

COMUNITAT VALENCIANA
LES VALLS DE LA MARINA



LAND OF VALENCIA

Excursions in the La Marina district

The scenery in the district of La Marina is a synthesis of the two fundamental elements of Mediterranean geography: mountains and sea. Honouring its name meaning the “marine” district, La Marina offers the visitor a variety of beaches, ports and charming coves along the coast, but it is also strong on mountains overlooking the sea. Just a few kilometres from the coast, the towering knife-edge mountains of the Sub-Betic range form a landscape of small valleys closed off by peaks that provide beautiful panoramas of the area. The terraced slopes of the sierras are scattered with whitewashed pueblos, surrounded by croplands in the valleys. To the west, the district of El Comtat, showing similar characteristics, also offers sharp contrasts, alternating between mountains and valleys that provide exceptional vistas over the enchanting countryside. To get acquainted with the “other face” of these lands so close to the coast, there’s nothing better than hiking or cycling through the area.

Before going on an excursion it is always



recommendable to consult the variety of maps and specialized guidebooks currently available, such as the following: Montañas Valencianas IV, El Comtat y la Marina Alta by R. Cebrián (Valencia, 1991); L’Alcoià i El Comtat by J.R. Nebot (Alcoi, 1993). English-speaking visitors can obtain R. Massingham’s book Costa Blanca Walks (Norwich, 1987).

Hiking routes

For those wanting to hike around the area, there are a dozen or so Short-Distance Routes, known in Spain as “Senderos de Pequeño Recorrido” (PRs), signposted in white and yellow. These routes run through some of the prettiest scenery in the district.

The existing routes are:
 PR-V-58: from Pego to la Vall d’Ebo, linking the flat coastal plain to one of the valleys of the interior.

PR-V-167: from la Vall de Gallinera, touring this interesting valley.

PR-V-154: circular route with start and finish in Benimassot.

PR-V-168: from Benimassot to Tollos, linking both villages in the Vall de Ceta.

PR-V-46, 49: from Castell de Castells to Callosa d’En Sarrià via Tàrvena and Bolulla.

PR-V-42 and PR-V-43: from L’Orxa to La Safor and from La Vall de Laguar to La Safor.

PR-V-23: from Quatretondeta to Benassau, through the La Serrella sierra.

PR-V-24: from Quatretondeta to Pla de la Casa.

PR-V-149, 150 and 151: touring the area around Castell de Castells.

PR-V-147: from Fleix, for a tour of la Vall de Laguar.

PR-V-158 (Les Badenes-Parcent); PR-V-181 (Benimaurell-Fleix); PRV-182: Facheca

Cycling routes

Cycling fans have a wide choice of quiet asphalted trunk roads and farm roads in the area on which to enjoy bicycling. These roads zigzag through the valleys and run through town and village streets lined with whitewashed houses and offering magnificent panoramas of the area. The network of dirt roads and forest tracks give access to scenic sites, and the climb to the mountains is well compensated by the spectacular views to be gained. Towns are close to each other and make it easy to enjoy a pleasant cycling trip around the district.

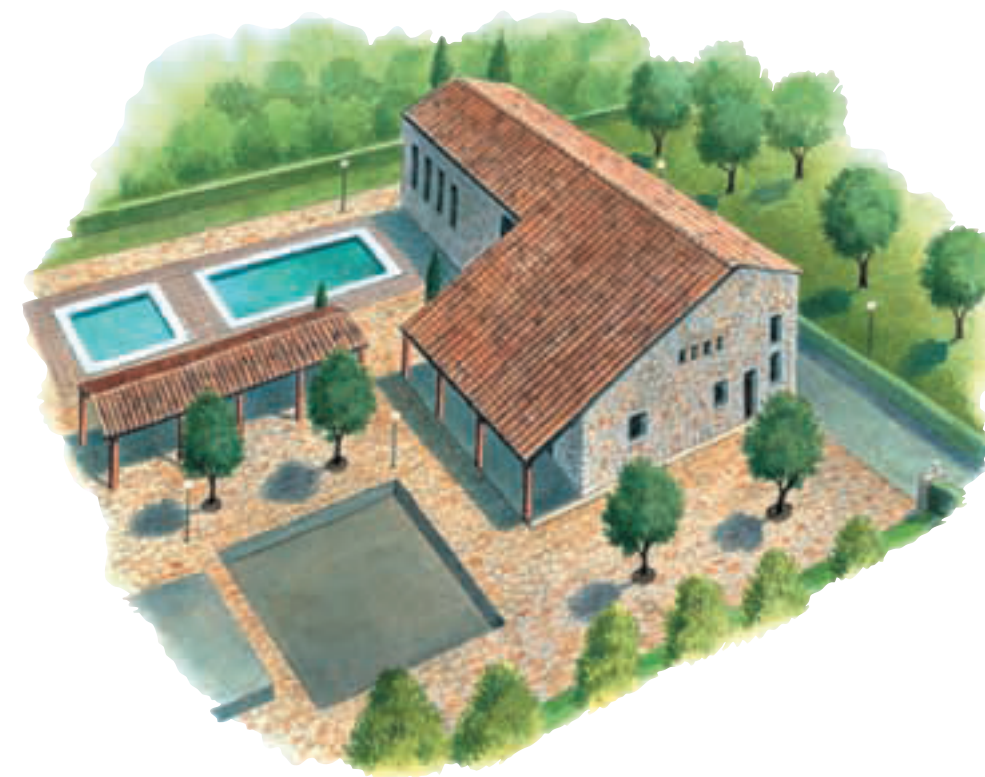
Useful tips

You can access the district of La Marina and El Comtat from Alicante and Valencia using the A-7 motorway, and the N-340 and N-332, linking both cities and bordering this area to the east and west.

Running to the west is the N-340, coming from Valencia, Xàtiva and Ontinyent and continuing to Muro de Alcoi, Cocentaina and Alcoi. From these three towns

there are various local roads entering the districts.

Running along the east is the AP-7 and the N-332, coming from Valencia, Gandía and Oliva and continuing to Alicante via Benidorm and Vilajoiosa. From Oliva, Els Poblets, Ondara, Pedreguer, Gata de Gorgos and Benissa there are various local roads running into the interior.



Tourist information offices

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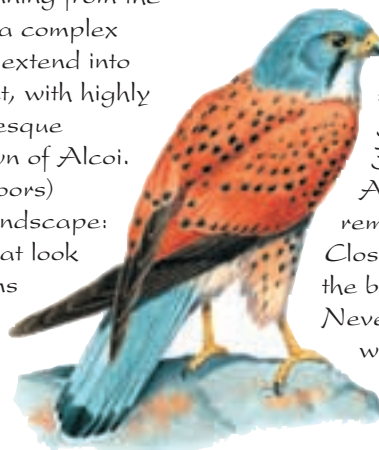
Tourist Info Alcoy
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Tourist Info Castell de Guadalest
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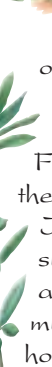
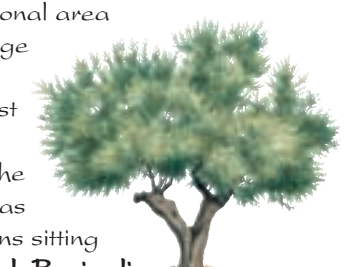
La Marina is the name of a district in Alicante province, running from the coast to the interior. It contains a complex series of sierras and valleys that extend into the neighbouring El Comtat district, with highly varied geographical features and picturesque landscapes that rise up to the tall mountains around the town of Alcoi. This is an area where the Morisco presence (converted Moors) lasted well into the 17th century, leaving its stamp on the landscape: terraced slopes around the mountains and fruit orchards that look spectacular at blossoming time. There are many small towns in this district, where mountain agriculture has been adapted to the lie of the land.



Gallinera, is a cluster of neighbouring towns by the names of Benirrama, Beniali, Benissivà, Benitaia, La Carroja, Alpatró, Llombai and Benissili, all of which sit on the slopes of the Sierra Foradada in the shade of the valley. To the south, on the opposite side of the sierra, **La Vall d'Alcalà** harbours the villages of Alcalà de la Jovada and Beniaia. A tour around the streets of Alcalà de la Jovada gives visitors a chance to discover the walls of an ancient Arab fortification next to the Town Hall (Ayuntamiento) and the remains of a palace attributed to the petty Moorish king Al Azraq. Close by the town one can visit the Morisco settlement of L'Atzuvieta, the best preserved in the area, and a snow storage well called the Nevera de Baix. To the east is the valley called **Vall de Ebo**, where the town by the same name rewards visitors with picturesque scenes along its tiny streets, with an attractive municipal area and an interesting cave called the Cova del Rull, open for visits. Near here, the small river called the Girona cuts through a narrow defile with sheer vertical walls in an area known as Barranc del Infern, or Hell's Ravine, with a spectacular route that is reserved for expert climbers only. To the south, the Girona flows through **La Vall de Laguar**, a municipality occupied by the villages of Benimaurell, Fleix and Campell, laid out on a multitude of terraced stone-walled croplands. Within the municipal area, the abandoned Isbert dam is set in spectacular scenery.



Farther down the river, the Girona valley becomes progressively wider, with seven towns facing its banks, in the transitional area between the mountains and the seacoast. Orange plantations have taken over most of the best terrain in this part of the valley, in sharp contrast to the abandoned mountain slope terraces and some expanses of non-irrigated cropland. On the left bank of the river, along the area known as La Rectoria, there are five small towns sitting close together: **Tormos**, **Sagra**, **Ràfol**, **Benimeli** and **Sanet y Negrals**, all full of rural charms. On the opposite side, south of the river, are the towns of Orba and Benidoleig. The old quarter of **Orba**, with its narrow streets and an ancient mansion house in the central plaza, contrasts sharply with the numerous newly-developed housing estates extending outside the town, now reaching the outlying villages of Les Casetes and Orbeta. Close at hand is the town of **Benidoleig**, whose municipal area boasts the spectacular visitable cave by the name of Cova de les Calaveres, so called for the skulls once unearthed here.



of the rocky crag called the Penyal de Laguar, dominated by its unique 16th-C church looking like a fortress. **Parcent**, in turn, was once a barony and is laid out on a hilltop set between two ravines. Further upstream is **Benichembla**, a town with a uniform grid plan on the banks of the Xaló river and on the flood plain of an ancient meander. It boasts an 18th-C church which has been successively defended over the centuries against flooding from the river. Within the municipal area, on a hilltop named after a "green horse" (Cavall Verd) are the last remains of the historic castle of Pop.

The valley narrows from this point on, only to re-widen again at the town of **Castell de Castells**, whose multicoloured houses stand out clearly on a knoll clothed by almond and olive trees, fenced in by the Xortà sierra, on which still stand the ruins of an ancient castle. The municipal area contains an interesting set of rock shelter paintings

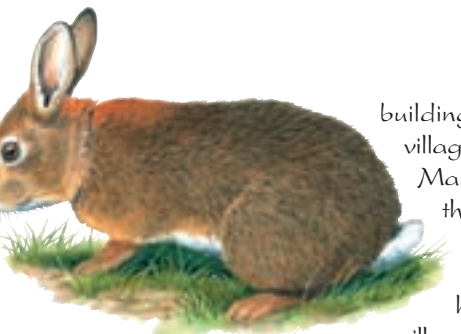


in the ravine called Barranc de Malafi, next to the flat area known as Pla de Petracos. To the west is the valley dubbed Vall de Ceta, a lengthy and occasionally broad valley that derives its name from the river and castle that dominates it. This valley is set between the Almudaina and Alfaro sierras to the north, and the flat hilltop of La Serrella, often snow-covered in winter, and dominating the landscape to



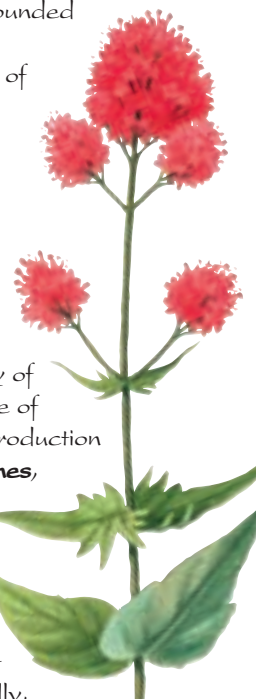
the south. Tree plantations, mostly for olives, are scattered across the terraced slopes, in between the villages that dedicate most of their energies to growing a famous type of olive oil. Along the narrowest part of the valley, between the Alfaro and Serrella sierras, are the highest villages in the area: **Famorca**, with a 16th-C church dedicated to San Gaietà, reformed in the 20th C, and **Facheca**, with a square dominated by a huge elm tree. Farther on, **Tollos** is the most sparsely-populated village in the whole area, situated in the mountain pass to the neighbouring Vall d'Alcalà. To the west lie the towns of **Benimassot**, with an old castle in its environs, and **Balones**, with narrow, steep streets. These both offer splendid views of the valley, as well as **Quatretondeta**, located in the middle of the valley under the impressive rocky slopes of Els Frares. Finally, the Vall de Travadell opens out towards the Alcoi river basin, hosting the village of **Gorga**, with an 18th-C town hall (Ayuntamiento) reformed in the 19th C, as well as the neighbouring village of **Millena**.

The Planes barony extends from the Serpis river valley in the north to the Almudaina sierra closing it off from the south, with good views over the picturesque mountains known as the Sierra de Mariola. Here, olive tree plantations share the terrain with fruit trees such as cherries. The variegated town of **Planes** stands on a hilltop, capped by a fortress and crisscrossed by narrow streets, some of which have stone steps. Of note are the Renaissance church of Santa María and the Dalt Vila square with an interesting Ayuntamiento



building. In the environs are the small outlying villages of Benialfaquí, Catamarrec and Margarida. To the south, on the slopes of the Almudaina sierra on a rounded hilltop, lies the town of **Almudaina**, with its cluster of houses topped by the silhouette of an Arab tower. Nearby is the small village of **Benillup**, with **Benimarfull** occupying the transitional land towards the plain.

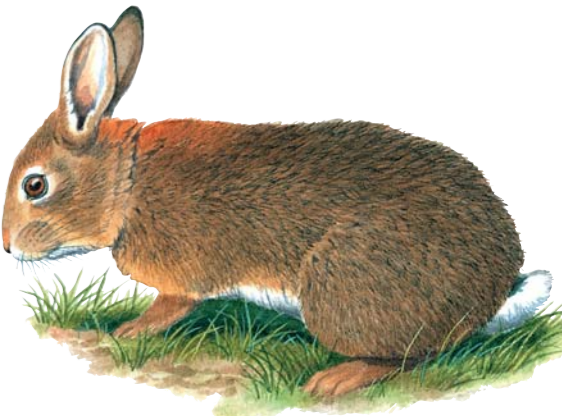
The north of the area, located around the Serpis river, is the annex to the Pla de Muro, an area containing four villages set under the flat hilltop of Benicadell. Olive trees here produce a famed variety of olive oil. **Alcozer de Planes** presents a complex maze of streets of Muslim origin and is now a centre for the production and marketing of aromatic plants. Next comes **Gaianes**, with a notable main square (Plaza Mayor), containing a church dedicated to St James, the Abbey House and the Town Hall. **Beniarrés** is the largest of these villages, with an area that



contains a dam by the same name and an important Neolithic settlement at the cave called Cova de l'Or. Finally, **L'Orxa** boasts a church dedicated to St Mary, a churrigueresque construction from the 18th C, and, outside the town, the spectacular defile on the river Serpis called the Estret de l'Orxa or Estret de l'Infern, where the river leaves the higher land on its way to the neighbouring La Safor district by the sea.

On a tour of these lands in the interior of Alicante province, visitors can enjoy some of the characteristic dishes of the district: appetizing salted pastries called "minxos", sugar-coated almonds known as "ronyoses", a wide variety of pizza-like "coques" or perhaps a succulent stew with cornmeal dumplings called "pilotes de dacsá". In addition, there are various kinds of pork meat and sausages, excellent oils and a variety of locally made liqueurs.





- ▲ Cima
- ▲ Zona de escalada
- 🌳 Àrbol monumental
- ☑️ Pozo de nieve
- 🕒 Cueva/Pinturas rupestres
- 🏠 Poblado ibérico
- 🏠 Poblado morisco
- 📍 Paraje de interés
- 🏠 Puerto de montaña
- 🏠 Ermita
- 🏠 Castillo
- 🏠 Monumento/Museo
- 🏠 Área recreativa
- 🏠 Área de acampada
- 🏠 Alojamiento Rural
- 🏠 Camping
- 🏠 Hotel / Pensión
- 🏠 Restaurante
- 🏠 Oficinas de información turística
- 🏠 Centro de Salud 24h
- 🏠 Gasolina

- Carretera
- Pista forestal
- Curso de agua
- Itinerario excursionista
- menos de 300 m
- 300 - 600 m
- 600 - 900 m
- más de 900 m