

Region of Valencia
Nature Guide 

*Discover the natural
and rural essence*



**MEDITERRANEAN
ATTITUDE**

Coastal and inland natural spaces, municipalities and routes



Welcome to
the Region
of Valencia



REGION OF
VALENCIA



Cortes de Pallás

GET TO KNOW THE NATURE AND INLAND AREAS OF THE REGION OF VALENCIA

*you're going to fall in
love with them*

If you love nature, the rural world and life in small towns, the Region of Valencia has much to offer. Along the more than 500 kilometres of coastline, you will find unending sandy beaches and small coves nestled among the cliffs. Without leaving the coast, you can observe the plant and animal species that live in wetlands as rich as the Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca, l'Albufera in Valencia and Les Salines in Santa Pola. Inland, you will find places as impressive as the Desert de les Palmes in Castelló, and the Parc Natural del Túria in Valencia, the source of so much natural and agricultural wealth. Another good example is the environment of the Font Roja, near Alcoi (Alicante), covered by an impressive forest. All that before reaching the mountains: from the coastal mountain ranges of Irta and El Montgó, to those inland, Tinença de Benifassá, Serra Calderona and Serra de Mariola.

To help you get to know these protected natural spaces, there is an extensive network of trails that you can explore on foot, by bicycle or on horseback. But in the Region of Valencia, you can also enjoy so many other outdoor activities.

And what about the towns? There are a multitude, so authentic and charming that just a few days in the Region of Valencia won't be enough. From the sea to the mountains, towns such as Bocairent, Sagunt, Chelva, Altea, Xàtiva, Morella and Peñíscola will leave a mark; preserving a rich historical and artistic heritage, as well as all the flavour and magical light of the Mediterranean. The Region of Valencia is also home to delightful small municipalities that preserve their medieval structure, where you can enjoy a rural environment that is practically unchanged. Hamlets and villages with less than a hundred inhabitants that we also recommend you visit. Each comarca has its own character: Discover them!



Contents

CAPÍTULO 1

p. 4. Protected natural spaces in the Region of Valencia

p. 6. Born in the Mediterranean

p. 15. The new Biosphere Reserves

p. 18. Others protected spaces

p. 19. Mammals and outstanding plant species

p. 20. Natural spaces map

CAPÍTULO 2

p. 22. The Coast

p. 24. Let's go to the beach

CAPÍTULO 3

p. 28. Routes and biodiversity

p. 30. If you move your legs, you move your heart

p. 40. Practical information







*Natural
spaces*

- OF THE REGION
OF VALENCIA -

Born in the Mediterranean



It is always, without doubt, a good time to go back to our roots and to explore, take care of and enjoy all the good things that nature gives us. The Region of Valencia can help you achieve this goal as it is a territory that is particularly rich and diverse in terms of natural resources. Here you have the chance to visit 22 environments recognised as Natural Parks, in addition to other protected spaces, which range from

Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPA) to places protected under the declarations of Protected Landscapes, Municipal Natural Landscapes and Natural Monuments. There are also Flora Micro-Reserves.

All these spaces are home to a wide diversity of ecosystems, although almost always with a common denominator: the influence of the Mediterranean, which determines the climate, rainfall and wind systems, and the temperature ranges in the region. Here you can get to know everything from wetlands as impressive as l'Albufera in Valencia and Les Salines in Santa Pola, to the arid areas of inland Alicante. From the scenic coastal mountain ranges that form part of the Cordilleras Béticas when they reach the sea, between Valencia and Alicante, to

Montanejos





Santa Pola Natural Park

Lavender fields, Cincorres



the heights of the mountains of the Sistema Ibérico, which penetrates through the northeast of the Region of Valencia and which some of the largest and most precious birds of prey in the country fly over. And, of course, the refreshing banks of rivers such as the Júcar, the Túrria and the Mijares are the habitats of numerous plant and animal species. The waters of these and other rivers also irrigate the region's rich fields. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the importance of the UNESCO declaration, in 2019, of the Biosphere Reserves of l'Alt Túrria and Valle del Cabriel, as a consequence of their natural wealth and the development in these areas of environmentally friendly human activities.

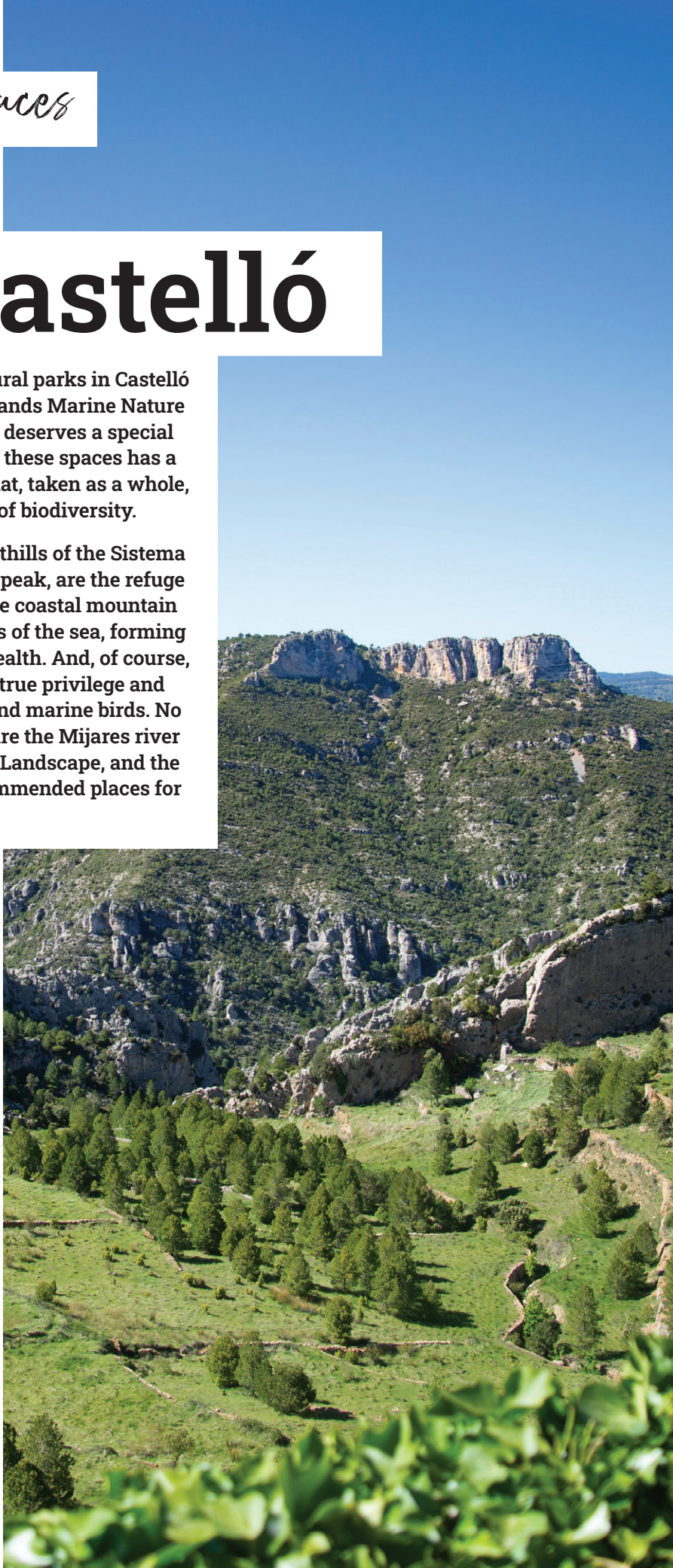
Castelló

There are eight spaces classified as natural parks in Castelló province, including the Columbretes Islands Marine Nature Reserve and Natural Park, a place that deserves a special mention due to its uniqueness. Each of these spaces has a distinct character and characteristics that, taken as a whole, make up an impressive catalogue of biodiversity.

While the highest mountains, in the foothills of the Sistema Ibérico, such as the iconic Penyagolosa peak, are the refuge of large birds of prey and mammals, the coastal mountain ranges, such as Irta, sink into the depths of the sea, forming cliffs and spaces of great underwater wealth. And, of course, there are also the coastal wetlands, a true privilege and source of food for migratory, resident and marine birds. No less important than the natural parks are the Mijares river and its estuary, considered a Protected Landscape, and the Almenara marsh. Both are highly recommended places for bird watching.

La Tinença de Benifassà

High mountain meadows, oak and pine forests, large areas of scrubland, caves, rocky outcrops, springs... In the almost 5,000 hectares of this natural park, there are habitats that you could find in more northern latitudes. But this wet massif's uniqueness is also the reason why so many and such a variety of species find refuge in it. Its emblem is the Spanish or Iberian ibex, which has one of the country's most important reserves here.





Penyagolosa

The somewhat more than 1,000 hectares of this natural park are home to the second highest mountain in the Region of Valencia, at 1,814 metres, which has lent the park its name. Around it, the rugged mountain range is the refuge of species as precious as the golden eagle and the Iberian ibex. All this explains why it is a place much loved by all the mountain climbers who dare to explore this area of the Maestrat.



Penyagolosa

Prat de Cabanes-Torreblanca

This natural park is, without a doubt, the main wetland in Castelló province. And, as such, one of the most valuable places from the point of view of bird life and environmental conservation. So much so that it is included in the List of Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. You can discover three different habitats here: the salt marsh, the sandspit and the marshy area. Each with different types of plants, among which birds such as the marsh harrier, the great cormorant, the kingfisher, the stilt, the red-crested pochard and the Eurasian coot nest. Other endemic animals also live here, such as the gambeta (crustacean) and the fartet (fish).

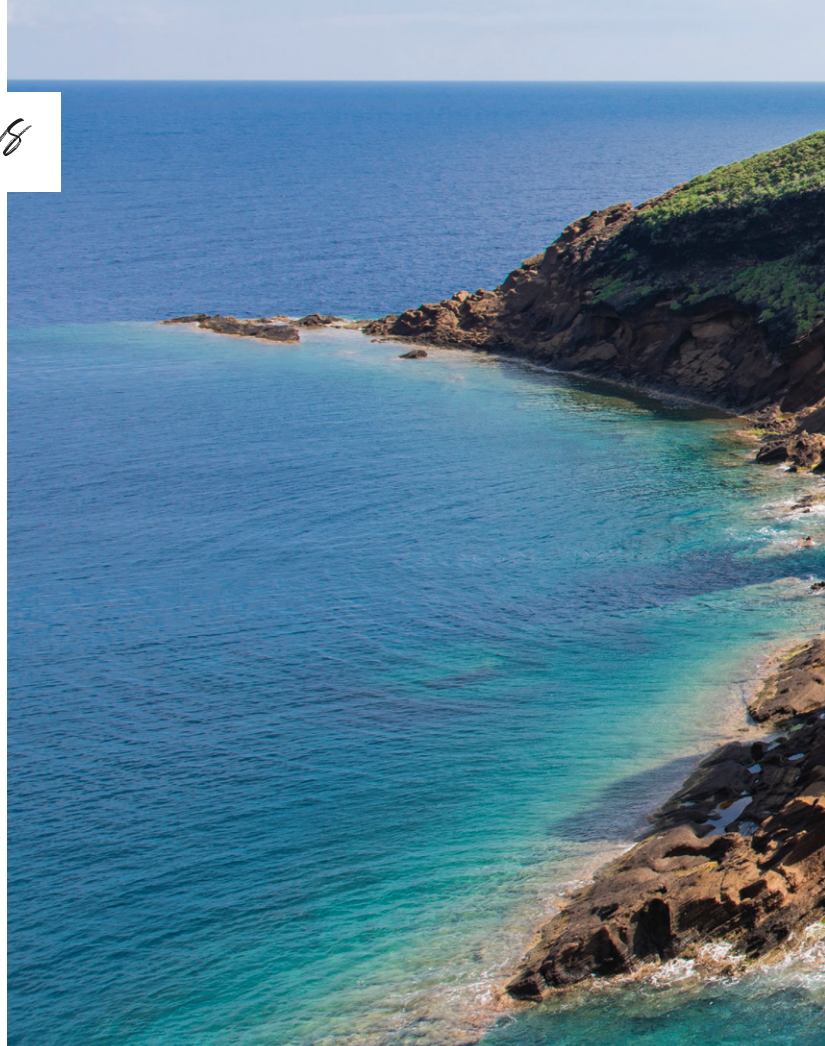
Collared pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*)



Desert de Les Palmes

What you are going to find in this natural park is not a desert, at least when following the widespread concept of a "dry place with little vegetation". Quite the contrary: vegetation abounds here, but centuries ago the Discalced Carmelite friars and nuns called it a desert because it is a particularly unpopulated area. The Desert de Les Palmes Natural Park is a coastal mountain range (its peak, the Bartolo, is 729 metres), which occupies around 3,000 hectares, crossed by numerous trails, where you can admire various Mediterranean-type botanical species surrounding the old Carmelite monastery and its museum (18th century).

Desert de les Palmes



Serra d'Irta

This natural park has two dimensions: land and sea. The second will be discussed later. Both make up one of the most unique and valuable protected areas in the Region of Valencia. In fact, you can admire one of its longest stretches of virgin coastline here, almost fifteen kilometres long. Be sure not to miss the panoramic views at the foot of Badum tower on one of the highest cliffs in the region.

Serra d'Espadà

Serra d'Espadà

Covering more than 31,000 hectares, this natural park is the largest protected space in Castelló province. In fact, you will be surprised to know that it is 60 kilometres long, along which there are steep mountains over 1,000 metres high, which run down to the valleys formed by the Mijares and Palància rivers. In between, a wide variety of ecosystems, among which pine and cork oak forests stand out. The latter supply the cork industry, so important throughout the history of the Serra d'Espadà.





+ Columbretes Islands

> A boat trip to the Columbretes islands is a true privilege and a gift for the senses. In fact, if you get the chance to visit this small archipelago of islets and reefs, located around 56 kilometres off the coast of Castelló, you will take with you a collection of indelible images.

Volcanic, they are the remains of several craters that emerged from the sea two million years ago; these islands are home to valuable colonies of seabirds, such as Scopoli's shearwater, which in the Region of Valencia only nests on the Columbretes islands. The same is true of Eleonora's falcon. No less important are the many species of underwater flora and fauna that inhabit the over 5,500-hectare marine reserve that surrounds it.

You can only disembark, always in small groups, on Illa Grossa, the largest in the archipelago, where there is a lighthouse a short walk away.

Illes Columbretes

Irta Marine Nature Reserve

The maritime part of the natural park of the same name, off the coast of Alcossebre and Peñíscola, is home to rich underwater flora and fauna, especially around the coastal cliffs, which plunge 20 metres below sea level down to the seabed. You can only go diving with permission, but you always have the opportunity to sail the 900 hectares of this protected space and witness the spectacular union between land and sea in this privileged spot in the Mediterranean.





Albufera

Valencia

To speak of nature in Valencia is to speak of the famous Albufera, which gets a special mention here. But there are other protected natural spaces that are well worth a visit.

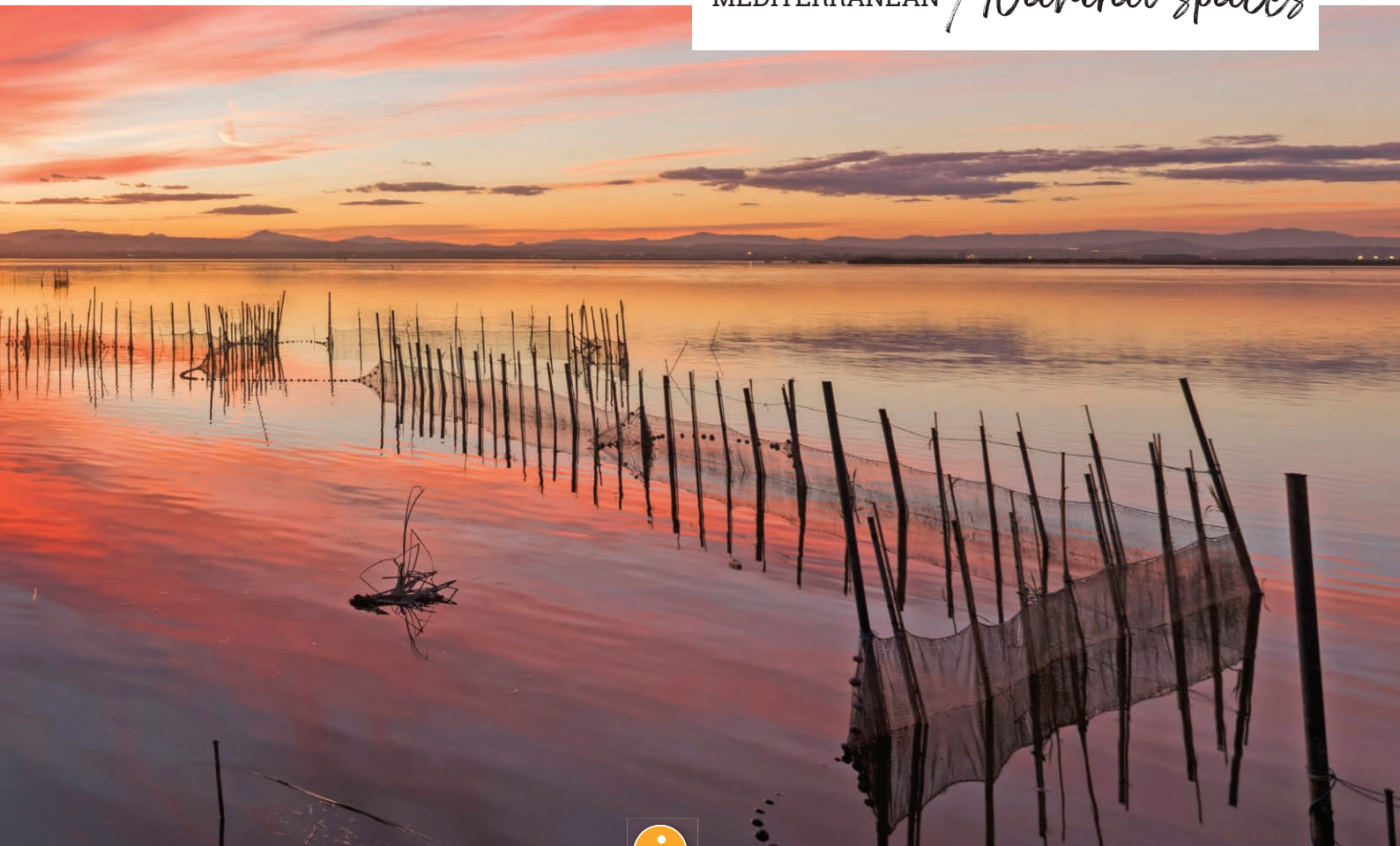
From the striking geological formations of the Chera-Sot de Chera Natural Park and the Hoces del Cabriel, to wetlands such as La Marjal de Pego-Oliva and the rich trail of life that the Túria river leaves in its wake, the panorama of natural parks and protected spaces in Valencia province is so vast that you will surely find your own favourite place here to immerse yourself in nature.

The Túria river

Much of the Túria river plain is protected within the limits of its own natural park. It encompasses an area of more than 8,000 hectares, which includes a biological jewel: the authentic Mediterranean riparian (riverside) forest, with an extensive range of large trees such as poplars, willows and elms. Sheltered by this vegetation in certain specially preserved stretches of the river, and with a bit of luck, you can observe another of the park's gems: the otter.

Parque Natural del Túria





+ L'Albufera de Valencia

> No introduction is needed to what is surely the best-known, loved and most-visited natural space in the Region of Valencia. What you may not know is that this valuable wetland, despite being separated from the Mediterranean by only a narrow strip of sand (restinga), is freshwater.

Hence, rice fields and other crops have proliferated on its perimeter since before Roman times. Although it was the Muslims during the Middle Ages who established agricultural systems here that in many cases have survived to this day.

From an ecological point of view, the Albufera lake has an average depth of around one metre and occupies most of the 21,100 hectares of the natural park's total area. If that seems big, it is known that today it is only a third of the size it was until the 19th century, when it was filled to obtain new cropland.

You can observe an incredible variety of European and Mediterranean birds here. In fact, according to figures from the Biodiversity Service, 350 ornithological species feed and rest in l'Albufera, a hundred of which breed in this environment. There are also two emblematic fish; the *samaruc*, which is critically endangered, and the *farmet*, which is endangered.

Chera-Sot de Chera

This natural park, in the northeast of the province, is characterised by high mountains, criss-crossed by deep gorges through which rivers flow, including the Reatillo (or Sot), which feed the Túria river kilometres below. Another unique feature of this space are the rock formations that have made the Sot de Chera sector the first Geopark in the Region of Valencia. In total, a protected area of more than 6,400 hectares where you can climb to heights of more than 1,100 metres.



Hoces del Gabriel

The Cabriel river, on the border between the Region of Valencia and neighbouring Castilla-La Mancha, has drawn a capricious landscape over millions of years with spectacular geological formations. In total, more than 31,400 hectares that harbour gorges and vertiginous crags, as well as other landscapes. In its crags, you will be able to observe large animals such as the mouflon and Spanish ibex; further down, you will note the presence of deer and wild boar. On the other hand, the abundance of birds of prey means that this natural park is a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA).

Serra Calderona

The last eastern foothills of the Sistema Ibérico occupy the 18,000 hectares of this natural park; on its slopes you can admire various Aleppo pine forests, as well as cork oak forests and heather. Among the most visited points in this protected space is the Garbí summit (593 metres), with its magnificent views of the nearby comarcas (l'Horta Nord and Camp de Morvedre).

La Marjal de Pego-Oliva



Serra Calderona

The Marjal de Pego-Oliva

The natural park as such, at almost 1,300 hectares, is spread between the provinces of Valencia and Alicante and is a wetland (a Marjal, or marsh, is a place where groundwater accumulates and comes up to the surface) with impressive biodiversity, where four streams born in the neighbouring mountain range converge. Apart from its value as a nesting and resting area during the migrations of all kinds of birds, the marsh is home to rich underwater flora and fauna.



+ The new Biosphere Reserves

> In 2019, UNESCO recognised two natural spaces in the Region of Valencia as Biosphere Reserves: Alto Túria and Valle del Cabriel. The first, at around 60,000 hectares, encompasses a large part of the middle course of the Túria river and is home to diverse land and habitats. This translates into a great variety of vegetation (pine, oak, juniper, riparian flora etc.) and animals (steppe birds, dippers, common midwife toads, Iberian hares, rabbits and, under water, the *Barbus haasi* and Valencia chub).

As respects the Valle del Cabriel Biosphere Reserve, it covers no less than 421,000 hectares spread across the Region of Valencia, Castilla-La Mancha and Aragón. The length and breadth of this space includes mountainous landscapes, rock formations, marshland, lagoons, steppes and even farmland on the plains formed by the river in the lower areas. In fact, agriculture and livestock farming are of great importance in the area around this river.

Puebla de San Miguel

Puebla de San Miguel

This protected space is home to the Alto de Barracas (or Cerro Calderón) which, as has already been mentioned, is the highest peak in the Region of Valencia and forms part of the Serra de Javalambre, in the Sistema Ibérico, in the heart of Rincón de Ademuz. The highlight here is the concentration of juniper forests, in addition to landscapes of great impact such as the Barranco de la Hoz and its abundant yew trees. This is an outstanding area for bird watching species such as the eagle owl, griffon vulture, golden eagle, short-toed and booted eagle, red kite, common kestrel, little owl, bee-eater, hoopoe and the shrike. And, from an ethnographic point of view, you can get to know the ways of life of the past in places as striking as the washing place, the textile mill and, of course, the Museum of Ethnology.





Costa Blanca

From the point of view of nature and with help from the Mediterranean itself, the triangle of coastal wetlands between Elx, Santa Pola and Torrevieja stands out in this province. But there are many more natural parks to discover, explore and enjoy.

For example, the Serra de Mariola, a sought-after destination for mountain climbers and hikers. Or the Font Roja crags, which you can explore and then seek shade among the holm oak forests. Of course, it is recommended to visit Penyal d'Ifac, an icon of the Alicante coast and a magnificent viewpoint of the Mediterranean. You should also discover the province's most emblematic mountains, many of which are listed by the Generalitat Valenciana as protected landscapes. A good example is the Serra d'Escalona, in whose abundant forest lives the largest colony of eagle owls in Western Europe.



El Montgó

Between the towns of Dénia and Xàbia rise the 753 metres of this impressive coastal massif. The natural park spreads over 2,100 hectares of amazing biodiversity. In fact, 650 different species of flora are present here. As for fauna, El Montgó is home to two particularly endangered birds of prey: the peregrine falcon and the Bonelli's eagle.

Montgó



Serra Gelada

These mountains are not particularly cold, quite the contrary: their name comes from the fact that the reflection of the moon on the limestone that characterises them creates visual "ice" illusions. As for the rest, in the 745 hectares encompassed in the natural park you can enjoy contemplating cliffs rising more than 300 metres above sea level, covered with abundant vegetation. Several islets are also part of this protected space: Mitjana, l'Olla, la Galera and la Illa de Benidorm, which will be discussed later.

Serra Gelada





Carrascal de la Font Roja

Serra de Mariola

In the shadow of Montcabrer (1,390 metres), sustainable agricultural and livestock-breeding activity has been developed since time immemorial in this iconic Alicante mountain range. The interaction of humans with nature has also created very authentic landscapes. The natural park covers almost 17,000 hectares of cliffs, meadows, gorges and plenty of water. Species such as the golden eagle, griffon vulture, owl, tawny owl, peregrine falcon and the sparrowhawk reside here; as well as smaller birds including the European turtle dove, red-legged partridge, bee-eater, Eurasian golden oriole, hoopoe and the Iberian grey shrike, and many others.

Carrascal de la Font Roja

This natural park, located in inland Alicante province very close to Alcoi and Ibi, covers the Sant Antoni mountain, the La Teixereta area and El Carrascal de la Font Roja. In total, almost 2,300 hectares of Mediterranean-type forests (pine, holm oak, gall oak, yew etc.) growing on the gentle mountain slopes. Higher up, with luck you will be able to observe some of the martens that inhabit the area. As well as Bonelli's eagles, sparrowhawks and tawny owls.

Penyal d'Ifac

This huge rock on a peninsula is one of the best-known geological symbols of the Region of Valencia. It is also one of its smallest natural parks (only 53 hectares) and one of the most visited. Although many of those who arrive here are only interested in the views over the Costa Blanca, the truth is that this crag is a habitat in which various botanic endemisms coexist, with a total of 400 different plant species. There are also several types of lizards, geckos and birds, such as the European shag and the peregrine falcon.



El Fondo

El Fondo is a depression in the submerged land, thus forming a valuable wetland that covers around 2,400 hectares of protected space, located in the municipality of Elx. This is one of the main nesting, feeding and resting places for numerous birds, some seriously endangered, such as the marbled duck, which has its main breeding point on the Iberian peninsula here. In addition to others such as the grey heron, flamingo, great egret, various species of coots, the common moorhen, black-winged stilt and various types of ducks, including the mallard. Without a doubt, winter is the best time to visit this natural park as more than 30,000 birds gather here then. A true paradise for birdwatchers!

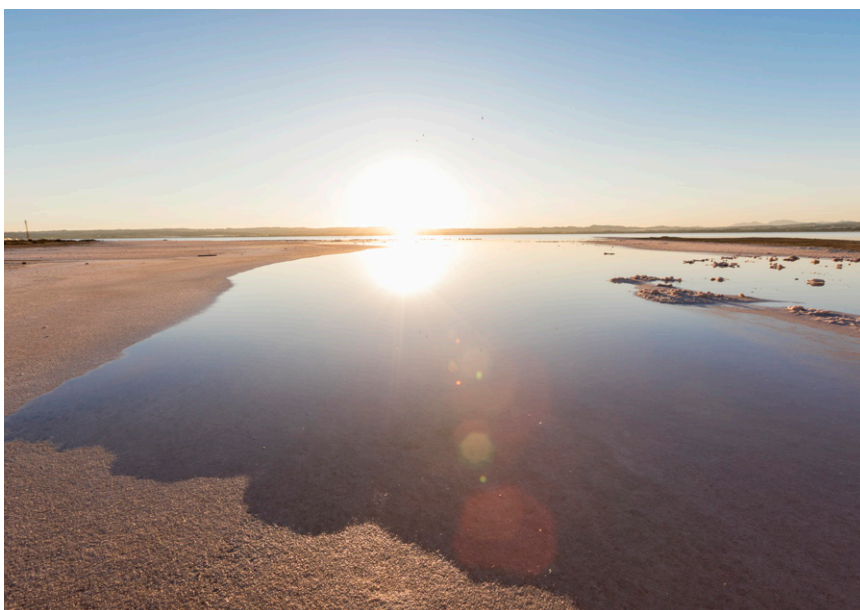
Les Salines in Santa Pola

This natural park of 2,470 hectares is very close to the park El Fondo. In fact, they formed part of the same space, l'Albufera d'Elx, which, due to the contribution of solids from the Vinalopó river, got gradually filled and divided. The peculiarity with respect to El Fondo is that salt flats were created here in the 19th century that significantly changed the landscape and formed a very differentiated ecosystem, a banquet for all kinds of birds. Among them, the flamingos will undoubtedly amaze you, since the colony here includes up to 8,000 of them.



Lagunas de La Mata-Torrevieja

These protected areas comprise a series of wetlands essential for the millions of birds that fly over the Region of Valencia during their annual migrations between Europe and Africa and vice versa. Both lagoons (in La Mata and Torrevieja) are separated by an anticline (curved elevation of the land) crossed in turn by an artificial channel that connects them with the sea. One of the unique features of this natural park, at just over 3,740 hectares, is the presence of the *Orchis colina*, a rare and highly vulnerable orchid, as well as the always spectacular flamingos.



Other spaces

There are many other places that stand out for their natural values. Sometimes in unexpected environments, such as the Illa de Benidorm, so well-known from a distance by the millions of sunbathers who enjoy the beaches of "the city of skyscrapers". Both this islet and the sea that surrounds it harbour rich biodiversity, home to such emblematic species as the peregrine falcon and, underwater, the dentex and the amberjack.

You can also spot these species, a few kilometres to the north, in the Cap de Sant Antoni Marine Nature Reserve, between Dénia and Xàbia. A space that occupies approximately 900 hectares and is characterised by vertiginous cliffs of up to 150 metres in height. Underwater and when freediving, you will be able to admire some of the most iconic underwater formations in this part of the Mediterranean such as *posidonia oceanica* and some species of gorgonia and coral, as well as lobsters and groupers.



Tabarca

Tabarca Islet Marine Nature Reserve

Tabarca is not actually an island, but a small archipelago made up of three islets and a main island. As a point of interest, the latter is the only inhabited island in the Region of Valencia. To get there, you simply need to board one of the boats that depart from the port of Santa Pola, about 4 nautical miles (about 7.5 kilometres) away or from Alicante about 11 nautical miles (20 kilometres).

Tabarca's environment is considered a marine reserve, with the aim of preserving the magnificent biodiversity that its seabeds and the waters that bathe them harbour. In fact, if you enjoy diving, some of the best dives in the Region of Valencia can be found here. The abundant *posidonia oceanica* meadows on the sandy seabeds are filled with species as valuable as sea turtles, seahorses, octopuses and groupers, to name just a few.



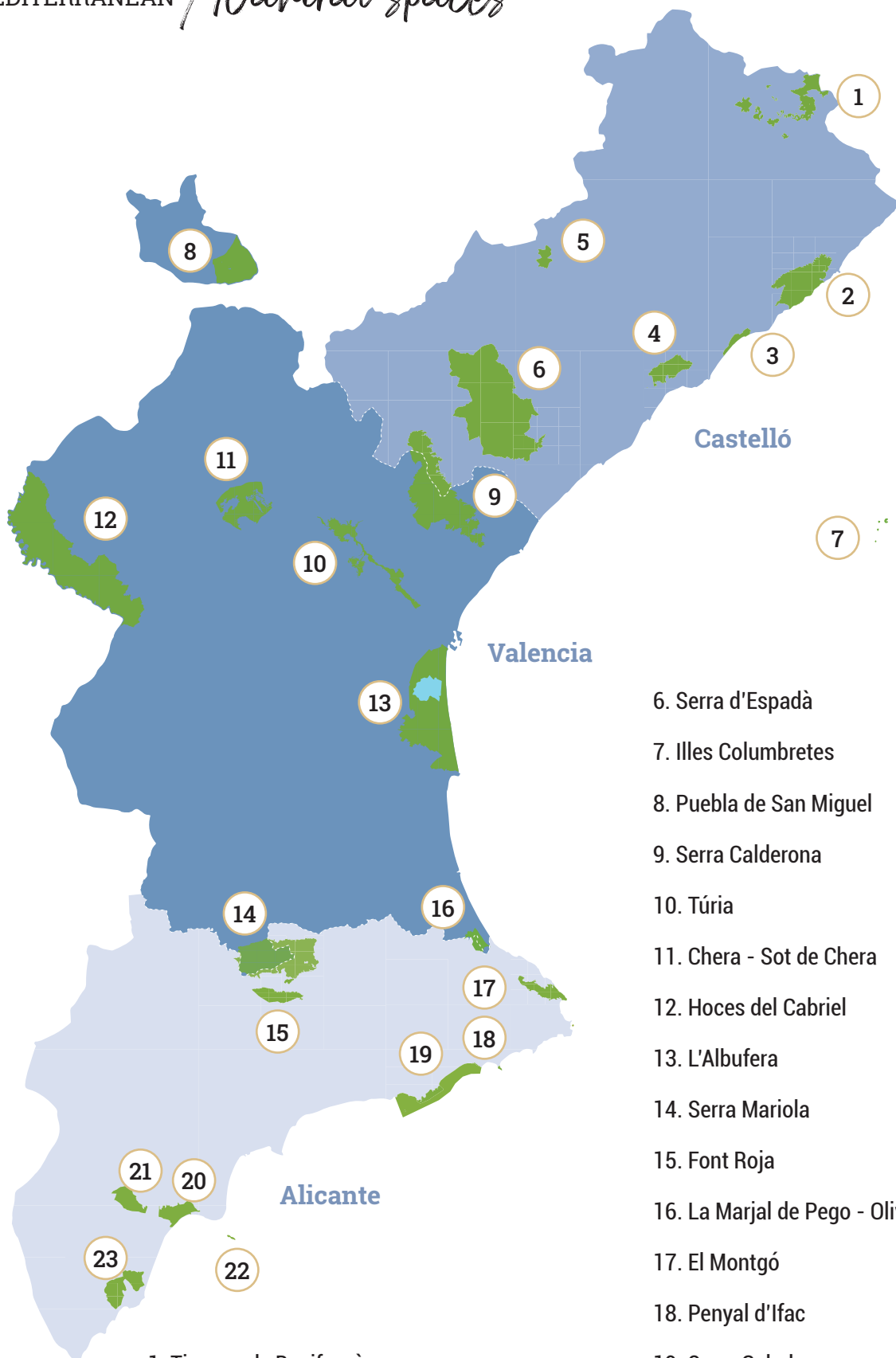
+ Mammals and outstanding plant species in the Region of Valencia

> From the inland mountains to the coasts, and from the wetlands to the steppes, many varied animal species inhabit the Region of Valencia. In the chapter on large mammals, in the forests and mountain ranges you can see mouflon, red deer, roe deer, Spanish ibex and wild boar. In addition to red foxes, badgers, martens, genet and European wild cats.

As for small mammals, the diverse ecosystems of the Region of Valencia are home to such valuable species as the European and North African hedgehog, greater white-toothed shrew, rabbits, Iberian hares, red squirrels, the southern water vole, voles, mice, dormice and several species of bats.

Regarding flora, apart from the large forests of cork oak, Aleppo pine, holm oak and gall oak, the chapter on orchids is of special value. The Region of Valencia is home to 69 species and 21 natural hybrids, including some as valuable as the yellow bee-orchid and the bee orchid.

In the undergrowth, you will come across shrubs and herbs including rosemary, thyme, fennel, cistus and gorse (or genista). While in the riverside areas of the great Valencian rivers abound large trees such as the weeping willow, poplars and elms, which share space with common reeds, rushes and cane. Not far from these areas you will find numerous fields of olive trees, almond trees, orange trees, carob trees and even persimmons.



1. Tinença de Benifassà

2. Serra d'Irta

3. Prat de Cabanes - Torreblanca

4. Desert de les Palmes

5. Penyagolosa

6. Serra d'Espadà

7. Illes Columbretes

8. Puebla de San Miguel

9. Serra Calderona

10. Túria

11. Chera - Sot de Chera

12. Hoces del Cabriel

13. L'Albufera

14. Serra Mariola

15. Font Roja

16. La Marjal de Pegó - Oliva

17. El Montgó

18. Penyal d'Ifac

19. Serra Gelada

20. Salines de Santa Pola

21. El Fondó

22. Isla de Tabarca

23. Lagunas de la Mata y Torrevieja



de las hoces del cabriel

Noria hidráulica

La aldea de Casas del Río es parte del término municipal de Requena, situada junto al río Cabriel, afluente del río Júcar, formando límite con el término municipal de Cofrentes y parte integrante de la marca de Requena-Utiel.

Las aguas que proporcionan el riego del margen izquierdo del río Cabriel son derivadas por una presa de vigas de madera recubiertas por una capa de cemento. La presa tiene forma de U invertida por sencilla razón: la presa separa el caudal del río para desviar parte de sus aguas a un molino que había en el margen derecho del río; la parte de sus aguas es conducida hacia la conocida rueda hidráulica de Casas del Río.

Características constructivas de la noria:

1. Caudal	4. Tipo
2. Tipo de material que cubre la noria	5. Tipo de material que cubre la noria
3. Tipo de material que cubre la noria	6. Tipo de material que cubre la noria
7. Tipo de material que cubre la noria	8. Tipo de material que cubre la noria
9. Tipo de material que cubre la noria	10. Tipo de material que cubre la noria

Noria hidráulica

La aldea de Casas del Río es parte del término municipal de Requena, situada junto al río Cabriel, afluente del río Júcar, formando límite con el término municipal de Cofrentes y parte integrante de la marca de Requena-Utiel.

Las aguas que proporcionan el riego del margen izquierdo del río Cabriel son derivadas por una presa de vigas de fusta recubiertas por una capa de cemento. La presa tiene forma de U invertida por sencilla razón: la presa separa el caudal del río para desviar parte de sus aguas a un molino que había en el margen derecho del río; la parte de sus aguas es conducida hacia la conocida rueda hidráulica de Casas del Río.

El nacimiento de Casas del Río tuvo lugar en el siglo IX, cuando, en el año 1720 la fundación de Requena, practicaron un canal sobre el río y construyeron una presa para elevar el agua y poder regar zonas próximas a los márgenes del río.

El nacimiento de Casas del Río va ligado al río en el siglo XIX, cuando, en el año 1720 la fundación de Requena, practicaron un canal sobre el río y construyeron una presa para elevar el agua y poder regar zonas próximas a los márgenes del río.

Patrocinador: **RED ELÉCTRICA**

Hoces del Cabriel

Information on all the protected natural spaces in the Region of Valencia at: www.agroambient.gva.es/es/web/espacios-naturales-protectidos





- THE -
COAST

- OF THE REGION OF VALENCIA -





Cala Ferris, Torrevieja

In the over 500 kilometres of coastline in the Region of Valencia, there are long sandy beaches, small coves, pebble beaches and numerous cliffs. Perfect places for you to enjoy the warm waters of the Mediterranean and the nearly 320 days of sunshine it gifts this vast coast each year.

There are virgin beaches located next to protected spaces, such as l'Albufera in Valencia, the Serra d'Irta and Montgó Natural Park. In addition to seemingly endless urban beaches as spectacular as those in Sant Joan, Malva-rosa in Valencia and Platja Nord in Peñíscola. And you can

Oropesa del Mar



Gandia





Let's go to the **beach!**

also enjoy the peace and charm of small hidden coves on this coastline.

As if this were not enough, you can also discover the Region of Valencia's stunning underwater realm, which you can enjoy even in waters that are not too deep. Of course,

the blue of the Mediterranean will become the recurring memory of your holiday in the Region of Valencia, along with that characteristic smell of salt and iodine and the caress of the sea breeze on your skin.

Cala del Mal Pas, Benidorm



El Saler, Valencia

BEACHES / *the coast*

Castelló province has what is probably the most filmed beach in the Region of Valencia; Platja Nord, in Peñíscola, where *El Cid* (played by Charlton Heston) rode in the 1961 film directed by Anthony Mann. And there have been more shoots since then.

But if this beach looks spectacular, get ready to enjoy the other coves and sandy beaches along the 139 kilometres of Castelló province's coastline. From Vinaròs to Almenara, dozens of blue flags have been granted, with which the Foundation for Environmental Education recognises Europe's beaches and ports that offer the best services and are the most environmentally friendly.



Valencia province boasts 135 kilometres of coastline, which extends from the municipal districts of Sagunt to Oliva. Throughout all of them, you will find great beaches equipped with all kinds of services, such as those in the tourist towns of Gandia and Cullera. You will also enjoy the sandy beaches in Valencia city itself and l'Albufera.

But there are also many coves on the Valencian coast where you can experience the pleasure of the sand (or pebbles), water, sun and salt practically undisturbed. In some, nudism is allowed, and in others, with just diving goggles and a snorkel you can admire all the beauty and underwater riches of the Mediterranean.



Peñíscola

Alicante is the province with the longest coastline in the Region of Valencia: no less than 244 kilometres. So it is also the province with the greatest number and diversity of beaches. From Dénia to Guardamar del Segura, you will easily find the one that best suits your tastes and needs.

For example, the longest beach in the Region of Valencia, Sant Joan, and some of the most spectacular and remote around protected spaces such as Montgó, Cap de Sant Antoni, La Nao and Les Salines in Santa Pola, for instance. These are some of the most iconic beaches.



Cala Moraig, El Poble Nou de Benitatxell



+ A magical underwater world

> Under the waters of the Mediterranean in the Region of Valencia lies a vast world just waiting to be discovered. This is the kingdom of *posidonia oceanica*, vital for the Mediterranean's environmental balance, which grows on the underwater plains closest to the coast. But red and green algae, sponges, anemones and corals also live here. The formations of these organisms harbour numerous specimens of sponges, sea urchins, moray eels, conger eels, red mullet, sargo, common seabream, dentex, gilt-head bream, groupers and red lobsters, as well as many other species.

It is also possible that you will see green sea turtles, different species of sharks, mainly blue sharks and mako sharks, and cetaceans such as pilot whales and rorqual whales passing near the coast of the Region of Valencia.

Guardamar del Segura





Routes
AND
biodiversity



If you want to enjoy nature to the fullest in the Region of Valencia, it is best to do so walking, cycling, horse riding or by doing any other outdoor sport, while you follow one of the many routes and trails that go into the different protected spaces. In total, there are about 9,000 kilometres of different types of hiking trails: from long distance (GR) footpaths that cross comarcas and provinces, to short distance (PR) and local (SL) footpaths.

You also have the option of following one of the thirteen Vías Verdes (greenways) that take advantage of old railway lines and infrastructure in disuse, which go through spaces of outstanding natural beauty. Highlights include Ojos Negros, which is the longest Vía Verde in Spain and has a long stretch between Castelló and Valencia provinces.

Along these trails, and at some particularly favourable spots, you will have the chance to see the most representative plants and animals of the Region of Valencia: from the usual species found in Mediterranean forests (with an abundance of Aleppo pines, holm oak and cork oak) and riverside forests, to wetlands and dune systems that flank much of the coastline.



If you move
your legs you
move **your heart**





CASTELLÓ



Vistabella del Maestrat

La Morería and La Rambla de San Mateu (Les Coves de Vinromà)

This is an easy (and very pleasant) route that surrounds Les Coves de Vinromà, in the surroundings of which lie remains from the Palaeolithic period. You will gradually ascend to the top of La Pisota, where you will see an impressive panoramic view of the Mediterranean. This is a circular trip of just over five and a half kilometres, ideal to do in a morning (about two and a half hours).

The Chico river and Pozo Negro (Fuentes de Ayódar)

Pozo Negro is a lagoon of glacial origin located in the Serra d'Espadà and one of the most beautiful spots for swimming inland in the Region of Valencia. The path that reaches this place (fairly easy) runs parallel to the Chico river for around six kilometres, which takes about two and a half hours.



Pozo Negro, Fuentes de Ayódar



+ **Vía Verde de los Ojos Negros**

> Much of the just over 76 kilometres of this route through the Region of Valencia runs parallel to the Palància river. Specifically, from Barracas (Castelló) to Algimia d'Alfara (Valencia), although you can continue to Sagunt, the start of the old mining track that linked Altos Hornos with Ojos Negros in Teruel, where the ore was mined.

The Vía Verde follows what was the old Sierra Menera mining railway tracks. Along the pathway, which is quite flat, you will find several rest areas, go through fifteen tunnels and cross eight bridges over the river, some of them truly spectacular.

El Clot de la Mare de Deu footpath (Borriana)

This is an ideal trail to follow at any time of the year, but it is especially appreciated in summer as it runs parallel to the Ana river, in the middle of a beautiful riverside forest full of poplars and willows. The footpath is around three kilometres long and is quite flat, so it is one of the best for a day trip with children.

Barranco de Almanzor ravine (Almedijar)

This route starts and ends in Almedijar in the Alt Palància comarca. Apart from the obvious beautiful scenery, the abundance of cork oak and pine forests that flank the path stands out. In total, around twelve kilometres long and of medium difficulty (because of the gradient), which you can cover in just under five hours.



Vía Verde Ojos Negros

VALENCIA



The Júcar canyons (Jalance)

There is no doubt: this is a stand-out hiking option inland in Valencia province, among spectacular stone walls sculpted by the Júcar river. It runs along the path laid out for the construction of a canal that goes to Cofrentes. In total, there are about eleven kilometres (round trip) of medium difficulty, which you can cover in around four hours.



The Chorradores de Navarrés (Navarrés)

This is one of the most recommended of the different mountain routes that you can follow in the area as it combines mountain and riverside landscapes, and, in good weather, the option of a swim in the spectacular Los Chorradores. You will be able to cover it in approximately five hours, after walking along around twelve kilometres of medium difficulty.

Vía Verde del Serpis (Alcoi)

Following the old Tren dels Anglesos between Alcoi and Gandia, and partly parallel to the course of the Serpis river, this hiking and cycling path makes its way through the stunning natural world at the foot of the La Safor massif. In total, 40 kilometres, in which you will especially enjoy the stretch that goes through El Racó del Duc.



Los Calderones, Chulilla



+ The Calderones route

> Following the Túria river canyons, this route is, without a doubt, one of the most spectacular inland in Valencia province. This is a circular trail that starts from the town of Chulilla, with the highlights being the water and the enormous rock walls drawn by the river over millions of years. In total, you will travel about 16 kilometres, rising around 300 metres (1,600 accumulated), so it is of medium difficulty. In summer, you will have the incentive of swimming in the area known as Charco Azul, a particularly beautiful spot that is also characterised by the fact that the waters are completely calm.

The Water Route (Chelva)

This tourist trail combines natural, cultural and recreational highlights. Throughout the two and a half hours of travel, you will find forests, a tunnel, river beaches, a waterfall, rest areas for picnics... It is an easy footpath, very suitable for families.



Ruta del Agua, Chelva

COSTA BLANCA

Santa Pola lighthouse and sierra (Santa Pola)

This circular path, approximately thirteen kilometres long and of low difficulty, will let you discover both the Santa Pola headland and the lighthouse, over the immensity of the sea and the sierra that frames the town. This natural space is covered with a mantle of typical Mediterranean vegetation; you can also walk next to large areas repopulated with pines.



Santa Pola



Barranco del Infierno ravine (La Vall de Laguar)

Due to its level of difficulty and the continuous gradients, this is not a trail for everyone, hence its name - 'ravine from hell'. But if you feel strong enough, its just over fourteen kilometres (taking almost seven hours) will impress you like few others. Deep gorges, tunnels, wooden railings next to the Ebo river, stone stairways... No wonder many know this route as "the cathedral of hiking".



+ Route to the top of Penyal d'Ifac

> Penyal d'Ifac is one of the best-known sights of the Alicante coastline and, at 300 metres high facing Calpe beach, a real challenge for hikers and climbers. You can finish the slightly less than five kilometres of circular pathway in around two and a half hours. The difficulty is medium-low.

Once at the top, and after going through a tunnel carved out of the rock, you will be able to see a superb panoramic view of this part of the coast, Calpe itself and the neighbouring sierras. You need to wear suitable (mountain) footwear and carry protection against the sun and water on this trail. There is currently a daily capacity limit, so you should book your space at the Penyal d'Ifac Natural Park Visitor Centre (Carrer del Peñón, Calpe).



Vía Verde del Maigó (Alcoi)

Through tunnels and viaducts that make their way through the narrow passes of the Serra de Mariola, a railway line was laid in the 1920s that connected Alcoi and Alicante. This greenway follows that line along 22 kilometres, which you can walk in one day. Much of the route runs through beautiful Mediterranean forests and gypsum formations.

Routes to Montcabrer (Agres)

At 1,390 metres, Montcabrer peak is the highest point in the Serra de Mariola; you can reach it from the small town of Agres. A route of around eleven kilometres (22 kilometres round trip) with a certain degree of difficulty. If you are brave enough to do it in winter, you can find a lot of snow. A historic ice cave is even preserved here: La Cava Gran. And in any season you will be spellbound by the silhouettes of the griffon vultures that fly over the area.



Penyal d'Ifac (Calpe)







L'Alfàs del Pi

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.



Tourist information



Tourist office



Tourism online

- www.comunitatvalenciana.com
- www.turismodecastellon.com
- www.costablanca.org
- www.valenciaturisme.org
- www.alicanteturismo.com
- www.castellonturismo.com
- www.visitvalencia.com
- www.visitbenidorm.com
- www.visitelx.com

Thank you
for visiting!



GENERALITAT
VALENCIANA



TURISME
COMUNITAT VALENCIANA

Make your stay in the Region of Valencia
a truly **special experience**.

It all starts on regionofvalencia.com



Follow us
and share!



@comunitatvalenciana



@comunitat_valenciana



@c_valenciana



@Visit Comunitat Valenciana



visitcomunitatvalenciana