

Rock Art World Heritage

The largest group of prehistoric paintings in Europe

The Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin on the Iberian Peninsula was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1998 as it is the largest group of prehistoric cave paintings in Europe and constitutes an exceptional image of human life, in addition to being located in environments of great scenic and natural value. A total of 351 locations were included in this World Heritage declaration in the Region of Valencia, with the following distribution (Alacant, 169, Castelló, 101 and Valencia, 81), but the findings have increased since 1998 to the present day until reaching almost 600 sites.

The Region of Valencia incorporates in the Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin a large number of places that include the different styles studied (Palaeolithic art, Levantine art, Schematic art and Macroschematic art).

It is mainly concentrated in the areas of Els Ports and Alt Maestrat in Castelló province, in Caroig massif in Valencia province and in the Valles de la Marina and the Alcoi area in Alacant province, although there are sites scattered throughout almost all of the Valencian comarcas.

Main caves that can be visited

Ancestral culture in the Mediterranean landscape

Parc Cultural Gasulla-Valltorta

In this landscape of limestone and Mediterranean forest that extends over several municipalities, there are no less than 97 rock art groups, mostly Levantine art. From Valltorta Museum, you can follow several hiking trails to visit some enclaves: Cova dels Cavalls, Cova del Mas d'en Josep, Cova dels Ribassals o del Civil, Coves de la Saltadora, Centelles cave in Albocàsser and, in the municipality of Ares del Maestrat, Cova Remigia.

Morella la Vella

These paintings are found on the Morella la Vella massif, the birthplace of the first settlers of these lands. They represent hunting scenes and schematic representations that can be visited free of charge and on guided tours, while you also enjoy the area's landscapes.

Caroig massif

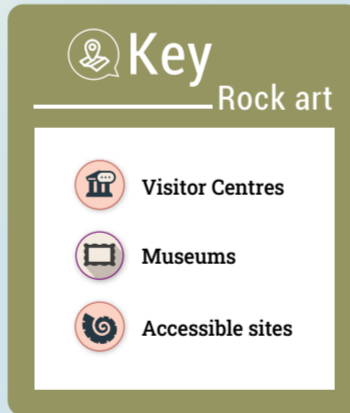
This vast tabular platform in Valencia province extends between Bicorp, Muela de Cortes, Cofrentes, Ayora and Navalón, and stands out for its geomorphological, botanical and ethnologic characteristics. As for rock art, you can visit the Cueva de la Araña, the Moreno river ravine, Garrofero de Navarrés cave and Voro de Quesa cave.

La Sarga - Alcoi

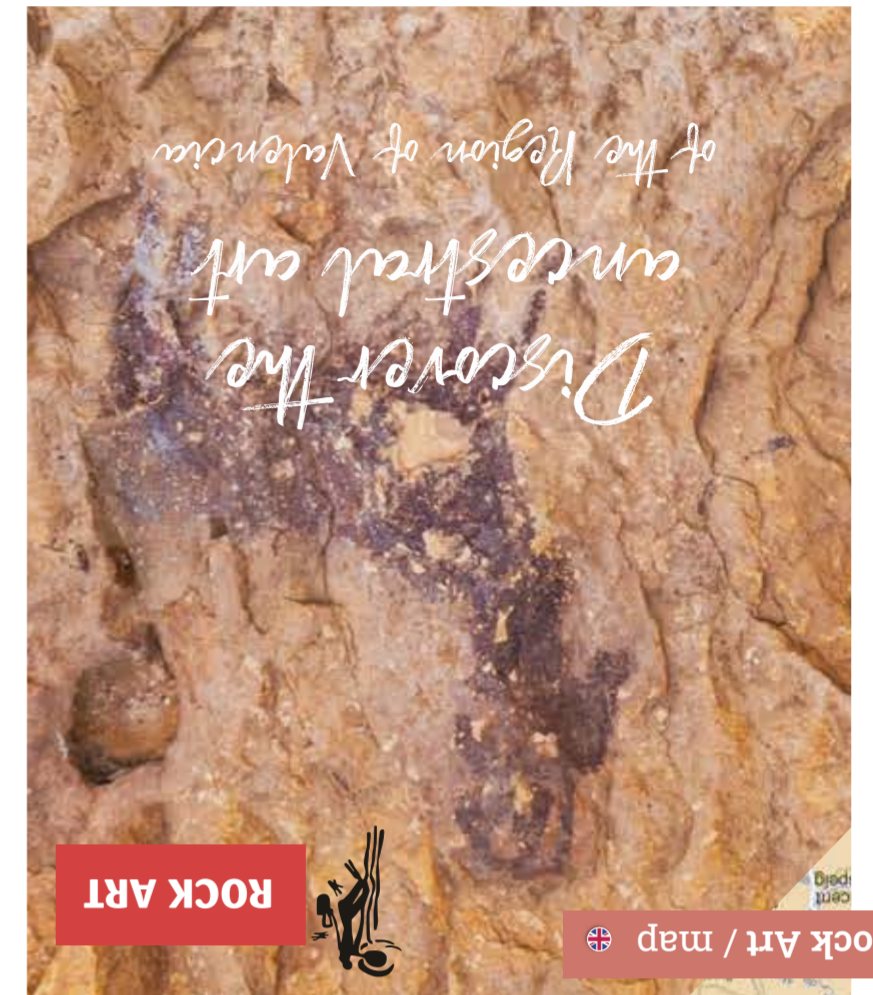
These paintings are located at Barranc de la Foradà (Serra dels Plans), specifically on the grounds of the La Sarga hamlet, very close to the Alcoi Via Verde (greenway). They are distributed across three caves in which three artistic styles can be appreciated: Macroschematic, Levantine and Schematic art. Located in a geologically very interesting landscape, they can be visited during a stimulating day of hiking.

Pla de Petracos - Castell de Castells

In Marina Alta in Alicante province, this sanctuary is made up of a group of caves, including one that preserves representations linked to the Neolithic period. Here you will find macroschematic figures dated to approximately 7,000 years ago in which the human figure seems to be the central theme, frequently drawn with arms raised, possibly representing people praying.



Main caves that can be visited, museums and visitors centres.



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Museums and visitor centres

Seeing rock art responsibly

Tips

- Find out in advance at visitor centres or museums about the option of taking guided tours.
- Prepare appropriate equipment: comfortable clothing, sunscreen, water depending on the length of the journey and perhaps some food.
- Follow the guide's instructions carefully and inform them of any possible damage caused.
- Do not touch the rock art motifs, either with your hands or with any kind of instrument. Do not apply any physical or chemical methods to the paintings or caves, and always keep a minimum distance from them.
- Follow the signs and do not walk outside the paths.
- Do not leave any rubbish behind, including organic waste.

To delve into Valencian archaeology



Bicorp Ecomuseum

This centre's objective is to disseminate Levantine Rock Art and, in particular, that which can be found in the municipality. Guided tours are usually organised to different caves located in municipalities around Caroig massif.



Museu de la Valltorta - Tírig, Castelló



A leading museum in the region dedicated exclusively to art in the Prehistory of the Region of Valencia. Located in the natural environment, next to the Barranc de la Valltorta, it offers detailed information on all the rock art sites in the Region of Valencia, but is also the starting point for guided tours of the caves that are closest to the museum.



Museu de Prehistòria de València

Its permanent collections display the broad panorama of Valencian archaeology from the Lower Palaeolithic to the Visigoth period, with special attention to the Iberian site of Bastida de les Alcuses in Moixent. It also has temporary exhibitions, restoration workshops, an education department and a library.



Alicante Archaeological Museum (MARQ)

This centre, which stands out for its modern educational materials, has different permanent collections dedicated to prehistory, the Iberians, ancient Rome and later periods. It also has exhibitions focused on the excavation and search for archaeological remains, and organises visits to sites in Alicante province, such as Pla de Petracos, Cova de l'Or and la Illeta dels Banyets.



Museu Camil Visedo in Alcoi/ la Sarga

Located in the building of the old Casa de la Villa dating from the 16th century in the Valencian Gothic and Renaissance styles, which merits a visit in itself, this exhibition covers from the Palaeolithic period to medieval times. Highlights include Neolithic ceramics and valuable finds from the Iberian settlement of La Serreta in the same municipal area. It is the museum from which guided tours to the important site of La Sarga in Alcoi are reserved and depart.



Must-sees

Tírig, the cradle of rock art

The Castelló municipality of Tírig is a must for lovers of rock art, as well as being a beautiful town. In the Maestrazgo area, there is Valltorta Museum and Barranc de la Valltorta, where in addition to visiting several caves with representations of Levantine Art, you will find examples of traditional agricultural and livestock farming systems.

La Pobla de Benifassà

In this quiet town in Castelló province, you can visit the Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park, which is home to Cova dels Rossegadors or Cueva del Polvorín, next to the Ulldecona reservoir. This important site shelters more than 200 units of paintings that represent scenes of hunting, domestication and gathering, as well as multiple animals.

Borriol

Close to Castelló de la Plana, the town of Borriol has a significant site dated to 10,000 years ago known as Cova de l'Albaroc or Cueva de la Joquera. The paintings here include a figure known as The Warrior or El Bruixot (The Wizard) that stands out thanks to its greater definition and better state of conservation.

The Moreno River Ravine Route

This is an attractive circular path of 11 kilometres and medium difficulty (around 4 and a half hours walking) on which examples of rock art can be observed. It begins in Bicorp and moves west towards the Baldío and Moreno river ravines. You will find caves there, among which Cueva de Calicanto stands out.

Bicorp: La Cueva de la Araña

This cave contains one of the most important scenes of Levantine rock art: honey gathering, in which a woman hanging from some ropes inserts her arm inside a hive while bees hover around. Dated between 9000 and 1400 BCE, in the two hollows there are also representations of hunting, deer, a large bull and several goats.



Tortosilla in Ayora

Found in 1911, this is one of the first cave paintings discovered in the Region of Valencia. They are representations of Levantine art that display scenes about hunting, honey gathering, war, motherhood and death. They can be visited with a prior reservation through the Ayora tourist office.

Titaguas cave paintings

This Valencian town is home to Corral del Tío Escribano cave, about two kilometres from the centre. It is a Neolithic site dated to around 9,000 years ago in which scenes of hunting, dancing and some animals can be observed. There are also other representations of Levantine art at Partida del Hondón, another site located nearby.

Altea - Sierra de Bernia

The mountain peaks of the Sierra de Bernia hide the cave paintings of L'Ermite del Vicari, which take their name from the ruins of a nearby hermitage. To visit them, you can follow a signposted footpath provided to reach this cave sheltering Schematic art and enjoy the beauty of the landscape.