



A DOCUMENTARY GUIDE

Alicante

Sun, Sea and Centuries of History



HISTORY



COAST



CULTURE



EXPERIENCE

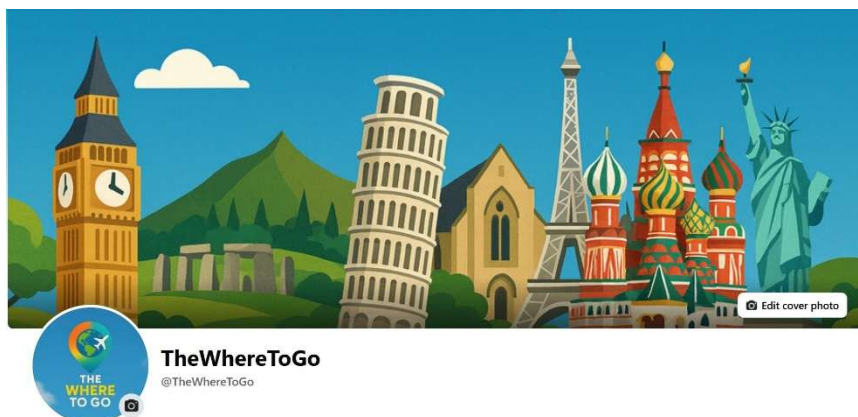
The inside cover for your information.....



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Alicante – Sun, Sea and Centuries of History

Introduction

Situated on Spain's southeastern Mediterranean coast, Alicante is a lively port city known for its sunny climate, historic landmarks, and relaxed seaside atmosphere. With more than 300 days of sunshine each year, it has long been a popular destination for both Spanish and international visitors seeking beaches, culture, and decent food.

Alicante's history stretches back more than 2,000 years. The area was first settled by Iberian peoples before becoming an important Roman town called *Lucentum*. Later, during the 8th century, the city came under Muslim rule, and many features of its urban layout date from this period. The city was named *Al-Akant*, from which its modern name derives. In 1248, the city was captured by the Christian King Alfonso X of Castile, marking its incorporation into the Christian kingdoms of medieval Spain.

Alicante is a treasure trove of experiences. One of the city's most striking landmarks is the hilltop fortress Castillo de Santa Bárbara, which rises dramatically above the harbour and offers panoramic views of the coastline. At the foot of the hill lies the historic old quarter, where narrow streets and colourful houses create a traditional Mediterranean atmosphere.

The city is also famous for its palm-lined waterfront promenade, Explanada de España, whose distinctive red, black and beige marble wave-pattern has become a symbol of Alicante. Nearby, the sandy urban beach Playa del Postiguet provides easy access to the Mediterranean just steps from the city centre. In the centre of the city is the Santa María Basilica, which is the city's oldest church.

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Parque de Canalejas

The Canalejas Park is situated close to the Plaza del Arquitecto Miguel López which pays tribute to José Canalejas who was a major benefactor of the city. The park was designed in 1886 by the architect González Altés, runs parallel to the Marina connecting, at the far end, with the iconic Esplanade. The park is famous for its collection of centuries-old ficus trees which were widely planted as an ornamental shade tree.

In Alicante, these colossal trees were planted at a time when parks and promenades were being redesigned to create more pleasant public spaces. Over the decades they have grown into enormous living structures, with thick trunks, massive branches, and dramatic surface roots that spread across the ground. Some of the specimens here are estimated to be more than a century old.



Alicante Marina



Alicante Marina is one of the most vibrant waterfront areas in the city of Alicante, combining history, leisure, and Mediterranean scenery. Located beside the historic port and at the foot of Santa Bárbara Castle, the marina has long played a significant role in the city's maritime life. The port of Alicante dates back over a thousand years, with evidence of trading activity during Roman times and later expansion under Moorish rule.



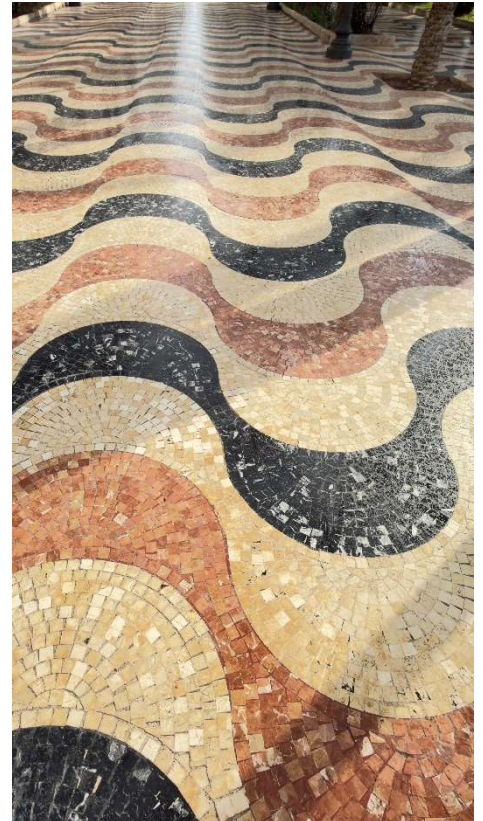
The modern marina area was developed mainly in the late 20th century as Alicante transformed its waterfront into a tourist and leisure destination. Today, the marina is home to hundreds of yachts and sailing boats and offers a lively promenade filled with restaurants, cafés, and bars. The marina is also well known for hosting sailing events during the Volvo Ocean Race bringing international attention to Alicante as a major sailing destination.



Explanada de España

The Explanada de España is one of Alicante's most famous and beloved public spaces. Running alongside the marina, this palm-lined promenade was built in the late 19th century on land reclaimed from the Mediterranean Sea. The most distinctive feature of the Explanada is its mosaic pavement. The wave-pattern mosaic pavement is made from more than six million small marble tiles in red, cream, and black. The pattern resembles the movement of the sea and creates a striking visual effect as people walk along the palm-lined boulevard.

The current design dates largely from the 1950s, when architect José Guardiola Picó redesigned the promenade to give it the elegant form seen today. Rows of tall palm trees provide shade, while cafés, ice-cream stalls, and market kiosks line the walkway. Throughout the day the Explanada is lively, but it is particularly atmospheric in the evening when locals gather for a traditional Mediterranean stroll along with street musicians and artisan stalls creating a relaxed and festive atmosphere.



Playa del Postiguet

At the foot of Castillo de Santa Bárbara lies Playa del Postiguet, Alicante's best-known city beach. With its golden sand and calm waters, it offers visitors the rare experience of swimming in the Mediterranean just minutes from the historic city centre. Historically, this stretch of coast lay outside Alicante's medieval walls and was originally used by fishermen and sailors.

The name "Postiguet" is believed to come from a small gate ("postigo") in the old city walls that once led directly to this shoreline. Today the beach stretches roughly a half mile (900 metres) and is bordered by a lively seafront promenade filled with restaurants and cafés. Its setting is particularly memorable, with views of Alicante's skyline and the dramatic rocky slopes of the castle above.



Castillo de Santa Bárbara



Dominating Alicante's skyline from the top of Mount Benacantil is the impressive Castillo de Santa Bárbara, one of the largest medieval fortresses in Spain. Its strategic position 550 feet (166 metres) above sea level made it a key defensive stronghold throughout history as well as offering spectacular views of the city and Mediterranean coast.

The site has been fortified since ancient times, with evidence of Roman occupation, but most of the castle dates from the period of Islamic rule between the 9th and 13th centuries. In 1248 the fortress was captured by the Christian forces of Alfonso X of Castile on the feast day of Saint Barbara, which is how the castle managed to get its name.

Today the castle is one of Alicante's most visited landmarks. Visitors can reach the summit by elevator, road, or a scenic walk-through parkland. Inside the fortress are courtyards, exhibition areas, and historic structures that reveal the site's long military past. The panoramic views from the ramparts are among the most memorable sights in Alicante.





Parque de la Ereta

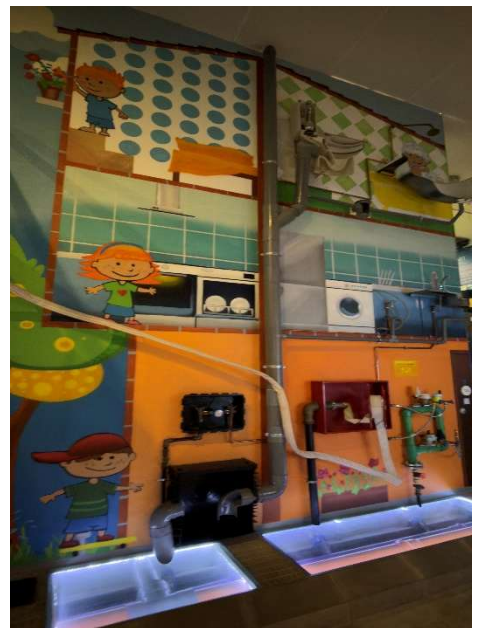
Just below Castillo de Santa Bárbara lies the peaceful hillside park known as Parque de la Ereta. Built in the early 21st century, the park was designed as part of a project to revitalise the historic district around the castle. The park's terraces follow the natural slope of Mount Benacantil, creating a series of viewpoints overlooking the city, harbour, and Mediterranean Sea.

Carefully landscaped paths wind through native vegetation such as pine trees, herbs, and flowering shrubs typical of the Mediterranean environment. You can use the park to walk up to or down from the castle. The Parque de la Ereta also connects easily with the nearby historic quarter, Barrio de Santa Cruz, making it a pleasant stop while exploring the older parts of the city.



Water Museum (Museo de Aguas de Alicante)

The Museo de Aguas de Alicante offers a fascinating look at how the city has managed its water supply throughout history. Located at the foot of Mount Benacantil, the museum is housed in a restored 19th-century building close to the historic wells that once supplied the city. Because Alicante has a dry Mediterranean climate with limited rainfall, water management has always been an important focus.



Inside the museum, interactive displays and models explain both traditional and modern water systems. Visitors can learn how earlier inhabitants collected and stored rainwater and how modern technology now supplies drinking water to the region. Its location also makes it a convenient stop when visiting nearby attractions such as Castillo de Santa Bárbara and the old town, Barrio de Santa Cruz.

Barrio de Santa Cruz (Old Town)

The charming Barrio de Santa Cruz is the oldest and most picturesque neighbourhood in Alicante. Built on the slopes of Mount Benacantil beneath the Castillo de Santa Bárbara, it is famous for its narrow winding streets and colourful houses. The neighbourhood dates back to the period of Muslim rule in the Middle Ages. After the Christian reconquest in the 13th century, the area gradually evolved into a working-class district where fishermen and craftsmen lived.

Today the district is known for its distinctive Mediterranean character. Whitewashed houses are decorated with bright flowerpots, painted shutters, and religious tiles, creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere. Walking through the Barrio de Santa Cruz is one of the most enjoyable ways to experience Alicante's historic charm. Small squares appear unexpectedly between steep alleys, and viewpoints offer sweeping views of the harbour and sea. The neighbourhood also hosts traditional celebrations and religious processions throughout the year.



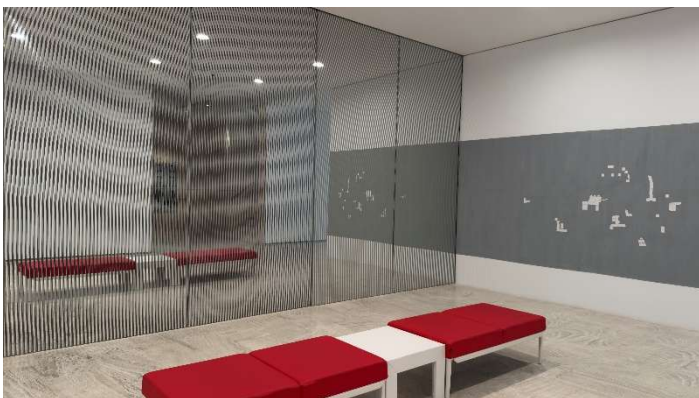
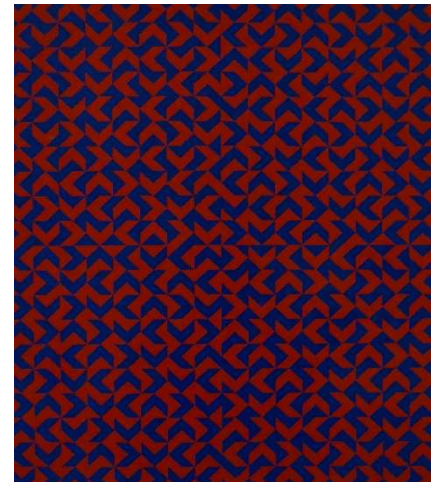
Contemporary Art Museum (MACA)



The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Alicante (MACA) is one of the city's most important cultural attractions. Located in a restored 17th-century baroque building in the historic centre, the museum presents a remarkable collection of modern and contemporary art.

The museum opened in 2011 and grew from a major donation by Alicante-born artist Eusebio Sempere. One interesting aspect of the museum is the contrast between the historic exterior and the modern interior galleries which are ideal for displaying contemporary art.

Admission to the art museum is free.

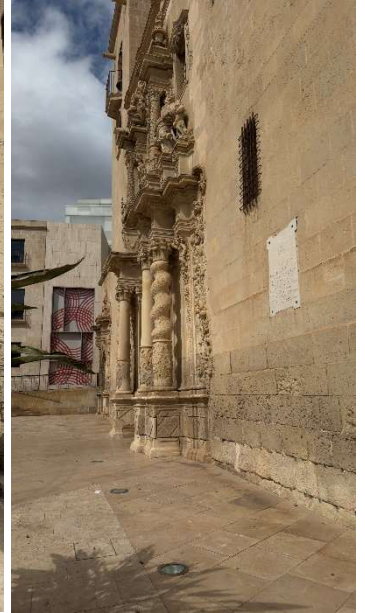




Basilica of Santa María

The Basilica de Santa María is the oldest church in Alicante and one of its most historically important landmarks. It was constructed during the 14th and 15th centuries and stands on the site of a former mosque. The church is a fine example of Valencian Gothic architecture. Its most striking feature is the elaborate Baroque façade, added in the 18th century, which contrasts with the simpler structure behind it.

Inside, the basilica contains a spacious nave, several ornate side chapels, and an impressive high altar. One notable feature is the 18th-century organ, which is still used during concerts and special religious services. Over the centuries the church has survived earthquakes, wars, and periods of reconstruction, yet it remains a central part of Alicante's religious and cultural life.

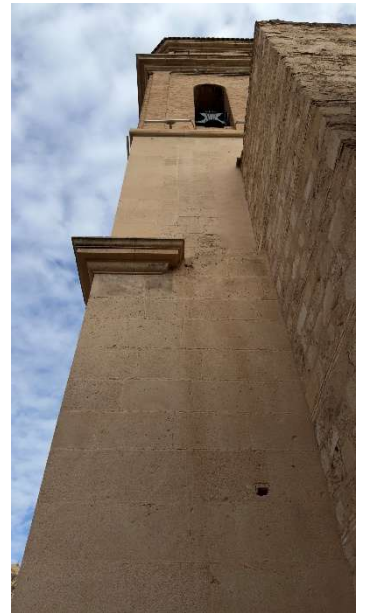


St Nicholas Cathedral (Concatedral de San Nicolás)

The Concatedral de San Nicolás de Bari is one of Alicante's most significant religious buildings. Constructed between 1616 and 1662, it stands on the site of an earlier medieval church in the heart of the old city. The cathedral was designed by architect Agustín Bernardino in a sober Renaissance style inspired by the famous monastery complex of El Escorial.



The cathedral is dedicated to Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Alicante, and remains an active place of worship. Its exterior is relatively simple, but inside there is an impressive, vaulted interior crowned by a large, blue-tiled dome rising about 150 feet (45 metres) above the nave. One of the most beautiful areas of the building is the Baroque Communion Chapel, considered a masterpiece of regional Baroque architecture.



Summary

Alicante is a city that effortlessly combines Mediterranean relaxation with layers of history stretching back more than two thousand years. My visit revealed a destination where ancient fortresses, palm-lined promenades, colourful old streets and modern waterfront life all exist side by side. From the moment I arrived, the city felt open, bright and welcoming, helped by the constant presence of the sea and the relaxed rhythm of daily life.

One of the defining moments of the visit was exploring the Castillo de Santa Bárbara, the vast hilltop fortress that dominates the skyline above Alicante. The panoramic views across the harbour, beaches and city rooftops provided a real sense of Alicante's geography and strategic importance throughout history. Equally memorable was walking through the Barrio de Santa Cruz, where narrow winding streets, whitewashed houses and colourful flowerpots created one of the most atmospheric areas in the city.

The city's seafront also left a lasting impression. The Explanada de España, with its famous marble wave-pattern pavement and rows of palm trees, captured the elegant Mediterranean character of Alicante, while the Playa del Postiguet showed how closely connected the city is to the sea.

What stood out most during the visit was Alicante's balance. It offers history without feeling overly formal, tourism without losing authenticity, and coastal beauty without the intensity of some larger Spanish destinations. Alicante feels lived in, relaxed and genuinely enjoyable to explore on foot.

The outside cover if you enjoyed this guide.....



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