

Who were the Iberians in the Region of Valencia?



The Iberians were one of the indigenous peoples of the Iberian peninsula that inhabited its eastern coast.

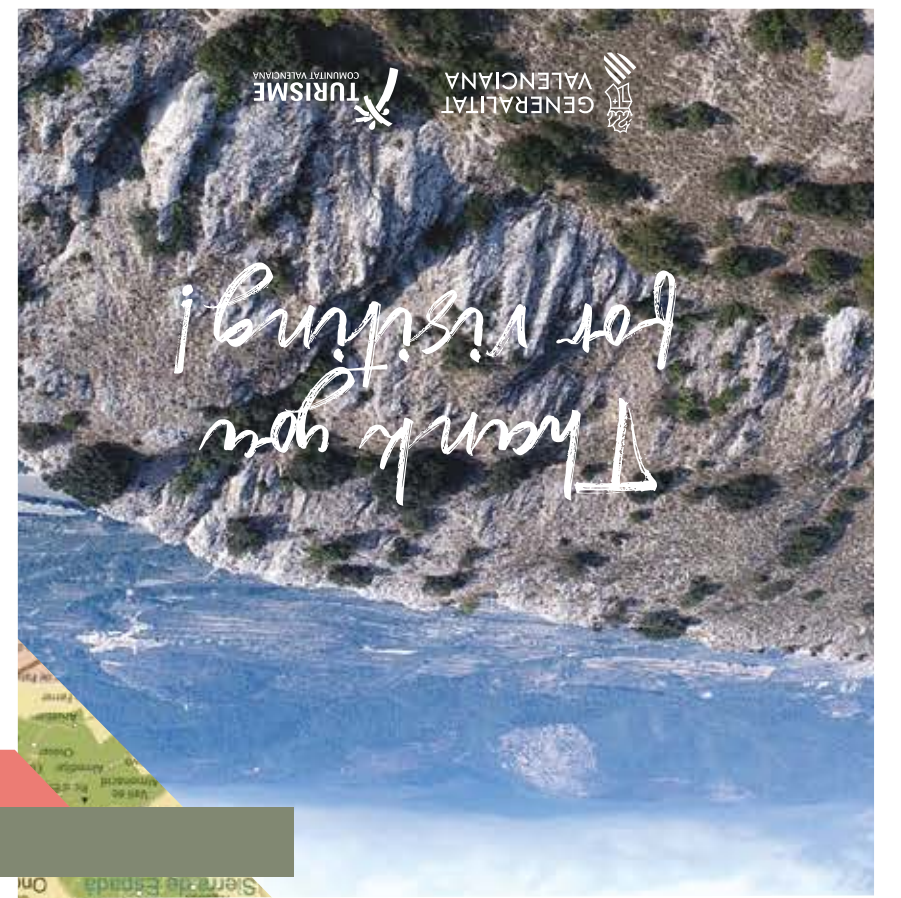
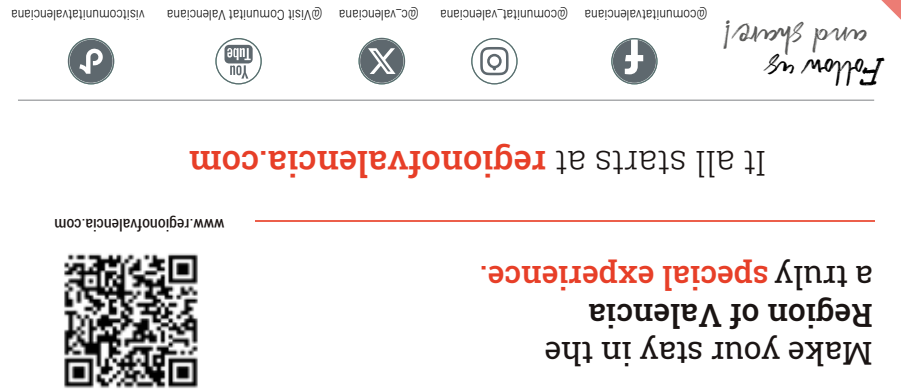
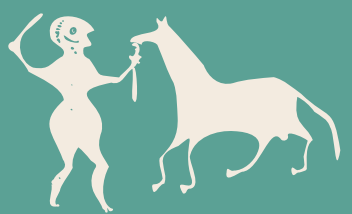
This was what the ancient Greek writers called them to distinguish them from the peoples of the interior, whose culture and customs were different. The Iberian culture developed from the 6th century BCE until the Romanization of Hispania. The Iberian peoples of the Valencian area are called the Edetani, Contestani and Ilercavones.

The Iberians lived organised into settlements, and engaged in shepherding and farming.

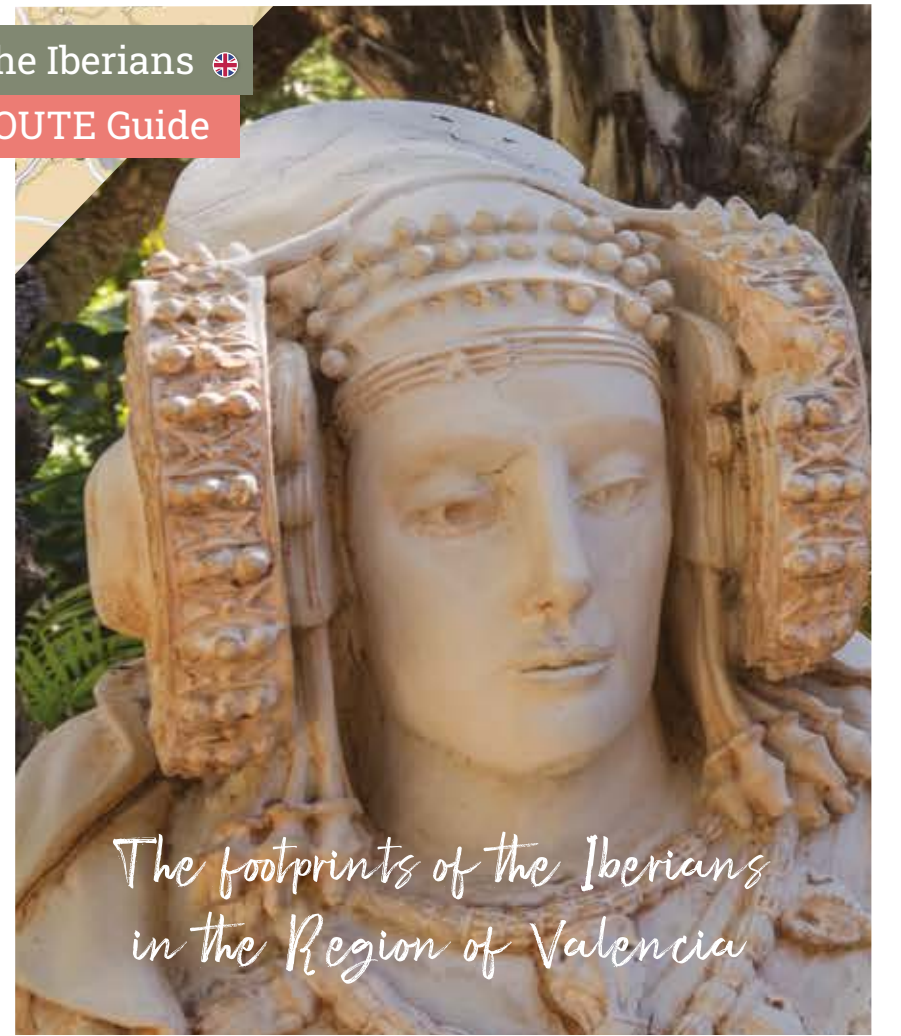
Archaeological excavations reflect a sedentary, organised and defensive people. Their towns were built in strategic places, controlling passes, which gave them a big advantage over their enemies. They were usually surrounded by stone and adobe walls with watchtowers and the city gates.



Recorre la Ruta de los Iberos y visita los poblados más importantes de la Comunitat Valenciana.



The Iberians ROUTE Guide



REGION OF VALENCIA MEDITERRANEAN ATTITUDE

Places, routes and archaeological sites.

Museums

Museum of Prehistory in Valencia

Finish off your visit at the Museu de la Prehistòria de València.



Founded in 1927 and dedicated to conserving, researching and disseminating the rich Valencian archaeological heritage, it has focused a large part of its work on Iberian culture through the Prehistoric Research Service (SIP). The second floor houses collections of materials from Iberian culture, with highlights being the famous set of painted vases with figurative decoration from Sant Miquel de Lliria and the Iberian Lead Books.

Alicante Archaeological Museum (MARQ)

Located in the magnificent building of the old San Juan de Dios Provincial Hospital, this museum is the perfect guardian of Alicante's history. Visiting its permanent collections will give you the opportunity to deepen your knowledge of ancient civilizations. The chronological and thematic presentation, along with the use of interactive spaces, make it a fundamental learning tool.

Tips for the visitor

Both the sites and other Iberian remains are part of the cultural heritage of all of us. While you enjoy your visit, take into account these indications in order to conserve it.

- Use the paths and areas provided for walking. Avoid using shortcuts.
- If a site is fenced, ask for the key to access it.
- Respect the structures, don't change or destroy them. Don't climb or sit on the walls.
- It is illegal to take archaeological materials away with you.
- Respect the environment, don't litter.





The remains of an ancient culture

The Iberians Route in the Region of Valencia offers sites you can visit in area of outstanding natural beauty. Stroll through their towns, fortifications and streets, and discover what the daily life of their inhabitants was like, their beliefs and customs 2,500 years ago.

/Castelló province

PUIG DE LA NAU. BENICARLÓ

One of the best preserved settlements in the Region of Valencia
Built in the 5th century BCE, the robustness of its construction makes it one of the most important in the entire region. During your visit, you will see the high walls of the houses, the defensive walls, the town's gates and its towers, which exceed two and a half metres in height in some places. Afterwards, make sure you enjoy a well-earned rest on the Mediterranean coast and the endless number of nautical activities offered on Benicarló's beaches. And if you visit the area outside of the summer season, in January the town hosts Artichoke Gastronomic Days (product with designation of origin) when tastings are organised.



PERENGIL. VINARÓS

A site shrouded in mystery
This is an isolated building on top of a hill above Vinaròs plain that presents very peculiar architecture. Today, its functionality still remains a mystery to researchers. The most plausible hypothesis based on its chronology and situation is that of its use as a watchtower or defensive tower at the time of the Second Punic War that pitted the Carthaginians and the Romans against each other. Vinaròs stands out for its unique landscape and beautiful beaches that extend over 12 kilometres. To the north of the municipality, you will find a characteristic natural environment with coves protected by gentle cliffs and vegetation typical of the area including Mediterranean palms and rosemary.



PUIG DE LA MISERICORDIA. VINARÓS

A farming settlement for vineyards
An Iberian settlement that combines a residential function with that of defence, and that stands on some vestiges of the Iron Age. Nowadays somewhat deteriorated, a wall that in some points exceeds 4 metres wide and abundant ceramic material is preserved, as are tools for growing vines. 15 kilometres from Vinaròs you will find the famous town of Peníscola, which has a charming historic centre with steep, narrow medieval streets. The famous castle of Papa Luna and its imposing medieval wall are located at the top.



EL TORRELLÓ DEL BOVEROT. ALMASSORA

Strategic town in La Plana
Listed as an Asset of Cultural Interest, remains from the Bronze Age have been documented, dating from around 1000 BCE, on which various urban structures from different times during its occupation have been superimposed. You will be able to see an Iberian street with terraced homes and walls of more than 70 metres that protected the village from invasions. Some of the items that have been found in the town during excavations are on display in Almassora Municipal Museum, which has a wide-ranging collection of up to 170 archaeological pieces: Iberian masks, the Cornelian scarab and objects related to children's burials are all on display here.



EL TORRELLÓ. ONDA

Fortress on a small peninsula of the Mijares river
Strategically located on a raised terrace, it forms a kind of peninsula, bounded by the El Torrelló ravine and the Mijares river. This fortified town, which dates back to the Bronze Age but which reached its peak with the Iberian culture, has some buttresses that show its defensive role. What stands out the most about Onda is its castle in the town centre, which dominates the surroundings from above. Built by the Arabs in the 10th century CE, this fortress is the defensive culmination of the walled town of Onda and has impressive views that shouldn't be missed.



LA LLOMA COMUNA. CASTELLFORT

Iberian village in the Els Ports comarca
Located at more than 1,300 metres above sea level, it was built during the Iron Age, and later inhabited by the Iberians between the 6th and 3rd centuries BCE. The buildings that can be seen today are the defensive walls, the south tower and a barn. The space also has information panels for visitors. Castellfort is a beautiful town built between natural stone walls that enjoys great cultural and historic wealth. You can admire its landscapes at Finestra del Mirador, the perfect place to enjoy the views of the Rambla Culembres and its natural charms.



SANT JOSEP. VALL D'UIXÓ

Iberian settlement on an underground river
This village built in the Bronze Age was home to Iberians, between the 6th and 2nd centuries BCE, and later the Romans. It includes a small walled enclosure and was protected by quadrangular towers, in an enclave full of history declared an Asset of Cultural Interest. The views of the entire site from its metal walkway to the panoramic view of the landscape and even the Mediterranean Sea are spectacular. The town is located near the hermitage of La Sagrada Família, and the Coves de Sant Josep and the longest navigable underground river in Europe. These galleries, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the category of rock art, offer visitors a peaceful boat ride to see the spectacular rock formations that the water has created over the years.



ROCHINA. SOT DE FERRER

A privileged defence over the Palancia river
An Iberian settlement from the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE where you can see the wall that forms the perimeter of the enclosure, the tower next to the entrance and a house that is larger than the other properties. It sits on a hill, with good visibility over the Palancia River and dominance over the surrounding area, which gives the village an excellent defensive position. Located on the banks of the river, Sot de Ferrer is crowned by the hermitage of Padu, which is accessed by a beautiful zigzag path, the Fuente del Río with its four washing places and the Old Bridge, to create a very enjoyable walk.



TORRE DEL PROSPINAL. PINA DE MONTALGRAO

A robust watchtower
Quadrangular Iberian tower built between the 4th and 2nd centuries BCE, which could have fallen in the orbit of ancient Arse/Saguntum, in relation to the fighting of the Second Punic War and the subsequent Roman military intervention. The Torre del Prospinal is one of four similar structures distributed around the Iberian settlement of Castellar de Ragudo. Another must-see is the Cueva de la Cerdaña near Torre del Prospinal. This is an impressive cave that was a sanctuary in Iberian times, closely linked to the worship of nature. Nowadays, stalagmites and stalactites formed over time adorn it inside.



TORRE DE FOIOS. LLUCENA

A defensive tower that is unique in the Region of Valencia
This tower, occupied between the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, was one of the first archaeological sites discovered in Castelló province. It was part of a town of which hardly anything remains, but that included a cemetery. The tower is oval shaped and is formed by a strong external wall that encloses another parallel internal one, separated by one metre, for better defence. The Llucena area is perfect for enjoying a day in nature, with hiking trails that cover various points of interest. One of them is the Roure del Mas Palenque, a 350-year-old oak tree, 17 metres high and with a trunk perimeter of almost 4 metres, which since 2020 has formed part of Castelló province's Network of Ancient and Unique Trees.



/Valencia province



CASTELLAR DE MECA. AYORA

More than 2 km of paths carved out of the rock
Located at more than 1,000 metres above sea level, this village dating from the 5th to the 2nd centuries BCE stands out for its paths dug out of the rock and made ready for the passage of carts, as well as its walls, cisterns and houses carved in stone. Iberian, Roman and Islamic ceramics have been found in it as it was inhabited until medieval times. If you visit at the beginning of October, be sure to catch the 'El Primer Corte de la Miel' festival in Ayora, a beekeeping, gastronomic, tourist and cultural fair with the central theme being honey, the area's product par excellence.



EL MOLÓN. CAMPORROBLES

An impregnable and strategically located place
It stands on a hill that was occupied between the 7th and 1st centuries BCE; various stretches of the wall, the remains of a fortified tower, the main gate and a moat carved into the rock have been preserved. The site offers visitors a clear image of an oppidum, a fortified town of the time. It also has remains from the Islamic period dating from the 8th to the 10th centuries CE, from which the ruins of a mosque stand out. The archaeological site includes a visitor centre with an exhibition of images and reconstructions of the most important findings. You can also visit the nearby El Molón recreational area, where you can enjoy a picnic and see the Botanic Garden, which has a wide variety of trees from the inland Mediterranean area.



KELIN. CAUDETE DE LAS FUENTES

Iberian capital of the comarca in wine lands
The Los Villares site, identified as the ancient city of Kelin, is a clear example of the evolution of Iberian culture from its beginnings to Romanisation. Kelin reached its peak around the 4th to 3rd centuries BCE to become the capital of a large Iberian territory. Every year, on the occasion of this site's anniversary in October, open days are organised with guided tours, historical recreations and Iberian gastronomy activities. Kelin is located in the heart of the Requena-Utiel wine area, which has its own wine route. Come and discover this unique area and visit the 10 municipalities that comprise it; you can visit different wineries, enjoy tastings and immerse yourself in the beautiful landscape of the vines.



CASTELLET DE BERNABÉ. LLÍRIA

A fortified hamlet for agriculture and livestock farming
Used for agricultural and livestock farming, this walled hamlet was occupied between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE, and was the residence of an elite Edetani family who lived with the people in their service. The village has been completely excavated, which makes it possible to visit various properties such as the family residence and spaces where farming activities were carried out, such as cereal storage and the production of wine, oil and honey. Llíria Archaeological Museum houses some of the pieces that have been found during the excavations of Castellet de Bernabé. An important collection of archaeological pieces that show its historical past is also on display.



TOSSAL DE SANT MIQUEL. LLÍRIA

Edeta, capital of Edetania and residence of the elite
Identified as ancient Edeta from the quotes of some classical writers such as Claudius Ptolemy, it was inhabited between the 5th and 1st centuries BCE. It was the place of residence of an aristocratic and warrior elite that controlled a large territory dedicated to agriculture and livestock farming. The visitable part of the site lets visitors appreciate the layout with streets arranged along stepped terraces and two-story houses. Edeta is known above all for its collection of decorated vases and for the texts that accompany these decorations, which can be visited at the Museum of Prehistory in Valencia and constitute the largest known Iberian epigraphic archive. Did you know? Llíria was declared a Creative City of Music by UNESCO in 2019. Every year, the city hosts the Early Music of Edeta Festival.



LA BASTIDA DE LES ALCUSSES. MOIXENT

Iberian village among the vineyards of Les Terres dels Aforins
It stands out for its defensive system formed by a wall that reaches 4 m wide with various attached towers and four gates that allowed the passage of carts. Outstanding pieces have been discovered during excavations, such as the well-known 'Mogente Warrior', and small plaques written in Iberian, as well as weapons and ornaments. After the tour, which lasts around an hour and a half, you can visit an Iberian home equipped with items from the period. You can finish off your trip with a wine tourism route through Les Terres dels Aforins, a beautiful valley that combines vineyards with Mediterranean forest and cereal fields. Be sure to see one of its historic wineries in the nearby towns of La Font de Figuera or Fontanars (wine has been made in this area since Iberian times), and try its exquisite local cuisine.



EL TÒS PELAT. MONCADA

Iberian mural paintings just a step away from Valencia
This ancient Iberian town was inhabited from the 6th to the 4th centuries BCE, when it was abandoned in peacetime for no known reason. Guided tours are organised throughout the year, during which you can see two houses and part of the defensive system that protected the town, as well as two visible stretches of wall. Excavations have uncovered items that show the town's economy was mainly agricultural, but unlike other places there were also marine resources, such as shells and fish vertebrae. All the items found are in the Moncada Municipal Archaeological Museum, located on Calle Mayor. Just 9 kilometres from El Tòs Pelat is the town of Alboraya, famous for its delicious horchata. You can also take some time to walk through the old quarter with its interesting heritage.



PUNTAL DEL LLOPS. OLOCAU

A fortress at the top of Serra Calderona
This fort for the defence and surveillance of the Edetani territory between the 5th and 2nd centuries BCE was the residence of a member of Edeta's equestrian warrior elite. Highlights include its impressive wall, watchtower and a number of rooms open to a central street that runs longitudinally through the settlement. The site is considered one of the best examples of an Iberian watchtower. Don't miss the views from the site located more than 400 metres above sea level, which take in the entire Camp del Túria, l'Horta de Valencia and the coast, as well as the Mediterranean forest on its slopes. It is also possible to see the three towns in the valley: Olocau, Marines Viejo and Gátova. You can start trails from any of them through the Sierra Calderona.



LA SEÑA. VILLAR DEL ARZOBISPO

An Edetani hamlet
This small walled village, occupied between the 6th and 2nd centuries BCE, is located at the foot of the Serranía on a plain surrounded by Mediterranean crops. Listed as an Asset of Cultural Interest, it was home to a community who worked in agriculture and livestock farming on the surrounding land.



12 kilometres from La Seña is the Calderones Municipal Natural Landscape, formed by the Hoces del Túria, which when entering the beautiful town of Chullilla creates a deep gorge with vertical walls over 80 metres high. This spectacular river canyon can be followed on 'the bridges route' that runs for 5 kilometres.



LA CELADILLA. ADEMUZ

Fortified village on the banks of the Túria river
Situated on top of a hillock overlooking the Túria river, this hamlet was inhabited from the 5th to the 4th centuries BCE, when it was destroyed by a great fire that led to it being completely abandoned. You can visit the houses that made up the village, where many materials of daily life have been recovered. The site also has an important defensive network comprised of a wide wall and a large exterior tower, of which some ruins remain. Don't miss the chance to try Ademuz's delicious cuisine, known for its traditional dishes made with pork and excellent gacha hashes. In Mas del Olmo, 14 kilometres from Ademuz, you can visit the Bread Museum, where you will discover how bread was made in the area in the past.



/Alicante province



TORRE DE LA ILLETA. EL CAMPELLO

A watchtower
At the foot of this defensive construction that today stands in La Illeta, built in the 16th century as a watchtower for the coastal area, are the ruins of an ancient Iberian settlement from the 4th to 3rd centuries BCE, of which two temples, warehouses and houses that are interpreted as places of trade are preserved. Next to the modern-era tower, a pottery for the manufacture of Iberian amphoras has been discovered and several kilns have been excavated.

This site is around 5,000 years old and has remains from different cultures and civilisations. From the Bronze Age there are two large cisterns partially excavated in the rock, burial sites and houses. On the remains of the Iberian settlement, a Roman villa was built with baths, a residential area and some fish hatcheries.



TOSSAL DE LA CALA, BENIDORM

Iberian Sanctuary and Roman Castellum
On the hill located in the far southwest of Benidorm, a Roman settlement rises on the remains of an ancient Iberian village. Today, there is hardly any evidence left of the Iberian sanctuary that once occupied the place, however, you can visit the Castellum from the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, which was part of a Roman chain of coastal military enclaves that controlled maritime transit. The site has information panels located throughout. Descending towards Benidorm, you can visit Poniente and Finestrat beaches, or enjoy the city. The viewpoint known as 'the balcony of the Mediterranean' boasts some incredible views.



LUCENTUM. ALICANTE

Ibero-Roman town precursor of Alicante
Lucentum is the name by which the Ibero-Roman town that preceded the current city of Alicante is known, located just 3 kilometres from the centre on Tossal de Manises. The Roman town was built on Iberian remains of which today the baths and remains of the wall and fortified towers, dated between the 6th and 2nd century BCE, are preserved. The items found in the different excavations are housed in Alicante Archaeological Museum. Another must-do here is the Moros y Cristianos, the city's biggest fiesta that is held in different areas and on different dates. Highlights include the parade through the city centre every 6 December for its patron saint, San Nicolás.



L'ALCÜDIA. ELX

The cradle of the Lady of Elx
It was at this site where, in 1897, one of the most characteristic examples of Iberian culture was discovered: the famous Lady of Elx. The town was occupied since the Neolithic period, and in Iberian times it was the original settlement of Ilce, the capital of its territory. It was later declared a colony by the Romans, and subsequently populated by the Arabs. During your visit, you can admire the ruins of the wall, western and eastern baths, as well as Iberian and Roman homes, the forum, a cistern and even a Christian basilica. Continue learning more about the history of Elx through its Palm Grove, a unique cultural landscape established by the founders of the Islamic city of Elx a millennium ago and declared a World Heritage Site in 2000.



EL PUIG. ALCOI

Fortified town up high
This settlement is a good example of a fortified town from the Iberian period that uses its elevation, occupied between the 7th and 4th centuries BCE. Under the protection of steep terrain, a town was built that occupied practically the entire hill and was protected by an exceptional fortified tower, of which some ruins remain today. You can now visit the housing blocks that formed small neighbourhoods, and the more open spaces that were used for daily work such as processing wool. In addition to its Moros y Cristianos fiestas, Alcoi stands out for the number of places of interest that can be visited. They include the rock art at La Sarga, found in some caves that were used as a sanctuary during prehistoric times.



LA SERRETA. ALCOI

Town and important Iberian sanctuary
With the typical structure of an Iberian town from the 5th to 2nd centuries BCE, it also has, at its highest point, one of the biggest sanctuaries of the time in the southeast of the Peninsula. Despite the few ruins that remain, visitors can get an idea of the importance of this place, which continued working even in Roman times. Known as 'the city of bridges', Alcoi was of great importance during the industrial revolution, which is why it has an unmissable modernist heritage.



CABEQÓ MARIOLA. ALFARFA

Iberian town sheltered by a large cave in Sierra Mariola
This place was inhabited between the 9th and 1st centuries BCE, and was the main Iberian settlement in the area, at more than 1,000 metres high, with great cultural importance. From the findings discovered during excavations, it is thought that the town was finally destroyed by a Roman attack. Near the settlement is Cueva Bolumini, with an entrance 15 metres high, that forms a wide cave 30 metres deep. Indicators of the presence of human beings since the Neolithic period have been found in it. It can be easily accessed when following the Iberians Route. There are also information panels that explain the history of the cave and Cabeqó Mariola. The views from the top are impressive.



POBLADO ALT DE BENIMAQUIA. DÈNIA

The oldest wine presses in the Western Mediterranean
A fortified town at the peak of Punta de Benimaquia, in the far northwest of Montgó Natural Park, which was inhabited in the ancient Iberian period around the 6th century BCE. The most striking thing about this settlement is that the oldest wine presses in the western Mediterranean have been found there. The site includes a space dedicated to wine production. The city's Archaeological Museum, based in Dénia Castle, is home to a collection of unique materials that testify to the inhabitants' wine-making activity. The Castle is one of the city's must-sees. It was built between the 10th and 11th centuries CE, in the Islamic period. After the Reconquista, it was converted into a citadel and later served as a fortress against piracy in the Mediterranean.

