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2013, it recognises the values of culinary tradition, going beyond a mere nutritional concept. This award, shared with other Mediterranean countries, takes into account various factors such as the farming, fishing, the way of preserving and transforming the food and the dissemination of the Mediterranean diet in local markets, fiestas and festivals. In short, it encompasses a true philosophy of life.

**Cultural Heritage of
Humanity by UNESCO**



Suns and Stars



in Spain. Today her restaurant, Casa Pepa, continues to be a benchmark.

In a gourmet destination like the Region of Valencia, there is a treat for the taste buds at every corner, from the most modest of bars to the most exclusive of restaurants. The creativity and innovation of the latter is recognised with more and more suns and stars that illuminate the national culinary universe. Throughout the Valencian territory, you will find more than twenty Michelin-starred restaurants. Although each one has its own personality, they all share a deep respect for their roots, a desire to update recipes and creativity in the kitchen. Local produce, seasonal ingredients, sustainability and a lot of love for cooking are common ingredients of a gastronomy that surprises in terms of its flavours, textures, presentation and pairing.

The good work of these restaurants has likewise not gone unnoticed by the Repsol Guide, which has awarded more than fifty establishments in the region its coveted soles, or suns. Eating in the Region of Valencia is the best way to savour life as it deserves.

That magic in the kitchen, which leads to these distinctions, is born from the

creativity of renowned chefs such as Quique Dacosta, who has several Michelin stars at his Quique Dacosta restaurant (Dénia), one of the World's 50 Best Restaurants, and in El Poblet (Valencia). As well as the work of Ricard Camarena at his namesake Valencian restaurant, Kiko Moya at his restaurant L'Escaleta in Cocentaina, and Alberto Ferruz at BonAmb in Xàbia, to name a few. Each of their culinary proposals offers a sensory journey designed solely for the diner's enjoyment.

The women who have been making a name for themselves in showcasing Valencian haute cuisine deserve a special mention. Vicky Sevilla stands out, having received a Michelin star at her restaurant Arrels, becoming the youngest female chef in Spain to do so. Other chefs who are synonymous with excellence in the kitchen include Carito Lorenzo, Fierro; María José Martínez, Lienzo; Begoña Rodrigo, La Salita; Susi Díaz, La Finca; Cristina Figueira, El Xato; Clara Puig, Tula; and Alejandra Herrados, Atalaya. Not forgetting Pepa Romans, one of the first women with a Michelin star

But there are not only renowned female names leading the kitchens, but female front-of-house managers and sommeliers shining in the Region of Valencia's best restaurants. For their dedication and good work, mention should be made of Manuela Romeralo, sommelier at Llista Negra; Raquel Torrijos, who has been a sommelier, front-of-house manager and now owner of Trenca-dish; Arancha Herrera, restaurant and front-of-house manager at Hikari Yatitori Bar; and Eva Pizarro, sommelier at Fierro, as well as many others. Their devotion to service, experience and attention to detail make them indispensable to their establishments.

MICHELIN
GUIDE



SOLES
REPSOL





Rice

cuisine



Visiting the Region of Valencia just to try one of its rice dishes is completely understandable. The reason for the success of this international dish is no secret: spectacular rice grown in the municipalities surrounding the l'Albufera and Marjal Pego-Oliva Natural Parks, other local ingredients of the highest quality from the land or the sea, and the mastery of recipes shaped over centuries.

This may surprise you, but there are more than eighty thousand varieties of rice in the world. There are only three covered by the **Arròs de València Designation of Origin**: Senia-Bahía, Bomba and Albufera. Although the cultivation of this cereal introduced by the Arabs dates back to the 10th century, its production has been established and perfected in the Valencian wetlands.

If you want to take your first steps in the kitchen, you should be aware that some varieties are more suitable than others, depending on the dish in question. If you feel like rice with a creamy texture and juicy grains once cooked that absorb the flavour well, the best option is the **Senia-Bahía** variety. If you are not sure about how long to cook it for, the **Bomba** variety is a great choice as it offers good resistance to overcooking without losing its ability to absorb flavours. Finally, the **Albufera** variety is the youngest, but also creates *meloso* creamy rice since its grains have an internal consistency and firm texture. Would you like to know a trick to make sure you are buying certified rice? Look at the label on the package; if there is an outline of a hut and it says 'Consell Regulador de la Denominació d'Origen Arròs de València', it is what you are looking for.



Among the most traditional recipes in the Region of Valencia are the well-known *arrocito* from Castelló province, *paella valenciana* and *arroz alicantino con salmorreta*, rice from Alicante province in a flavourful sauce made from tomato, ñora peppers and garlic.

A treat for the taste buds

Rice recipes in the Region of Valencia have evolved over time, although many ingredients and processes have remained unshakable. These humble paellas prepared in the barraca cabins and farmhouses of the 19th century evolved to become beach bars, eateries and picnic areas on Valencian beaches. Today, the specialties of the three provinces provide dozens of gastronomic experiences: delicious brothy caldoso rice dishes such as *arròs amb fesols i naps*, stewed rice in earthenware casserole dishes such as *arròs al forn* (baked rice) and *arròs amb costra* (rice with a crust). And, of course, the dry rice dishes that include paella –which is made in a shallow metal container of the same name– which can be made with chicken, rabbit or game, shellfish and fish or even vegetables, among dozens of other possibilities.



But beyond the rice specialties, there is the culture of **sharing a paella**, getting together with friends and family to enjoy the ritual of cooking and eating it. It is no less common for towns and cities to organise their own gastro festivals in which visitors are always invited to participate.

One could talk long and hard about how to prepare these rice dishes as it is not as simple as it seems, but requires great control not only of the type of rice and the other ingredients, but also of the intensity of the flame, the oil and the proportion and type of water. It is not easy to do at home but, with practice, you can become a true specialist.



Produce protected

By designations of origin and other unique products

Coming from the land, the sea or the mountains, the best produce from Levantine terrain supply the Region of Valencia's pantry and are ready to offer an exclusive gastro route. Discover the delights that will surprise your taste buds in the most unexpected corners of the region.





Products with designation of origin or protected geographical indication



Artichoke from Benicarló

Compact and packed, intensely flavoured, bright green colour, with a small opening where the leaves meet, and good resistance to blackening after cutting. This is how artichokes are grown in the Baix Maestrat comarca. The designation of origin is limited to the areas of Benicarló, Cálig, Peñíscola and Vinaroz, where they are harvested between October and June. You will find dozens of ways to try them..

Ribera del Xúquer Kaki

Biting into a Ribera del Xúquer persimmon is synonymous with pleasure, sweetness and a tropical aroma. The variety grown in Valencia province is Rojo Brillante, better known as Persimon, the brand under which it is sold. It is a large fruit with an average diameter of 80 millimetres, oblong in shape and with a firm consistency. A curious fact: to eliminate the kaki's astringency, an anoxia (without oxygen) chamber is used to eliminate the tannins so that it tastes even better. A bite provides vitamin C, pro-vitamin A, phosphorus and numerous amino acids.

Nisperos from Callosa d'en Sarrià

Sweet or slightly sour in flavour, loquat from Callosa d'en Sarrià proudly display their protected designation of origin. If you are not yet familiar with this fruit, you will be surprised by its orangey or yellowish colour, its shiny and compact pulp and its ovoid shape with a slight curvature where it joins the branch. The spectacle of colour is served up in Marina Baixa during the spring.

Tiger Nut from Valencia

This much appreciated tuber deserves a place of honour on this list. Did you know that tiger nut is the original ingredient of horchata? With a protected designation of origin, its special characteristics mean it is only feasible to grow it in a localised area in the north of l'Horta de Valencia. The process of obtaining the tiger nut requires great patience: nine months growing, harvesting, washing and a minimum of three months drying. The wait is worth it; the tiger nut has a high starch and amino acid content, is rich in minerals and provides proteins and unsaturated fats. And if you can drink your horchata looking at the sea, even better.

Montaña de Alicante Cherries

In the north of Alicante province and the south of Valencia province, extraordinary cherries regulated under a Protected Geographical Indication are grown. Their sweet taste, the firmness of their flesh and their size are common characteristics of the burlat, picota, picota ambrunesa, early lory, prime giant, sweet heart and brooks, as well as others. The care that goes into harvesting them by hand without a doubt gives this tasty fruit additional value. Starting in spring, you can see the fields dotted with red.





Vinalopó Table Grapes packed on the vine

Very thin skin, uniform colouration and a delicious flavour are the main characteristics that define this type of table grape that grows inside a paper bag and remains there for at least 60 days. As odd as it may seem, with this method the fruit is protected from inclement weather. Its appearance is spotless. There are seven DO protected varieties: in light skin you will find aledo, ideal, domingo, doña María, rosetti and victoria, and with black skin, red globe. Grown in Valle Medio del Vinalopó, they can be eaten from the end of August to mid-January.

Mollar de Elx Pomegranate

With a voluptuous shape and a colour that ranges from cream to intense ruby, the Mollar de Elx pomegranate is a fruit that entices with its sweetness. The pips are also white and edible. It is considered to be one of the best in the world. Geographically, the designation of origin covers more than 40 municipalities in the Alicante comarcas of Bajo Vinalopó, Alacantí and Vega Baja. The benefits of this super fruit include antioxidant, detoxifying and even heart-healthy properties.



Valencian Citrus Fruits

Oranges, mandarins and lemons are included in the Valencian Citrus Fruits Protected Geographical Indication. This is not just an administrative matter, but a link with the senses and memory as the Region of Valencia smells of orange blossom and tastes of citrus fruits. The scent of a freshly squeezed orange is something you never forget.

Turrón from Xixona and Alicante

This sweet, which started out seasonal but is now sold year round, was one of the first to obtain official protection. Its ingredients and processes are carefully examined to constantly ensure excellent quality. Turrón with the Xixona and Alicante PGI is made with natural ingredients including almonds, honey and sugar. And the production and packaging area has to be in Xixona, although the ingredients can come from anywhere in the Region of Valencia.



Other unique food in the Region of Valencia



Maestrat Black Truffle

This is the black gold of Valencian cuisine, and one of the flavours you will discover in many

innovative recipes. Revered by the Ancient Greeks, they are produced in different places that have the right altitude and climate. To discover their origin, you should visit Benassal, Ares del Maestrat, Culla, El Toro, Catí or Morella. You will also find black truffles in the Valencian town of Andilla. Plan a day trip between January and March to see how they are collected.



Red prawns from Dénia

Knowing they are an intense red, delicious and a product of the sea from around Dénia, what would you say it is?

Without a doubt, these red prawns need no introduction. The Creative City of Gastronomy is the cradle of this produce that is fished between Dénia and Ibiza, at 600 metres deep. You can order it cooked in sea water or grilled, it is exquisite either way, and a good source of B vitamins, iron and iodine.



Vinaroz tiger prawns

The texture and flavour of Vinaroz shrimp are unique for several reasons: the low salinity of the water where they live, the

moderate temperature throughout the year and the food they eat, enriched by deposits from the Ebro river, which all give their meat unique organoleptic qualities. How can you identify them? Their length, up to 20 centimetres, and a colour that ranges from pink to brown.



Embutido Sausage from Requena

Among the unique food in the Region of Valencia, be sure not to miss embutido sausage from Requena, which includes

several products that stand out from other embutido sausages due to their flavour and aroma. The secret of their quality lies in the type of meat and in the selection of the parts used to make each embutido sausage: onion blood sausage, güeña, longaniza, salchichón, sobrasada, perro, chorizo and orza.



Tomato from El Perelló

From the Valencian countryside around the town of El Perelló (Sueca) come small treasures that delight

diners and chefs alike. On your next visit to the Region of Valencia, ask for something with this tomato as the main ingredient and you will see that there are few as fleshy, sweet and with such thin skin as it. One of the things that makes it unique is that it is grown organically and sustainably in beach sand.





MEDITERRANEAN DISHES

Casseroles full of flavour, aroma, tradition and affection are made with the Region of Valencia's exquisite products. Gastronomy tourism lets you discover the richness that geography and history contribute to each recipe. The popular inland stews have nothing to do with the seafood creations but, together, they make up the Mediterranean's unique cuisine.



Starters to whet the appetite

Starters come from the land and the sea, even combined: try the fresh taste of a tomato salad seasoned with just a few drops of oil and accompanied by salted fish. The latter can be anything from *tonyina de tronc* (tuna) to a *mojama*, roe, cod or *budellet* (dried and salted tuna gut) that brighten up a salad as well as enhance a casserole. Putting a spoonful of *titaina*, *espenecat* or *esgarraet* on a piece of artisan bread is just the prelude to the dishes you are going to enjoy. Other suggestions include *borreta de melva* (fish stew), *farcida coca*, tuna marinated in seven spices and roasted scallops with artichokes and sweetbread.

Fideuás, stews and casseroles

Traditional dishes from the Region of Valencia go far beyond rice. There are some, such as *fideuá*, a typical recipe from Gandia, in which rice is replaced by fideo pasta. This dish also has a lot of variants and even competitions. In certain areas, seafood fideuás abound with thin or thick fideo pasta, and clams or delicious specialties with black fideos dyed with squid or cuttlefish ink.



In addition to all of the above, there is also a range of *putxeros*, stews, casseroles and *tarongetes* with much heavier ingredients, suitable for the colder seasons or for inland areas. With pork, *embutido* sausages, chard, pumpkin, wheat, pulses and rice, meals to be eaten with a spoon are created that delight lovers of good food. In mountainous areas reign the *olletas*, a type of soupy stew with aromas of *embutido* sausage and different meats.

Another of these traditional dishes that also deserves a mention – it is the best example of using leftovers – is *cocido de Nadal*, or Christmas stew, of which on the first day you eat the soup, meatballs, other meats and *embutido* sausages. On the second day, rice is added to the broth and, finally, for the following day, *ropa vieja* is prepared, a dish that consists of frying chopped leftover meat with tomato and onion.

Seafood cuisine and the Valencian countryside

Meals served inland, which even include game among their ingredients, are heavier than what you will find nearer the sea.

On the coast, seafood produce and recipes prevail, with grilled, baked, barbecued and fried fish occupying a place of honour. Delicious stews are made with the sardines, tuna, red mullet, sole, monkfish, redfish, rays, gilt-head bream... that you will see in the markets. The fish soups (*suquets de peix*), which are cooked with whitebait, provide intense flavours that hold their own against the best oven-baked fish and vegetable casseroles, or the tasty salted fish, prepared according to the same recipe that the Phoenicians introduced.

Finally, mention should also be made of the importance of vegetables from the Region's fields, whether included in cocas, empanadas, or in casseroles and salads. Without a doubt, visiting the Region of Valencia holds a thousand delights for the taste buds.



Desserts and

Sweets

Jewish and Arab gastronomic heritage has created numerous speciality confectionery and pastries that have reached our days for those with a sweet tooth to enjoy. Nuts such as pistachios and natural sweeteners such as honey play a leading role in these sweet nibbles. There is documentary evidence dating back to the 16th century of marzipan and turrón, which even has its own designation of origin.



Turrón from Xixona and Alicante

From a combination of almonds (peeled, toasted and chopped), pure honey and sugar is born **Turrón from Xixona**, a delight that sweetens life not only at Christmastime, as is traditional, but also during any season. Each ingredient is specially selected, and the almonds have to be of the Valencian, Mallorca, Marcona, Mollar or Planeta varieties. Within the Geographical Indication Certification, Turrón from Xixona can be of the Extra or Suprema categories. The *turrón* protected under the PGI are made and packaged in Xixona. On the other hand, **Turrón from Alicante** includes egg whites and wafers as well as almonds, honey and sugar.



Flaons

From pasta to horchata

Between the bakeries and the patisseries, you will find a wide range of proposals that range from Easter mona cakes to pastes, *pastissos*, *coques* and sweet *coquetes*. Not to overlook the iconic sweet, *arnadí* from Xàtiva, which is made with pumpkin or sweet potato, *pastis de gloria* on Easter Saturday or the ricotta *flaons*, among many other delicacies. The delectable product, tiger nut *orxata* (horchata) from Alboraià also merits special mention.

Ice cream

Artisan ice cream in the Region of Valencia isn't just for summer, but the pleasure of savouring its creamy texture and intense flavour extends to all twelve months of the year. Whenever it is that you visit, make sure you stop by one of its ice cream parlours, some of which have achieved recognition among the best in the world. Flavours such as orange, horchata and fartón carry Valencian DNA. The most intrepid can try *Agua de Valencia* or aniseed.



Citrus fruit in the kitchen and at the table

The Region of Valencia is the largest citrus fruit producer in Europe (Geographical Indication Certification "Cítrics Valencians"). Oranges, mandarins and lemons are not only eaten directly, but are also used in various recipes, stews, salads, desserts, and even drinks. They are a staple in the Mediterranean diet.

Oenology AND wine tourism



Although it is impossible to speak about a 'typical' Valencian wine, there is something that characterises the wines from the Region of Valencia: their quality.





D.O.

The region of valencia's designations of origin

Varieties such as Monastrell, Bobal and Muscat make these productions something very original and different which, together with the wineries' constant search for excellence, has earned them the recognition of the world's leading experts. The Muscat of Alexandria grape is used to make both dry and fruity wines, as well as liquors with an alcohol content of over 15°, which gives rise to Muscat Mistela and Muscat Liquor.

Valencia D.O.

The wine sector plays a key role in the economy of Valencia province. Along with the Region of Valencia's other two major designations of origin, the Valencia DO was created in 1932. It spans four subzones: Alto Turia, Moscatel, Valentino and Clariano. 85% of the wineries in this DO are cooperatives. The varieties accepted in this DO include Bobal and *Monastrell* in reds, and Merseguera, Muscat and Verdil in whites.

Vinos de Alicante D.O

This designation of origin was founded in 1932 and its Regulatory Council was established in 1957. Alicante wines took off in the 1990s when new wineries that promoted innovation alongside tradition were created or set up. The diversity of climates, comarcas and varieties of the different zones that are part of the Vinos de Alicante PDO brings with it a wide catalogue of types of wines, including sweets, sparkling wines and Fondillón. As for varieties, Muscat of Alexandria stands out in the whites, and *Monastrell* and Grenache in the reds.



FONDILLÓN, THE WINE OF KINGS

Fondillón is a type of wine that is unique in the world. It is a natural aged wine of the *Monastrell* variety with more than ten years of ageing, made only in the historical district of Alicante. The grapes are left to overripen on the vine. Then after the fermentation process it is aged for a minimum of ten years in wooden barrels from wineries certified by the Regulatory Council of the Alicante PDO. This ageing is carried out through the solera system and oxidative ageing. As these are wines that take a long time to be made and stored, there are not many wineries that produce them today so there are very few reserves of this product. All this makes it an exclusive wine, very particular, rare and different.



Utiel-Requena D.O.

Wine is the main economic engine of this inland area in Valencia province. The designation of origin was created in 1932 after decades during which the Valencia-Utiel railway line encouraged the formation of winery districts. In any case, this

territory's wine-making tradition may be up to 2,600 years old, according to discoveries unearthed at archaeological sites such as the Iberian Solana de las Pilillas, which place this area as one of the oldest in terms of wine production and marketing. Bobal is the quintessential grape variety of the Utiel-Requena DO.



Cava D.O

Different wineries located in the Valencian town of Requena belong to the Cava DO, within the Levante Zone, one of the four that make up this interregional Designation of Origin. Almost all the cavas made here use the Macabeo variety, although you can also find Chardonnay and Grenache in some rosé cavas.



Castelló IGP

This Protected Geographical Indication was created in 2003 with the intention of recovering the area's wine-making legacy. The three comarcas or subzones that are part of it are; Alto Palancia-Alto Mijares, Sant Mateu and Les Useres-Vilafamés.



The Utiel-Requena Wine Route

This wine route runs through the area covered by the Utiel-Requena Designation of Origin and is made up of more than 50 establishments: hotels, restaurants, rural holiday homes, craft shops, active tourism companies, museums and, of course, wineries.

One of its most outstanding attractions is something that is not easily found in other wine-producing areas: the caves and underground galleries where the huge jars in which wine was once made and stored have been preserved. You can visit them in the historic centres of Requena and Utiel. In addition to the vineyard-filled landscape of the villages along the route, it includes a unique place: part of the Hoces del Cabriel Natural Park. The river, the Cabriel, a tributary of the Júcar, is considered one of the cleanest in Europe.

Wine Tourism
Routes to really experience it

Wine tourism lets you discover the Region of Valencia through its wines but, beyond that, it provides the possibility of understanding and taking in its landscapes, traditions, crafts, architecture and gastronomy. The Mediterranean spirit permeates the four wine routes found in the Region, two of them (Alicante and Utiel-Requena) are also part of the Wine Routes of Spain brand, the country's benchmark for wine tourism.



The Alicante Wine Route

The Alicante Wine Route is the perfect alternative or complement to sun and beach tourism. An ideal option to discover this province's inland areas, full of history, culture, gastronomy and a long wine-making tradition. On the trip, you will have before you a fascinating journey through two comarcas: Vinalopó to the south, and Marina Alta and Baja to the north; different but united by the vine.

The rich heritage awaiting you includes medieval castles and fortresses that, in another era, defended the territory of the Crown of Aragón against the Crown of Castilla. And, more focused on wine culture, the *riuras*, rural constructions for the production of raisins (Muscat of Alexandria conquered the world in centuries past, to be exported across Europe, Russia and North America) and, of course, the unique Fondillón.



The Castelló Wine Route

Castelló also has a wine route on which you can visit wineries, hotels, *masía* farmhouses, rural holiday homes, restaurants and traditional shops. The wine-making tradition of inland Castelló province is less well known than that of its neighbours, Valencia and Alicante provinces, which also makes it more intriguing. The wine tourism proposed on this wine route can be complemented with oleotourism, since in this same province centuries-old olive trees and olive groves have been preserved which, in addition to forming a unique heritage, are becoming a destination in themselves.

Valencia, a unique wine route

This Wine Route helps visitors discover the different areas that make up the Valencia DO and offers a wide variety of resources. You will find places as unique as what is considered to be the oldest winery in Valencia province, the Celler de Proava, dating from the 13th century, in the heart of the city's historic quarter; the charming Valle dels Alforins, a land that hides centuries-old wineries and one of the oldest Iberian sites in the Region of Valencia, the Bastida de les Alcusses; the area of Alto Turia, famous for its "high altitude wines" produced in an environment declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO; or towns such as Chiva and Turis, home to some of the cooperatives with the longest history in Spain specialising in the production of Muscat.



Oil, culture AND experiences



With a delicate balance between its fruity flavour and the intensity of bitterness and zest, olive oil from the Region of Valencia gives the taste buds a unique experience. On an oleotourism getaway, you will discover native varieties that don't exist anywhere else, such as blanqueta, serrana de espadán, villalonga, farga and morruda. With these varieties are spectacular, high-end oils that offer wide aromatic variability.





Oil is also one of the essential components of the Mediterranean diet and of thousands of recipes without which they would lose all meaning. Before enjoying this product at the table, contemplate groves of olive trees, learn about the different varieties and enjoy some tastings. It's an exciting world. To delve into olive farms and visit mills, you will have to visit the sub-zones of Maestrat, Plana Alta-Alcalatén, Sierras de Espadán y Calderona, Serranías del Turia-Ribera del Magro, Utiel-Requena-Valle de Ayora, Macizo del Caroig-Vall d'Albaida, Montaña de Alicante and Vinalopó.



Oleotourism

The best way to get into the exciting world of oleotourism is by connecting with the natural environment that is home to olive trees and the lives of the farmers who watch over such precious crops. Devoted to the land, and knowing how to interpret the signs of nature each season, they harvest the olives that will be turned into households' liquid gold. A greenish-yellow oil that is an essential part of the healthy Mediterranean diet.





EXPERIENCES AROUND THE WORLD OF OIL

A number of oleotourism activities have been created that reveal the secrets of both the olives themselves and the agricultural work. These experiences are designed for everyone and range from farm tours to tastings.



Oleotourism



Experiences



Among olive trees

Olive groves harbour stories and legends that can only be uncovered through guided walks among thousand-year-old trees. This experience is ideal for finding out how to differentiate varieties, learning about cultivation techniques and discovering how oil is made.

Museums and visitor centres

Visiting these centres of knowledge, many of them located in centuries-old buildings, is the best way to delve into the history and evolution of olive tree cultivation, the tools and machinery used to obtain the oil and many other interesting facts.

Mills

Following the oil production process in a mill from the moment the olives arrive until the bottled oil leaves helps visitors appreciate this essential ingredient in the kitchen. There are still historic olive mills in operation that are well worth a visit.

Tastings

Any oleotourism experience should finish off with an oil tasting led by a specialist who will help you identify varieties, aromas, tones and flavours etc.





Fishing tourism,

A

marine immersion



The best way to learn about the Region of Valencia's seafaring tradition is through immersive experiences that let you experience first-hand the fishing process from the sea to the market. Boarding a fisherman's boat, sharing an early morning, watching the sunrise from the deck and the excitement of the first catches are experiences that will be part of your memory forever. Arriving at the port, learning about auction methods and visiting the markets of the coastal cities are other ways of appreciating this produce that you will later enjoy on your plate.



Sea activities

On board a boat

This is a first-person learning experience as you can enjoy a "real" fishing experience with the excitement of the catch, the classification of the pieces... Followed by a seafood dish with the freshly caught fish. It's truly unforgettable.



Marine route with tasting

Walking among the boats in the port, learning about the different fishing gear and the work of the sailors is just the beginning of a day that continues with the auction of freshly caught produce and a fish tasting. In some cities, museums or visitor centres dedicated to the sea or fishing are also visited to contextualise the experience.



*To note

Peix de Llotja

When you visit the markets, note the 'Peix de Llotja' mark, a guarantee from the Region of Valencia that it is managed by COINCOPESCA (the Interfederative Commission of Fishermen's Associations). This seal distinguishes produce that has been caught by association fishermen in a sustainable way and respecting the environment on the 500 kilometres of Valencian coastline. Every time you buy 'Peix de Llotja', you will be acquiring a quality product, local to Castelló, Valencia or Alicante province, while supporting the economy of more than eight thousand families.

Markets Guardians OF tradition



The best way to get to know the Region of Valencia's local products is to stroll through its markets and food festivals. Many of these spaces are located in historic places where the architecture is part of the experience. Others have become genuine gastronomic temples where you can enjoy delicious bites that taste of tradition or show off local chefs' creativity.







/ Central Markets

Central Market in Castelló de la Plana

Considered the pantry of the capital of Castelló province, this 1949 market was built following a design by the architect Vicente Traver Tomás. It is located right in the centre on Plaza Mayor. In just one visit, you will see the local products on sale at its 60 stalls. Meat, vegetables, confectionery and pastries... the perfect place to buy quality products.

Central Market in Valencia

Strolling inside this modernist market, which began to be built in 1914, is an unforgettable experience. The beauty of the iron architecture, the tiles and the large stained glass windows that flood the space with light can only be compared to the pleasure of observing the almost 300 stalls overflowing with products that speak of Valencia. As well as being a place for shopping, it is also a gastronomic space.



Central Market in Alicante

With almost 300 stalls and a long history that goes back to 1921, this historic eclectic-style market is the best place in Alicante city to see the local pantry. Go inside through its main door, via a grand staircase, and stroll through the shopping areas from Monday to Saturday from first thing in the morning. Take advantage of your visit to discover the gastronomic offer available at its coffee shops and bars, where you can enjoy anything from oysters with cava to tapas with a craft beer.





From the museum
to the table



A great way to learn about gastro products in depth is by going to visitor centres and themed museums where their unique characteristics, cultivation methods and harvesting are explained in detail. Some even organise guided tours and educational workshops.

The Mediterranean diet would be impossible to understand without the presence of olive oil, so learning about its benefits at Segorbe Oil Museum (Castelló province) is highly recommended. The tour through this old mill is supported by modern interactive audiovisual panels that narrate the evolution of oil and recreate the entire process to create it. Make sure you don't leave without greeting "La Morruda", a thousand-year-old olive tree.

Valencia's geographical characteristics have over time favoured rice cultivation in the surroundings of l'Albufera Natural Park. There are two museums focused on this deeply rooted product that explain its origin, cultivation and importance in the local cuisine. One is located in an old restored hermitage in Cullera, and the other in an old mill, Serra, from the

beginning of the 20th century in the Valencian capital.

How much do you know about tiger nuts and horchata? After visiting the Valencian museum dedicated to this drink, it will no longer have any secrets. This educational space is located in the heart of Alborai's farmland, at the 11th-century Machistre farmhouse, a property with 16th-century clay floors and 18th-century Manises tiles. Inside, you will learn how the tiger nut is grown, the process of making horchata and how it is sold. You can even make some horchata and try it.

The Xixona Turrón Museum has been being forged for a long time. It began by grouping obsolete machinery at the headquarters of El Lobo and 1880, and little by little it has grown, just as the consumption of marzipan and turrón has too. Today you can visit the three floors of the museum (*Ingredients, Processes and Marketing*) to delve into the origin of a product to which references have been made since the 15th century. The histories of Xixona and turrón are inextricably linked.

As a bar, in a cup or as cake icing, chocolate is always well received. You will have the opportunity to observe the old tools that were used to make it, touch the cocoa beans and browse a comprehensive library with books and images related to chocolate until you succumb to the pleasure of a tasting in La Vila Joiosa or Sueca.

An old salt mill houses the interesting Alicante museum dedicated to salt, located at the Las Salinas de Santa Pola Natural Park. This is a privileged location to understand the extraction process, mining systems, its characteristics and uses. Without overlooking the biodiversity that develops in saline environments. From the observatory, you will also be able to see different species of birds such as flamingos, little egrets, yellow-legged gulls and marbled ducks, and it is even possible to enjoy a guided tour of the park.



Recipes

WITH LOCAL
PRODUCTS
AND D.O
COMUNITAT
VALENCIANA



/ *Starters***BORRETA DE MELVA**

Borreta de melva is a **very popular traditional recipe made, for the most part, in Alicante towns** such as Benissa and Xàbia. A dish that is made with salted frigate tuna, with the traditional touch that the iron pot gives it. Without a doubt, a simply sublime meal thanks to the flavour and quality of all its ingredients. **A recipe that reflects the essence of Valencian cuisine,** which prepares many of its dishes using a singular, essential ingredient: fish, a product of great fame and renown throughout the Mediterranean coast.

Ingredients:

- 200 g salted frigate tuna
- 3 dried peppers
- 4 potatoes
- 2 onions
- Oil and salt

Method

Once all the ingredients are ready, you can get down to work and start preparing the dish. The first thing to do is to put an iron pot filled with water on the heat, and then add the chopped onions and potatoes. Bring to the boil, add the frigate tuna (after desalting it for 3-4 hours) and, lastly, the dried peppers. Add oil and salt to taste. Leave to cook for a while over a low heat. Now you can enjoy this recipe!





COCA FARCIDA

One of the most popular recipes with different variations that is made in kitchens and bakeries in the Region of Valencia is coca farcida. Coca farcida can be made in different ways. This recipe is made with a flour and oil dough filled with a tasty tomato, pea and tuna ratatouille. *Coca farcida* is an ideal dish to enjoy between meals or as a delicious starter.

Method

Mix the flour, salt and bicarbonate in a bowl. Blanch in the hot oil. If the dough is dry, add boiling water. Divide into two equal parts.

To prepare the ratatouille, fry the onions and tomatoes and add the peas and the shredded tuna. The tuna trunk is previously desalted for three hours, changing the water. When everything is fried, add the hard-boiled egg cut into small pieces. Spread a layer of dough on the previously oiled baking tray. Place the ratatouille on top and cover with another layer of dough. Bake in the oven until golden brown.

Ingredients

- 1 kg flour
- 1/2 l oil
- 1/2 kg onions
- 1/2 kg ripe tomatoes
- 125 g salted tuna
- 250 g peas
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- 20 g salt
- Baking powder

/ *Main meals*

PAELLA VALENCIANA

Ingredients

- 400 g rabbit
- 700 g chicken
- 300 g green beans
- 100 g tavella (pod)
- 200 g "garrofón"
- 1 ripe tomato
- 400 g Valencia D.O. rice
- 8 tablespoons of oil
- A pinch of paprika, saffron and salt.



Paella is the highest standard of Valencian cuisine and probably also of Spanish gastronomy, due to its recognition worldwide. Its origin, like that of all traditional cuisine, comes from the conjunction of foods that each family had available to them, especially in the countryside of Valencia province, which was supplied with fresh vegetables. In the past it was also customary to raise chickens and rabbits, so once all these ingredients are added to the abundance of rice grown in l'Albufera, the result is this genuinely Valencian dish that got its name from the pan in which it is cooked.



Method

Heat the oil in a paella pan and once it is hot, add the chopped meat, fry it well and add the green beans, garrofón and tavella. Continue frying for about eight minutes and add the grated tomato. When the tomato is fried, add the paprika and, without letting it burn, add the water up to the edge. Leave to cook for around 30 minutes and add salt to taste. When the broth is ready, add the rice and distribute it, then add the saffron and leave to cook for around 15 - 20 minutes. Finally, leave to stand for a few minutes before serving.



ARROZ AL HORNO

Arroz al horno, oven-baked rice, is a dish full of flavour that also looks great on the plate and takes pride of place on the Region of Valencia's dining table. The ingredients of this dish vary, but it always consists of a mouth-watering spread of cured meats, pork ribs and pancetta, as well as tomatoes, garlic, chickpeas and, of course, rice, ideally of Designation of Origin. Back in the day, the rice from this dish adopted the name "arròs passejat" in Valencian, meaning "gone-for-a-walk rice", as once the first stages of the recipe were complete, locals would take their traditional terracotta dishes full to the brim with ingredients to the nearest communal oven or bakery as home ovens were far and few between.

Method

Preheat the oven to 250°C.

Fry the tomato and add the chickpeas and a clove of garlic. (The chickpeas should be soaked the night before). Fry the pancetta and ribs with the head of garlic then set aside. Put the chickpeas and tomato mix in a clay casserole dish and add the rice (80grams of rice per person). Add the stock - two parts stock to one part rice.

Stir and add the pancetta and ribs. Place the whole head of garlic in the middle of the pot and arrange the slices of potato and tomato around it. Add the four blood sausages. Add salt to taste. Place in the oven and bake for 20-30 minutes at 250°C until the stock has evaporated and the rice is cooked.

Ingredients

- 4 pancetta slices
- 16 pieces of pork ribs
- 4 blood sausages
- 4 slices of potato (crosswise)
- 4 slices of tomato (crosswise)
- 1 whole head of garlic
- 250 g chickpeas
- 100 g grated tomato
- Rice

For the stock

- Pork and beef bones
- Onion
- Carrot
- Chicken
- Celery
- Colouring
- Salt



/ Desserts

PASTELES DE BONIATO (SWEET POTATO PIES)

Ingredients

If you are an inveterate lover of desserts and sugar, these sweet potato pies will surely seduce you. Note the following ingredients you will need to make this recipe.

For the dough and the filling:

- 1/2 glass strong cazalla
- 1/2 glass olive oil
- 1/2 kg sugar
- 3/4 kg flour
- 1 egg
- 3/4 kg white sweet potato
- 1/4 kg sugar
- Cinnamon

In the Region of Valencia, sweet potato pies are the quintessential Christmas dessert. Of Arab origin, they are usually made in the shape of small pasties, which is why it is common to talk about 'pies', in the plural. The fusion of the flavour of the cinnamon and the sweet potato, together with a touch of *cazalla*, is a feast for the senses.

Method

To make this dessert, you will need to make the dough on the one hand and the filling on the other. If you follow the instructions below, you will soon have a delicious sweet potato pie to enjoy whenever you want.

First make the filling. Boil the sweet potatoes in their skins. Peel, scoop out the pulp and mash it hot with the sugar and a pinch of cinnamon until it forms a paste. To make the dough: put the cazalla and the oil along with the sugar in a saucepan over the heat. Be careful, because as the cazalla has a high alcohol content, it will catch fire. Then cover with a lid for a few seconds. When some of the alcohol has evaporated and the sugar has dissolved, add the flour. Stir to form a dough. In total, the whole process should take about 20 minutes.

Finally, to form the sweet potato pie, work the dough while hot. Spread in round portions (a glass can be used as a mould) on a smooth, oiled surface. Fill with the sweet potato paste and close. Seal the ends by pressing with a fork. Brush with the beaten egg to make it shiny after baking. Place in a pre-heated oven and bake at a high temperature of 220°C for 25 minutes.



ARNADÍ



Method

Roast the sweet potato wrapped in aluminium foil and the halved pumpkin at 170°C for 45 minutes. Scoop out the flesh from the pumpkin and sweet potato and drain off any excess water.

Put the ground almonds, lemon zest, 400 g sugar (reserve 100 g for later) and ground cinnamon in a bowl and stir.

Add the chopped almonds and beaten egg yolks and stir until the ingredients are well mixed. Place in a non-stick pan or frying pan and stir over a low heat for 15 min. Add the oil (optional) and stir until well blended.

With the help of a spatula or spoon dipped in water, arrange in an earthenware casserole pot so that it ends in a conical point. Decorate with the almonds and pine nuts in the shape of a cross. Sprinkle with sugar and roast in the oven at 150°C for 30 min. It should be tender on the inside and crusty on the outside without burning the nuts. Chill and enjoy.

Ingredients

- 500 g roasted or boiled pumpkin
- 500 g roasted or boiled sweet potato
- 2 egg yolks
- 5 g ground cinnamon
- 1 grated lemon
- 125 g ground almonds
- 125 g chopped almonds
- 20 g olive oil
- 100 g whole almonds
- 50 g pine nuts







Shopping,

MEDITERRANEAN

flavours

IN YOUR LUGGAGE



All trips end with a touch of sadness when leaving behind days of fun, culture and excellent gastronomy. But to remember what you've experienced, there's nothing like packing a few iconic products that you've discovered during your getaway. Although the list could be almost infinite, this is a selection of some gastronomic proposals that will help you remember those happy days with Mediterranean flavours.







Cheese

There are artisan cheeses for all tastes produced in Valencian lands, from fresh to mature, made from cow's, sheep's or goat's milk. Some of the most awarded cheeses come from Almedijar and Catí in inland Castelló province, but there are excellent products throughout the region.

Fruit

Valencian fruits are of such extraordinary value that they alone would justify a trip. Save room in your luggage to take all kinds of citrus fruits, pomegranates from Elx, Ribera de Xúquer persimmons, loquat from Callosa d'en Sarrià, Vinalopó table grapes packed on the vine and cherries from Montaña de Alicante.



Chocolate

A bar of artisan chocolate or one of its many variations from a local company is a gift that will always be welcomed by friends and family on your return home.

Oil

The golden elixir from olives grown in ancient groves or native varieties such as blanqueta, serrana de espadán, villalonga, farga and morruda is one of the essential gourmet souvenirs for a good Mediterranean diet.



Black truffles from l'Alt Maestrat

Easy to take home and a delicious ingredient that can be added to countless stews to enhance their flavour. Although black truffles are collected between January and March, you can find them packaged year round. A gift to impress.

Wine

In the wineries of the Region of Valencia's designations of origin (Alicante, Valencia and Utiel Requena) or the Castelló PGI, you will find excellent memories in the form of whites, rosés, reds and cavas. Even some as special as Fondillón, a sweet wine with a high alcohol content that is made in Alicante.



Rice

If on your trip you visit l'Albufera Natural Park in Valencia and observe how this grain is grown, you will probably want to take home the best varieties: Senia, Bomba and Albufera. They will for sure help you remember this place's delicious rice dishes.



Turrón from Xixona and Alicante

Sugar, honey and almonds, few products can be made with so few ingredients and be so delicious.

Carmelitano liquor

This golden-coloured herbal liquor is made with grapes and more than thirty medicinal herbs that give it an inimitable flavour. Its origin dates back to the 17th century when the monks of the Carmelite monastery of Desierto de las Palmas, very close to Benicàssim, began to produce it. It was not until 1896 that it was marketed; today it is one of the most popular souvenirs.



Horchata

Made with tiger nuts, sugar and water, horchata is a drink that will instantly take you back to the Region of Valencia. You can buy it concentrated to enjoy at any time and remember your stay.

Assorted liquors

Part of the gastro culture, these are an excellent way to end any meal. There are highly appreciated options such as Mistela, which is made with grape must and alcohol, or the drinks grouped under the Specific Designation Traditional Spirits of Alicante: the Aperitivo Café de Alcoy; the Cantueso Alicantino, made with lavender flowers and pendulums; Herbero de la Sierra de Mariola, with sage, pennyroyal and other herbs, and Anís Paloma from Monforte del Cid, made with green or star anise.

Salted fish

Canned and salted products are highly durable so you can take them home and remember Valencian flavours. Options include roe, *mojama*, dried cod, *tonyina de tronc* (tuna) and *budellet* (dried tuna gut).



Tourism Centres

REGION OF
VALENCIA

Through its Network of Tourism Centres, Turisme Comunitat Valenciana aims to improve the employability and efficiency of human resources, the attraction of talent, research, innovation and promotion of gastronomy, hospitality and tourism.

The Network of Tourism Centres is currently made up of ten centres that form the backbone of the Region of Valencia: Castelló, Morella, Valencia, Gandía, Dénia, Alicante, Alcoi, Elx, Benidorm and Torrevieja. The location of this network makes it possible to meet the

sector's global training needs. There is also an e-learning platform, as an alternative to in-person training, to meet the training needs of the increasingly diversified and constantly evolving tourism sector.





The 10 pillars of gastronomy

1.

The Region of Valencia is part of a cultural, historic and food environment included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. For this reason, we are committed to promoting a healthy and sustainable diet based on our land's natural resources.

2.

Respect and recognition of the traditions and institutions that have forged the social structure of the territories of the Region of Valencia: where we find heritage such as the Water Tribunal, the irrigators' communities, agricultural techniques, planting systems and traditional crops, the fields and orchards, rice paddies, vineyards, citrus fruit varieties, craft guilds, the commercial spirit reflected in La Tira de Contar, markets, kitchens, fishing traditions and gear, Lateen sailing, folklore and an endless fiesta culture, all linked to gastronomy.

3.

We take on the commitment to pass on the gastronomic legacy received in the best of conditions, as fun and educationally as possible, with arguments as solid as our cookbook, the rich pantry and the gastronomic landscape.

4.

Ensure the authenticity of the varieties and flavours of its food, linked to the land and its people. Promote local and unique products over the industrial and global, promote ethical and responsible production and consumption.

5.

Incorporate the agri-food production sector into the tourism promotion strategy as the origin of the ingredients and basis of the gastronomy on which our Region's GDP is founded.





6.

Promote entrepreneurship across all areas of gastronomy, giving our professionals extensive training to make them ambassadors of excellence, good food and the products of the Region of Valencia.

7.

Promote innovation, research and creativity in gastronomy from our roots without losing the identity that characterises us, from all Turisme innovation and training centres, as well as from public and private academic institutions.

8.

Generate a powerful boost for the Region of Valencia's gastrodiploacy through meetings, networks of common interest, forums and cooperation programmes with cities, states and regions.

9.

Project the viability and future of gastronomy with the guarantee of its promotion and use. If the heritage we treasure is not used or passed on, no one will inherit it, and we do not want anything else to fall into oblivion.

10.

Our gastronomy is part of a privileged area of the Mediterranean basin, although it has kept its uniqueness, product of the melting pot of civilizations and events that have forged a complex culinary story.





Practical information

How to get there

The Region of Valencia can be reached by land, sea and air.

By car

- The **AP-7**, the Mediterranean motorway, crosses the Region of Valencia parallel to the coast and connects with the European network.
- The **A-3** connect with Spain's capital.
- La **A-23**, o Autovía Mudéjar, connect with Sagunto, Segorbe and Teruel province.
- The **A-31**, o Autovía de Alicante, crosses this province.
- The **A-33** connect with Fuente de la Higuera and the Region of Murcia.
- The **A-35** connect with Albacete province.

By train

The railway network of the Comunitat Valenciana connects its entire territory with the rest of the country. High-speed trains connect Madrid with the centre of Valencia, Alicante, Castelló de la Plana, as well as other municipalities such as Utiel-Requena, Elx, Orihuela and Villena.

www.renfe.com (AVE y AVLO)
www.ouigo.com
www.iryo.eu
www.fgv.es (Red de Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat Valenciana)

By plane

The three Valencian capitals have airports with an extensive network of domestic and international routes.

- The Castelló airport (Benlloch) has connections with some Spanish and European cities, and is close to destinations such as Benicàssim, Oropesa del Mar and Peñíscola.
- Located 8 kilometres from the capital, the Valencia-Manises international airport is one of the main points of access for visitors due to its proximity to the coast.
- Alicante-Elche Miguel Hernández international airport is the best option for the province's tourist centres such as Benidorm, Xàbia and Torrevieja.

www.aena.es

By sea

The passenger ports of Valencia, Dénia and Alicante offer good links with both the Balearic Islands, Barcelona and various Mediterranean countries. Depending on the season, there are connections to some Balearic destinations from the port of Gandia.

When to go

The Region of Valencia boasts an exceptional climate most of the year, especially in the coastal areas where, thanks to the Mediterranean, they enjoy mild temperatures in the winter and summers are usually hot.

The climate inland is more continental, with dry summers and cold winters. High season in the Region of Valencia is during the European summer months, from June to September, as well as national bank holidays and the Easter period.





Make your stay in the
Region of Valencia
an unforgettable experience.



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