

GEORGE AND KATHERINA GRISHIN

# VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!





George and Katherina GRISHIN

# **VIVA VALENCIA!** **¡VISCA VALENCIA!**

A BOOK BY

GEORGE and KATHERINA GRISHIN



A CHAT BETWEEN

PAULINA GRISHIN and MARTINA GÓMEZ

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VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!

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which in turn assisted in creating this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

**We fully share the pain and sorrow of the October 29, 2024 tragedy. But we believe that the Valencia suburbs will be reborn!**

**The heroism of the volunteers in the first days after the tragedy is the key to this!**



## **STOP! THE MOST IMPORTANT**

Don't start reading this book yet! It is really long.

We want to help you, dear readers.

As with any electronic book, on the left, you can always see the table of contents.

We also have a list of the “Main” positions. The “Most Important.”

Choose whatever interests you, for example:

Around the city WITH KIDS

Enter the phrase or just the keywords into the search area. You will be glad to discover 15 or even 20 places worth visiting with children.

Finally, the short list of Chapters at the end of the book will help you navigate the pages much quicker.

TOP of Valencia = VALENCIA BONITA

WHERE to go and visit if you have one day

MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

THE PRACTICAL PART:

TRANSPORT, FOOD, DRINKS, SPORTS

SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

Around the city WITH KIDS

Out of Town WITH KIDS

Trips OUT OF TOWN

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The Coat of Arms, the bat, the dragon

Valencian CELEBRITIES

The VALENCIAN language

ARCHITECTURE. XVIII-XXI centuries



## TOP OF VALENCIA = VALENCIA BONITA

### WHERE to go and visit if you have one day

V	VALENCIA	DG+DV
A	AYUNTAMIENTO	DG 1+2
L	LONJA DE SEDA	DG 64
E	EDUCATION	DV 10,12
N	NATURE	DG 25, 27, 28
C	CATHEDRAL	DG 39
I	IGLESIA	DG 33
A	ARTS	DG 26, 12
B	BASILICA	DG 38
O	OCEANOGRAPHIC	DV 10, 4
N	NIGHTLIFE	DG 22, DV 11
I	INGLÉS	DG 6, 55
T	TRAIN STATION	DG 7
A	ALBUFERA	DV 11, 19

Our main two maps are – **DG / digo (Old City)** and - **DV / DiVa (All city districts)**

- V Valencia, La Valenciana. Three Valencias. What could be more beautiful?
- A Ayuntamiento. The Town Hall is on a beautiful square. Museum with exhibits from the Reconquista – 13<sup>th</sup> c.
- L Lonja. The Silk Exchange. The Gothic wonder of the 14<sup>th</sup> c.
- E Education. CAC and other fascinating city museums.
- N Nature – parks. Turia. Viveros / del Real. Montforte
- C The Cathedral of the Virgin Mary. Holy Chalice (Grail?). Goya. Musical angels. 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c.
- I Iglesia. Church of Saints Peter and Nicholas. “Sistine Chapel.” 15-18<sup>th</sup> c.
- A Art. Museum of Fine Arts, MuVIM, Museum of Modern Art. 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, c.
- B Basilica. The Hunchback – *Geperudeta*. The city's patroness. 18<sup>th</sup> c.
- O Oceanarium and Bioparc. Marine and land fauna.
- N Nightlife. Restaurants and nightclubs in Carmen and Cabanyal.
- I Shops – (El Corte) Inglés and the area around Colón Market. Round Square
- T Trains. North Station, Colón Market, and other modernist masterpieces. 19-20<sup>th</sup> c.
- A Out of town! Albufera Lake. El Saler and Pinedo beaches. Or Cabanyal



## MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

### THE PLAN OF THE OLD CITY

AUTHOR - Señor Juan A. Diez

We call it DG or digo.

See detailed explanations of the numbers  
at the end of the book.





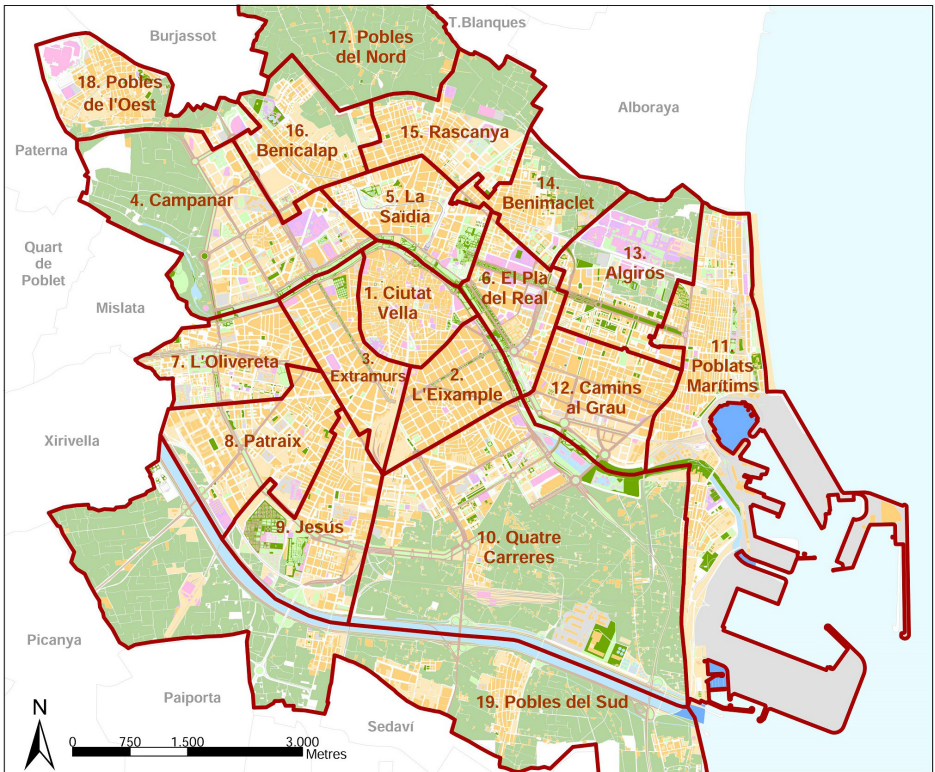
## MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

### THE PLAN OF THE LARGER CITY

19 districts / *Distritos*

We call it DV or DiVa.

See detailed explanations of the numbers  
at the end of the book.



## THE BEGINNING. HOW MANY VALENCIAS ARE THERE?

### GREETINGS

Hey! I'm Polly—well, actually Paulina, but Polly's fine. I'm 16, and I just moved to Valencia. I'm already loving it here. This city is a fantastic mix of old and new, and it's super green with all the nature everywhere. It's so pretty! You gotta tell me more about it!

Hey, Polly! I'm Martina, also 16! Valencia is my hometown. I was born near the Universities and Viveros Park. How about we explore the city together? Maybe even take a road trip around the region! I bet our parents would totally help us make it happen.



### MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

*So first, we're gonna chat... while also writing a book! It's all about Valencia, and since it's a vast city, we'll need some good maps.*

*Our first map is of the city centre, which we call «digo.» Don't worry—there's an explanation at the end of the book.*

*The second map shows all of Valencia. We've got "Distritos / Districts of Valencia" or "DiVa" on there.*

*The "digo" and "DiVa" maps may overlap sometimes, especially when the places listed are in the Old Town (Ciutat Vella).*

*My parents and I made this list called the "Tops." We actually made an anagram using the words "VALENCIA BONITA" and matched each letter with some cool spots to check out.*



*It's basically a quick visitor's guide—like, what to see if you're only in Valencia for a couple of days.*

*Please note these lines are in italics. We will be showing the really important bits.*

## THE PRACTICAL PART

*At the very end of the book, you'll find a super helpful chapter on practical stuff like transport, food, drinks, and what to do if you're only in Valencia for a short visit.*

And... here we go!

## VALENCIA'S NAMES

Valencia... what comes to mind?

Valence?

Nice try! So, you remember some chemistry, but no, not that!

"Valentia" actually means energy. Even bravery!

When the city was under Muslim rule, it was called *Balansiya*. Nowadays, newspapers often refer to it as "*La Capital del Turia*"—basically, the capital city by the Turia River.

Oh, and about the river—if a local tells you to go "across the river," don't be confused if you just find a park instead! The old riverbed was turned into a massive park.

Valencia also has the name "*Cap i Casal*," which means "The Head and the House" or "The most important city." This name has been around for eight centuries!

*And just a heads-up, there are actually THREE Valencias:*

*The City.*

*The Province.*

*The Autonomous Community (la Comunidad Valenciana).*

*Here, we call the latter "La Valenciana".*

## VALENCIAN AND CASTILIAN/SPANISH VALENCIAN language

*Our book mixes Valencian and Castilian/Spanish versions of names and words. Sometimes, they're similar, and sometimes, not so much. For instance: "Comunitat" is Valencian, and "Comunidad" is Castilian. The same goes for "Túria" vs "Turia" and "València" vs "Valencia."*





## FALLAS – THE MAIN FIESTA

### A FAMILY ON FALLAS

Let's start with our family album... Here's my mom, dad, and all my siblings.

Whoa, what kind of dress are you wearing? And what's up with the hairstyle that looks like bagels? Plus, all that gorgeous jewellery! What is it?

I'm a *Fallera*—the Fallera Mayor of our district.

A Fallera? I've never heard of that before. Tell me more, please!



### FALLAS IS THE STRANGEST HOLIDAY

*Fallas is probably the weirdest tradition in Spain. We literally prepare for it for eleven months.*

*What exactly do you do?*

*We create massive, funny, and beautiful groups of sculptures called Fallas (the same name as the holiday). Sometimes, they're as big as a three- or four-storey building. Each one has about 20-40 smaller figures called Ninots.*



*We also write funny, satirical poems, wear special costumes, and offer flowers to the Mother of God.*



*And then, one night, we burn them all! It's on March 19th. By the following day, all that's left are piles of ashes... and we start all over again.*

That's definitely a strange tradition! Who came up with it? What does it all mean?

*Almost everywhere in the world, people celebrate the spring equinox. It's a time to say goodbye to winter and welcome spring.*

*In Valencia, it all started with carpenters (los Carpinteros). Valencia's always been known for beautiful furniture-making.*

*They wanted to celebrate the most important carpenter: St. Joseph (San José in Castilian, Sant Josep in Valencian), the Legal Father of Jesus. March 19th is his feast day, and it is now All Fathers' Day.*

Back in the day, the carpenters would have parties and burn leftover wood scraps outside their workshops. It was their version of spring cleaning. They'd even put a ceremonial torch in the middle of the bonfire.

Then, they started making figures (*Ninots*) to add to the fire. Over time, those figures became full-on compositions, and they started writing funny captions mocking their bosses, mayors, and politicians.

*The oldest known Falla was at Queen Square, which used to be called St. Catherine's. Some sources say Ninots have been placed there since way back in 1820.*

*Why is it called Fallas, though? It sounds like such a strange word.*

*What's so weird about it? "Facula" is Latin for "little torch." When King James the First, the Conqueror, marched in, his troops used torches to light their way.*

So, when is this strange fiesta celebrated?

### FALLAS SCHEDULE

*The last Sunday in February is Cridá, when we officially start the countdown to building the monuments. Every day from the 1st to the 19th of March at 2 p.m., firecrackers explode at Ayuntamiento Square by City Hall (digo-1). It's called Mascletá—loud, chaotic, and awesome. The noise is insane, like, so loud the ground shakes under your feet.*



For almost three weeks, we all go a little crazy, locos—but in a good way! We have so much fun, hang out with friends, and dance in the streets...

It's all mixed together: art, satire, tradition, fun, noise, and religion.

### Where should I go to see it?

Valencia alone has almost four hundred Falleros commissions (*Comisiones Falleras*), which means there are about



eight hundred monuments (*Fallas*) because each commission creates two: a main one and a children's one.

**How many people do you think participate?/**

*don't know, ten thousand?*

*More like over a hundred thousand!*

Being part of *Fallas* is a tremendous honour, usually passed down through families. It's also a tribute to the city's history. But it's definitely an expensive hobby—every *Fallero* pays fees to their commission, and everyone tries to have the perfect costume.

It's not just the *Falleros*, either. Sculptors, artists, decorators, florists, builders, firefighters, musicians, journalists, restaurateurs—basically the whole city joins in!

*Fallas is celebrated in about 30 other cities, like our Dénia.*

**March 15th is the Plantá**—when all the monuments are assembled in the city squares. It's all about the hustle, laughter, and fuss! The streets are closed to traffic; for us, it's our favourite time of year.

**If there are eight hundred monuments... how can I see them all?**

## **SPECIAL SECTION OF FALLAS**

*You'd be better off starting with the Special Section (la Sección Especial). There are about ten monuments in this section, mainly in the city centre. These are the most beautiful, the most interesting, and have the funniest poems. The satirical poems are actually a super important part of each monument, and they're usually written in Valencian!*



## What are the poems about?

They're about everything: the government in Madrid, kings (past and present), foreign politicians, bad roads, garbage in the streets. Basically, everything we complain about to our friends and family ends up on the monuments for everyone to see. It's like we're shouting it out loud!

## How can I see all of this?

Two days should be enough if you just focus on the Special Section. Let's look at the photos. Here's the Falla on Reino de Valencia Boulevard.



## Who are these people?

*Each Falla has its own theme (una Lema). This one is called “All Things Bad,” and it’s about what we need to burn away. It features the Borja–Borgia family (our infamous Valencian Popes), Pandora with her Box of All Evils, and even the President of the Government—of course, we couldn’t leave him out!*

Check out some photos from past Fallas. Here, a prophet is wondering what Spain will be like in 2030. Will it be a dictatorship, a federal or confederate country, or just one big football club?



## What else is interesting to see?

*The **Fireworks**—or the Night of Fire (Nit del Foc). Even though there are fireworks every night, the biggest show is on March 18th near CAC (Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias).*

*And then there’s **the Burning** (la Cremà). The City Commission votes to save a few Ninots, but everything else is burned on the night of March 19th. The last one to go is the Falla in City Hall Square.*

***So, you work on these sculptures for a whole year, and then you only get to enjoy them for four days? Isn’t that sad?***

Yeah, it kind of is. But honestly, we live life to the fullest during that week!

## THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK

### LA GEPERUDETA. LA MARETA OFRENDA / OFFERING TO THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK



Ofrenda is the most beautiful moment of Fallas. It's when flowers are offered to the Little Hunchback or Geperudeta.

**What a strange word!  
Who is she, the Little  
Hunchback?**

*She's our beloved Mother of God—La Virgen de los Desamparados. She's the patroness of all the underprivileged, the deprived, the forsaken. She's also the patroness of Valencia, Gandía, and the entire Valencian Community. She's even considered the commander-in-chief of the Valencian troops! And, of course, She's this touching figure with baby Jesus.*

**Why is She called a “Little Hunchback”?**

*There aren't many images of the Mother of God standing up. If you think of icons or paintings by masters like Leonardo or Raphael, She's almost always sitting.*

But in Valencia, She's standing and tilts her head down a bit. Plus, She wears this beautiful robe with a super fancy collar, which makes it look like She has a hump.

*That's why we call Her La Geperudeta or Mareta—sweet, affectionate names. She's the protector of children, the sick,*



*the unfortunate—all those who can't care for themselves.*

The original sculpture is from way back in 1414, made by pilgrims. But people say She arrived in a really mysterious way—maybe they were angels, not pilgrims?

### **And what is the Ofrenda?**

*It's the offering when we lay down flowers.*

*There are these vast flower arrangements, and we decorate Her sculpture. It's in La Virgen Square near the Basilica (digo-38), right in front of the Turia River fountain. Her cloak is made up of thousands of red and white flowers.*

*People come from different parts of the city, all dressed up and carrying bouquets. They toss the flowers up, and Falleros, standing way up high, catches them and weaves her cloak. The whole sculpture is 15 meters tall!*

*—Oh, in your first photo, the cloak's only half done!*

*Did you know that in 2024, we've proposed that the Guinness Book of Records recognise Her cloak as the biggest in the world?*

*"El manto floral más grande del mundo!"*

*The sculpture is a must-see from March 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>.*

### **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK**

Is it true there are lots of images of the Little Hunchback around Valencia?

Yes! There's even a sculpture of Her underwater by the lighthouse in the port! Plus, there are dozens of ceramic images of Her all around the city. We really love our Patroness!

*The holiday for the Little Hunchback is on the second Sunday of May. She's carefully carried from the Basilica to the Cathedral (digo-39). We even made a unique car with the number*

*plate V-0075-GP to carry her. GP stands for Geperudeta, of course.*

## THE FALLAS MUSEUMS

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

That's great! But what if someone can't make it to Valencia in March?

I get it—hotel prices during Fiesta week are crazy. But no worries! There are two Fallas museums you can visit throughout the year. The first is in the city's north, in the Town of Fal-leros. It's got big and small sculptures—copies of the winners from different years. It's called the Museu de l'Artista Fall-er (DiVa-16).

The second museum is near the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC). It's called Museo Fallero de València (DiVa-10), and it's next to a church where the Orthodox icon of the Mother of God, Nuestra Señora de Monteolivete, is venerated.



## THE TURIA GARDENS AND THE CAC

### THE TURIA GARDENS

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

*On our way to the Fallero Museum, why not take a walk? After all, Valencia is a paradise for families.*

*The best walk, hands down, is in one of Europe's largest and most beautiful parks: the Turia Gardens (El Jardín de Turia, digo-25, DiVa 2, 4-6, 10).*



### SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

*It's visited by 3 million people yearly—more than any other park in Spain! Every morning, especially on weekends, thousands of Valencians come here to walk, run, cycle, and play sports. And visitors do the same.*

### BUT WHERE DID TURIA GO?

A colony of Roman legionaries was founded on a small island on the Turia River back in 138 BC.

The river had such a temper! It kept flooding; the worst flood happened in 1957, leaving the city covered in mud. It was awful!

So, Valencians convinced the government to create a new riverbed running west and south



the city. You can see it if you drive to the airport or Madrid on the A3 or to Alicante and Dénia on the V30-V31 (DiVa 8-10, 19).

It protected the city from the tragic flood on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. But the Suburbs, like Paiporta and Alfafar, were not so lucky...



## THE BEST PARK IN EUROPE

*In 1986, they started building a park on the old riverbed. It's almost 10 km long, a beautiful green space called "the lungs of the city." It has everything: football, baseball, and rugby fields, workout machines, the Palace of Music, the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC), and some of the most incredible bridges, both ancient and modern.*





## THE GULLIVER

### Around the city WITH KIDS

*Is there something for the kids?*

*Of course! Let's start with the Gulliver statue (DiVa10). It's this massive playground shaped like a giant lying down. Kids love climbing all over it, running around, and playing tag.*

The Gulliver is actually best seen from the air. If you're flying into Valencia, sit on the plane's right side, and you'll spot it!



## THE FUTURE IN THE PRESENT!

### CAC - CITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

We've already checked out the Fallas Museum and walked through the Turia Gardens. Now, let's visit the most futuristic place in Europe! Anytime they make a sci-fi movie, they usually film it here. Part of "Star Wars" was even shot here in 2023.

#### What is it, and where did it come from?

*CAC stands for the City of Arts and Sciences (La Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias, DiVa10). It was designed by the incredible architects Santiago Calatrava and Félix Candela, along with engineers Alberto Domingo and Carlos Lázaro.*

*Construction started in the 1980s, and CAC opened to visitors in 1998. The Ágora, the "big blue dinosaur," was finished in 2022.*

#### What can we see there?

## PALACE OF ARTS

Let me tell you about the main parts of CAC.

Walking from the Fallero Museum to CAC, you'll first see something that looks like a giant airship, a flying saucer, or even a dinosaur. This is *the Palace of Arts of Queen Sofía (Palau de les Arts de la Reina Sofía)*, which opened in 2005.

*Classical art thrives here, including ballet, opera, music, dance, and theatre. The building is almond-shaped, almost defying gravity, with a concrete feather floating above it.*



Inside, it's just as futuristic: metal and glass, panoramic elevators, spiral staircases, gardens, and balconies. Every detail is unique, like door handles shaped like blue human torsos. The bright blue tiles remind you of Valencian cathedral roofs; each hall has its vibe and style.

You can take a tour of the Palace of Arts. Besides performances and operas, there are programs for kids, and a music education centre called the Centre for Musical Improvement, named after Plácido Domingo. Across from it is the Valencian campus of Berklee College of Music, the largest independent music college in the world.

## HEMISPHERE

*The Hemisfèric was the first CAC building to open. It has a 3D cinema and a planetarium, and it looks like a huge, hundred-meter-long eye watching over the park, stars, and sky.*

*The Hemisfèric offers us the wonders of audiovisual art with the latest tech and encourages us to stay curious.*



Inside, there's a massive dome with a perfect projection of the solar system, and the IMAX screen is 900 square meters. In the summer, students from Berklee College organise concerts next to "The Eye."

### **UMBRACLE** **SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS**

*Next, let's walk through the beautiful Umbracle—a Mediterranean garden under these light and airy arches. There's no roof, so you're outside, surrounded by trees, flowers, and bushes, but it still feels like you're in the shade.*

They hold fashion shows and discos at the far end of the Umbracle.

And, by the way, clubs in Valencia stay open longer than elsewhere in Europe, especially during the warmer months—they don't close until 6 or 7 in the morning.

The Umbracle is a lovely place for a walk. It's home to lots of alley cats. I remember when we had two dogs that loved chasing the cats... but the cats here are well cared for and fed. Parrots are always making noise in the trees above.

Downstairs, there's a big parking lot and a popular nightclub with young Valencians. In December, it hosts a Christmas



market, and in summer, it's a great place to cool down. Modern sculpture exhibitions are also held along the Umbracle.

## SCIENCE MUSEUM

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

*Across from the Umbracle is the Science Museum (Museu de les Ciències), which opened in 2000. The building looks like the skeleton of a massive extinct reptile.*

*The museum's motto is "It is forbidden NOT to touch, NOT to experiment!" This is a perfect motto for a museum, especially for kids.*



These four parts—art, cinema, science, and the walking area—are surrounded by ponds. In the summer, they're filled with boats, paddleboards, and those inflatable balls you can run inside. It's also a great place for modern sculpture exhibitions and photos. The futuristic buildings reflected in the water, especially at night, are just amazing!

Oh, and this is where you'll find the big "València" sign.

## THE TALLEST

So, what's the tallest structure in Valencia? It's a bridge called the Golden Dam (*el Puente de l'Assut de l'Or*), which looks like a harp. It's 125 meters tall, and you can see it from pretty





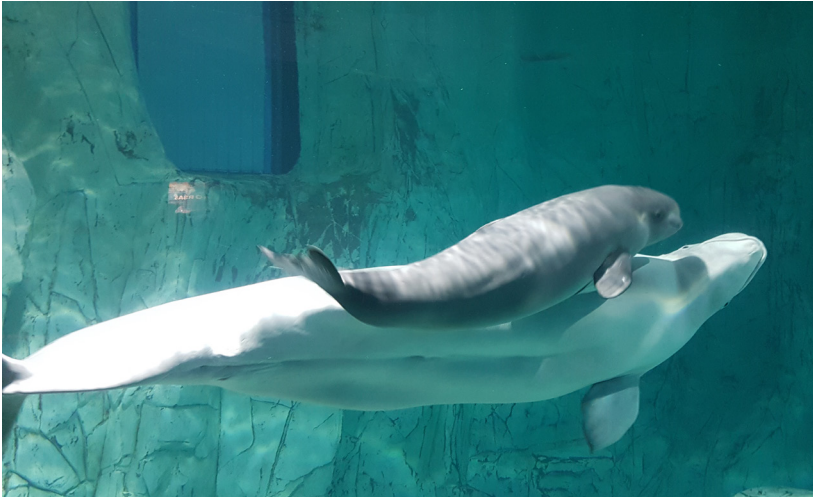


much anywhere in the city. People even call it the “*jamonera*” because it looks like a tool for slicing jamón.

And next up, we have the *Ágora*, a new centre with exhibitions, cafes, and a restaurant.

### **AN ENORMOUS AQUARIUM** **MUSEUMS and exhibitions** **Around the city WITH KIDS**

*A little further, you will find the most exciting place for kids: the Aquarium. The Oceanogràfic (DiVa10) is the largest marine aquarium in Europe, and it's incredible. It's home to birds, fish, jellyfish—and even massive belugas. There are 45,000 different species of sea creatures here! They've created excellent conditions to make all the animals feel at home—everything from temperature and lighting to water composition is taken care of. The dolphin shows are a must-see!*



You can also have lunch in the underwater restaurant, watch penguins, listen to birds, and enjoy the antics of belugas and walruses. And if you want an extra special experience, you can even sleep in a glass tunnel “under the sharks” with your kids!

**THE BIOPARC**  
**MUSEUMS and exhibitions**  
**Around the city WITH KIDS**

*We shouldn't forget the Bioparc (DiVa4) when talking about animals. It's in the north-west, right at the beginning of the Turia Gardens.*



## PRE-ROMAN PERIOD



### HOW OLD IS VALENCIA?

I love imagining how and when things happened. Valencia is more than 2000 years old, right? Are we going to travel back in time?

Yep, let's go back to the very beginning.

*I remember there's a place where it says, "Valencia was born here." It's somewhere in the centre, right?*

*Exactly! It's at the Archaeological Museum of La Almoina (digo-41), right behind the two cathedrals in the centre of Roman Valencia. But there are even older places in our enchanted kingdom!*

**Where are they?**

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

We'll need to head to Llíria and the surrounding area.

Great! My parents love road trips. Let's hop in the car and go! But first, tell me where we can learn about ancient times in Valencia itself.

## THE VALENCIA HISTORY MUSEUM

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

*We have seven history museums, but I think the best one is the Valencia History Museum (Museo de Historia de Valencia). It's outside the city centre, in Mislata, near the Bioparc (Di-Va4-Mislata).*

***What's so special about it?***

*First, it's small—no giant museums, which is kind of nice, right?*

*Second, the city's history is split into different periods, making it super easy to follow.*

*Third, there are videos! They're divided into different eras and available in different languages, which is pretty rare for Spanish museums. You can watch the movies to learn more about the characters.*

There are real and fictional people—from Roman patricians and Muslim merchants to socialist workers and industrialists. They all have names and life stories.

The videos even have subtitles in the language of your choice. The characters discuss the problems of their daily lives, like the Civil War in Rome or the reconquest of Valencia by El Cid.

“And what do you think of Señor Martorell's new novel, ‘*Tirant lo Blanc*’?” asks a lady in the Silk Exchange (*Lonja*) to her friends. Remember, this “new” novel was written over 550 years ago!





## THE UNDERGROUND RESERVOIR

The fourth thing that makes this museum unique is the building itself.

Yeah, I wanted to ask—these massive vaults and the basement... Did they store wine here?

Nope, it was for water! This was the first underground drinking water reservoir in Valencia. It's called "*El antiguo depósito general de la Sociedad de Aguas Potables de Valencia*." It was actually the first of its kind in all of Spain! November 19, 1850, was a big day because that's when clean drinking water first arrived in Valencia!

### What about earlier times?

## PREHISTORIC AND ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUMS and exhibitions

*The Prehistoric Museum (Prehistoria, digo-17 at C/Corona 36) shows us the Bronze and Iron Ages and the early settlements in La Valenciana. It's such a lively way to learn about the customs and ways of life then!*

*There's even an ancient statue—one of the oldest in La Valenciana. It's a small bronze statue of Apollo from Pinedo, sitting and looking at something in the sky. It's only one and a half meters tall and might have belonged to a private collection. Our Apollo is over 2000 years old.*



## NOT TOO MUCH TRAVEL IN THE OLDEN TIMES

However, we must leave the city to understand the prehistorical era before Valencia was founded.

## NOT TOO MUCH TRAVEL IN THE OLDEN TIMES

However, we must leave the city to understand the prehistorical era before Valencia was founded.

## Why?

People back then lived pretty sedentary lives and didn't travel. The Phoenicians and Greeks were some of the first to start sailing in the 10th century BC, and the Romans didn't start building their famous roads until the 2nd century BC.

I can totally imagine a world with no ports or proper roads. People pretty much just consumed what they grew or hunted. I mean, where would they go, and why?



## CELTS, LUSITANIANS, AQUITANIANS

*But still, entire tribes did move, which definitely shaped the history of the Iberian Peninsula.*

*The Mediterranean coast is the prettiest and most fertile part of the peninsula, and the Iberians have lived here for thousands of years. They're the ones who gave the peninsula its name. Today's Valencians are basically Iberians.*

*Later, the Celts came. They spread across almost all of Europe. In Iberia, they settled in the central and northern parts, mixing with the Iberians and creating the Celtiberians. The Aquitanians, basically the ancestors of the Basques, lived right along the border with present-day France.*

### How long ago was that?

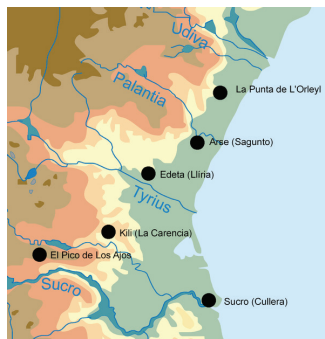
*At the Prehistoric Museum, we learned about the different eras. The Neolithic era saw the start of some economic activity around 6000 BC (or BCE, as they say now). People figured out how to make bronze around 3000 BC, and the Iron Age started around 1000 BC.*

*By the 5th century BC, the proto-peoples were formed: the Ibero-Celts in the centre, the Lusitanos in what's now Portugal and Extremadura, and the proto-Basques in the north.*

## IBERIANS

*Then there were the Iberians—numerous tribes living on the Southern and Eastern coasts of the peninsula.*

*There were lots of them. They didn't have borders or states, just cities with territories and fortifications. The Turdetani lived in the south, the Bastetani around what's*



now Cartagena, and the Contestani around present-day Alicante and Dénia.

*The Edetani lived where we are now. We should go visit their capital, Edeta.*

## EDETA AND THE WOLF ROCK

### EDETA / LLÍRIA

#### Out of Town WITH KIDS

*But I don't see Edeta on any maps.*

*You're right. Nowadays, it's called Lliria. They love music there, and you'll see a monument with a lyre and treble clef in the main square.*

### HISTORICAL HIGHWAY – CV-35

#### Trips OUT OF TOWN

*We'll take the CV-35, which I like to call "the highway to history." Today, it's lined with fancy villas and private schools, but in Edetani times, it was the main road from the coast inland.*

### IN THE CAVES, ON THE MOUNTAINS

Why did the Edetani stay away from the coast?

At first, people lived in caves. Then, they started building houses and moved to the plains. Metals were invented, and our ancestors began growing fields of grain and vineyards.



It feels like we're going uphill. And there, on the horizon—are those mountains?

Yep, on the left, that's Lliria. The ancient Edetani town was on the hill above it, where the Monastery of St. Michael stands now. We'll pass by Lliria today.

Or should we stop at Parc Municipal de Sant Vicente, where our Saint preached? It's so pretty. After a short walk, we can head to the Calderona mountains.

## MARÍA CALDERÓN AND JUAN JOSÉ

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Such a beautiful name—Calderona. It honours María Calderón, who was King Philip IV's mistress. They had a son, Don Juan José de Austria. He was listed in the church records as “hijo de la tierra,” or “son of the earth,” which they called kids whose dad was missing.

Don Juan ended up being a pretty big deal in Spanish history. He was the ruler of Barcelona, the Viceroy of Sicily, and even the Netherlands.

According to legend, his mom, María, hid in these mountains and became a highwaywoman. But if you go by the official records, she became a nun and even an abbess in Guadalajara.

But for now, let's go even further back in time.

## THE WOLF ROCK

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

*We're parking here, just outside Olocau, a cute little town in the foothills. See that hill up there? That's where we're headed!*

*Is it a tough climb?*

*Not at all! It's a nice walk and won't take more than forty*



*minutes. We're headed up to the Rock of Wolves (El Puntal dels Llops).*

We're here at the top! Look at that view—the entire valley, with Llíria in the distance. On the left, there's Valencia and the sea.



**What are these stones?  
It looks like some ancient geometry class.**

These are the foundations and walls of Edetani houses. There used to be a fortified settlement up here. The Edetani built outposts like this one all around Llíria to guard the inland roads. This one, the Rock of Wolves, is one of those forts. It's pretty impressive how well everything was planned, right?

Yeah, see that watchtower at the top? The main street of the village runs right under it. It's narrow, with just fifteen buildings.

*Can you imagine the Edetani living here in the 5th century BC? The Egyptians already had their pyramids, Greek culture was thriving, and here in Iberia, we also had a real civilisation centred around Llíria.*

## **CALDERÓN**

### **Trips OUT OF TOWN**

*Let's drive a bit further around these spots. Everything here is just gorgeous. Olocau has a path in the red mountains, Eagle Peak (Pico del Águila), and a monastery near a beautiful forest called Cartoixa de Porta Coeli. You could honestly spend days here exploring!*

Anyway, it's time for us to head back and learn about the Romans! How did they manage to conquer this place?



## 2<sup>nd</sup> BC – 5<sup>th</sup> AD. ROMAN PERIOD

### WHERE VALENCIA WAS BORN

#### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

*The answers are at the Archaeological Museum in Almoina Square, just behind the Cathedrals (digo-41). There's even a sign that says, "Valencia was born here."*

*And when did that happen?*

*According to Roman records, Valencia was founded in 138 BC. However, it has not been continuously inhabited since then...*

I read that it started out as a settlement for retired Roman legionaries, right?

Exactly. The lands here were given to Roman soldiers as a reward for their service. The town was called "*Valentia Edetanorum*"—which means "Brave Edetania." So, it's no wonder we visited Llíria—Edeta.

And why was Valencia founded here?

An ancient road crossed the stormy Turia River here. The Roman town was initially built on an island in the river and then moved to the right bank. An Edetani village was already there.

How do we know where the town centre is?

### CARDO AND DECUMANO

The Romans planned everything out. Every town had two main streets: the "*Cardus Maximus*" ran North to South and the "*Decumanus Maximus*" East to West. There was a Forum at their intersection, which was like a central meeting place.

VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!



ROMAN CITIES in IBERIA in the 1st c. AD



ROMAN VALENCIA  
Museo de Historia de Valencia

Today, the Forum would be where the Cathedral-Basilica of Los Desamparados (digo-38) stands. The *Almoina* Museum is just behind the Cathedral-Basilica—where Valencia was born.

The Cardo is now called Salvador Street, and the Decumano is Caballeros Street. The Valencian government is nearby, in the Generalitat Palace (*Palau de la Generalitat Valenciana*, digo-37).

### **VALENCIA = BRAVERY. SERTORIUS' REBELLION**

Did the town grow quickly?

Not really. The order of the Roman consul Decimus Junius Brutus created it. He was a military commander who settled veterans from the Iberian wars here, and this square was named after him.

But then an uprising happened! It was probably the world's first separatist movement. The Iberians' favourite, Quintus Sertorius, wanted to make Iberia independent from Rome. His fleet was based in Dénia (*Dianium*). The war raged all over Iberia, and Pompey "pacified" him in 73 BC—yep, the same Pompey who defeated Spartacus a year later. During the Sertorian War, Valencia was burned to the ground.

Was it left in ruins for a while?

For about a hundred years. Its renaissance began under the first emperor, Augustus. Roads were laid out, and the main one ran along the Mediterranean coast from Marseille to Valencia, then toward what's now Seville. All of these cities existed back then but with different names.

## VIA AUGUSTA

What was the main road called?

It was called “*Via Augusta*,” after Emperor Augustus. Before that, it was called the “Hercules Path”—named after the ancient hero who travelled along it after retrieving the Hesperides Apples.

The road crossed the Turia River, where today’s Trinity Bridge stands (digo-46.2), and continued into the Valencian Cardus, now Salvador Street.

## TORRES DE SERRANOS: THE SERRANOS TOWERS OR GATES

Of course, you know the *Serranos* Towers, right (digo-30)?

I love visiting them. They’re so strong yet elegant. But you can’t call them gates—they’re two massive octagonal towers.

The city walls and gates were built in 1392, during the Gothic era, and they are among the best examples of 14<sup>th</sup>-century architecture in the peninsula. The walls and gates’ chief function was to protect the city



TRINITY BRIDGE. MUVIM





from attacks, but they also allowed people to watch over the main road from above, giving the city control over commerce.

The gates would be closed at night, and visitors had to pay to enter—like you do on the toll roads today.

All kings had to enter Valencia through these gates. So many historical figures have walked through them!

During the Civil War of 1936-39, Valencia was the capital of Republican Spain, and the towers were used to store treasures, including paintings from the Prado.

## THE WALLS OF VALENCIA

But the gates are supposed to be part of a wall, and there's no wall here!

There were actually three different sets of walls: Roman, Muslim, and Christian. They were torn down in the 19th century. Please see their map at the end of our book. We have found it online, uploaded by an author *Falconaumanni*.

## THE ROMAN WALL: FOUR GATES

The Roman wall was pretty small, just surrounding the tiny town centre (please see the map at the end of the book). Today, it would include the Generalitat Palace, Plaza de la Reina, Avellanas Street, and Náquera Street, almost reaching the Seranos Towers. You could walk from one edge of Roman Valencia to another in just 15 minutes.

There were four gates from which the main roads started:

**Puerta Sucronense** opened to the South, leading to Sucro (now a tiny town called Albalat de la Ribera). In ancient times, the Sicilian Greeks founded Sucro, an important town.

**Puerta del Mar** led Eastward to the sea.



The third gate faced west, toward the Celtiberian lands, considered a “problem region” back then.

The most important gate was the **Puerta Saguntina**, which led North to Sagunto and Rome. Sagunto is where Rome first established its presence in Spain, and that’s why Salvador Street is a *Cardo*—it led from the Sagunto Gate. The Serranos Gate was added later, during the Muslim era.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY: SAGUNTO. CAVES...

Should we go to Sagunto? It’s not far from Valencia, about 40 kilometres away, just like Lliria. We could drive along the sea on the V-21...

### PORT SAPLAYA

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

Wow, what are those colourful houses with turrets? They’re adorable!



Let's stop and take a walk. This is our "Little Venice," Port Saplaya (DiVa, Alboraya, above 11 and 13). The houses are right on the water, and there are piers where yachts can dock—like the London Docklands.

It's picturesque, with villas, big houses, cafes, and beaches.



## **SAGUNTO**

### **Out of Town WITH KIDS**

Sagunto, also known as Saguntum, Murviedro, or Arse.

This is where the conflict between Rome and Carthage began. Hannibal showed off his skills as a commander here in 218 BC when he laid siege to the mighty castle on the hill. After that, he went to Italy with his elephants. In the end, Carthage lost the war and was destroyed, and Rome started its conquest of Iberia. Valencia was founded about eighty years later.

What should we visit in Sagunto?

There's so much history here. At the city entrance, a monument commemorates Scipio Africanus and Sagunto's role in the Second Punic War—over 2,000 years ago!



We should start by hiking up to the castle and the theatre. The Roman theatre used to hold 8,000 people, and the views from the top are breathtaking.

Sagunto is also known for its old town, which had a Jewish quarter (*Judería*).

We must check out *Casa dels Berenguer*, a Gothic-period house, and learn about the city's history. Then, we should explore the *Museo de la Escena Grecolatina*, a museum about Greek-Latin theatre. It's so cool to see the masks and costumes of ancient actors! They even have Medea with her children and Hercules' mace.

That's enough for today; let's head back. What else can we see in this region north of Valencia?

## CAVES OF SAN JOSEP AND OTHERS

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

#### Trips OUT OF TOWN

There are so many great spots here. Segorbe has a Museum of the Festival of Horses and Bulls, which takes place in September. Montanejos has warm waters in a beautiful canyon. Benicàssim's main point of attraction is the stunning villas along the seaside. Castellón has awesome museums and parks. We must also check out the modern art museum in Vila-famés—it's an absolute must-see!

And what about us teenagers?

There are these mysterious caves with an underground river where you can take a boat ride. They're called St. Joseph's Caves. We must drive to Vall d'Uixó and look for the *Coves de Sant Josep*. It's better to book tickets in advance, though.



## 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES. THE MUSLIMS. EL CID

### HISTORY: VISIGOTHS, MUSLIMS. THE RECONQUISTA (500-1244)

The Romans ruled Iberia from the 2nd century BC to the 4th or 5th century AD. Over time, their empire weakened, and the Barbarians, Vandals, and Alans invaded the peninsula. To try to keep order, Rome invited the Visigoths, who were known as warriors and bureaucrats.

The Visigoths began restoring order on the peninsula in the 5th century. They established a powerful state with laws and a bureaucracy; their capital was Toledo.

Then, in 711, Julian, the Visigoth ruler of Ceuta, called for Muslims from North Africa to help him out (he had a personal vendetta involving his daughter's honour. She had an exotic name, Florinda-La Cava). The Muslims came, and in a short time, they took over most of Iberia. In 718, the Reconquista started—an effort to take back the land that lasted a crazy 774 years!





## EL CID

Three hundred and eighty years later, they tried to reconquer the Valencian lands. There's a monument to El Cid (El Campeador) in Plaza de España in Valencia. The statue shows "the stan-dard-bearer on a dancing horse."

El Cid (Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar) was born in Burgos in 1048. "*Campeador*" basically means "the warrior who fought gloriously." He recaptured Valencia from the Muslims in 1092 and ruled the city until he died in 1099.

## WHERE TO GO: EL CID'S ROADS

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

El Cid's main route stretched from his birthplace in Burgos all the way to Valencia. You can check out *Caminodelcid.org* for descriptions of routes that crisscross through La Valenciana. It's a cool way to follow his path!

## CANTAR DEL MIO CID

"The Song of My Cid" is the first piece of Spanish literature, with the written version dating back to around 1200. It was written in medieval Spanish, with really intricate language.

Valencia is called "*La Clara*" (the Clear one) and "La Mayor" (the Head) in the song.

El Cid is called "*El de la barba vellida*" (He with the fluffy beard) and "*El que en buen hora nació*" (The one who was born in a happy hour).

## Valencian CELEBRITIES

I actually read somewhere that the author of "The Song" might have been a Muslim named Abu-i-Walid Al-Waqqasi, who died in Dénia in 1096. So, both Valencia and Dénia helped give birth to Spanish literature!



## TRACES OF MUSLIMS: CULTURE, LANGUAGE, ARCHITECTURE

We owe so much to the Muslims. They loved Iberia—called *Al-Andaluz*—and even called it “paradise on Earth.” They brought medicine, culture, maths, astronomy, and agriculture. They introduced us to rice, saffron, oranges, palm trees, mul-berries (*moreras*), and even *horchata*!

Our language and place names also reflect the influence of Islam. Any name starting with “Al” comes from Arabic, like Alzira (where James I died) and Algemesí (where, during their September holiday, men build “dancing towers”). “*Beni*” means “sons”—we have a lot of towns starting with “Beni,” like Benigembla and Benicàssim.

## WHERE TO GO FOR CHERRIES

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

If you want Spain’s best cherries, visit the Gallinera Valley in May. All the little towns in that valley were founded by the Muslims, like Benitaia and Beniali.

## ALMUDÍN, BATHS, AND THE MUSLIM QUARTER

In Valencia, you can also find the *Almudín* (digo-44), a robust granary beside the Almoينا Museum behind the Cathedrals. There used to be a Muslim castle (an *alcázar*) there. The *Almudín* was built later during Christian times, but the Muslim architectural influence is evident.



It's now a concert hall—you can listen to 18<sup>th</sup>-century music in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century building!

There's also *Mudéjar* architecture, which literally means “those who stayed”—Muslims who remained after the Reconquista. Their style used lots of bricks and openwork arches. You can find plenty of examples in Segorbe and Teruel.



There's also a hidden gem in the capital, near the Cathedral: the Admiral's Baths (*Baños del Almirante*, digo-47.2). My mom loves hammams, and this one, built in 1320, was open until the 1960s!

What are those star-shaped openings in the ceiling?

Oh, those are “*tragaluces estrellados*”—eight-pointed skylights! You can see the stars during the day in this medieval bathhouse!

After the Reconquista, a Muslim quarter called Morería was created in Valencia. You can still see its gate, the Portal de la Valldigna (digo-32).

The cultural heritage from the half-millennium of Muslim influence is enormous. We still celebrate the “*Moros y Cristianos*” fiesta all over La Valenciana. It's colourful, bright, noisy, and so much fun. They even stage mock battles! Today, Spain recognises the Muslim contribution to its history and culture.



## THE RECONQUEST. SANCTUARY IN EL PUIG

### THE CONQUEROR KING

The Reconquista began in 718 when Christians started their effort to regain the Iberian lands. It took a long time, but in La Valenciana, it only lasted from 1229 to 1244.

A tall, handsome king led the effort: Jaime I (Jaume I, or James I), also known as “*El Rey Conquistador*”—the Conqueror King.

### REAL MONASTERIO DEL PUIG DE SANTA MARÍA

#### Out of Town WITH KIDS

#### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

One of the significant events of the Reconquista occurred in 1237, just north of Valencia, in the town of El Puig (pronounced “El Puch”). Today, the monastery there is called the Royal Monastery of Our Lady.



### THE ICON, THE PATRONESS OF THE KINGDOM

A decisive battle occurred here between the Christians and the troops of Abu Zeyan, the last Muslim ruler of Valencia. But before that, a miracle happened.

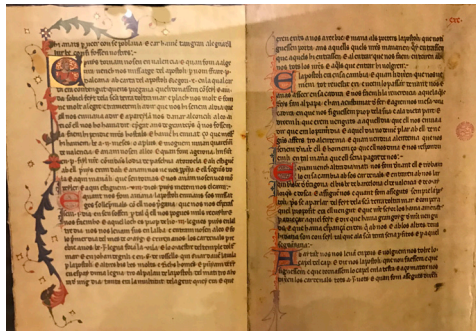


The Christians found an ancient icon buried under a bell. *La Mare de Déu del Puig* icon eventually became the *Patrona del Regne de Valencia*—the Kingdom of Valencia patron. The icon is still kept in the monastery church.

## BOOKS IN EL PUIG

In Puig, you really feel like you're swimming in the ocean of history. There's the church with the main icon, the Museum of Typographic History, and many important books.

One book is the **Llibre dels Furs (Fueros) de la Ciutat i Regne de València**, the Book of Laws of the City and Kingdom of Valencia. From 1238 to 1707, it was the most important book in La Valenciana.



Another is the **Llibre dels Feyts (Hechos del Rey Jaume)**—The Book of the Deeds of King Jaume. Jaume I himself wrote it, and it's actually the first autobiography of a king in Europe!

## VALENCIAN language

The first printed book in Spain dates back to 1474. Lambert Palmar's printing house stood beside the Valldigna Gate (digo-32). He published a collection of poems called **Les trobes en lahors de la Verge Maria**, with 45 poems by 40 authors. Most were in Valenciano, with only a few in Castellano and Italian.





## TOURIST ROUTES IN EL PUIG

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

El Puig is at the crossroads of many historic routes: the Roman Via Augusta, the Camino de San Vicente Mártir (dedicated to our main Valencian saint, Vicente the Martyr), and El Cid's route.

You can trace all these routes online, and I highly recommend taking one of them—it's such an amazing way to dive into history!

## 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. COAT OF ARMS AND FLAG. THE BAT

### THE BAT AND THE DRAGON

What else can we learn about this era?

Almost every town in La Valenciana has a monument dedicated to Jaume the First, the Conqueror.

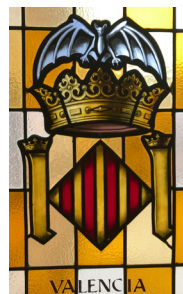
What's the story with the bat? And why is there a dragon?

Are you interested in the *Rat Penat—the bat*?

The bat is a nocturnal and mysterious creature often associated with vampires. Yet somehow, it appears on the coat of arms of a Christian state. Isn't that a bit strange?

### THE COAT OF ARMS OF VALENCIA

The story behind our coat of arms sounds like a fairy tale. It was probably created about a century after the Reconquista. King Pedro IV was so into celebrations that he even earned the nickname "the Ceremonious." In 1377, he gave Valencia its coat of arms.



It has four red Aragón stripes on a golden background, two letters “L” for “Leal” (Loyal) because Valencia was “Twice Faithful” to Pedro IV during the War of the Two Pedros, a royal crown, and... a bat.

### A BAT BEATING A DRUM

Jaume I arrived in Valencia in September 1238 with his troops, camping in a suburb called Russafa outside the city walls (DiVa-2). The Muslims used to tame bats to get rid of mosquitoes, and legend has it that when they were planning an attack, a bat landed on the king's tent. When the Muslims approached at night, the bat started beating on a drum, warning the Christians and helping them fight back.

Another, simpler version of the story says that a massive flock of bats suddenly took off above the Christian camp, which they took as a signal to attack.

It's a cool story, but it was probably invented by Pedro the Ceremonious or even later.



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JAUME I IN THE CITY OF VALENCIA  
Painting by Fernando Richart Montesinos, 1884.  
Museu de Belles Arts de Castelló



## DRAGON-ARAGÓN-THE BAT

Remember the monument to Jaime I (digo-56) in El Parterre Gardens near those massive Ficus trees? He's wearing a helmet, and on top of it is a bat.

It's actually a dragon. Christian Spain had three main parts during the Reconquista: Castilla, Aragón, and Navarre. The Aragónese kings conquered what would become the Kingdom of Valencia.

Interesting, right? Aragón... Dragon. The words sound kind of similar!



It was medieval marketing at its best! On the coat of arms of the Valencian Community, there's a knight's helmet (*yelmo*) with a winged dragon on top and a shield with Aragón stripes. It was basically propaganda for the power of Aragón and its kings.

There's even a theory that people later mixed up the dragon and the bat, and that's how the bat made its way onto Valencia's banner, La Senyera, and the city's coat of arms.

What is La Senyera? Where can I see it?

## AYUNTAMIENTO

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

We've already been to the square where the noisy *Mascletá* is held during Fallas. The main building is the Valencia City Hall, or Ayuntamiento (digo-1). It also has a really interesting historical museum (digo-2); walking there feels like stepping back hundreds of years.

There are maps of Valencia from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and King Jaume I's personal belongings.

Wow, have they really preserved those for 800 years?

Yep! They even have the king's sword and the flag the Muslims raised on the city tower as a sign of surrender: the *Pendón de Conquista*, in Aragóense colours.

## THE ROYAL BANNER: LA SENYERA

### Valencia's Flag – La Senyera

The most sacred relic in the museum is the Banner of Valencia—*La Real Senyera del Reino de Valencia*. It can NEVER be tilted. Kings don't bow, and neither does this royal banner!

So, if King Philip VI comes to Valencia...

By protocol, everyone—including the mayor of Valencia and the military—will salute the king. But our Lady, La Senyera, will stand tall.

*"¡La Real Senyera no se inclina ante nada ni nadie, solamente ante Dios!"*



“The royal banner does not bow to anything or anyone, only to God!”

It's so beautiful, our banner!

Absolutely! You can see four colours from afar: the scarlet and gold Aragónese stripes, a blue bar with yellow flowers and a white border. But if you look closely, you'll see some green gems. It's such a stunning five-colour beauty—La Real Senyera!

They also have the keys to the city. The actual ones that were handed over to King Jaume I by the Muslim King Zayyan, with these words:

“My noble Muslim people, Christians and Jews, live together in Valencia. I hope that you will be able to rule them so that they continue to live in peace and harmony, cultivating this beautiful land together...”



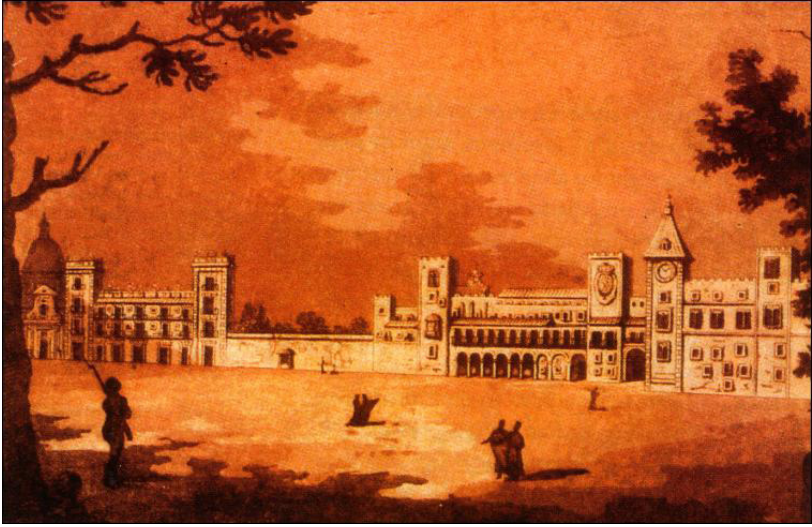
## ROYAL WEDDINGS – 1599

In the display, you'll see other sets of symbolic keys. These were gifts to the kings of Spain from the Valencians.

One set of keys was made for the Royal Weddings in 1599. The young King Philip III left Madrid and Barcelona, and the entire royal court stayed at Valencia and Dénia for two months. This was due to the influence of the Marquis of Dénia (who would later become the Earl of Lerma) over the young king. The celebrations were called “The Wedding of the Century” (La boda del siglo). Lope de Vega even came to our region to write poems about it.

Banquets were held in the Royal Palace of the Real (more on that later). The tables were decorated with diamonds and pearls, and the Valencians celebrated in the streets.





Queen Isabel II returned these symbolic keys to the city almost two and a half centuries later.

## VIVEROS GARDENS AND THE ROYAL PALACE

### REAL IS NOT ALWAYS ROYAL

Around the city WITH KIDS

MUSEUMS and exhibitions

Where are we going today?

To our favourite garden! The *Jardines de Viveros* (or Del Real) are behind the old Turia River, next to the Museum of Fine Arts (digo-26 – DiVa-5). It's such a great place for both kids and adults.

We can visit the dinosaurs in the Museum of Natural History (*Museu de Ciències Naturals*, digo-27), then check out the birds in their cages, the ducks and geese in the pond, and the beautiful rose garden.



What's that little hill in front of the entrance?

It's all that's left of the Royal Palace. Actually, "*del Real*" doesn't exactly mean "Royal." You speak Castellano, right? Do you notice anything weird about the name?

### SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

The gardens are called *Viveros* (Nursery) or *Jardins del Real*, and when we walked over the old bridge to get here, I noticed it's called Puente del Real. Shouldn't it just be Puente Real?

Good catch! Imagine Valencia as a medieval city, still Muslim—the capital of an independent *Taifa*.



Oh, I get it. The kings of Taifa didn't want to live in the noisy, dirty city, so they moved to gardens across the river.

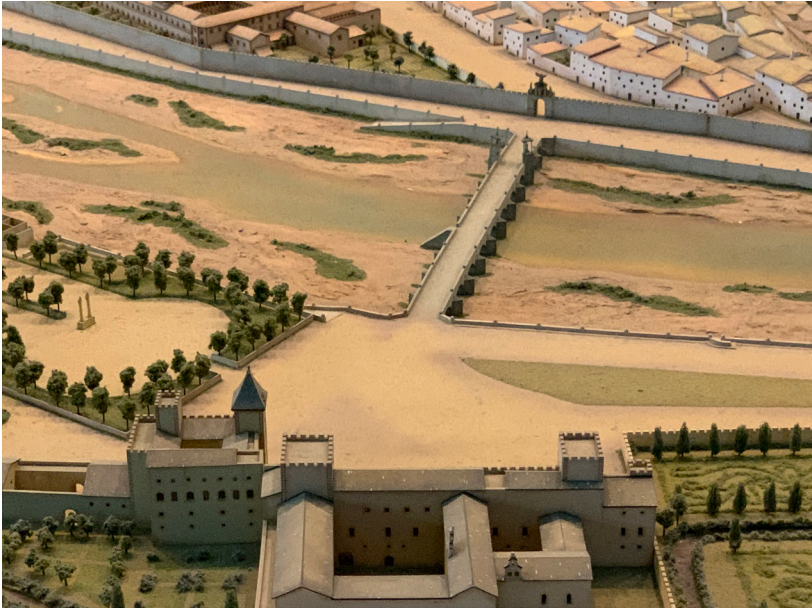
Exactly! Remember when we visited Seville and Granada? They also had pretty gardens from the Muslim era, and it was the same here in Valencia.

After the Reconquest in 1238, the kings of Aragón (who became the kings of Valencia) still preferred to live "in the country." The Palacio Del Real (or *Rajal*) means a "suburban palace."

The palace was never the official residence of the kings, neither those of Aragón nor Spain. It was more like a leisure retreat for them. And wow, they really loved visiting Valencia!

Was it a small palace?

Not exactly! By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the palace's facade stretched over 200 meters. Because it had so many rooms, it was even



Museo Valenciano de la Ilustración y la Modernidad / MUVIM

called the “Palace of 300 Keys.” The garden was much bigger than the current Viveros.

### **14<sup>th</sup> c. THE KING DANCES BEFORE HIS PEOPLE – PEDRO IV** **Valencian CELEBRITIES**

Pedro IV the Ceremonious ruled during pretty turbulent times. There were wars with Genoa and Majorca, plus the War of the Two Pedros: Pedro the Cruel of Castile versus “our” Pedro of Aragón, the Ceremonious. Then, there was the *Guerra de Unión*—the War of the Union—in Aragón, when cities rose against the king between 1347 and 1348.

One day, the king and queen stopped at their favourite Palacio del Real. That night, rebels arrived to fight for Valencia’s



rights. They even made the king and queen dance by candlelight! They weren't harmed, but the king didn't forget the insult.

### **TWICE LOYAL, OR SUPER LOYAL**

Didn't you say that the letters "L" came from him, from King Pedro?

Yes! His war with Pedro of Castille, the Cruel, lasted 13 years, from 1356 to 1369. Pedro the Cruel invaded Aragón and Valencia several times and even besieged Valencia. Twice, the Valencians didn't give in—they stayed loyal to King Pedro of Aragón. So, he rewarded the city and its citizens.

Pedro IV gave the city the two "L" letters: *Leal Lealissima*—Twice Loyal. At the same time, the city got the Senyera Real (our banner), the bat, and the crown above the coat of arms. After that, kings continued to stay in the palace, and festivals were held to honour them.

Around the same time as King Pedro's reign, the concept of *Cridá* appeared. It was like a public announcement, as was the *Pregón*, which announced the upcoming festivities.

### **THE PALACE WAS DESTROYED: VALENCIA FOUGHT THE FRENCH**

The kings really loved the Palacio del Real. So, who destroyed it, and why?

It was actually the Valencians themselves! This happened during the War of Independence against Napoleon and the French. War broke out after the May 2 uprising in 1808, and the whole country was divided. Valencia sided with the "Spanish" party.

The French besieged the city three times. In March 1810, the Valencians destroyed the palace to prevent the enemy from



building a headquarters on the other side of the Turia River. It has never been rebuilt.

Or maybe the French destroyed it. After all, it symbolised the Kingdom of Valencia's glorious past.

Napoleon's troops finally captured Valencia in 1812. Traces of the sieges can still be seen on the Towers of the Quart (digo-15).



## 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. THE WALLS OF VALENCIA

### POWERFUL WALLS AND TOWERS – ARABIC

What are those towers? Did the city have walls? Were there other walls besides the Roman ones?

Of course! Valencia was fortified not once but three times. The original Roman wall eventually crumbled, but then the Moors came in 711 and lived here for five hundred years. Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together peacefully for a long





time. But when the Cordoba Caliphate collapsed in the 1030s, many *Tai-fas* (small Muslim states) emerged, and that's when the era of wars began. So, they built new Muslim walls.

Were they bigger than the Roman ones?

Yes, they were! Check out the Map of the walls at the end of our book. The Arabic walls stretched along the Turia River, from where the Serranos Towers are today to a spot across from the Palacio del Real. They then went down to the present-day Ayuntamiento Square, along the Central Market, and back to the river.

Is anything left of them?

Not much, but we've already seen the Valldigna Gate—Portal de la Valldigna (digo-32 or No 3, al-Qaysariya on the Walls map). It's in the Carmen neighbourhood, close to the lively Tosall Square, full of cafes and restaurants.

## WALLS OF THE CHRISTIAN PERIOD

The Christian walls were much longer. The boundaries of medieval Valencia can be traced along the current streets. Let's start again from the Serranos Towers (digo-30; also see the end of the book).

The walls went toward the sea along the Turia, reaching today's Exhibition Bridge. Then they turned toward what we



MUVIM



call the “Arc de Triomphe,” today’s Sea Gates (near digo-55). From here, the Colón shopping street begins.

Mom and I love shopping and exploring the little streets around the beautiful Colón Market.

The market itself is a must-see—a masterpiece of modernism!

From there, the Christian city walls followed Colón Street to the Plaza de Toros (Bullring Square, digo-6) and the North Station, with those cute orange tiles (digo-7). Then, the walls formed a smooth arc along Guillem de Castro Street, past the Quart Towers (digo-15), and back to the Turia River.



These Christian walls were built under our good friend Pedro the Ceremonious and finished in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, around the 1390s. It's pretty interesting—you can trace their outline with today's streets along the Turia embankments, Colón, Xàtiva, and Castro.

## GEOGRAPHY OF VALENCIA FOR MOTORISTS

Dad always says it's super easy to drive around Valencia because of its great layout.

Just don't go into the old centre! Outside of that, it's all very straightforward.



The first “ring” is an oval that circles the Old Town, including the Turia embankments, Colón, and Castro streets—basically, traces of the old Christian walls.

The second ring is shaped like a diamond. Its prettiest sections are the Gran Vías, which are boulevards like Marqués del Turia, Ramón y Cajal, and Ferran el Catòlic.

Beyond Turia is the “New Center” (*Nuevo Centro*), which has a central bus station, department stores, government offic-

## VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!

es, and a hospital. This area forms a rectangle closed by the avenues General Avilés, Primat Reig, and Aragón.

Then there's the third semi-ring, Peris i Valero – Peres Galdós, and the Northern and Southern semicircles, the Rondas, which comprise the fourth ring.

Finally, the V-30 highway runs along the new Turia riverbed, making it easy to travel between the city's north and south.

I take that road every day on my school bus to college. All these routes are easy to find on our DiVa map or even in a satellite view of the city. It's sad to think that the recent destruction during the October 2024 Flood occurred nearby!

### THE BIG SMALL TOWN

That's what's so great about Valencia. Although the city has a population of over a million, including the suburbs, it's still super compact and easy to live in. A taxi ride to the centre takes just 15 minutes, and public transport is also really efficient.



### SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

But honestly, you don't even need a bus or taxi—you can run, walk, or bike! We have so many bike routes!

## 15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. THALASSOCRACY

### AN OLD NEW CITY: THE CENTER

#### 15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – THE GOLDEN AGE OF VALENCIA

Today, we're exploring the heart of Valencia. We're diving into the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Valencia was the wealthiest city in Spain and maybe even Europe.

How did that happen?

### HISTORY LOVES GEOGRAPHY:

#### THE GREAT SILK ROAD AND THE MAIN PORT

Geography is vital to history. Paris became important because it was on major trade routes. Even today, it's hard to avoid Paris when we drive from Calais to the south. Savoy, the wealthiest part of Italy, was located at the mountain passes in the Alps and along pilgrimage roads. Vienna was known as the "Crossroads of Europe," connecting the East and the West.

And what about Valencia?

The Via Augusta ran along the coast, from Rome through Marseille to Seville. But land travel was dangerous and expensive—bandits, tolls, customs officers... sometimes the tolls were worse than the bandits!

Maritime transport was the primary way to move goods internationally, and the main products were wool, silk, wines, grain, and spices. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was relatively peaceful—fewer wars—so people wanted to live comfortably and dress well—just like today!

For regular people, "nice" meant warm—wool. The wool came from England or Spain and was processed in central Europe.



But the wealthy wanted silk. Didn't silk come from China? What did Valencia have to do with that?

Valencia was called "The Last Point on the Great Silk Road." Remember which ports were the biggest in Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries?



Venice, of course. Then, Pisa, Genoa, and Marseille.

Exactly! And in Spain?

Barcelona, Valencia and Dénia!

Barcelona was recovering from some wars at the time. Meanwhile, Valencia became really wealthy. Agriculture flourished thanks to gardens and canals built by the Muslims. Elaborate ceramics were produced in Manises (where the airport is now), and paper was imported to Europe via Xàtiva as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Valencian artisans made some of the finest artefacts.

This wealth led to the rise of banking, and Valencia became the principal commercial, industrial, and financial centre of the Crown of Aragón.

People used to say, "*El que iba allà abajo se hacía rico.*"

"Whoever went down there (to Valencia) got rich."

## ARAGÓN AND CASTILLE. AND NAVARRE.

We talked about Aragón, the dragon-Aragón thing. But why haven't we mentioned Spain as a whole?

Well, there hasn't been a united Spain yet! It didn't happen until 1516, and honestly, not really until the 1710s. Christian Spain comprised two powerful kingdoms: Castille in the cen-

tre and Aragón in the East, along the coast. There was also a smaller kingdom, Navarre, up in the mountains.

## CASPE – THE FIRST ELECTION OF A KING

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

So, in the 1400s, there was this King of Aragón, Martin I. He was a typical Renaissance ruler known as “*El Humano*” (The Humanist). But he had one big problem—all his kids died. And then he passed away in May 1410... from laughter. I’m not even joking! It’s probably the only time that’s ever happened in history.

Did that end the dynasty?

Yeah, pretty much. *In 1412, they organised the first elections in Spain’s history to choose a new ruler. Representatives from Aragón, Valencia, and Barcelona met in Caspe—six from each of the three parts of the Crown of Aragón. Even Saint Vincent Ferrer was on Valencia’s team!*

My dad wrote about this in his book *Dénia Divina*, Valencia Valiosa. Although there were many contenders, they ultimately chose a representative from the Castilian dynasty: Ferdinand I of the *Trastámara* family.

The Trastámaras were known for favouring the bourgeoisie, which helped Aragón (or Valencia) grow wealthy.

## ALFONSO V THE MAGNANIMOUS

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

The next king is really important in Valencia’s history: Alfonso V. He was Ferdinand I’s son (the one who was elected in Caspe), and he ruled from 1416 to 1458—that’s 42 years! But he lived outside Spain almost the whole time.



## THALASSOCRACY: THE STATE OF THE SEA

Why? Didn't he like Aragón or Valencia?

In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Aragón/Valencia became the first maritime empire in the modern world—a *thalassocracy*. The Balearic Islands, Sardinia, and Sicily were all part of the Crown of Aragón. Alfonso V even conquered Corsica and Naples and decided to live there instead.

Wow, what an empire!



## THE HOLY GRAIL AND THE THREE POPES

### THE CHALICE – THE GRAIL OR JUST THE HOLY CUP?

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

Now let's visit the Cathedral to see the Chalice—the Holy Cup, known here as *El Santo Cáliz*.

We've been there so many times! But what's the connection between the Cup and Valencia? Why is it here?

There are so many theories about where the real Cup is—the one Christ drank from at the Last Supper. The history of Valencia's Chalice can be traced back to Rome in the 2nd or 3rd century, and then to the mountains of Aragón...

We actually followed the Route of the Chalice once. It's called *La Ruta de Santa Grial* and is in the province of Huesca.

The Cup was kept there from 258 onwards. The place I remember most is the San Juan de la Peña Monastery, built into the side of a mountain. It's so cool!

The Chalice was hidden there from 1076 to 1399. But in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Alfonso V needed much money for his overseas conquests. Who would he borrow from? The wealthiest people in the Crown of Aragón—Valencian merchants, artisans, and churchmen.

And even back then, they had the concept of “collateral.” Alfonso wasn't big on paying his debts, so in 1437, he left a bunch of church valuables “for safekeeping” in Valencia, including the Holy Chalice.

Wow, has it been in the Cathedral ever since? For almost 600 years?

Yep! The passage to the Chapel of the Holy Chalice is to the right of the Cathedral entrance. You'll see it in a niche—so beautiful but pretty small.



Look at those elegant handles!

The upper part is important. The bowl is made of burgundy agate and is over 2,000 years old! Gold handles, alabaster bases, pearls, rubies, and emeralds were added a thousand years later.

## GOTHIC

The chapel itself looks like a spaceship!

Yeah, it's very 15<sup>th</sup> century—the last century of the Gothic style, with all those pointed arches. You'll notice Gothic features in almost all of Valencia's main buildings from this period.

### THREE SPANISH POPES AND MUSICAL ANGELS

There are a lot more amazing things to see in the Cathedral. For instance, there's a chapel on the right side of the central nave with two paintings by the famous Goya. One shows Saint Francis Borgia at the deathbed of an unrepentant sinner. (More about the Borgias in a bit.)

Now, let's head over to the central altar and look up. We're under the *Bóveda del altar mayor*...What a view! There are golden stars on a dark blue background and ten angels in flowing robes—gold, blue, and orange—with massive wings. And they're holding musical instruments: a guitar, a lute, flutes, and a harp.

Who made this beautiful artwork?

Two Italian artists, Pagano and San Leocadio, were under a contract with Bishop Rodrigo de Borja. Don Rodrigo saw that a new style, the Renaissance, was taking off in Italy and decided to bring it to Valencia.



## BORJA / BORGIA IN VALENCIA AND GANDIA

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

And who was Don Rodrigo? That last name sounds familiar.

Oh, for sure! You know how important the Pope is in Christianity, right? There have been 266 popes throughout history, of whom 212 were Italian.

Only three popes came from Spain. Pope No. 37, Dámaso from Galicia, and Popes Nos. 209 and 214, both from La Valen-





ciana! They were from the Borja family, known as the Borgias in Italy: Calixto III and his nephew Alejandro VI.

Yeah, my dad talked a lot about Alexander Borgia! He's the one who divided the world between Spain and Portugal in 1494 in Tordesillas. They also accused him of a bunch of sins... He had kids like the famous Lucrezia and Cesare.

Exactly. Both Borgias became popes during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which, as we said, was Valencia's golden age. It even turned two of our bishops into popes!

### **THE BORJA PALACE – THE VALENCIANA's PARLIAMENT**

Their palace is now home to our regional parliament.

You know, Valencia has three “administrative levels,” right?

*There's the City, the Province, and the Autonomous Community. We call the latter La Valenciana.*



*The City Hall is in Ayuntamiento Square, and that's where we saw the relics of the Reconquista.*

*The Provincial Parliament (Diputació de Valencia) is in Manises Square, in the double palace of the Marquises de Scala/Baylía.*



*The Parliament of the Comunidad of Valencia is in the former Borja/Borgia/Benicarló Palace. You can visit it in early October when many palaces are open.*

Yeah, we went there. I was curious about those five statues at the entrance and the battle scene on that huge painting...

We'll talk about the Battle of Almansa later. The five statues at the entrance represent members of the Borja family: two popes, one saint, and two illegitimate kids. Four are from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and Saint Francis lived in the 16<sup>th</sup>.

## **GANDÍA – BORJA PALACE**

### **Out of Town WITH KIDS**

I saw five identical statues in Gandía!

Yep! The Borgias came from Xàtiva and the nearby Canals. During his reign, Alexander VI bought Gandía and its duchy. There's a beautiful palace there—probably the only one from that period restored so well in La Valenciana. The Gothic Collegiate Church is also worth a visit.

And the five statues on the main square? Yep, that's the Borja family.

## **ROUTES – BORJA, MONASTERIES, AND AUTHORS**

### **Trips OUT OF TOWN**

### **Valencian CELEBRITIES**

From Gandía, further into the peninsula, the area is perfect for history lovers.

Dad always says geography is to blame for everything. Only one road (C-60) crosses the mountains from the coast.

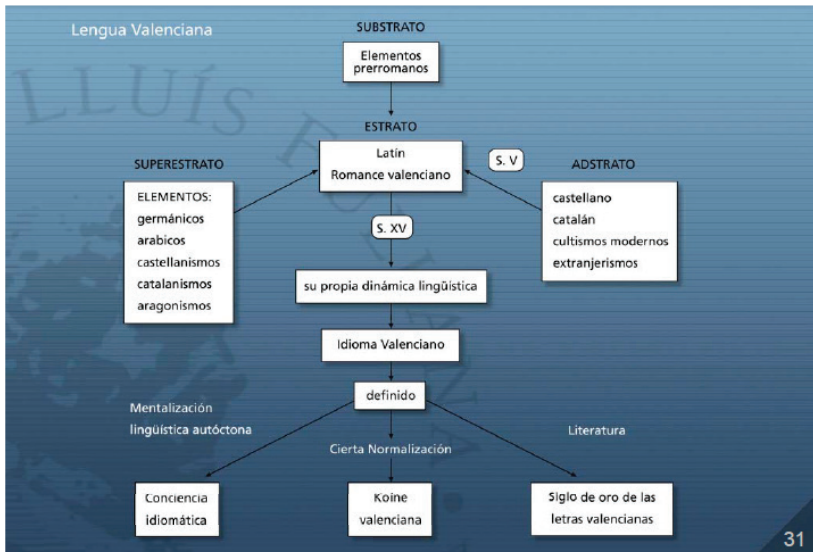
It leads to the Roman Via Augusta (now A7), Xàtiva, and many other exciting spots. Notable routes here include the Ruta of Monasteries, the Ruta of the Borja family, and the Ruta of Valencian Literature Classics.

## CLASSICS OF VALENCIAN LITERATURE

### VALENCIAN language

Let's talk a bit about literature.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the classics of Valencian literature made it clear that they wrote in Valenciano—not Castilian, Catalan, or Occitan, although all these languages are similar.



### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Let's take a short trip from Gandía to Cotalba, near Alfauir.

We'll find the beautiful Monastery of St. Hieronymus/St. Jerome, surrounded by mountains that form a horseshoe shape. The church has an ornate, Gothic-style spiral staircase and a grand staircase that reminds me of the one in the Cathedral in Burgos.

Yeah, this is definitely late Gothic. Who lived here?

The main classic of Valencian literature—you could call him the last troubadour—Ausiàs March.

Most of his life was connected to La Valenciana—Gandía, Cotalba, Dénia, and Valencia. His dad, Pere March, was a poet and majordomo (butler) of the Dukes of Gandía, and he built the monastery!

Nearby in Beniarjó, you can still see the remains of Ausiàs March's house.



## VELES e VENTS. SAILS AND WINDS

One of March's most famous poems is about how hard it is to travel across the sea—and through life. You'll find lines from it immortalised in monuments, plaques, and even the names of houses and restaurants.

My dad discovered that March described his return to Dénia in the poem. Apparently, the combination of winds Ausiàs wrote about is something you can only experience at the entrance to our port.

## JOANOT MARTORELL AND OTHER CLASSICS

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

The second superstar of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Valencian literature was Joanot Martorell, who lived in the Gandía area. He wrote the first-ever novel in European literature with a hero—*Tirant lo Blanc*.

We read it at school, obviously. We also read other classics from that century, like Jaume Roig's "*Llibre de les dones*," Isabel de Villena, and Joan Roís de Corella.



## GOLDEN AGES

Fun fact: Valencian literature's Golden Age was in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Castilian and Portuguese literature's was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and English literature's highlight was in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. So, Valencian literature was kind of ahead of Europe—right up there with the Italian Renaissance as one of the origins of European literature.

Joan Roïs de Corella was a friend of Ausiàs March's family. He was a priest at the monastery of St. Francisco in Valencia. His main work, *Espill/Espejo/Mirror*, was written in the language of the simple Valencian people. It was full of jokes but also marked by severe misogyny—a pretty dismissive attitude toward women.

On the other hand, Isabel de Villena is considered a proto-feminist. Her work *Vita Cristi* describes the life of Jesus through the eyes of the people around him—totally revolutionary for the role of women in religion and society at the time!

She was the illegitimate daughter of Enrique de Villena, a Master of the Order of Calatrava, a necromancer, and an alchemist. She grew up in the royal court, became a nun, and eventually was the abbess at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity (digo-46).

## A DECENT VALLEY – VALLDIGNA

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

If you're around Gandía, you've got to visit Valldigna—the Decent Valley. Jaime II gave it that name. The future Pope, Alexander VI, started his church career there in a beautiful monastery. The place is so peaceful, with the remains of old vaults and a half-ruined but still beautiful church.



## GOTHIC: GENERALITAT AND THE EXCHANGE

### GOTHIC IN VALENCIA – GENERALITAT

Gothic architecture appeared on the Valencia map even though it disappeared everywhere else. However, the Valencian merchants decided to invest in it anyway.

The Palace of Generalitat—is that Gothic, too?

Yes, it is! *Palau de la Generalitat* (digo-37) is a Gothic building. Like the Borja palace, you can only visit it during fiestas. The Gold Room and Sala Nova are amazing! The Gold Room has a carved and painted polychrome wooden ceiling—Renaissance style with a bit of *Mudéjar* influence. There are 35 intricately carved ceiling beams. In the Meeting Room are portraits of all the members of Parliament who worked there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It's such a rare sight!

### THE SILK EXCHANGE

#### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

The biggest monument to Valencian Gothic is the Silk Exchange—*La Lonja/Lotja de la Seda* (or the Merchants' Exchange, digo-64). It was built at the very end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

I love the twisted columns there! They look like palm trees! And those high ceilings with their criss-crossing vaults are incredible. The vaults themselves are as tall as the sky!

That's *El Columnario*, the Hall of Columns (or *Sala de Contratación*,



the Hall of Contracts). This was where the silk market thrived. Instead of displaying goods on counters, they concluded contracts here.

Do the words Lonja or Lotja remind you of anything?



Florence! There's a Lodge on Piazza della Signoria, in front of the Old Palace and the David statue—*Loggia dei Lanzi*.

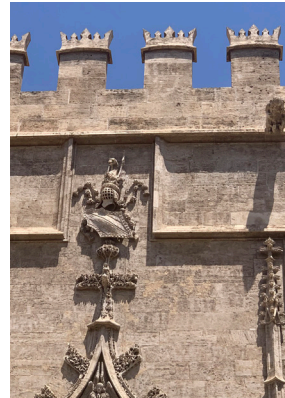
Exactly! A lodge or lonja is like a place under a canopy or some kind of cover so that merchants wouldn't get wet in the rain. It made negotiating more convenient.

## **BANKING, NAVIGATION, INSURANCE, LAW** **ARCHITECTURE**

There was also a bank here—one of the first in Spain. Under Martin the Humane (the king who died from laughter), *La Taula de Canvi* (the Exchange Table) was established in 1407.

And why was it called an "Exchange"?

Christians weren't allowed to lend money on interest, so most banking transactions looked like currency exchanges. The interest rate was kind of hidden in the exchange rate. The Exchange Table stayed in operation until 1719.



Is it true that the Maritime Consulate in the Stock Exchange was the first in Europe?



Yep! El *Consulado del Mar* was pretty interesting. It was like Lloyd's of London—these “consulates” weren't diplomatic missions but dealt with shipping issues, maritime law, and insurance.

We were in Venice's Rialto area, where marine insurance started. Does Valencia have something like that, too?

Yes, and its centre was in the Lonja! The tower had a beautifully decorated room on the upper level for maritime arbitration and insurance. It was called *La Sala Daurada* (the Golden Hall). The ceiling is impressive—carved and gilded wood, with strange animals, birds, and ships. You'll also see the coat of arms of Aragón-Valencia, strong walls, and a massive conference table. This is where merchants and shipowners negotiated, argued, and settled disputes.

And most importantly, they resolved everything without involving central authorities or courts.

## **GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE**

Do you remember the Gothic towers at the Serrano Gates? They are very severe and powerful, classic examples of late 14<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic architecture.

The Silk Exchange was built about a century later, in the 1490s, during the transition from Gothic to Renaissance. Grace, light, and intricate decorations were vital during this time.

Look at those funny gargoyles up there! Men and women in the weirdest poses! I need to get a closer look!

## **CONSTANTINOPLE, VALENCIA, AND SEVILLE**

The Lonja was built at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, just as Valencia's Golden Age ended. The city's importance for Aragón and Spain started to decline.

It's incredible how everything is connected in history! In 1453, the Muslims took Constantinople, something they'd dreamed of for eight centuries. This made trading silk through the Eastern Mediterranean (the Levant) more difficult for Western Europe.

So, the Portuguese and Spaniards started looking for alternative routes.

The Portuguese went South and East around Africa. Do you remember the monument to the navigators and the ship tower in Belém, Lisbon?

Of course! And the Spaniards put their trust in Columbus and tried to reach China by going West. Instead, they found America.

Right! Castille and Queen Isabel funded Columbus's voyages. One of the leading financiers was actually from Valencia—a baptised Jew, Luis de Santángel. There's a bust of him near Puente del Real.

The centre of international trade and shipping moved to Castille. Seville, the sea gate of the Crown of Castille, became the leading financial and legal hub. Columbus and Magellan sailed from ports around Cádiz.

So, was that the beginning of Valencia's decline?

Yeah, pretty much. Valencia entered a "sunset" period that lasted about two and a half centuries until the revival of the silk industry during the Age of Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The city still looked elegant and rich, but it was no longer Spain's main port or busiest marketplace.

## **WEATHER VANES**

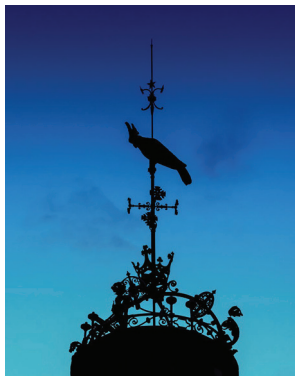
Hey, before we leave the Lonja area, have you seen the Central Market across the street? It's this super pretty Modernist building made of glass and metal.



Now look up! There are two weather vanes—a parrot and an eagle. The parrot is called “*La Cotorra del Mercado*”—the Ratchet from the Market. It’s a cheerful bird, even if it’s giant.

And the eagle is St. John’s. He holds a sphere in his claws, which represents the whole world. The eagle is a symbol of the Christian church, after all. Oh, there’s also a weather vane of a happy fish above the fish stalls.

The eagle is perched on the Church of St. Johns (Los Santos Juanes) (digo-66). This is one of the oldest churches in the area, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was rebuilt during the Baroque era, and St. Vincent Ferrer preached his first sermon here!



## UNIVERSITY. THINKERS



### UNIVERSITY – LA NAU

Okay, let’s talk about our University, which dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It’s only a seven-minute walk from the Market and Lonja (digo-58).

Higher education has existed in Valencia since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1412, all high schools were united under the name *Estudi General*.

In 1501, the Pope upgraded it to a University, and they were allowed to issue bachelor's and doctorate degrees. Then, in 1502, the King confirmed its status.

Is that why the University's coat of arms has the names and shields of Pope Alexander VI and Catholic King Ferdinand II (Queen Isabel's husband)?

Exactly! Nowadays, the modern Valencian and Polytechnic Universities are located behind the Turia. They're both on the avenue named after Blasco Ibáñez, a famous Valencian writer who lived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Other university buildings are on Orange Street (Avenida de Tarongers). Over 65,000 young people study here—it's like a city within a city. Honestly, studying in Valencia is the best. The universities are modern, with beaches, cafes, exhibitions, and concerts everywhere. Plus, you can't beat the weather!

Now we're at the old University building called La Nau. Does it mean "The Ship"?

It's not a ship. Nau is an abbreviation for la *Nostra Antiga Universitat*, which means "Our Ancient University." I love the big square in front of it, with all the fountains and statues.



## THE PATRIARCH'S MUSEUM MUSEUMS and exhibitions

The square is called del Patriarca (the Patriarch's Square). The title of Patriarch was given to San Juan de Ribera, the most famous Valencian of the early 17th century. His palace has a fascinating history and art museum—definitely worth checking out!

The statues around the fountain are also cool. On the right are the Catholic Kings Ferdinand II and Isabel. On the left is Pope Alexander VI, next to Vicente Blasco y García (1735-1813), one of the most famous university rectors who helped develop education across Spain.



I always wonder why there's a naked pagan goddess in the middle of all these historical people.

She represents *La Sabiduría*, or Wisdom, which makes sense in this setting.

## PERE COMPTE Valencian CELEBRITIES

Pere Compte, who also designed the Silk Lonja, was the chief architect of the La Nau building. Although the elegant courtyards resemble Renaissance structures, they are from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## JUAN LUIS VIVES

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

You kind of feel like you're in some palace in Florence here. In the centre, there's a monument of Juan Luis Vives that says, "*Clarissimo Scolari et Praestantissimo Philosopho.*" Who was he?

He was the most famous philosopher from Valencia, known as "our Erasmus of Rotterdam." He lived from 1492 to 1540 and studied at our University for a couple of years.



He came from a Jewish family. His dad was stripped of his property and executed for secretly visiting the synagogue, and his mom was tried after she died. Vives was scared of the Inquisition, so he went to study at the Sorbonne. Later, he moved to Bruges, where he married and vowed never to set foot in Spain again. He was close friends with Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More and left behind a lot of work that helped reform pedagogy and education. He died in Bruges, which was part of Spain at the time.

Oh, that must be why we have the Brujas (Bruges) Square behind the Central Market. But Brujas also means "witches" in Spanish, which is funny.

## **16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. THE HABSBURGS. THE GERMANÍAS UPRISING**

### **1516: A NEW ERA FOR SPAIN**

Wow, Aragón and Castille had just merged into one country, and then suddenly we're talking about Bruges? Let's get into this more. What role did Valencia play in all of this?

### **Valencian CELEBRITIES**

In 1516, a new era began for Spain. The first ruler from a new dynasty gradually came to power—the Habsburgs, Austrian, German, and Flemish rulers. Carlos I (the future Emperor Charles V) brought the Habsburg name to Spain.

I read about this! The Catholic kings Isabel and Ferdinand II had many children. Their daughter Juana (who was unfairly called “the Mad” or La Loca) married a handsome Habsburg named Philip. In 1500, she gave birth to Carlos in Ghent. In 1506, she was declared... well, “out of order.”

Ferdinand II died in 1516. Isabel and Philip had died earlier, leaving only Juana and Carlos as heirs.

People in Spain were unsure about Carlos, but 1517 Pope Leo X de' Medici recognised him as king. By February 1518, Carlos arrived in Iberia, and the Parliament of Castille (the Cortes) voted him in as King.

But Spain was still divided then, right? Did Carlos become King of all of Spain?





## A STILL DIVIDED COUNTRY

Not exactly. There were still separate kingdoms—Castile, Aragón, Valencia, and Navarre. Carlos travelled across the country—to Aragón, to Barcelona. In January 1519, he got news that his great-uncle, Emperor Maximilian I, had died. Carlos had to go to Germany.

So he didn't come to Valencia? He had to choose between becoming King of Valencia or Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, right?



Carlos I decided to go to Aachen in Germany. Instead of visiting Valencia, he sent his mentor from Flanders, Adriano de Utrecht (the future Pope Adrian VI, 1459-1523), who became the Regent of Spain in 1520.

## GERMANÍAS

Recently, I saw a picture of Adrian. He was wearing red and standing on a platform in front of a group of men who looked more challenging than respectful.

Right, you probably saw that painting in the Valencian Cortes building, in the hall where the five Borjas are. Those men were future heroes of the *Germanías* Uprising—Joan Llorenç and Guillem Sorolla. The older leader reaches out his hand as if to say, “Where is the King?”

*Germanías* is such a strange word. What does it mean?

It means fraternities or brotherhoods. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, they were armed groups that defended the Kingdom against pirates. But in 1520, they rebelled against the nobles and took power. They ruled Valencia for two years until 1522.

The rebel leader, Vicente Peris, is a local symbol of the fight for freedom and justice.

One of the Gran Vías in Valencia is called Germanías! Now I know why!

## SPORT AND PAELLA

### SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

Sorry, I got lost in history for a bit there. These centuries (the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>) are my favourites! But let's switch gears to something modern.



Do people do a lot of sports in Valencia? Which ones?

Valencia is definitely a sporty city. On weekends, Turia Park is full of runners and cyclists. My mom and I go to yoga there—it's incredible doing stretches on a mat under the pine trees!

My favourite sport is cycling. What's your favourite route?



### UP THE TURIA ON A BIKE

I've got two special routes. The first one is up the Turia. Could we meet at the Palace of Music?

Are we going far?

Only until we're tired! We start by cycling up the Jardines de Turia along the bike paths. The path ends at Cabecera Park.

Yeah, near the Valencian Bioparc.

Exactly. Behind the Bioparc, there is a path along the Turia. It is mysterious, our main river. It doesn't flow within the city limits, in the old or new riverbed. But as soon as you pass under the A7 motorway – here it is! A full-flowing stream. It's so cool to drive along it. Just take a robust bike, as there are many stones there.

Most of all, I like the wooden curved bridges across the river and the area opposite La Canyada. On the right is a high sandy bank with a vast forest, and on the left is a path along the river.

My record is a 60-kilometer lap to Riba-Roja. You can even go further and return by train.

## TO THE SOUTH! EL SALER, ALBUFERA

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

And if we go South, where do we end up?



In some of my favourite places! There's a bike path from the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC), starting at the Golden Dyke Bridge. In Pine-do, it veers toward the coast, where you'll find about 30 kilometres of beautiful beaches. If the sea is warm, you can stop

anywhere for a swim. My favourite stretch is from El Saler to La Devesa.

We love watching the sunset over Lake Albufera!

Albufera is one of Valencia's gems—it's the largest lake in Spain, covering 21,000 hectares. There are lots of interesting towns on its shores—Alfajar, Sedavi, Cullera, and Sueca. Make sure to stop by El Palmar, a fishing village right in the heart of the Valencian Lake District.

Massive birds flock around the lake—ducks, storks, herons—and the plant life is cool, too. The best part, though, is a boat ride for just 5-7 euros per person. It feels like you're miles away from civilisation.

## BARRACKS

I love those funny little pointed houses. Are they called barracks?

Yeah, they're called *Barracas*. They're traditional dwellings all over the Valencian Huerta (the Garden). They're lovely white houses, usually made of clay, with thatched or reed roofs. They have doors or windows on both ends, so they're super well-ventilated.

My parents and I watched a series called “*Cañas y barro*” (“Reed and Clay”) about life around Albufera in the 19th century.

Is El Palmar really where Valencian Paella was born?

**MUSEU DE L'ARROS  
ON ROSARI STREET  
MUSEUMS and exhibitions**

Exactly! There are colossal rice plantations around Albufera. We even have a Rice Museum near the Port of Valencia, on Rosari Street (DiVa-11). One surprising thing I learned there is that rice cultivation was banned for a long time because mosquitoes spread malaria. It only became allowed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



It's such a shame that Valencians got rid of those bats!

**PAELLA, ALI I PEBRE, AND ALIOLI  
FOOD, DRINKS**

Paella is the name of the flat, wide frying pan with two handles—and, of course, the dish itself. People started cooking paella in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, after the Germanías uprising. The classic paella includes chicken, duck, rabbit, and snails.

*All i Pebre*—“garlic and pepper”—is the sauce used for many fish dishes. Around Albufera, they usually cook eels (*anguilas*) with it.

We should head to Catarroja, the “Ali i Pebre capital”! Isn't *Alioli* also a sauce?

Yeah, Alioli is “garlic and oil”. It's whipped into an airy, white sauce, sometimes with an egg.





## CATARROJA, A FISHING PORT

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

What's interesting about Catarroja?



Catarroja is really close to Valencia, just along the V-31 road, a bit past the IKEA sign. You drive a few minutes and suddenly feel like you're in another world—on the green banks of a lake. The boats are adorable!

Unfortunately, these places and their inhabitants suffered greatly during the catastrophic flood of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. We feel sorry for our neighbours!

## EL RAVATXOL AND LA VELA LATINA

### VALENCIAN language

There's a funny word connected to these boats: *El Ravatxol*. It means "little bully," in the 1890s, the first steam trams were named this. The same word was used for the boats that carried people and goods across Albufera.

Are the boats with masts called Ravatxol, too?

Nope, the flat-bottomed sailing boats are something different. They've been used in Albufera since Roman times—for fishing, hunting, transport, and working in the rice fields. And sometimes even smuggling, secretly, of course!

Their sails are called Vela Latina, an oblique, triangular sail. Regattas with these boats are held in Albufera during Easter and October. We definitely need to check them out!

## VALENCIÀ / VALENCIANO

### The VALENCIAN language

Shouldn't Ravatxol be spelled Ravachol? What's the difference?

The first spelling is Valencià, and the second is Castilian. There is much debate about the Valencian language. In Valencia, we even have two different language academies. One says Valencià is similar to Catalan, while the other insists it's a separate language with its own history and traditions.

What do you think?

Languages were formed between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. When the Catalans came to La Valenciana during the Reconquista and with King Jaume I, they didn't have to teach their language to those already living here. The locals already spoke *Mozarabic*, a dialect used since the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

And Ausiàs March and Joanot Martorell, two classic Valencian authors, insisted they wrote in Valencià.

## 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. GERMANA DE FOIX

### BACK TO HISTORY! VICEROYS. GERMANA DE FOIX

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Alright, let's get back to history. You mentioned that during the Germanías uprising, the Viceroy's troops were defeated at Gandía. When did we start having a Viceroy?

Our Carlos I had quite an exciting biography. There's even a rumour that his grandmother became his mistress—crazy, right?



Germana de Foix (1488-1536) was quite a character! My friends in Valencia live on Carrer de la Reina na Germana, a street named after her. She became King Ferdinand II's second wife.

And she ended up being Carlos I's "grandmother-stepmother" (or "*abuelastra*" in Spanish).



Grandmother-stepmother and grandson-stepson?! How did that happen?

Carlos was 17, and Germana was 29—not a huge age gap, and they were both young. The future Emperor threw tournaments and banquets in her honour. Later, they even had a daughter named Isabel.

To avoid misunderstandings, Germana was sent to Valencia, where she married Juan Brandenburg-Ansbach. Together, they became the Viceroys of Valencia in 1523. Later, she married Fernando of Aragón, the Duke of Calabria.

## **SAN MIGUEL DE LOS REYES**

### **Trips OUT OF TOWN**

They were an extravagant couple! Let's head north from Valencia (DiVa-15) to see how luxurious their lives were. The Royal Monastery of San Miguel, founded in 1545 by the Duke of Calabria, is a beautiful Renaissance building with a two-story courtyard full of arches.

What's there now?

### **VALENCIAN language**

Germana and Fernando were patrons of the arts, and their library is still kept at the monastery. San Miguel is said to have

inspired Spain's most famous building, El Escorial. Today, it is home to the Valencian Language Study Centre.

## MAP OF 1584

### MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

My dad has this excellent map of the Kingdom of Valencia on his office wall. It's from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, drawn by Abraham Ortelius. I noticed that the port of Valencia was separated from the city and called Grao.

It's one of the first accurate maps of the Kingdom. Back then, La Valenciana had about 270,000 people, which wasn't much compared to the 7.4 million in all of Spain. The city was tiny by today's standards—around 60,000 people, including the suburbs. That's about the population of today's Russafa.

Valencia continued to grow and strengthen, and the Turia River was super important.

When were the bridges built?



## TURIA. BRIDGES AND FLOODS

### BRIDGES OVER THE TURIA

#### Around the city WITH KIDS SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

If we take our bikes and cycle from the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC) to Cabecera Park, we will pass 17 bridges along the Turia Gardens. There's an additional 18<sup>th</sup> bridge near the port in Nazareth. Let's explore which of these bridges are the most picturesque and historic:

### MODERN BRIDGES BY CALATRAVA

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Among the modern bridges, those designed by Santiago Calatrava are particularly noteworthy. Valencia has five of them:

Golden Dyke Bridge / l'Assut de l'Or

The second bridge from the sea, this iconic structure resembles a harp and is the tallest in the city, standing at 125 meters high.

Monteolivete Bridge

This bridge has two elegant curved parts that are best appreciated when viewed from underneath, walking between the CAC ponds. A Roman-style column in the centre serves as a modern tribute.

Flowers Bridge / Puente de las Flores

This bridge is notable for its flowers, which are replanted throughout the year. It is one of the city's most vibrant and colourful bridges.





Comb Bridge / Exhibition Bridge / Puente de la Exposición

Its arch and supports look like a comb, giving the bridge a very distinctive appearance.

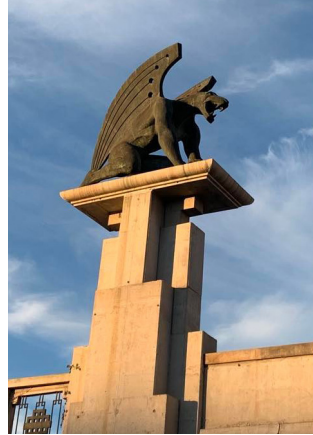
## BIRDS AND DEMONS

October 9 Bridge / Puente de 9 de Octubre

This bridge features strange one-legged birds with outstretched wings, adding a unique artistic element.

Some of the bridges feature striking sculptures:

The Bridge of the Kingdom / Puente del Reino is guarded by gargoyles, or gárgolas. These statues, created by Salvador Monleón Cremades and sculptor Joan Martí, were added when the bridge was built in 1999. They were intimidating to many children (and adults!) but serve as guardians of the bridge.



In contrast, the Guardian Angel Bridge / Puente del Ángel Custodio, built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is rather plain and lacks any sculptures despite its name.

## ANCIENT BRIDGES

Is the Reino bridge named after the Kingdom of Valencia? Haven't we walked on the Del Real bridge? Is that also Royal?

Remember, del Real is not "royal" but "rural".

Del Real and the Marine Bridge, del Mar, are my favourite bridges of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One is a pure force capable of re-





sisting the current, while the other is rather elegant and extends over a beautiful pond.

### **Which bridge is the oldest?**

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Valencia had six main bridges, starting from the mouth of the Turia and moving upstream: Marine, Del Real, Trinidad, Wooden, Serranos, and St. Joseph.

Del Real Bridge. Often mistaken for a Royal bridge, “Del Real” actually means rural. *This 1595 bridge embodies a pure force capable of withstanding Turia’s currents.*

*Marine Bridge / Puente del Mar. Built in 1596, it is elegant*

*and extends over a beautiful pond, making it one of the most picturesque bridges.*

*Trinidad / Trinity Bridge. Initially erected in 1407, it was the first bridge to connect the two riverbanks and is the oldest in the city.*

*Serranos Bridge. Constructed in 1550, this bridge is near the famous Serranos Towers.*

*Wooden Bridge / Puente de Madera / Del Fusta. Built to help connect the community across the river.*

*St. Joseph Bridge / Puente de San José. The bridge named*

*after Saint Joseph, the patron saint of the Fallas festival, was first built in 1486 and later rebuilt in 1607.*

All of them, except the Marine, are shown on our digo map.

### Exploring the bridges today **SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS**

Walking, running, or cycling along the Turia Gardens and passing under these bridges is one of the most enjoyable activities. They display muscular structures, pointed like breakwaters, reminding us how powerful the Turia River used to be and how these structures were built to withstand its force.

### **FLOODS: 1517 AND 1957. AND 2024....**

The Turia River often showed its strength, causing frequent floods that shaped the city. Two of the most notable floods are:

- The Flood of 1517 was powerful enough to destroy many of the city's early bridges. This led to a massive reconstruction effort to make more robust, more resilient structures.

- The Great Flood of 1957 left much of the city underwater, covered in mud and clay. This catastrophic event prompted the decision to divert the Turia away from the city centre, creating the New Turia Riverbed. The bypass road (V-30) runs along it.

The former riverbed was transformed into the beautiful Turia Gardens, now a popular recreational area. These gardens are a true example of Valencia's adaptation to its natural challenges.

Two obelisks near the Aragón Bridge commemorate the 1957 flood and serve as a reminder of the past struggles against nature's power and the resilience of the people of Valencia.

The saddest flood occurred on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The new Turia riverbed helped to save the centre of Valencia, but many suburbs, like Alfafar, Paiporta, and Sedaví, suffered a lot. We feel sorry for the victims and their families.



## SAINTS ON BRIDGES. TWO St. VICENTE Valencian CELEBRITIES



Saints on bridges are a special part of Valencia's cultural heritage. Sculptures on the city's bridges honour various historical and religious figures. On the Aragón Bridge, you can find statues of a Fisherman and a Valencian lady, while the St. Joseph Bridge has a statue of San José, the patron saint of Fallas. Our Lady of the Desamparados graces the Marine Bridge.

However, Valencia's two most important saints are both named Vicente, and they are honoured on the Puente del Real.



The Miracle of the Handkerchief is a beloved story in Valencia. San Vicente Ferrer was preaching at the Santos Juanes parish near the Central Market, speaking about the importance of helping those in need. During his sermon, he took a handkerchief out of his pocket, and a gust of wind carried it away. It eventually landed in front of a house where a family was struggling with hunger. Seeing the handkerchief as a sign, people came to help the family, and they received the support they desperately needed.

A. S. VICENT FERRER  
FILL D'ANTONI DE MALLORCA  
NECA DE MALLORCA  
ECL. DE LA PARROQUIA  
ORATAT EN ESTA CASA  
LA ASSUMPTIO DE FESTA  
DE LA TAPINERIA  
CENTENARI  
MCMXIX

RECORD DEL VI CENTENARI  
DEL SEU ADMONIT  
MCCCX-MCMXX



## 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY. PARK and HOSPITAL

### THE HEYDAY OF THE HABSBURG DYNASTY.

Moving onto Valencia during the Habsburg dynasty in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this was a time of great change. The Habsburgs, starting with Charles I (later Emperor Charles V) and his son Philip II, led Spain to new heights of power, but not without challenges for Valencia.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Valencia was the wealthiest city of the Crown of Aragón, a thriving hub for Mediterranean trade.

While still prosperous in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the city's prominence began to shift. It experienced an influx of French immigrants driven by the ongoing religious wars in France.

However, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the city faced a demographic crisis, mainly due to the 1609 expulsion of the Moriscos (Muslims who had converted to Christianity). This greatly affected agriculture and the local economy, marking a decline in Valencia's once-thriving Golden Age.

### THE EMPIRE

The Empire shifted gears in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Spain was at the peak of its power, holding two-thirds of the Americas. It even had the Netherlands and Belgium. Portugal and places like Macau were part of the Spanish crown for 60 years, from 1580 to 1640. Spain also had vast holdings in Italy, including Naples, Sicily, and Milan. But with all of this to take care of, Valencia wasn't exactly top of Madrid's list.

Why Madrid, though? Wasn't Toledo the capital before?

Yeah, it was. But in 1561, Philip II moved it to Madrid so he could be closer to his dad's memorial—the Escorial.



MUVIM

## THE BEST PARK IN THE OLD TOWN Around the city WITH KIDS

Let's go somewhere cool today. There's a park, a museum, a church, and an old hospital that's now a library—basically, everything is in one place!

These are the Gardens of the Old Hospital, or *Jardins de l'Antic Hospital (digo-9)*, on Guillem de Castro and l'Hospital streets. It's super close to the North Station and the Bullring.

I know! The boys at our school love skating in that park on their skateboards!



Exactly! And in 2015, these gardens were even voted the best in the world. There's the Main Library of Valencia, the MUViM

(Museum of Enlightenment and Modernity, digo-12), and the Silk Museum (digo-11). Oh, and the lovely Hermita de Santa Lucia.

Santa Lucia is like the one we have in Dénia. We used to live near that Hermita. Her holiday is December 13<sup>th</sup>, and we used to light these pretty candles...

### THE FIRST LUNATIC ASYLUM IN EUROPE

Did you know that the very first asylum in Europe was right next to the Hermita in Valencia? It was founded way back in 1409, officially called *El Hospital de los Pobres Innocentos, or de Folls* (digo-9). Since 1414, it's been under the care of the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary of the Poor—our Lady of the Defenseless. She's also known as our Little Hunchback.

And then it turned into the Main Hospital, right?

Yeah, the city always took care of the poor and the sick. Hospitals were established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1512, Ferdinand



It united all the small hospitals into one and named it the Main Hospital.

There was that massive fire in 1545, though. Was the hospital rebuilt?

Yes! The hospital was actually one of the biggest in Europe. It was rebuilt in a Renaissance style that looked like a giant cross. Now, it's the Public Library of the Province of Valencia. You can go inside and see how simple but beautiful it is.



I especially love the central hall. It's multifaceted and has an elegant dome. There's an arch in front of the garden entrance. Is that a bust of a Roman emperor?

Not exactly. It's Aesculapius, the God of Medicine. And yeah, the arch is super unique—it's a triple arch. Famous doctors like Hippocrates are featured in the medallions. There's also Andrés Piquer, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century doctor who worked in the hospital, and Crisóstomo Martínez, who made an anatomical atlas in 1680.



## ALICANTE. THE HOLY FACE AND ELCANO

### A LONG TRIP TO ALICANTE

#### Out of Town WITH KIDS

So, we've talked about the 16<sup>th</sup> century, not too rich in buildings. If your parents ever decide to take you to Alicante, there's definitely some amazing architecture to check out.

Alicante is such an exciting city. Not for nothing, it was fought over by Aragón and Castile for about a century! The beautiful embankment, the Castle of St. Barbara, and the Archaeological Museum are all worth a visit.

### ONE OF THE HOLIEST PLACES IN SPAIN:

#### THE HOLY FACE

#### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

The Monastery of the Holy Face, *Santa Faz*, is home to “*Veronica*,” meaning “True Image”—the woman's name and the canvas. The canvas is said to have Christ's face imprinted on it. Only three holy canvases exist in the world, and one is right here in Alicante.

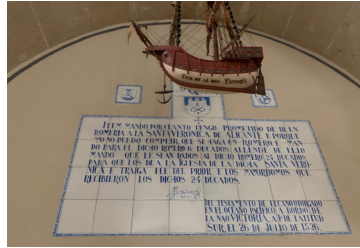
You might be thinking about the Shroud of Turin. Well, the difference is that the Turin Shroud shows the whole body of Christ, while *Santa Faz* is just His face.

The canvas made its way here from Rome, and, of course, the Borja family was involved! None other than our future Pope Alexander entrusted it to a pilgrim. Apparently, the canvas didn't want to stay at the bottom of the chest—it kept rising to the top. In 1489, a tear appeared on the Face during a prayer for rain, and right then, it started raining!





Since then, there have been annual processions called *Romerías* from the centre of Alicante to the Monastery of Santa Faz. The building dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and has a pretty simple Renaissance facade, although some baroque columns were added later. But inside, it's truly something else.



## ELCANO AND THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

All the Spanish kings and state leaders visited Santa Faz and paid tribute to Elcano, who took over after Magellan and became the first person to sail around the world.

Magellan died in the Philippines, so who was Elcano?

Juan Sebastián del Cano / Elcano (1476-1526) was from Getaria in the Basque Country. He joined Ferdinand Magellan's 1519 expedition. After Magellan died, Elcano took command and led the remaining crew back home. Only the Victoria Caravel made it back, with only 18 survivors.

I actually saw a replica of the Victoria in Dénia. It's crazy to think such a small ship made it all the way around the world!

Carlos I gave Elcano a coat of arms with a globe and the inscription "*Primus Circumdedit me*," which means "You were the first to circumnavigate me." Sadly, Elcano died during the second expedition to the Spice Islands. His dream was to participate in the *Romería*, so his memorial plaque, charts, and testament are in the Monastery of Santa Faz. It's such a fascinating and holy place.



## 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – NOT THE BEST TIME FOR VALENCIA

### “MINOR” HABSBURGS

Let's head back to Valencia and look at the 17<sup>th</sup> century—the 1600s. What comes to mind when you think of that time?

For sure, Baroque architecture. But also a pretty severe crisis.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Spain was thriving, but what about Valencia?

The Habsburgs ruled Spain for almost two centuries, from 1516 to 1700. The first Habsburgs were known as the “Greats”: Charles I (Carlos) and Philip II, the one who ruled the Empire with an iron hand.

But the 17<sup>th</sup> century put on the throne what we call the “Minor” Habsburgs—Philip III and IV and Charles II. During this time, their favourites, or “*Validos*,” often ruled on their behalf. The empire started to show cracks. The gold from overseas was spent on building churches and repaying debts to foreign bankers and merchants. The country was constantly at war.

### “THE BIGGEST THIEF” AND DON QUIXOTE?

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

The first Valido was the Marquis of our Dénia, Duke of Lerma—Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas (1553-1625). Our Dénia's coat of arms comes from his family.

You can see his portrait by Rubens in the Prado Museum in Madrid. He's there on horseback, looking all grand. But in Madrid, they called him “the biggest thief of the Christian world.” Lerma convinced Philip III to move the capital twice—from Madrid to Valladolid and back again—and made a ton of money from these moves.

He's sometimes called the "First Prime Minister." Before reaching that position, Don Francisco served as the Viceroy of Valencia. During his time, the del Real Bridge was rebuilt.

Lerma's time in power is actually remembered for peace—there were no significant conflicts in the Netherlands or Portugal (both countries that Spain lost later under Philip IV).

I read that during his time, there were fewer wars, so there was less need for knights to go off and perform heroic acts. That's when Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*.

## EXPULSION OF THE MOORS

Yeah, there's definitely a theory that links the peace of that era to the creation of *Don Quixote*.



But Lerma's most significant action during that time was the expulsion of the Moors—Muslims who had remained in Spain. They were sent to Africa and other regions because people saw them as a “fifth column” aiding Muslim pirates.

The first complete depiction of Dénia is in a painting showing this expulsion.

The same goes for Valencia. In 1616, Pere Oromig painted “*Embarco moriscos en el Grao de Valencia*”, showing the expulsion scene. He tried to present it as a peaceful event, but it was far from it. A lot of Muslims were killed, especially around Dénia.

The expulsion took place between 1609 and 1610. Lerma wasn't totally in favour of it, but another important figure—the Patriarch and Archbishop of Valencia, Juan de Ribera—strongly supported it.

I remember seeing his statue in the University in La Nau courtyard! And there's also that huge painting of him in the Chapel of the Holy Chalice. He seemed so wise, but it's kind of shocking to think he was a supporter of this...

At that time, most Spaniards supported the expulsion; they stood by the Church's stance. The decision was ultimately made in Madrid, and, honestly, there were very few Moors in Castile compared to Valencia.

### **THE 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY WAS NOT THE BEST FOR VALENCIA**

In Valencia, the Moors made up about a third of the population. Their expulsion devastated the Kingdom's economy, leaving it impoverished for half a century.

We had plague epidemics, and there was even a peasants' revolt in 1663, known as “the Second Germanía.” In 1651, there was a terrible flood, and banditry on the roads—*bandolerismo*—was a real problem.

VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!

Even though there was still some money left, it was mostly spent on huge celebrations, which were very showy, in true Baroque style. Think of events like *Los Miracles de Sant Vicent*.

## **PAINTING IN DARK COLORS**

### **Valencian CELEBRITIES**

Despite the difficult times, some of the most famous artists of La Valenciana were born in this century, like Francisco de Ribalta and José de Ribera, also known as “the Spaniard.”

They took a lot of inspiration from Caravaggio, with that dramatic lighting and those dark, moody tones - just like in life. Ribalta’s style was even called *tenebrismo*, meaning “twilight.”





## THE FIRST MAPS OF VALENCIA

**1608, MANCELLI**

### MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

The first detailed map of the city was made in 1608 by Antonio Mancelli, an Italian. Its name is *Nobilis ac regia civitas Valentie in Hispania*, which means the noble and real city of Valencia in Spain.

Mancelli's work was terrific. It was a bird's-eye view of Valencia, with every house and tower visible! Interestingly, the map is drawn "upside down," with the south at the top.

What do we recognise here? The Turia River has five bridges. Let's try to name them!

Starting from the left corner, there's the Puerto del Mar (the Marine), Del Real, the Holy Trinity, the bridge near the massive towers—Serranos—and one more on the right, which must be St. Joseph's bridge! Back then, they called it the "New" bridge.



You can see how mighty the city walls are, with a crowd of towers along the river. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when these walls were built, Aragón and Valencia were at odds with Castille. Any potential threat would come from the North.



### **TOMÁS VICENTE TOSCA, 1704**

#### **MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES**

The second famous city plan is by Tomás Tosca, a mathematician, architect, and philosopher who drew it in 1704. It has been meticulously reconstructed at the MuVIM Museum.



Museo Valenciano de la Ilustración y la Modernidad / MUVIM



At the top, it says *Valentia Edetanorum vulgo del Cid*. Remember Edeta-Llíria, the ancient Iberian stronghold, and how the Cid captured Valencia? The city's history is all in the name.

It's so beautiful. Look at those solid Quarts Towers (digo-15). But what's up with all these vast empty spaces? Were there big squares in the Middle Ages?

Absolutely. The Market Square is in the centre (digo-64-65), and slightly to the left is the present-day City Hall Square, Ayuntamiento (digo-1-3). A large green area is on the right, near the river. That's where the Botanical Garden is today (digo-16).

And on the left? A vast square next to a mighty fortress... Let me think... The Marine Gates and the Del Real Bridge are nearby. Oh, of course, I go there often with my parents! It's





where the Bancaja exhibition hall is today.

## AROUND THE GLORIETA

### BANCAJA EXHIBITIONS MUSEUMS and exhibitions

We've seen many beautiful works of art there, including paintings by Sorolla, Valencia's most famous artist. The exhibitions change frequently and are always interesting. I definitely recommend it to anyone visiting Valencia!

### MONASTERY OF SANTO DOMINGO

Right across from Bancaja, there's the Glorieta Park with its massive ficus trees (digo-54). On the old Tosca map, you can see a big church or something behind it. I've never actually been inside.

It's the Santo Domingo Monastery, and its church is the oldest in the city (digo-49). Jaume I founded it in 1239, right after the Reconquista. The old fortress of La Ciudadela used to be nearby.

It's not easy to visit because the Main Military Command of



La Valenciana, known as *Capitanía General*, has occupied the monastery for a long time.

The building itself is a mix of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles. Inside, there's the famous Chapel of the Holy Kings (*Capilla de los Santos Reyes*), which dates back to 1431. You have to wait for a holiday to visit.

I read somewhere that a rebellion against the Republic was planned here in 1936. The mutiny on February 23, 1936, also started here.

Valencia was the capital of the Republicans for a year during the Civil War. It became the home of the government, a tangible symbol of freedom!



## CERVELLÓ AND THE ABOLITION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Right across from Santo Domingo is the Cervelló Palace, which reminds us of the suppression of freedom (digo-49.2). After the destruction of the Real Palace in 1810, the Royals liked to stay in Cervelló.

In 1814, Ferdinand VII returned from exile. At the time, he was known as “the Desired One.” He immediately repealed the Cadiz Constitution, which had been adopted while he was away in 1812. It was, by all means, the most progressive constitution in Europe at the time! Then he banned Parliament, and soon, people started calling him the “Traitor King.”

The Cervelló Palace is definitely worth a visit. It now houses an archive, and many rooms have been beautifully restored.

If you walk around the corner, you'll find another important spot. Saint Vincent Ferrer was born here (digo-52). The Gothic



VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!



building, rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, still has a lot of charm.

### SAN JUAN DEL HOSPITAL

This area, known as La Seu-Xe-rea, is steeped in history. For centuries, people from the three main religions lived here. My favourite spot is the Church of the Crusaders.

San Juan del Hospital, which belonged to the Order that would later be called the Maltese Order, was founded in Valencia right after the Reconquista. Jaime I gave the land to the Hospitallers.

Head straight for the strange frescoes in the second chapel on the left—there's Christ and... the Whore of Babylon? You can also find the grave of a real Byzantine Empress and a sculpture of St. Catherine, the patroness of students.



### ST. CATHERINE

We're heading toward the city centre now, walking from Cervelló along La Paz (Peace) Street to Queen Square and the Cathedral. The main Tourist Office (digo-53) is right here, by the way.

These buildings are so beautiful, aren't they? And look at that slender, elegant bell tower at the end of the street.



That's actually St. Catherine's church, Santa Catalina Mártir (digo-63). It was initially from the Gothic era, but the bell tower was added in 1702. The tower, which looks like a candle—a total nod to the Baroque era—was designed by the famous architect Juan Bautista Viñes.

I just love those twisted columns at the top!

They're called "Solomon's" columns. And the bell tower itself is so unusual because it's hexagonal. Super unique!

### ORCHATA – YES, IT'S GOLD! FOOD, DRINKS

Oh, Caterina! My dad always reads the name of this café out loud like he's addressing my mom. Is orchata made of milk?



Actually, this famous Valencian drink is made from ground-nuts. A legend says that when Jaume I tasted it, he exclaimed, "*Or, chata*" – which means, "Girl, this drink is like gold!" It's totally worth visiting this *orchateria*. The beautiful tiles from Manises are unique. Plus, you can try all the typical Valencian sweets: *churros*, *fartones*, and *bunyuelos* – delicious doughnuts.

### A ROUND SQUARE

This uniquely shaped courtyard is near the city centre, close to St. Catherine's. It was created in 1837 and is called Plaza Redonda, or *El Clot*, which means "The Hole." You can enter it from four different sides, walking along the charming streets of the old centre. It used to be a small meat and fish market.



Now it's surrounded by cute little shops. Whenever friends visit, we like to bring them here to check out the fans, lacework, Fallas dresses, and ceramics.

## 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – RUIN AND PROSPERITY

### A REBELLIOUS START AND PROSPERITY. BOURBONS

Let's talk about the dramatic 18th century.

Spain definitely didn't have a boring history – and neither did Valencia!

Honestly, after the Golden Age in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, things got pretty crazy. Wars and trouble were constant. And the city didn't really calm down until the 1980s.

Well, you're sort of right. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was peaceful during the reign of one of Spain's most efficient kings, Carlos III (Charles III). It was the Age of Enlightenment, and Valencia saw the construction of silk factories and an overall boom in science and craftsmanship. The Academy was also established during this period.

But didn't the 18<sup>th</sup> century start with a pretty bloody war?

### THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION – TWO CHARLES AND ONE PHILIP

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Carlos II, the last Habsburg in Spain, was in fragile health, and none of his children survived. When he died in 1700, two dynasties started claiming the Spanish throne.

The French Bourbons, led by the Sun King, Louis XVI.

And the Austrian Habsburgs, represented by Archduke Charles.

We even have a square named after the Archduke in Dénia. But in the end, the Habsburgs didn't win, right?

The War of the Spanish Succession lasted from 1700 to 1714. Military operations in Spain started in 1705, and the



country was completely divided. Castille supported the new Bourbon dynasty under King Philip V, who was placed on the throne by his grandfather, Louis XIV.

Valencia and Barcelona were on the side of the Habsburgs – they supported the old rulers who gave them freedom! In Dénia, there's a monument of broken handcuffs in honour of General Juan Bautista Basset y Ramos, who fought on the Austrian side. He's considered a hero of Dénia, Valencia, and Barcelona. At one point, he was promoted to the rank of the Viceroy of Valencia.

Eventually, the Habsburgs lost. Charles managed to take Madrid twice, but in 1712, he was elected as the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles VI. People call him "The Emperor Who Wanted to Be a King." He decided the Emperor's crown was more important, so he left Barcelona and returned to rebuild Vienna.



### ALMANSA. 1707. APRIL 25

We saw a massive painting of a battle at the Valencian Parliament in the Borja Palace, right by the five statues of the Borjas. It showed the Battle of Almansa, the biggest defeat for the Habsburgs and Valencia, on April 25, 1707.

Under the command of the Duke of Berwick, an Englishman, the Franco-Spanish army fought against the Anglo-Dutch-Portuguese troops led by the French general Marqués de Ruviigny. Honestly, that war was a total mess, with so many sides involved.

### “WHEN THE WIND BLOWS FROM ALMANSA”... ALL IS LOST

Valencians still remember this defeat. There's even a saying, “*Quan el mal ve d’Almansa, a tots alcança*,” which means, “When evil comes from Almansa, it will be bad for everyone.”

So, did Valencia lose all its rights?

Yeah, pretty much. On June 29, 1707, Philip V (the Bourbon) signed the *Decree of Nueva Planta*, and with that, many of Valencia's institutions were abolished. The Kingdom of Valencia lost its parliament – the *Corts*. Our laws (*Furs or Fueros*) were no longer valid. The Maritime Consulate was also gone. Instead of a Viceroy, a military governor governed La Valenciana, and speaking Valencian was banned.

But things got back to normal in the 1980s. We have our parliament and our language again now.

### VALENCIAN language

Yeah, but it's important to understand that from 1707 to 1980, all of this was banned – for 273 years! Although Valencian never entirely disappeared, people mostly spoke it in villages.





## CATHEDRAL AND BASILICA

### QUEEN SQUARE

Here we are in Queen Square. It was recently rebuilt in the early 2020s, and it's always buzzing with people – basically the heart of the city's tourist centre. Fun fact: all roads in La Valenciana are measured starting from this point. In 1930, the city's first traffic light was installed here. There's a lot of history here – Ausiàs March passed away in a house nearby, and St. Vincent the Martyr was kept in prison here.

So, which Queen is the square named after? One of the two Isabels?

Well, the square itself is only about a century and a half old. Initially, the smaller place was called St Catherine's, after the church we've seen.

After the larger square was laid out, they celebrated the wedding of Alfonso XII and María de las Mercedes here. It was



1874, the Bourbons had just returned to power, and they were pretty popular. Sadly, Maria died at only 18 years old, so the square was named in her memory.

These houses are stunning, especially at the end of La Paz Street!

The Montforte Building is really iconic for us Valencians. I love those beautiful dancers, the round windows, and that curved corner. It's all so elegant!

This corner is super important in the city. St. Vincent Martyr Street begins here, and it's the longest street in Valencia – over three kilometres long!

Shall we head to the Cathedral? Do you know its full name?

*Santa Iglesia Catedral Basílica Metropolitana de Santa María.*



## THE CATHEDRAL. IRON PORTAL AND MIGUELETE

### Around the city WITH KIDS MUSEUMS and exhibitions

At the main entrance, you can see Baroque in all its glory! This portal, built during the War of Succession, is called *La Puerta de los Hierros*, or the doorway of the Iron lattice. It looks like a complete Baroque masterpiece.

Let's go inside. If you look up, you feel that the portal, the tower, and the walls are all closing in on you. And hey, what's that tower?



## MIGUELETE

Oh, that's Miguelete! It's one of the symbols of Valencia!

Why is that? Wait, now that I think about it... When you see the Cathedral from the square, that tower definitely catches your eye. Did you say it was named after a bell?

Yep, *La Torre del Miguelete* – or *del Micalet* – is basically a symbol of the city. It's named after a bell that weighs 7.5 tons, one of the largest in the Crown of Aragón. It was consecrated on September 29, 1418, on St. Michael the Archangel's day.

That's so long ago! It has a very Gothic look, though there are decorations at the top.

There's also an observation deck called *El Balcón del Levante*. Let's climb up those 207 steps! Imagine the bell ringers had to go up there every day. We'll pass by a dark hall called *La Presó* on the way. It's not a prison but a shelter for people needing refuge. If you remember the "Notre Dame" story, Esmeralda would have been hiding here!



Here we are at the top. That's the bell tower, called the *Espadana*. And wow, Micalet, the bell is enormous! There are 11 bells in total, each with its name.

Look at the city from up here – it's so packed!

Yeah, but that's what makes it so charming! *Ciutat Vella*, the old town, is still so ancient and authentic. Nothing's planned – the streets twist and turn like they did centuries ago. Even I get lost sometimes!

The blue domes and bell towers really add something special to the view. I recognise many buildings from here – the Lonja, the Central Market, the Ayuntamiento Square, and City Hall.

Right below us, in the block between Miguelete and St. Catherine's bell tower, is where our famous artist Sorolla was born. Here, he was baptised, grew up, and even got married. His first studio was nearby.

## BRIDE AND GROOM

The bell towers of Santa Catalina (St. Catherine's) and Miguelete are often called the Bride and Groom. They stand pretty close to each other, both overlooking Queen Square, and both are such important symbols of the city. Locals and tourists love them equally.

Miguelete is tall and robust, while the St. Catherine tower is delicate, with its shell carvings, garlands, and twisted Solomon columns. It's like they look at each other, communicating with their bells.

We've made our way down from Miguelete and continue our walk around Valencia from the 16th and 17th centuries. Let's head over to Plaça de la Verge, but first, we'll cross Queen Square.



## THE TAMBOURINE ARCH, OUR GIFT TO AMERICA

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Here's a unique monument – a man with a curved sabre looking upwards. It's Rafael Gustavino Moreno (1842-1908).

He's one of our greatest gifts to America! Rafael Gustavino was a Valencian architect who moved to the USA in 1881, bringing the ancient art of building lightweight arches with him. This technique came from the Muslim Mudéjar architecture, using light bricks to make structures called “*tambourine vaults*.” Today, you can find dozens of Gustavino's works scattered across America!



## PORTALS OF THE CATHEDRAL. HEADS AND ARBITRATORS

### Around the city WITH KIDS

Okay, let's continue along the Chapel of the Holy Chalice. If you turn the corner, you'll find the prettiest little bridge – it reminds me of Venice's Bridge of Sighs!

There are actually two bridges connecting the Cathedral. One leads to the Bishop's Palace to our right, and the other, around the corner, leads to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Forsaken.

And here's another Cathedral Portal with a lovely rainbow-shaped arch! On top are a bunch of heads—do you know who these people are?

This is the *Puerta del Palau, or del Almoina*. It's the oldest portal, built when the Cathedral was built in





1262 in the Romanesque style, which was outdated even then. The seven pairs of heads here all have names, like Pedro and María, Domingo, and Ramona. Legend has it they represent Christians from Catalonia who came after the Reconquista and married local girls. They were immortalised on the portal.

### THE MOST ANCIENT ARBITRATION

If we continue walking around the Cathedral, we'll reach the Gothic Portal, *La Puerta de los Apóstoles*. This portal has a beautiful window with a Star of David. It is where the oldest arbitration court in Europe meets every Thursday.

*The Tribunal de las Aguas, or Water Court, has been meeting for a thousand years to resolve disputes about water usage. It's so important because water is life for the Huerta!*



Isn't it cool that Valencia's surrounding region is called *Huerta*, which means "the garden"? It was all set up back in Muslim times.

### OLD TURIA AND THE CANALS. MESTALLA, THE STADIUM

Wait, is that why there's a statue of the Turia River in the square near the Basilica? Why is the river depicted as a man?

Well, "*el río*" is masculine in Spanish. So here he is, portrayed as this mythological giant, full of calm strength. We call him "*El Padre Turia*." He has a cornucopia, and eight nymphs around

him with jugs, each with Fallas hairstyles. They represent the eight main irrigation canals near the city – Quart, Rovella, Mislata, Tormos, Rascanya, Favara, Benaher, and Mestalla.

I know, the football fans only care about Mestalla! The main stadium is actually named after that canal, isn't it?

## OBRA NOVA

The two temples here are so different! This arcade at the top of the Cathedral – doesn't it feel kind of Roman and ancient?

It's called Obra Nova, or "The New Work." Although most of the Cathedral, except the Iron Portal, was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, this beautiful Renaissance arcade dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It's so light and elegant—nothing like it in Europe!

I just want to fly up there! So, what else is Plaça de la Verge known for?



## **FESTIVITIES AT THE BASILICA** **HOLIDAYS** throughout the year

Santa María de los Desamparados, the Little Hunchback, is the city's patron saint, and we love Her.

Queen Square might be the tourist hub, but Plaça de la Verge is for the locals. There are always so many different events here – folklore dances, flower petal compositions, and these fantastic big carts.

The carts are called *Las Rocas*. During religious holidays, saint statues are carried on them. You can visit the Casa de las Rocas Museum near the Borja Palace to see the Triumphal carts dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1960s, some carts had to be shortened to fit under the tram wires!



And don't miss the *Corpus Christi* processions in late May or June. It's a huge event, and you'll see everything – dwarfs, giants, the Moma (virtue) and momos (seven deadly sins), plus the Water Show.

## **CABANYAL** **MUSEUMS** and exhibitions

We could also visit Cabanyal, the marine district. The Museo Semana Santa Marinera is on Rosario Street, near the Rice Museum. During Easter Week, tall carts parade through the streets, making for solemn processions.



## THE “SIXTINE” OF VALENCIA

### CAVALIERS STREET – DECUMANO

#### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

Let's go back to the Basilica. From there, we'll walk down Cavaliers Street, one of the two main streets from Roman times, running West to East. Maybe that's why there are so many gorgeous palaces here.

On the right is the Generalitat Palace – such a beautiful Gothic building. And further down, there's the Museum of Tin Soldiers, *L'iber*, and the Mercader Palace. History is just everywhere on this street!

If we keep walking, we'll end up in a more modern part of the city. The fun Carmen district starts around Tossal Square, with its cafes, restaurants, and nightclubs. But let's stay in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries a bit longer – I want to show you the Sistine Chapel of Valencia!

### THE VALENCIAN SISTINE

Isn't that in the Vatican?

We call the Church of Saints Nicholas of Bari and Peter the Martyr our Valencian Sistine. It is located on Cavaliers Street, number 35: San Nicolás de Bari y San Pedro Mártir (digo-33).

The frescoes inside are stunning – they were painted during the Baroque era in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### POPE CALIXTUS III. GOTHIC – BAROQUE

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Bishop Alfonso de Borja built this church at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Later, he became Pope Calixtus III—another significant connection to the Borja family in Valencia!

Alfonso started rebuilding the church in 1419 when he was still an abbot. It was constructed above a Roman temple in the Gothic style, with later additions from the Baroque period.

Once inside, you can see just how exquisite those Baroque touches are—the ceiling vaults tell stories of the two saints, and everything is beautifully detailed.



### THE EVANGELICAL AND EPISTOLICAL SIDES

Churches have special terms for the “right” and “left” sides. When you’re facing the altar, the left is called the “evangelical side”, where they read from the New Testament. When they explain it, they move to the right, or the “epistolary side.”

Here, the evangelical side is dedicated to St. Peter the Martyr, who was tragically killed near Milan in 1252. The epistolary side is all about St. Nicholas of Bari, who is actually a big deal in Orthodox countries. They even have special services on Mondays called “*Caminatas de San Nicolás*.”





## Valencian CELEBRITIES

All the frescoes were painted by Antonio Palomino, Charles II's court artist, with the help of Valencian painter Dionís Vidal. They date back to 1697-1700. The details and stories are incredible! You could spend hours just admiring each panel. And the colours are so vibrant—restored recently, in 2016. It feels more like magic than a church!

By the way, Antonio Palomino also painted the Basilica of Our Lady and San Juanes (St. Johns') Church. His frescos in San Juanes are now being restored using bacteria!

## SANTA CLAUS AND ST. NICHOLAS. AND THE THREE KINGS

### HOLIDAYS throughout the year

And St. Nicholas Day on December 6<sup>th</sup> is such a joyful time for kids!

Santa Claus brings gifts at Christmas in some countries, but here in Spain, kids know that St. Nicholas visits on December 6<sup>th</sup>. He watches how children behave and makes his gift list. Then, the Three Kings bring those gifts during their big cavalcade in January – definitely a sight to see on January 5<sup>th</sup>!

## GRAFFITI IS ALSO ART

As we discuss the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century—much calmer and wealthier—let's also peek at modern Valencia. One of the coolest features of the Carmen and Pilar districts is the graffiti.



It's not like regular graffiti – they're more like murals or paintings! You could wander around for hours looking at them.

Each is unique, but my favourite is the massive one in Botxa/Bocha Square.

## 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

### CARLOS III

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

We're headed to the Silk Museum! It's so cool that the silk industry here used all the advancements from the reign of Carlos III (Charles III). Honestly, he was probably Spain's best ruler of the last 300 years.

Carlos III lived from 1716 to 1788. He started as the Duke of Parma and then became the King of Naples and Sicily. From 1759, he ruled Spain for almost thirty years. People even called him the "best mayor of Madrid." He decorated and strengthened the country, and I honestly think that if he had lived longer, Spain wouldn't have faced the tragedies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This was the era of Enlightened Absolutism, the time of Voltaire, Frederick the Great, and Catherine the Great. It also saw the American War of Independence.

France and Spain were actually united against Great Britain at the time, helping out the American colonies. After all, Spain almost owned both Americas, from Florida and California to Patagonia!

Back in Spain, everything was thriving. The education system was getting a boost, including professional education like *La Escuela de Artes y Oficios*. Universities were popping up, agricultural reforms were happening, and all these progressive societies – las *Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País* – were being formed. Newspapers were being printed, there were these *tertulias* (basically discussion circles of intellectuals), and new art academies were opening, too.



## FINE ARTS MUSEUMS and exhibitions

We have already visited the Museum of Fine Arts, right? It's next to the Gardens del Real, in the building with that gorgeous blue dome.

Those blue domes are like one of the symbols of La Valencia. They just look so beautiful with their blue tiles!

The Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos, founded in 1768 by Carlos III, has one of Spain's most extensive collections of medieval and modern art.

They taught painting, sculpture, and architecture at the Academy. They even started teaching fabric design in 1784 because the silk industry in Valencia was growing so much.



## THE MILITARY HISTORY MUSEUM

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

Since we're still in the area, we should also check out the Military History Museum (*Museo Histórico Militar*). Kids would totally love it! There are scenes of soldiers storming the Quarts Towers, exhibits on the history of the Spanish flag, and so much more.

## ART MAJOR DE LA SEDA

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

Alright, now let's talk about silk. The museum is called a College – isn't that kind of odd?

It's the *Museu i Col·legi de l'Art Major de la Seda* (digo-11). Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, silk spinning has been a big deal here. By 1780, half of Valencia's population was connected to the silk industry!



This neighbourhood is called *Barrio de Velluters or Sederos*, which means “the district of weavers.”

The building itself is Gothic and dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition inside is fascinating – you learn how silk is made and what a “*morera*” is (a mulberry, the silk tree). *Sericulture* is the term for silk production.

The Hall of Fame is impressive. It's all about the glory of Valencian silk. There's this beautiful painting on the ceiling—a

figure of Glory. The tiled floor has images symbolising the four continents. Gorgeous women are riding carts drawn by animals representing each part of the world as it was known back then.

Wait a second – Europe has horses, Asia elephants, Africa lions, and America has... caimans or alligators? That's actually kind of funny!



## **DOS AGUAS AND CERAMICS** **Around the city WITH KIDS** **MUSEUMS and exhibitions**

We're wrapping up our tour of the Rococo era at the Ceramics Museum. This place really reflects the French influence! The most famous wall in Valencia, sculpted by Ignacio Vergara Gimeno and his team in 1740, is here.

It's the Palace of the Marquis of Two Waters, or *El Palacio del Marqués de Dos Aguas* (digo





60). The alabaster carvings are so delicate that they almost look like they could glow. The wall coverings are pretty unique for Valencia – they actually look like wallpaper but have such an exquisite stone-like finish. And those two powerful male figures?

They represent rivers—our good old friend Turia and Júcar, the two major rivers of La Valenciana. They come with jugs, crocodiles, snakes, lions, and other creatures. It's such a fantastic piece of art.



## THE MUSEUMS OF CERAMICS Out of Town WITH KIDS

The Palace has a small ceramics exhibit. What's great about it is that you can also see parts of the 18th-century palace itself. Don't miss the fan collection—*los abanicos*!



There's another ceramics museum in Manises where this art form originated. It's close to the airport, and honestly, every shop there feels like a little museum. The tourist centre, covered in blue tiles, is definitely worth seeing!

## OUR SCHOLARS

### SCIENCE AND ART – THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was pretty chaotic, but the second half became known as the Age of Enlightenment or *Ilustración*. Many new things became normal—like streetlights, “*los faroles*.”



Valencia produced many famous scientists during this time! In 1776, Carlos III founded the Royal Economic Society of the Friends of the Valencian Land, *La Real Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País de Valencia*. Many brilliant minds are associated with it.

## OUR FAMOUS SCIENTISTS

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, linguist, historian, and publisher.

Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, a publisher and fighter for women's rights,

back in 1726!

Antonio José Cavanilles y Polop, Spain's leading botanist.

Francisco Bayer y Benicassim, philologist and numismatist.

Astronomy - José de Zaragoza, 1675.

Cartography – our good friend Tomás Vicente Tosca, 1704.

Anatomy – Crisóstomo Martínez.

Medicine - Andrés Piquer.

Philosophy – Juan de Vergara, Luis de León. And many others.



## 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES. A BRIEF HISTORY

### THE TROUBLES BEGAN

Unfortunately, Spain's prosperity took a hit after the reign of the superb Carlos III. From 1788 to 1975, Spain's global influence dwindled, and Valencia faced similar ups and downs. Of course, there were times of progress, like in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but much was chaotic.

It was also a period when democracy began to take root, and the monarchy's role declined. However, this led to a series of wars, regime changes, and the loss of the Spanish Empire.

Here's a quick rundown of some of the critical events of that time:

*The War of Independence (1807-1814) against Napoleonic France marked a dramatic start to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Valencia stood its ground during three sieges from 1808 to 1812, and we can still see the marks of those times—the Quarts Towers have visible scars from French bombings.*

*After the war, King Fernando VII abolished the progressive 1812 Constitution in Valencia, which was a huge step backwards for Spain.*

*Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, and later in 1898, Spain lost its overseas territories, like many of the “Vice-Kingdoms” in the Americas. Unlike colonies, these territories were equal to Spain, and their loss was deeply felt.*

*Queen Isabel II's accession to the throne led to the Carlist Wars—her uncle Carlos and his descendants argued that only a man could sit on the Spanish throne.*

*In 1868, the revolution briefly replaced the monarchy with Amadeo I from the House of Savoy, followed by Spain's first attempt at a republic in 1873.*

*In 1874, Alfonso XII restored the monarchy after a military uprising in Sagunto, near Valencia, with support from the future Marquis de Campo.*

*Valencia and Spain experienced a period of relative calm and growth from 1874 to 1931, during the reigns of Alfonso XII and XIII.*



*However, the Empire continued to crumble with revolts in Cuba and the Philippines and the war against the United States. These last parts of the Empire were lost in 1898.*

*The Second Republic was formed in 1931. During the Civil War (1936-1939), Valencia even served as the Republican capital for a year. Afterwards, there were years of recovery and a slow re-opening to tourists in the 1950s, followed by the democratic transition in 1975.*

And through all those ups and downs, the city of Valencia continued to live, grow, and flourish.

## THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

### EL PALLETER

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Perhaps the most striking character at the beginning of the 19th century was a simple firewood collector named *El Palleter*.

At the start of the Napoleonic Wars, Spain was allied with France. Together, they lost the Battle of Trafalgar. In 1807, French troops entered Spain. On May 2nd, 1808, an uprising broke out!



There are so many squares named May 2nd all over the country now! And do you remember that tragic Goya painting, *Los fusilamientos del tres de mayo*!



Our Valencia did not submit to the French. From 1808 to 1812, it was besieged and stormed three times. The Palacio del Real was destroyed in 1810. The towers of the Quarts have holes from the French bombings.

And all this Resistance started with one person, El Palleter!

On May 23, 1808, people gathered at the Plaza de la Compañía (Les Panses). Stagecoaches with the press came there, behind La Lonja. The news on everybody's mind was Ferdinand VII's abdication in Bayonne on May 6.

The crowd started to move towards the present Palau de la Generalitat. Those sitting in it could not decide whether to obey the new French king, Napoleon's brother José Bonaparte. He is still remembered as "Pepe-the-Bottle", *Pepe Botella*.

Amidst the uncertainty, a man named Vicente Doménech—stepped forward. He was a collector of splinters, *el palleter* in Valencian. Vicente took his red sash, tore it, and tied it to a stick, attaching images of Our Lady of the Underprivileged and Ferdinand VII. Then, he made a proclamation known today as *el Crit del Palleter*:

"I, Vicent Doménech, a simple lumberjack, declare war on Napoleon!

Long live Ferdinand VII and death to traitors!"

**VALENCIAN language**

In Valenciano:

*¡¡ Yo, Vicent Doménech, un pobre palleter,*

*li declare la guerra a Napoleó:*

*Vixca Ferran VII, i mort als traïdors!!*

It was a powerful call to arms. The battles for Valencia started and lasted four long years! A monument to El Palleter is located next to the Quarts Towers. Copies of it are in the Fine Arts Museum, and a painting by Sorolla captures that moment.

Número estimado de habitantes (en miles) <sup>37 38</sup>											
Ciudad	800	900	1000	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1750	1800
Barcelona			5		48	38	20	32	34	50	100
Burgos		9	18		21	27	8	11	10	9	10
Cádiz				1	2		2	5	40	60	70
Córdoba	160	200	450	60	60	40	35	31	31	34	40
Granada	15		26	60	150	100	70	69	70	70	70
Madrid					3		13	65	140	160	168
Málaga			17	15	40	40	42	11	30	36	49
Murcia	10		19		15		25	17	26	32	40
Sevilla	30	40	90	80	90	70	43	135	72	66	96
Toledo	25		37	35	42	45	32	80 <sup>39</sup>	23	20	18
Valencia			15	26	44	36	42	65	50	60	80
Valladolid			6		25		30	41	16	19	20
Zaragoza			17	21	15	20	20	25	30	35	43

POPULATION OF THE SPANISH CITIES DURING CENTURIES

VALENCIA WAS the 5th in 1300-1400, the 3rd-4th in 1500.

It is the 3rd, nowadays.

## MONUMENTS

Regarding monuments, I have quite a few favourites, especially those that show how uniquely Valencian we are. There's Glorieta Square, where huge ficus trees create an enchanting park that's over a hundred years old (digo-54). It's such a pretty spot! By the way, "*Glorieta*" means a tree-lined square, most often round.

Hidden in the bushes of Glorieta, you'll find a monument to the Spanish cape—a floating cloak paying homage to the "*Capa Española*." It's so quirky and fascinating that it makes me smile whenever I see it.



Then, there's the majestic statue of Jaime I in Parterre Park, located in Alfons el Magnánimo Square. It's probably the grandest monument in Valencia, showing Jaime I on his horse with that famous dragon helmet. This statue gives you a real sense of pride in our history.

## CERVANTES, THE SUN AND THE SPHINX

Another unusual monument I love is Don Quixote, holding a heavy bust of Cervantes. It can be found near the Ethnological Museum (digo-17). I love everything unusual, and this one really captures a sense of whimsy and heroism. It's



the work of Mariano Benlliure. We'll talk about this famous family later. What monuments do you like?

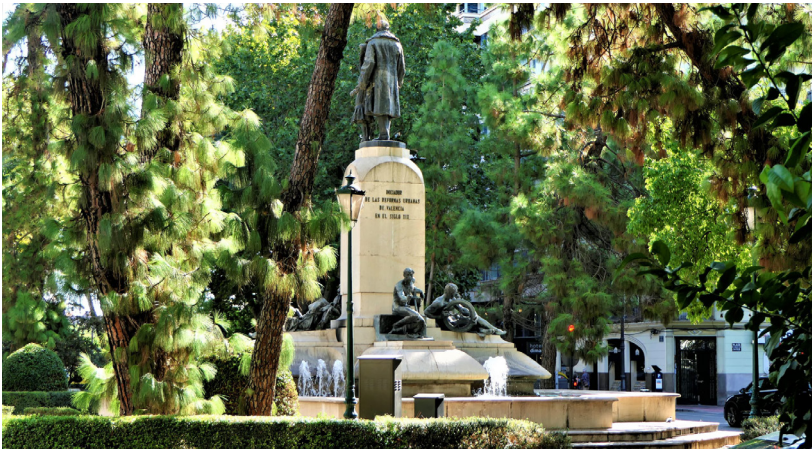
"The Sun and the Know-it-All". *El Homenaje al Libro*—a statue of a little man reading a book with a sun on his head. It's super adorable! The statue is right beyond the Turia, and it's a tribute to books and knowledge, which makes me love it even more.

My other favourite is located on the southern ring, at the intersection with the City's longest street, Sant Vicent Màrtir. There are strange intertwined letters on one side of the avenue. And on the other – the funniest sphinx in the world, looking more like a cute doggie.

## MARQUIS DE CAMPO

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

One monument I respect a lot is of "our" Marquis, the Marquis of Campo. He helped develop so much of Valencia, from railways to ports and even the gas system. He was also the youngest mayor of Valencia and received his title of Marquis from King Alfonso XII for helping to restore the monarchy.



The statue of the Marquis is large and elegant, first standing at City Hall before moving to the leafy boulevard of Marqués del Túria (DiVa 2).

The powerful figure of the Marquis is in the centre. Symbolic figures are on four sides. The young man with the flaming flower represents gasification, while the man with the wheel symbolises the railways. There's also a girl with a shipwreck—rather ironically meaning navigation—and a figure of Charity. It's an impressive monument to someone who did so much for our city.

I like the inscription: The initiator of urban reforms in Valencia in the XIX century. *Iniciador de las reformas urbanas de Valencia en el siglo XIX*. How often have I passed this place? A direct route to the centre from our apartment is just across the Marquès del Túria.

## MONUMENTAL TREES

Some of our trees are also monumental—*árboles monumentales*. I can't get enough of these beauties. They bring history to life and remind me how nature can stand as a witness to everything a city goes through. The ficus trees at Glorieta, the Royal Gardens, and the palms at the Botanical Gardens all stand as living monuments deeply rooted in Valencia's past and present.

There are some fantastic routes—*rutas*—to explore, and they make you feel like you're travelling through different parts of the world. You'll find trees from everywhere in places like the Gardens del Real, Monforte, and Alameda Boulevard. There's the unique Ginkgo Biloba with its quirky leaves, palm trees with sweet dates, and the Mulberry tree, or *morera*. And, of course, there's the *araar*, which the ancient Egyptians used for embalming.

My mom is absolutely obsessed with bottle trees, *árbol botella*. With their spiky trunks and chubby shapes, they look like they came straight out of a fairytale.



And my mom's favourites are the proud *araucarias*. They're originally from Chile, and in England, they call them monkey puzzle trees, which I think is kind of cute. She also loves it when the *jacarandas* bloom. When that bright purple bursts onto the streets, it's like magic.

Of course, we can't forget Valencia's famous ficus trees. They're so impressive that it seems like everyone wants to take a picture with them. For example, the ficus in Parterre Garden is massive—its trunk has a circumference of more than 13 meters, it stands 22 meters tall, and its crown gives shade to nearly 1,000 square meters. I mean, it's like standing under a giant green umbrella!



## STREETS ARE ALSO MONUMENTS

Our streets aren't just paths—they're like a giant book filled with stories of our past. I really love how we name so many of our streets after people who lived right here in the city. Sometimes, these men and women are remembered only by their neighbours for their good deeds, but their names live on, giving life to the places we walk through daily.

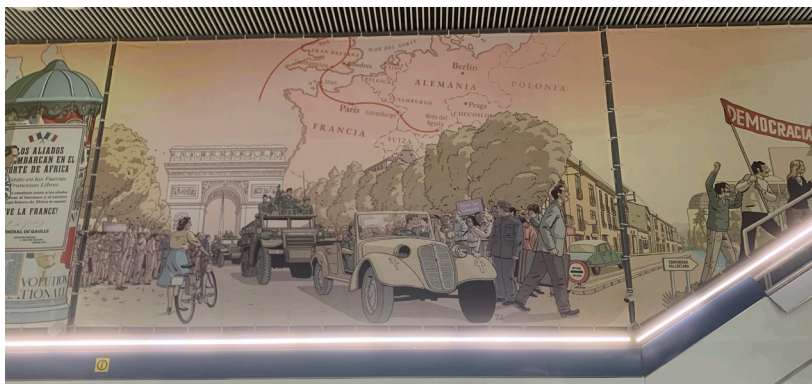
We live near a large avenue called *Avinguda de l'Institut Obrer de València*. These institutes provided education for workers during the Republican period—it's pretty cool to think about how much has changed and stayed the same. Nearby is a tiny *Carrer de les Brigades Internacionals*, named in honour of the international brigades that fought in the Civil War.



## AMADO GRANELL

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Valencia recently inaugurated Tram Line 10, making getting to the city centre much easier! One of the stops nearby is Amado Granell-Montolivet. When I walked around the station, I saw a large mural dedicated to the life of Amado Granell, a Republican general who fought against the Nazis and was among the first to enter liberated Paris. He's such a fascinating figure, and I'm glad Valencia remembers him.



## BLASCO IBAÑEZ AND JOAQUIN SOROLLA

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

We used to live on *Avenida Blasco Ibañez*, the widest and longest avenue in the newer part of the city. Vicente Blasco Ibañez is one of our literary heroes. If Sorolla is Valencia captured in colour and light, then Blasco Ibañez is Valencia in stories, words, and emotions.

They knew each other well and were friends. I remember reading this lovely passage by Blasco Ibañez, where he wrote about Sorolla:



“Many times, when I wandered along the beach, I met a young artist, only five years older than me. He worked under the bright sun, magically transferring the gold of light to his canvas, the invisible colour of the air... We worked together. He was working on his canvas; I was working on my novel—and there was one plot in front of us. So, our friendship was renewed (they had known each other since childhood). We were like brothers until death separated us. It was Joaquín Sorolla.”



Sorolla created more than 2,200 works, the main characters of which were Valencia and Valencians. His art is full of warmth and the brightness of the city. In 2023, we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death with exhibitions all over Spain.

Blasco Ibañez was one of the most famous Spanish-language writers. His novels are full of Valencia—like “*Cañas y Barro*”, “*La Barraca*”, “*Flor de Mayo*”, “*Entre naranjos*”. He was a champion of democratic thought and spent his last years in exile in France. I want to visit his tomb, designed by another genius, Mariano Benlliure, at the *Cementeri General de València*.

I saw the movie *Blood and Sand*, which is based on one of Blasco Ibañez’s novels, and it’s funny how some of the storylines and settings are still so connected to what we see in Valencia today. Sharon Stone played one of the main characters. How cool is that?

## DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

### DISTRICTS – DISTRITOS

#### MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

Valencia has many different districts, each with its own vibe and personality. They all tell stories about the city and its history.

Valencia has 19 districts, *distritos*, each divided into smaller neighbourhoods or *barrios*. Our DiVa map shows all of them. We live in Quatre Carreres—Four Roads. I love the charm of the name, even if we can't tell which four roads it refers to anymore!





When we head downtown, we visit Ciutat Vella, the Old Town. I adore wandering through L'Eixample, full of beautiful buildings, and then sometimes continuing to Ruzafa, which is always lively.

### **MUSEUMS and exhibitions**

El Carmen is our favourite in the Old Town, especially with its bars, nightclubs, and exhibitions. The old monastery's Cultural Centre (CCCC) is a lovely spot.

And then there's the coast—who doesn't love the beach? Camins al Grau (Roads to the Port) and Poblats Marítims (Sea Villages) have cool names and lots to explore.

You also mentioned the three districts across the river. Campanar has the Bioparc and the New Centre; its name is like hearing bells ring.



La Saïdia has a lovely Arabic touch. It is named after Abú Zayd, who helped conquer Valencia. I especially love this area's del Real/Viveros Park and Marxalenes Park.

And there's El Pla del Real, where you'll find the Monforte and the memories of the lost Palacio del Real.





## **BARRIOS. BLOCKS**

Barrios? Oh, yes! Ruzafa, or Russafa, is part of the Eixample, the first expansion of the Old Town. Unlike Ruzafa, the Eixample has that neat grid layout, almost like Manhattan. Plus, those octagonal corners at the intersections are so pretty.

Extramurs (Outside the Walls) is another district worth mentioning—it's where the Botanical Garden and train terminals are. There's also Arrancapins, home to the famous Red House.



And then there's the Old Town barrios: La Seu, La Xerea, El Carmen, El Pilar, El Mercat, and San Francesc. La Seu, the oldest and the Cathedral's home, is the city's heart. The Basilica, the Generalitat and the Diputació of Valencia - all are here in La Seu.

Another famous Barrio is the Gran Vía, part of L'Eixample. La Petxina is in Extramurs, and Morvedre and Trinitat in Saidia are right next to the Turia Gardens.

Did you know that the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC) is actually the name of a barrio? I just found that out myself!

## BEACHES AND PARKS

### BEACHES, BARS AND NATURE. NORTH AND SOUTH

Let's talk about some of the best tourist spots outside the centre: the Sea Villages and the Southern Villages.

In Poblats Marítims or the Sea Villages, you'll find the most incredible nightlife in El Cabanyal and El Canyameler. It's full of cute cafés with live music and little neighbourhoods with adorable houses. Passeig de Neptú is basically a food lover's paradise. Hemingway's favourite restaurant, La Pepica, is here! Then there's El Paseo Marítimo, a beautiful boardwalk right along the sea.



I love the fountain boat on the Paseo with all those wind names in Valenciano! Levant, Llebeig, Migdia—so poetic.

### Around the city WITH KIDS

Valencia's main tourist beaches are in Malvarrosa. They're wide, sandy, and have such fine, soft sand—perfect for a day out with kids or just relaxing. It's always full of people playing volleyball, and everyone seems to have the best time.

Then there's Natzaret, which is becoming a trendy area near the port.



### Out of Town WITH KIDS

The Southern Villages are just as amazing! Pobles del Sud is close to the centre, and you can get there quickly by car, bus, or bike. It's all about beaches, Albufera Lake, forests, and dunes.

There are these fabulous wood-decked paths over swamps, and the sunsets over Albufera are magical—you'll see people going there by the hundreds just to watch! I often bike there myself. First, I pass Pinedo, which has beaches and cute restaurants by the sea. Then, El Saler, where the beaches are tucked into the dunes and feel super private, even in summer. And, of course, El Palmar, right on Albufera, which is where Paella was born!



### PARKS. MONTFORTE. LIONS SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

You mentioned the Montfort Garden—what's it like?

*Viveros / Del Real* sometimes overshadow *Jardín de Montforte* (digo-28), but it's the city's most classic garden. Its sculptures and exotic plants remind me of the Luxembourg Gardens or the Tuileries in Paris.

Montforte is described on *jardins.valencia.es* as “a neoclassical garden, ideal for walking and relaxing, full of beauty and nature.” They were created not too long ago, in the 1850s. Montforte was commissioned by Juan Bautista Romero, Marqués de San Juan, and designed by the Valencian architect Sebastián Monleón Estellés. Right at the entrance, lions in the Patio de los Leones greet you. Have you ever noticed them?



Oh, definitely! I saw similar ones in Madrid, at the Cortes building! And somewhere else...

Yes, the first versions are called the “Medici Lions.” They’re in Florence, in Loggia. Sculptor José Bellver Collazos made these lions for the Parliament in Madrid, but they wanted larger ones, so they ended up in Montforte.

**MORE PARKS, GARDENS, FORESTS.  
ZOO. CENTRAL, CABECERA, POLIFILO,  
BENICALAP, CANYADA**

I checked *jardins.valencia.es*, and wow, there are so many gardens! Of course, the Gardens of Turia are the biggest, longest, and definitely the most beautiful.

We’ve talked a lot about Viveros / del Real, and of course, we love going to the woods of El Saler or Albufera. But what else?



## Around the city WITH KIDS

The *Parque de Benicalap* is super popular, probably because of the fantastic tropical pool. It's also close to *Artista Fallero*, where you can visit the Fallas Museum before a relaxing walk.

Central Park took forever to build, but now it's stunning! It's a green paradise right in the middle of the city, with all sorts of different plants, fountains, and old warehouse buildings. It also has an adorable playground.

Another awesome spot for kids is *Parque de Cabecera*, at the other end of the Turia. This park is where the river meets the city, and it has ponds, small hills, and vast green spaces—it's really picturesque.

And then, of course, there's Bioparc—Valencia's zoo! Lemurs walk around with people, and you can watch eagles soar right over your head during the shows. I remember a giraffe almost reaching me when I was little—its snout was massive!

Then there's *Jardín de Polífilo*, probably the most poetic garden ever. It's named after a book from 1467 by Francesco Colonna called *El Sueño del Polífilio* or *The Dream of Polyphilus*. In Latin, it's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, like “A Dream Struggle With Love for Everything.” In Greek, your name, Polia, polloi, means “many things”. The garden has areas with names like “The Square of the Gates of Destiny” and “The Island of Cythera.” Pretty dreamy, right?

Another place I love is Parque de la Granja, near the city's edge at CV-35 in Burjassot—it has a mini train track! There's also Area Recreativa in Manises, and if you cross the Turia, you'll reach the Mirador de la Reina, which has this massive forest behind it. You could seriously get lost there, and you might even find mushrooms in the fall! It's also reachable from La Canyada.



## FAMOUS PEOPLE OF VALENCIA

### CELEBRITIES. OUR TOP 10.

#### Valencian CELEBRITIES

Polly, whom would you name as the top Valencian celebrities?

I recently asked my mother to do it. This is whom she listed, and Dad and I agreed.

I will only add some short epithets, which I have taken from the website “150 famous Valencians” of *Las Provincias*. LP is our leading newspaper, founded by the Marquès de Campo.

San Vicente Ferrer, patron saint of the City, XIV-XV century.

Ausiàs March, poet, XV c.

Joanot Martorell, author, XV c.

Alejandro VI, Rodrigo de Borja / Borgia. The Pope, XV-XVI cc.

Marqués de Campo, José Campo Pérez, entrepreneur, mayor, XIX century.

“Changed Valencia [for the better] and opened it to the world.”

Joaquín Sorolla Bastida, artist, XIX-XX cc.

“The deepest colours, between the canvas and the soul.”

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, writer, journalist, Republican politician, XIX-XX cc.



“An undisputed genius.”

Luis García Berlanga, director, XX-XXI cc. “Breakthrough into Freedom”.

Rita Barberá Nolla, politician, mayor, XX-XXI cc.

“The heart of Valencia at the turn of the century”.

Santiago Calatrava Valls, architect, XXI-XXIII cc....

“The Swiss from Benimamet”.

You are right. Most Valencians would start their lists with them, although the last two will be hotly debated. Recently, there was a covert attempt to rename the Bridge of Flowers into Rita Barberá Bridge...

Calatrava, who brought Valencia to the XXIII century, is often criticised for the high cost of his projects. However, his City of Arts and Sciences immediately transformed Valencia into a modern, futuristic city. Films about the future are often shot there.

## **ANOTHER TOP LIST: 23 VALENCIANO/AS.**

### **Valencian CELEBRITIES**

#### **VALENCIAN language**

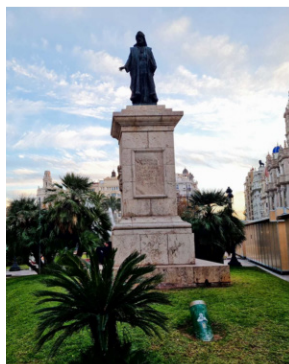
There must be more than ten in a city full of great personalities like Valencia! I've looked at two sites,

“150 Valencians” and <https://www.valencianot.com>.

I then made a further list of 23 celebrities, past and present. Here they are:

San Valero and San Vicente Mártir. Saints. IV century.

Francesc de Vinatea, Valencian rights activist. XIII c.



Sor Isabel de Villena, the first writer in Valenciano, abbess. XV c.

Luis de Santangel, financier of the voyage of Columbus. XV c.

Joan de Joanes, artist. XVI c.

Juan Luis Vives, philosopher and humanist. "Valencian Erasmus". XVI c.

Antonio José Cavanilles y Palop, botanist. XVIII c.

Vicente Martín y Soler, a composer who became famous even in Russia. XVIII c.

José Peris y Valero, politician and journalist. XIX c. "The leader of progressives and a man of action."

Brothers Jose and Mariano Benlliure. An artist and sculptor from a famous artistic family. XIX-XX cc. "Epitome of the XIX century". "The Humble Bricklayer", "Picapedrer".

Tomás Trénor y Palavicino, Marqués del Turia, entrepreneur, organiser of the 1909 Exhibition. XIX-XX cc. "To sacrifice our [Valencian] glory for the whole of Spain."

Francisco Javier Goerlich, XX c. The leading architect of the City. He created half of the Ayuntamiento Square, and today's outlook is of the central part of the city.

Concha Piquer is a folk singer and style copla. XX c. "The top of Copla".

Vicent Andrés Estellés, poet, journalist. XX c. "The poetry of [simple] life."

Nino Bravo, singer, XX c. "From phonogram to America".

Antonio Ferrandis Monrabal, actor. XX c. "Not just a cute fisherman."

Joan Genovés. A fighter against dictatorship. The artist of "little people". "Taking Risk through Art" - El Arte comprometido. XX-XXI cc.



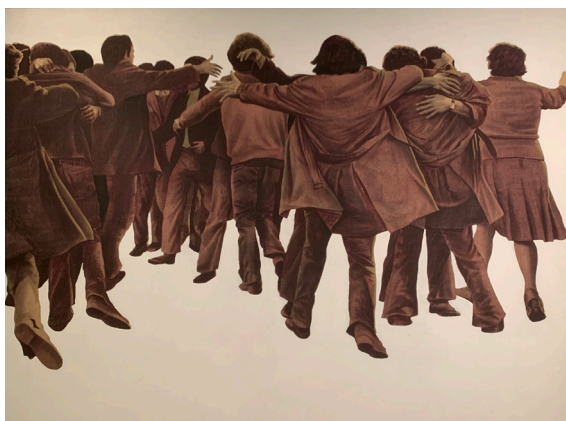
Isabel Clara Simó, writer in Valenciano. XX-XXI cc.

Quique Dacosta, XX-XXI cc. "The chef who touched the stars."

El Soro, Visente Ruiz, matador. XX-XXI cc. "A Revolutionary with Banderillas".

Roberto Soldado Rillo, a football player. XX-XXI cc.

We've talked about 33 amazing people, just a third of a hundred out of the thousands of incredible citizens who deserve the spotlight. Seriously, there are so many, especially when it comes to artists and sculptors!



## ARTISTS OVER 600 YEARS – LLADRÓ

### Valencian CELEBRITIES

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

In the spring of 2023, the Lladró Art Collection exhibition at the Palace of Communications was terrific. The collection is crazy rich—it literally covers *half a millennium* of art! I decided to write down the artists and sculptors associated with Valencia. Some of these names weren't even in the exhibition, but they are still important.

If you want to sound like a real art connoisseur regarding Valencian art, you should go through this list!

## GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE

Joan Reixach (1431-1486, worked in Valencia).

Vicent Macip (València, 1475 – 1550).

Joan de Joanes (Valencia 1505 – Bocairent 1579). Our Botticelli.

## BAROQUE – ROCOCO – CARAVAGGIO Followers

José de Ribeira (Xàtiva 1592 – Napoli 1652).

Joan Ribalta (Madrid 1596 – València 1628). —————

Crisóstomo Martínez Sorlí (Valencia 1638 – Antwerp 1694).

Jerónimo Jacinto de Espinosa (Cocentania 1600 – València 1667).

## CLASSICISM, ROMANTICISM AND REALISM

José Camarón Bonanat (Segorbe 1731 – València 1803).

Vicente López Portaña (València, 1772 – Madrid, 1850).

Antonio Cortina Farinós (Almàssera, 1841 – Madrid 1890).





## IMPRESSIONISM AND MODERNISM

Joaquín Sorolla Bastida (València 1863-Cercedilla 1923).

Mariano Benlliure Gil (València 1862 – Madrid 1947).

Ignacio Pinazo Camarlench (València 1849 – Godella 1916).

Cecilio Pla Gallardo (València 1860 – Madrid 1934).

José Mongrell Torrent (València 1870 – Barcelona 1937).

Antonio Fillol Granell (València 1870 – Castelnovi, 1931).

Julio Vila Prades (València 1873 – Barcelona 1930).

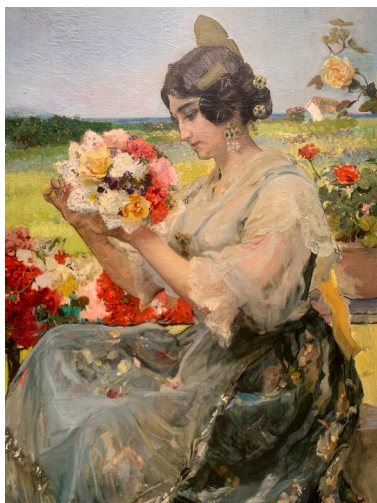
Juan Bautista Porcar Ripollés (Castello de la Plana, 1889-1974).

José Segrelles Albert (Albaida 1885 – 1969).

## MODERNITY

Joan Genovés (València 1930 – Madrid 2020).

Pepe Gimeno (València 1951 -).



## TRADITIONS AND FESTIVALS

### HOLIDAYS throughout the year

Our rich history is evident in everything, from monuments, street names, and barrios to the amazing graffiti around the city.

And don't even get me started on our traditions and all the holidays we have—our *fiestas* are honestly the best!

We all know about the most important one, *Fallas*. But which other *fiestas* are worth checking out?

### A YEAR IN HOLIDAYS

Here's a quick rundown of some of my favourite holidays throughout the year.

*January 5-6* – It's all about the *Three Kings* or the *Magi*. They bring gifts for the kids, and it's such a joyful time! The *cavalcades of the kings* are seriously magical—they come on camels and horseback, parade through all the towns and cities in Valencia, and there's music, gifts, and candy for the kids. So cute!

*January 17* is the *Feast of San Antonio Abad, the patron saint of animals*. On this day, people bring all sorts of animals—donkeys, horses, dogs, and even turtles—to the streets to be blessed. It's adorable.

*January 22* – This is *St. Vicente the Martyr's Day*, with the most beautiful ceremony in the centre of Valencia.

Then, in *February*, we have *Carnival (Carnestoltes)*! The costumes are so creative, and it's always fun to see what people come up with.

And, of course, there's *Fallas*, which take over all of March. The main events happen from March 17 to 20.



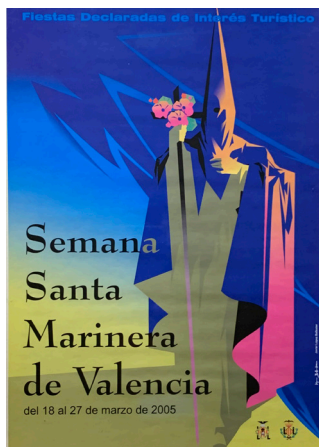
Our fireworks are called *Nits de Focs*, or *Nights of Fire*, which fits perfectly. The big one is on the night of March 18<sup>th</sup>, and they've been holding it near the Palace of Arts in CAC since 2023. It's so impressive!

Then comes *Easter*, which is either in *April or May*. *Semana Santa* (*Holy Week*) is a solemn time with beautiful processions. People stroll through the streets in tall caps representing different *Cofradías* (or religious brotherhoods). The *Semana Santa Marinera* procession is a must-see in the port area. And there's even a museum about it (DiVa-11)!

On *Easter Sunday*, we make delicious *Monas*, which are Easter cakes. Earlier, people used to fly hexagonal, bright kites called *Caxirulos*. Nowadays, we have a *Kite Festival* (*Cometas*) in May, which is always a blast.

The second Monday after Easter is dedicated to *St. Vicente Ferrer* (a strange numeral: *lunes infraoctavo*). There's this lovely tradition where kids tell miracle stories (*Els Milacres*) about his deeds from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One of the classic stories always involves *the miracle with the handkerchief* (*mocadoret*).

The second Sunday in May is when we have the *Transfer of the Geperudeta*, where the statue of *Our Lady of the Forsaken* (the Little Hunchback) is brought from her basilica to the Cathedral. It's a very solemn and touching procession and means so much to us Valencians.



Then there's *Corpus Christi* ("The Body of Christ"), celebrated since 1355, usually around May or June, about 60 days after Easter. The whole thing is filled with so much joy—cavalcades, dancing in the streets, and these huge, decorated carts called *Rocas* carrying religious scenes. There are even little street performances called *Mysterias*, and people pour water on passers-by from balconies—it's called *La Poalà*.

And oh, you can't miss the *Night of St. John* (*La Noche de San Juan*), which is on June 23-24. It's so fun! We light bonfires on the beaches, swim, and dance—definitely one of my favourite celebrations.

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

If you missed *Fallas*, you should head to Alicante between June 20 and 24 for their version, *Las Hogueras de Sant Joan*. It's their most important holiday, and it's like *Fallas* all over again!

### BATTLE OF FLOWERS. ALAMEDA

#### Around the city WITH KIDS

One of the most incredible events in July is the *Battle of Flowers* (*la Batalla de Flores*). It's always held on the last Sunday of the month, and you should totally go to *the Flowers Bridge* or *Alameda Boulevard* (digo-29) to check it out.

Since the 18th century, the boulevard *Alameda / Albereda* has been a popular place for well-to-do Valencians to walk and ride. It's lined with colossal fountain vases, some monuments, giant ficus trees, and elegant blue-roofed pavilions.

*Baron de Cortés* introduced the *Battle of Flowers* way back in 1881. So, here's how it works: themed carts (*carrozas*) pulled by gorgeous horses are driven to the boulevard, and the ladies and gentlemen riding on them are dressed to the nines with



tennis rackets in hand. Why tennis rackets, you ask? Well, they use them to bat away the flowers that people throw at them—*marigolds* (clavelones), to be exact. Literally, a million marigolds fly through the air, forming this elegant orange carpet that the horses walk on slowly.

The *Battle of Flowers* is part of the *Great Feria of Valencia* (*La Gran Feria de València*), and the whole month of July is filled with concerts, fairs, and even bullfights—though I'm personally not into that.

Things get super messy in August with *La Tomatina* in *Bun-yol*, just an hour's drive from the city. It's the famous *battle of tomatoes*. Honestly, after going once, I couldn't even look at tomatoes for like two years...





*From July to September, the Gardens of Turia near the Palace of Music host many jazz festivals and movie screenings, which have a great vibe.*

In August, you should head to *Pinedo* for the *Corregudes de Joies*, local horse races.

There are music festivals and modern music concerts in *Viveros* and *Turia Gardens* on the *CAC ponds*, too.



## **MOROS and CHRISTIANS**

*Moros y Cristianos fiesta* is a spectacular sight. This celebration happens all along the coast, and the costumes for the two “armies” are excellent. In Valencia, these processions usually take place around October 9<sup>th</sup>.

## Out of Town WITH KIDS

In Dénia, *Moros y Cristianos* happens in mid-August, and the grand parade is on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, you should definitely check it out in Alcoy—it's cool because they represent all three religions there.

## OCTOBER 9 – ANNIVERSARY OF THE RECONQUEST OF VALENCIA

Our biggest holiday is *October 9<sup>th</sup>*, celebrating the day Valencia was reconquered in 1238. Starting on the 4<sup>th</sup>, palaces that are usually closed to the public open their doors. This is a great time to visit the *Borja Palace* and the *Generalitat* building.

*October 9<sup>th</sup>* is also *Saint Dionysus' Day* (*Sant Donis*), like our version of Valentine's Day. It's a tradition to give women marzipan wrapped in a *mocadora* (a napkin or a scarf), with the knot secured by a ring. So romantic, right?



## CATALINETS AND NICOLAYETS

### Around the city WITH KIDS

School holidays here have their own Valencian twist, too. *St. Katherine's Day* (*Santa Catalina*) is on November 25<sup>th</sup>, and *St. Nicholas* is on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Girls celebrating their saint are called *Les Catalinetes*, and boys are *Les Nicolayets*. We have all kinds of events around these dates.

*Santa Lucia's Day*, the *Saint of the Light*, is on December 13<sup>th</sup>—with lots of music and candles.

And then there's Christmas, with all the beautiful *Beléns* (nativity scenes).

**It feels like the whole year is one big holiday.**

**When does anyone actually work here?**

Haha, I know, right? It's true—every town, even every barrio, has its local fiestas! But we definitely find time to work, trust me!



## ARCHITECTURE OF THE 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> CENTURIES

### LO RAT PENAT AND RENAIXENÇA

We were talking about traditions; two important organisations—the *Lo Rat Penat Society* and the *Las Provincias* newspaper—are the primary keepers of those traditions.

The leading newspaper, *Las Provincias*, was started by *Marqués de Campo*, who I've mentioned before. The *Bat Society*, or *Lo Rat Penat*, was founded in 1878 and was initially named "Lovers of the Valencian Glories" (*Amadors de les Glòries Valencianes*).



### VALENCIAN language Valencian CELEBRITIES

*Constantí Llombart*, *Teodoro Llorente*, and *Jacinto Verdaguer* founded the *Renaixença* movement, which was about bringing back the Valencian language and literature, which had become somewhat forgotten by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *Lo Rat Penat* (The Bat) Society played a huge role in making this happen.



### BUILDINGS THROUGH THE AGES –

#### A MAGNITUDE OF STYLES of 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

And now, from books and traditions, let's go back to architecture. There are so many different styles of buildings here—it's kind of overwhelming, right? So, let's try to make some sense of it.

*18<sup>th</sup> Century – Baroque and Rococo.* Think of the *Palace of the Marquès of Two Waters (Dos Aguas, digo-60)*.



## VIVA VALENCIA! ¡VISCA VALENCIA!



End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century – *Academic Baroque (Academicismo)*. A good example is the *Palace of Justice (Palau de Justícia)*, originally the Royal Customs House, 1758 (digo-55). It's right by *Glorieta* with those giant ficus trees.



19<sup>th</sup> Century – *Neoclassical Style*. We've got the *Cervelló Palace* (near the *Palace of Justice*, digo-49.2). And then there's our *City Hall*, which was called *Casa Consistorial* (digo-1+2). It was built between 1758 and 1930, so it's this mix of different styles—*Neoclassicism*, *Neobarocco*, and *Neo-Renaissance*.

It has the most famous balcony in the city, by the way. If you're the *Falla Major*, that's where you'll be!



Another neoclassical example is the *Bullring (La Plaza de Toros)*, digo-6). Its *Doric columns* evoke images of ancient Roman arenas, such as the *Colosseum* or the one in Nîmes. However, the Bullring is one of Europe's biggest arenas, accommodating almost 13,000 people!

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

The *Museum of the History of Valencia* is another example of a neoclassical style.





Oh yeah, isn't that the one in an underground water cistern from 1850? Those elegant vaults are so cool.

Yes, exactly! It's pretty unique.

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought us *eclecticism*, a mix of styles. A very exotic Neo-Byzantine building is on Corona Street, next to the *Prehistoric Museum*. If you ever get to go inside, you're lucky—it's the chapel of *la Beneficencia* (digo-17), originally an orphanage set up by the *Marquès de Campo*.



## MODERNISM

Modernism was the main style from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. You can find *Modernismo Walks* (*Rutas Modernistas*) in many cities in *La Valenciana* and *Catalonia*. It's probably the most elegant, artistic, and picturesque style of the past 200 years. It's known as *Art Nouveau*, *Secession*, or *Liberty* in other countries.

I wish they still built things like this now! Valencia has many modernist buildings, not just the *North Rail Terminal* and the two markets (*Central* and *Colón*), which people always talk about.

The *North Rail Terminal* (*Estación del Norte*, digo-7) was finished in 1917, and it's seriously adorable—like a toy! You have to see the *Mosaic Hall*. It's filled with Valencian ceramics, tiles, and cladding, with bright colours—green, red, orange, blue. There are also scenes from Valencian life, like the *Albufera* huts and a Valencian woman with flowers. The decorations are just everywhere, on the walls and the ceilings.



It's a perfect example of *Modernism*, where they focused on every detail, no matter how tiny.

## AROUND THE AYUNTAMIENTO

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

Almost all the City Hall Square buildings are modernist (Ayuntamiento, digo-1). The Post Office, now called the *Palacio de Comunicaciones*, really stands out. It looks like a fairy-tale castle from the outside, but the giant dome made of colourful glass is just amazing inside.

*Casa Noguera* is on the square, with its huge panoramic balcony and neo-Gothic details. Down the street, called Barques, is the Hotel Reina Victoria. It's so cool to think that this beautiful place stands where poor fishermen's houses used to be.

What I really love are the corners and spires of these buildings. The Reina Victoria even has an elegant fan above the upper balcony. It was one of the oldest hotels in the city, and regulars at its café included none other than Federico García Lorca and Ernest Hemingway!

Look at the red tower of the Bank of Valencia—it's covered



in exotic lace-like patterns. Even though it was built in 1947, long after the modernist era ended, the architect wanted to bring back that beautiful style.

Another building I love is Edificio Suay on Calle Correos 1. It has semicircular balconies connecting its two wings and Neo-Gothic battlements on the roof. It's extra special in the best way!



When we get to Queen Square, we can't miss the Monforte building—it's on the corner of San Vicente Street.

If you're into Modernismo, stroll along La Paz from Queen Square. All those rounded corners and house details are so charming. Some look like little castle towers, and others have glazed balconies. Keep an eye out for houses at Nos 21, 31, 32, 36, and 42!

Now, let's go to the Colón market! It's full of restaurants and cafes today, but it was built in 1926. The bright red bricks make it eye-catching, and the tiles with plant motifs pop out beautifully against the red background.

The Colón Market is at the beginning of Ensanche, the "Extension" district that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Almost all of the buildings here are in the fabulous modernist style. You'll

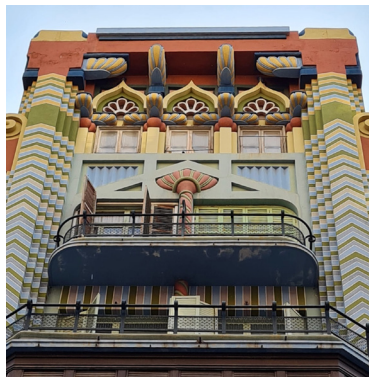
love just wandering around and admiring them.

Oh, and there's one more building worth mentioning! It mixes Modernismo and Neo-Gothic styles: the Palau de l'Exposició, built for the 1909 Exhibition (DiVa-6). It's in a quieter part of the city, past the Turia River and near del Real Gardens.

Next to it is Nuevo Asilo de Lactancia, one of the few spas left in the city. It was also built as a daycare for workers' children for the 1909 Exhibition.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century: ART DECO

We've already seen the Bullring, but if you walk around some of the neighbouring streets, you'll spot an Art Deco beauty on Castelló Street at number 20. It's the Casa Judía, or "Jewish House," built in 1930, and it's so fantastic! The design combines the Star of David with Egyptian and Hindu elements—it's super exotic.



Ayuntamiento Square is another must for Art Deco lovers. There's the cute little Rialto Cinema, and right next to it is the Ateneo Mercantil de Valencia. Built in 1879, it has the motto "Bring culture to commerce"—how cool is that?

### MUSEUMS and exhibitions

One of the later examples of Art Deco is the *Bombas Gens* factory on Avenida Burjassot, now a centre for contemporary art. It's all about "The Love of Art." Inside the Bombas Gens complex is Ricard



Camarena, one of the city's top restaurants. And the lovely *Marx-alenes* Park is close by, so you can mix a walk in the greenery with seeing some pretty strange art exhibits!

### **DRIER 20<sup>th</sup> Century: RATIONALISM**

Sadly, after the magic of Modernism and Art Deco, we moved into the more restrained “contemporary” styles.



The last big moment was the *Finca Roja* (the Red House), built in 1933 in the Arrancapins neighbourhood. This massive fortress, which takes up an entire block, has impressive red brick walls, green roofs, and little towers.

The whole idea behind Finca Roja was to create a new type of urban living space. The apartments had shared courtyards, gardens, and common spaces for residents to meet or for kids to play. It's like an early version of the co-living and co-working we're so used to now.

After that, we saw an era of Rationalism that influenced Valencia's urban look for the next seventy years until Calatrava's masterpieces came along.

The “*Racionalismo Valenciano*” style showed up in different ways. You can see Edificio Alonso near the Northern Train Terminal, at the corner of Xàtiva and Sant Vicente streets, with rounded balconies and lots of glass.

Then, on the way to Malva-Rosa Beach, we pass these stark, cubist buildings called Naked Architecture. My sister Svetlana nicknamed this area “Silent Hill” because it's so dull and ominous. The tiny windows and minimalistic design—it's social housing, but at least it's near the beach!



## MUSEUMS and exhibitions

We also have a “concrete monolith” called the MuVIM Museum in the city centre. Its primary charm lies in its representation of the new minimalist architectural style.

You can also find a lot of modern architecture in what used to be the city’s outskirts. For example, near the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC), there’s the Higher Conservatory. And in the port area, the *Veles e Vents* building reminds me of a giant cruise ship.

There’s also an older building by the Port, the *Edificio del Reloj*, built in 1916. It has a clock tower in the Modernist style, and right next to it are Modernist warehouses called the Tinglados.



Norman Foster, the famous architect, also left his mark on Valencia. He designed the Bridge of Arts over the Turia River and the Congress Palace, nicknamed *El Palacio de la Luz*, “the Palace of Light.” You can find it near the “Big Blue Lady of Elche”, or *Dama Ibérica*, on Avenida Corts Valencianes. The city’s tallest building, the Melià Hotel, is not far from there.

## THE GARDENS OF TURIA SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

Let’s head over to the Gardens of Turia. In 1987, the Music Palace marked the beginning of what would eventually lead to the glory of Calatrava’s City of Arts and Sciences. But the real beginning of Valencia’s modern transformation was the Gardens of Turia.

The gardens are an incredible example of architecture that shapes the whole city. They are like a long green oasis running





right through the middle of Valencia. The gardens are “a place that unites and directs the city.”

And one day, when the gardens stretch all the way to the sea, they'll create the best urban ensemble in Europe. The new extension will be called *el Parque de Desembocadura*—a park at the mouth of the river that's no longer there.

## VALENCIAN STYLE: MENINFOTISME

### VALENCIAN language

We have this thing called the Valencian attitude to life. It's all about mixing beauty with practicality.

Long live the spirit of Valencia! A belief in a bright future!

Haha, though we also have this word—“*meninfot*.” It's like saying, “I don't care,” but maybe a bit ruder.

Are you saying that *meninfotisme* is your philosophy? Come on, as a true Valenciana, you're definitely exaggerating. I know you care about our city.

Of course, I do. We all care about everything Valencian—our history and our culture.

I love our city's motto...

Visca Valencia!

*Vixca València!*

Long live Valencia!

## **PRACTICAL SECTION: TRANSPORT. CUISINE. SPORT**

### **THE PRACTICAL PART MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES**

So, let me finish with some practical tips for anyone visiting Valencia!

Our best guide is the DIGO map of the city centre. We borrowed it from Señor Juan A. Díez, known for his gorgeous web-site <http://www.jdiezarnal.com>. You can also find it on gifex.com. Oleg Krivobokov ([proret.foto@gmail.com](mailto:proret.foto@gmail.com)) helped a ton by improving the resolution, and then we added many comments about the must-see spots downtown.

The second important map is our DiVa, the Districts of Valencia. It helps you find your way much quicker. Both maps, Digo and DiVa, are at the beginning and end of the book.

Here's a little more info to make your visit to Valencia easier:



## PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES

Most people arrive in Valencia by air, and our airport is in Manises, the ceramics' capital. If someone's picking you up, you must ask them to take you through Manises along dels Tramvies Street. You'll pass by this fantastic park fence and a cute market, then reach the Tourist Centre—like this perfect symphony of white and blue tiles. It's really something!

The ceramic industry in Spain started in Manises during the Muslim period, and it's well worth visiting. Every little shop there feels like a pottery museum.

It's definitely cheaper to get to the city centre from Manises Airport using the metro. The station is right inside the airport. The red L3 line will take you to the centre, to Xàtiva, and from there, it goes to the northern parts of the city all the way to Alboraya. The green L5 line also passes through Xàtiva and goes to Malva-Rosa Beach. In 2023, a single ticket was €4.80.

Check out [emtvalencia.es](https://emtvalencia.es) and [metrovalencia.es](https://metrovalencia.es) for more info on fares because there are many different ticket options with discounts.

If you're taking the AVE high-speed train, you'll arrive at Joaquín Sorolla Train Terminal, which is pretty close to the North Station.

If you're driving, you'll probably use the AP-7 motorway, which runs along the coast, north to south. It's called the Autopista del Mediterrani, the Mediterranean Sea Highway. If you're coming from Madrid, you'll be on the A-3, the Autovía del Este.

Three main roads lead into the city centre from the highways: V-21 if you're coming from the North (Barcelona and Teruel), CV-35 from the North-east (Llíria), and V-31 if you're coming from the South (Alicante and Dénia).

The V-30 is also super helpful. We used to take it from the city's South side to our *Mas Camarena* college in the North. It's

great because it avoids all the city centre traffic and follows the new Turia riverbed.

## GETTING AROUND THE CITY

### SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS

Walking is always the best way to get around the city centre. It takes only about 30-40 minutes to walk from most of the suburbs to downtown, and it is lovely to walk through the Gardens of Turia.

Even better: bikes! You can rent one—check [valenbici.es](http://valenbici.es) for that. Valencia has 156 kilometres of bike lanes, so it's super bike-friendly.

Valencia is pretty tiny! My dad sometimes bikes around the entire city in the morning, and it only takes him about an hour—it's like 20 km.

Public transport here is also super convenient. We have the metro, trams, and buses. If you're visiting, you should get the València Tourist Card, valid for one, two, or three days. It's great because it covers transport from the airport to the centre, lets you visit the Southern Villages, and even allows you to go to Port Saplaya, which we call our "Little Venice." You can even use it to go to Sagunto!

Plus, it gets you free entry to some museums. For more info, check [visitvalencia.com](http://visitvalencia.com). Public transport is pretty cheap too—like €1.50 per bus ride, and even less if you use *EMTicket* or *SUMA* cards, which you can buy at any tobacco shop.

The metro has three zones, and tickets to even the farthest one (Zone 3) cost less than €5 in 2023. Make sure to check out some of the best metro stations! Alameda by Calatrava and the new Amado Granell-Montolivet station are on the 10th line.

If you're into clubbing, we also have night buses that reach the farthest parts of the city.





Taxis are also fairly cheap here. It shouldn't cost more than €15 to get from the centre to the outskirts, even late at night. You can book one at [pidetaxi.es](http://pidetaxi.es), and they take cards, too.



## RESTAURANTS AND CUISINE

Valencia is definitely the food capital of our region! Everyone has their taste, but as the Visit Valencia website says, “*Cada rincón es una sorpresa*”—basically, there's a surprise waiting in every corner of the city.

Here are some of the top spots for eating out. You've got Cabanyal and Malva-Rosa (DiVa-11) by the beach—especially along Passeig de Neptú by the sea. The Eixample area in the city centre is a little pricier (DiVa-2), but Russafa is more lively, affordable, and has many options.

There are also many great places along Alameda and the Gardens of Turia, mainly on the far side of the river (DiVa-5,6)—we call it the left bank. And if you're feeling adventurous,

head out to El Palmar and the Sea Villages (DiVa-19), where paella was born!

### MENU MUST-HAVES. SNACKS

Let me give you a quick rundown of some of the most popular dishes you'll see on menus here:

For starters, we have things like *pisto* (stewed veggies) and a bunch of dishes that include red peppers, like *esgarret*, *titaina*, and *espenca*. *Esgarret* is with cod, *titaina* has tuna, and *espenca* is all about fried veggies. Many of these come with garlic, parsley, or even nuts, so just ask if you have allergies!

*Buñuelos* or *croquetas* are like little fried patties, often filled with cod, ham, or even pumpkin. *Cocas* are tiny Valencian pizzas that can be savoury or sweet, and the most common toppings are tuna, tomato, and egg.

### SOUPS & BROTHS

My mom loves *puchero valenciano* in winter—a warm, cosy broth with stuffed cabbage leaves. Then there's *olla valenciana*, another hearty soup with meat, chorizo, and beans. And if you're in El Palmar, you must try *all-i-pebre*, which is basically eel with potatoes and pepper.

### RICE DISHES—PAELLA!!!

We can't talk about Valencian food without mentioning paella. It's so popular here, and we love it, especially when the rice gets a little crispy on the pan's edges.

You'll usually see *paella valenciana* or *paella de marisco* on the menu. The first has rabbit and chicken, and the second is about seafood like squid, shrimp, and mussels. There are also other rice dishes like *arroz negro* (which has cuttlefish and

is black), *arroz a banda* (separate rice with sepia slices and fish broth), and *arroz al horno* (oven-baked rice with pork or black pudding).

And then there's *fideuá*, which is similar to paella but made with vermicelli pasta instead of rice. If you see *caldoso* or *meloso* rice, those are more like brothy rice dishes, sometimes with beans.



We haven't even discussed seafood or meat dishes, but I know there's so much more! My mom is obsessed with cuttlefish and *sepia*.

## SWEETS

The most typical drink for desserts is *horchata* (made from tiger nuts and not dairy, just FYI). *Fartons* are these sweet breadsticks served with horchata, and then there are *churros* with hot chocolate, which are excellent.

If you want something more traditional, try *turrón*, a famous almond dessert from Jijona, Alicante. You can also try *coca de land*, which is basically sweet cake bread. *Mona de Pascua* is an Easter cake, and *toña* (also called *panquemao*) is like toasted sweet bread. *Almoixàvena* is an old-school Arabic dessert that is served only on Thursdays.

## LUNCH OR DINNER?

The meals here can be somewhat confusing if you're not used to them. We have *desayuno* in the morning, which is pretty much breakfast. Then we have *almuerzo*, which is like a second breakfast, and then *la comida*, the actual lunch served after 1 or 2 p.m. Some restaurants even close at 4 p.m. after lunch service.

In the evening, we might have a little snack called *la merienda*, and then there's *la cena*, or dinner, which starts around 7:30 or 8 p.m. But many places, especially pubs and tourist spots, stay open all day.

## DRINKS

Water is my go-to drink, but let's be honest: Valencia is known for its excellent wines and cava.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY—WINES & CAVA

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

If you're into wine, you have to check out the region around Utiel and Requena. This DOP is west of Valencia, along the A-3, and they make some of the best *cavas*, Spain's answer to champagne. Some of the best wineries are Dominio de la Vega, Chozas Carrascal, and Pago de Tharsys.

The region also produces incredible red wines, *tintos*, that are just as famous as Rioja or Ribera del Duero. Some bodegas that my parents would recommend are Rafael Cambra Dos, *Mestizaje*, Mala Vida, Hu-Ha, and Paradigma.

White wines mostly come from Alicante. The grapes used are Malvasia, Moscatel, Tardana, Verdil. Bodegas: Pasiego Las Suertas, Enrique Mendoza, Tharsys City

## BEER in MEASURES

Beer is also popular, especially on a hot day! Here in Valencia, we usually serve beer in small portions. A typical draft beer is called a *caña* (200 ml), while a *doble* is 330 ml. If you want something bigger, there's a *tanque* or a *pinta*; for a group, you can get a jug called a *jarra*.

For bottles, the small 200-ml one is called a *botellín* or *quinta*, while the bigger one (333 ml) is a *tercio*.

But enough about food and drinks, let's talk about sports and all the fun things to do around here!

## **SPORTS & RECREATION**

### **SPORT. CYCLING. WALKS**

Valencia is proud of its high quality of life, which is why it was voted the best city in the world for expats in 2022. There are so many things to do, and it's so affordable! Plus, the weather is always amazing, which makes it perfect for getting outdoors.

Valencia is full of people doing sports, and I'm not just talking about the marathon in December. Every weekend, the Gardens of Turia become this massive sports fest—you'll see crowds of people jogging, biking, and doing yoga or aerobics. Parents are always cheering on their kids at the football or rugby fields, which is so sweet.

Remember to be careful with your joints, especially when running! Running on soil or sand is much better than on tarmac paths.

We're also really into football and basketball, and if you head to Malva-Rosa Beach, you'll see people playing volleyball all the time.





## OUT-OF-TOWN ADVENTURES

### Trips OUT OF TOWN

If you're up for a walk, *senderismo* means hiking, and there are many great places to go! The main spots are the Gardens of Turia, the promenades along Malva-Rosa Beach, and the paths in Pinedo and El Saler.

For something a bit more adventurous, head out to the mountains. Some cool spots are the suspension bridges in Chulilla, the Roman aqueduct at Peña Cortada, and the three waterfalls in Anna. There's also the Water Route in Chelva, or if you're up for a challenge, try climbing Mondúver Mountain near Gandía—it's not that hard, and the views are incredible!

You could also hike Montgó or check out the Cova Tallada cave in Dénia.

As for cycling, we've already discussed the Turia Gardens and the bike paths throughout the city—they total 160 km!

## SWIMMING!

### Out of Town WITH KIDS

Speaking of water, I love swimming, especially in rivers.

We should go to the upper reaches of Turia or Júcar. Some great spots are Bugarra, Pedralba, and Chelva. We could also head to Pou Clar near Xàtiva, Ontinyent, or Montanejos in the Castellon mountains. Just remember that in summer, some of these places require tickets in advance.



## TOP VALENCIA = VALENCIA BONITA

### VALENCIA'S BEST SPOTS

Let's wrap this up with my quick recommendations for Valencia if you're short on time. You can find these in our guide, Valencia Bonita, and detailed Digo and DiVa maps!

I'd suggest you focus on three main areas: the historical centre, the futuristic and green Turia Gardens, and one of our two beach areas.

### THE CENTER—FOUR SQUARES

Valencia's centre is super cute and really easy to explore. There are four main squares you just have to check out. First, head to Plaza de la Reina (digo-39), where you'll find the Cathedral. See the Grail Cup, those unique Goya paintings, and the Musical Angels frescoes. And if you're up for it, climb El Micalet Bell Tower for some great views.

The second main square is just around the corner—Plaza de la Virgen (digo-38). Here, you'll see the Basilica of Our Lady of the Forsaken (with our beloved Little Hunchback statue), the Turia fountain, and the impressive Gothic Generalitat building.

Follow some winding little streets to the Market Square (*Plaza del Mercado*) from there. This is where you'll find the Silk Exchange (*La Lonja*), probably the prettiest Gothic building in Valencia (digo-64). Right across from it is the Central Market, which is super modern and totally worth a visit.

Nearby, you'll reach the fourth main square—*Plaza del Ayuntamiento*, where City Hall is located (digo-1+2). This square has a mix of different styles, all really cool. The City Hall itself has some historical exhibits from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the Post Office is pretty over-the-top and even hosts art exhibitions sometimes.

## TURIA AND THE CAC

Now, from history to the future! You've gotta take a walk around the City of Arts and Sciences—CAC. It feels like you're stepping into the future. You can even hop on a boat ride for a bit of fun. If you've got kids with you, don't miss the Fallas Museum and definitely get to Gulliver Park, which is like the coolest playground ever.

Of course, visiting the Oceanogràfic (aquarium) or the Bioparc (zoo) is always a good idea.

## ON THE BEACH...

When it's warm, take a bus, bike, tram, or car to one of the two beach areas.

The first option is *Las Arenas, Malva-Rosa, and Patacona*. These beaches are perfect for tourists. They have vast stretches of white sand and many great restaurants.

However, locals prefer the wilder beaches to the south, where the sand and dunes stretch for miles between *Pinedo and Cullera*. If you head down to Devesa, you can catch what might just be the best sunsets in the world at Albufera. And if you're in El Palmar, you'll be in the birthplace of paella! The best thing to do is mix some forest walks with beach time—swimming, sunbathing, and enjoying nature.

That's all for now.

We love you all, residents and visitors of Valencia!

Please write to us at [grishins@me.com](mailto:grishins@me.com) if you want to know more!

With love,  
George, Katherina and Paulina Grishin



## TOP OF VALENCIA = VALENCIA BONITA

### WHERE to go and visit if you have one day

V	VALENCIA	DG+DV
A	AYUNTAMIENTO	DG 1+2
L	LONJA DE SEDA	DG 64
E	EDUCATION	DV 10,12
N	NATURE	DG 25, 27, 28
C	CATHEDRAL	DG 39
I	IGLESIA	DG 33
A	ARTS	DG 26, 12
B	BASILICA	DG 38
O	OCEANOGRAFIC	DV 10, 4
N	NIGHTLIFE	DG 22, DV 11
I	INGLÉS	DG 6, 55
T	TRAIN STATION	DG 7
A	ALBUFERA	DV 11, 19

Our main two maps are – **DG / digo (Old City)** and - **DV / DiVa (All city districts)**

- V Valencia, La Valenciana. Three Valencias. What could be more beautiful?
- A Ayuntamiento. The Town Hall is on a beautiful square. Museum with exhibits from the Reconquista – 13<sup>th</sup> c.
- L Lonja. The Silk Exchange. The Gothic wonder of the 14th c.
- E Education. CAC and other fascinating city museums.
- N Nature – parks. Turia. Viveros / del Real. Montforte
- C The Cathedral of the Virgin Mary. Holy Chalice (Grail?). Goya. Musical angels. 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c.
- I Iglesia. Church of Saints Peter and Nicholas. “Sistine Chapel.” 15-18<sup>th</sup> c.
- A Art. Museum of Fine Arts, MuVIM, Museum of Modern Art. 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, c.
- B Basilica. The Hunchback – *Geperudeta*. The city's patroness. 18<sup>th</sup> c.
- O Oceanarium and Bioparc. Marine and land fauna.
- N Nightlife. Restaurants and nightclubs in Carmen and Cabanyal.
- I Shops – (El Corte) Inglés and the area around Colón Market. Round Square
- T Trains. North Station, Colón Market, and other modernist masterpieces. 19-20<sup>th</sup> c.
- A Out of town! Albufera Lake. El Saler and Pinedo beaches. Or Cabanyal

## MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

CENTRAL VALENCIA

THE PLAN OF THE OLD CITY

AUTHOR - Señor Juan A. Diez

digo or DG Map / Plan

Developed by Gifex / G. Grishin / O. Krivobokov





1. ***The most exciting places.***

20.2 Interesting places not marked on the map.

They are located near the place with the same number.

1. City Hall: ***Ajuntament de València*** La Casa Consistorial + Casa de Enseñanza. 1763-1930. Neo-classical, neo-baroque, neo-renaissance.
2. Municipal History Museum: ***Museo Histórico Municipal***
3. Communications Palace / Former Central Post Office ***Palau de les Comunicacions*** / El Edificio de Correos. 1915-1922. Eclectic architecture. Modernism.
4. The Main Theatre: Teatro Principal. 1774 - 1832, By Filippo Fontana. The first theatre in the city.
5. Bullfight Museum: Museo Taurino / Taurí. 1929. One of the largest and oldest in Spain.
6. Bullfight Arena: ***Plaza de Toros / Plaça de Bous***. 1859. Neo-classical / simple Doric style. Sebastián Monleón Estellés. One of the largest in Spain.
7. Train Station North: ***Estación del Norte*** / Estació del Nord. 1917. Modernism / Art Nouveau.
8. Church of St Catherine and St Augustine. Iglesia de Santa Catalina y San Agustín / Sant Agustí. XIII-XX c. Valencian Gothic.
9. Hospital for Poor Innocents: Hospital de los Pobres Inocentes. XV-XVIII c. Renaissance.
10. Hermitage of Santa Lucia: Ermita de Santa Lucía / Llúcia. 1276. 1511. XVIII c.. Neo-classical.
11. Silk Museum and College: ***Museo y Colegio del Arte Mayor de la Seda*** / l'Art Major de la Seda. Gremio de Velluters. 1494 – XVIII c.. Baroque. 1686 – College.

12. Museum of The Enlightenment and The Modernity of Valencia: **Museo Valenciano de la Ilustración y la Modernidad / MUVIM**. 2001. Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra.
13. Parish Church of Pilar: La iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Pilar y San Lorenzo. 1611. Baroque.
14. Parish Church of St Michael/St Sebastian: Parròquia de Sant Miquel i Sant Sebastià. 1726-1739. Valencian Baroque. Josep Cardona i Pertusa. José Padilla.
15. Quart Gates / Torres / **Portal de Quart** / Cuart. 1441-1460. Late Valencian military Gothic. Pere Bonfill, Francesc Baldomar y Pere Compte.
16. Botanic Gardens: Jardín Botánico de la Universidad de Valencia / Jardí Botànic. 1757. Gregorio Mayans. 1786. Vicente Alfonso Lorente. 1968.
17. Charity Cultural Centre / The Ethnological and Prehistoric Museums: Centre Cultural la Beneficència / **Museu Valencià d'Etnologia + Museu de Prehistòria de València**. Institució Alfons el Magnànim. 1841. 1876. Joaquín María Belda. 1995.
18. La Milagrosa: The old Orphanage of Marqués de Campo: Antiguo Asilo del Marqués de Campo. 1882, Gothic-inspired. José Camaña Laymon.
19. Valencian Museum of Modern Arts / IVAM: Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno / d'Art Modern / IVAM. 1989.
20. Benlliure House-Museum: Casa-Museo Benlliure. 1880. 1982. The romantic garden and house of one of Valencia's most famous artistic families.
- 20.2. St Joseph Bridge: **Puente de San José**. 1607. Jerónimo Negret. Dedicated to the Patron Saint of Fallas.
21. Holy Cross Parish Church: Parroquia de la Santísima Cruz. Former Convent of Carmen: Ex-Convento del Carmen 1343. 1555. 1655. Gótico, renacentista.

22. CCCC (Contemporary Culture Centre of Carmen: ***Centre del Carme Cultura Contemporània***). 2017.
- 22-2. Little Cats' House: La casita de los gatos.
23. Pineda Palace: Palacio de Pineda / Palau Pineda. 1728, Neoclassic.
24. Santa Monica Station and Wooden Bridge: Estación de Santa Mónica o del Puente de Madera / Pont de Fusta. 1892. 1957.
25. Turia Gardens / Park: ***Jardines del Turia*** / Jardí del Túria. 1986.
26. Fine Arts Museum and the St Pio V College: Museo de Bellas Artes / ***Museu de Belles Arts*** / El Colegio de San Pío V. The second largest in Spain. Building from 1683-1744. Juan Pérez Castiel.
27. Del Real / Viveros Gardens and the Natural History Museum: ***Jardines del Real / Viveros + Museo de Ciencias Naturales***. Remnants of the del Real Palace before 1810. Built in the XI century - 1560-1903. 27.2. Del Real Bridge: Puente del Real. 1332. 1599. 1966.
28. Montforte Gardens: ***Jardín de Montforte*** / L'Hort de Romero. 1849, and much older.
29. Alameda / Albereda Boulevard and the Flower Battle: Paseo de la Alameda / de l'Albereda / Batalla de Flores.
30. Serranos Gates / Towers: ***Torres de Serrano*** / Porta de Serrans, 1397. Genovese Gothic.
- 30.2 Serranos Bridge / Puente de Serranos. The most ancient of those, which still stands. 1349. 1518.
31. House of the Rocas, Easter and Corpus Christi carriages: Casa de las Rocas / Museo del Corpus de València. 1434.

32. Valldigna Gates / Portal de Valldigna. 1400, Valencian Gothic.
33. Church of / **Iglesia de San Nicolás de Bari y San Pedro. “The Valencian Sistine Chapel”**. 1242-1455 (Borja) – 1693: frescoes – Antonio Palomino / Dionis Vidal. Gothic – Baroque.
34. The Borja / Benicarló Palace: **Palacio de Benicarló / de los Borja**. The Seat of the Valencian Autonomy government. 1485, Valencian Gothic and Renaissance. Pere Compte.
35. The Baylia Palace: Palacio de Baylia / de la Batlia. The Seat of the Province of Valencia Government. XV-XVI c. – façade XIX c.
36. Marqués de la Scala Palace: Palacio del Marqués de la Scala. XVI-XVIII c. Valencian Gothic – Renaissance – Baroque.
37. Generalitat Palace: **Palau de la Generalitat**. Started in 1421. Golden Hall, 1534. Valencian Gothic with Renaissance additions.
38. The Royal Basilica of Our Lady of the Forsaken: **Real Basílica de Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados**. 1666, Baroque. The Geperudeta Sculpture from 1414.
- 38.2 Allegorical Fountain of Turia River: **La Fuente alegórica del río Turia**. 1976, Manuel Silvestre Montesinos.
39. Valencia Cathedral: **Catedral - La Seu de València. La Iglesia Catedral-Basílica Metropolitana de la Asunción de Nuestra Señora de Valencia**. Started in 1238–Romanesque-Valencian Gothic–Renaissance–Baroque – Neo-Classic. Chapel of the Holy Chalice: Capilla del Santo Cáliz, 1356-1369 (Holy Grail?). Frescoes of the Major Chapel: Bóveda del altar mayor de la catedral de Valencia. 1476. Paolo da San Leocadio,

- Francesco Pagano. Bell Tower Miguelete / Micalet. 1381-1425.
40. Archbishop's Palace: Palacio Arzobispal. 1946. Historical Baroque.
41. Almoina Archeological Centre: **el Centro Arqueológico de l'Almoina**. 2007.
42. Crypt of the Prison of San Vicente: Cripta de la cárcel de San Vicente Mártir. VI c., the Visigothic period.
43. The City Museum, the Palace of Marqués de Campo: Museo de la Ciudad / Ciutat / Palacio del Marqués de Campo. XVII c. – 1857.
44. El Almudín / L'Almodí. 1307-XVI c.
45. Escrivá Palace: Palacio de los Escrivá. XV-XVII c. Valencian Gothic.
46. Royal Monastery of the Holy Trinity: Real Monasterio de la Santísima Trinidad / Trinitat. 1490, Valencian Gothic, Baroque.
- 46.2. Trinity Bridge: Puente Trinidad. XV-XVI century.
47. St John of the Hospital Church: **Iglesia San Juan del Hospital** / Sant Joan de l'Hospital. 1238. The oldest church in Valencia belonged to the Order of Knights of the Hospital of St John, i.e. the Knights Hospitalier.
- 47.2 The Admiral's Baths: **Baños del Almirante**. Mudéjar style.
48. Church of St Thomas and St Philipp of Neri: Iglesia de Santo Tomas y San Felipe Neri. XVIII, Baroque. Design by Tomás Vicente Tosca.
49. The Convent of St Dominic: **Convento de Santo Domingo**. Capitanía General. La Capilla de los Reyes. 1239 - XIXth c. Valencian Gothic, Baroque.



- 49.2. Palace of the Counts of Cervellon: **Palacio de los Condes Cervellón**. 18<sup>th</sup> century. Neoclassic. The Municipal Archive of Valencia: El Archivo Histórico Municipal de Valencia
- 49-3. Bancaja Foundation, Art Gallery: **Fundación Bancaja**.
- 50-51. Valencian Autonomy Government Delegation: Delegación del Gobierno en la Comunidad Valenciana / Church and Palace of the Temple: Iglesia y Palacio del Temple. 1770, Neoclassical.
52. The house of St Vincent Ferrer: Casa natalicia de San Vicente Ferrer / de Sant Vicente Ferrer. 1350 – 1677 – 1950. Valencian Gothic.
53. **Tourist information Office: Calle la Paz / la Pau.**
54. The Glorieta Gardens with the enormous ficuses: **Jardines de la Glorieta**. 1812.
55. Palace of Justice, or the Royal Customs House: Palacio de Justicia, o Casa Aduana Real. 1758-1802, Pure Academic Baroque.
- 55.2 Maritime Gates: Puerta del Mar. 1944. Javier Goerlich Lleó.
56. Parterre Gardens: **Jardines del Parterre**. 1850. Monument to James I the Conqueror: Estatua ecuestre del rey Jaime I el Conquistador
57. Royal College and Seminary of Corpus Christi and the Patriarch: **Real Colegio Seminario del Corpus Christi o del Patriarca**. 1586, Renaissance – Baroque – NeoClassic. The Patriarch San Juan de Rivera: his Museum.
58. University of Valencia: Universidad de Valencia o Universidad Literaria. The La Nau Cultural Centre. 1497, Pere Compte, 1830, Neo-Classical.

59. Church of St John of the Cross: Iglesia de San Juan de la Cruz / Sant Joan de la Creu. 1240. 1615, Baroque.
60. National Museum of Ceramics and Decorative Arts: ***El Museo Nacional de Cerámica y Artes Suntuarias González Martí***. The Palace of Marqués de Dos Aguas, 1699. 1740. 1998. Sculptor Ignacio Vergara. Baroque.
61. Church of San Martin the Bishop: Iglesia de San Martín Obispo y San Antonio Abad. XIV-XIXth century, Valencian Gothic, Baroque.
62. The Round Square: Plaza Redonda / plaza del Clot. 1840.
63. Church and the Tower of St Catherine: ***Templo y Torre de Santa Catalina Martyr***. XVI c. - 1785, Valencian Gothic, the Tower from 1740.
64. Silk Exchange: ***La Lonja (Llotja) de la Seda de Valencia*** / Lonja de los Mercaderes. The most important work of the Valencian Civil Gothic. 1476. Francesc Baldomar, Joan Ivarra y Pere Compte.
65. Central Market: ***Mercado Central***. 1914-1928, Valencian Modernism.
66. Parish Church of St Johns: Iglesia Parroquial de la Santos Juanes / de San Juan del Mercado. XIV c. – XVI c. - 1700. Valencian Gothic, Baroque.

## MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES THREE WALLS of VALENCIA

ROMAN

MUSLIM

CHRISTIAN

THE REMAINING TOWERS / GATES are:

Portal dels Serrans / Serranos

Portal de Quart

Portal de la Valldigna



## MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES

### THE PLAN OF THE LARGER CITY

#### PLACES OF INTEREST

Outside the City Centre

19 districts / *Distritos*



We call it DV or DiVa.

Distritos de Valencia = DiVa = DV

Source: Ayuntamiento de Valencia

Also showing objects from the digo / DG map.

1) Ciutat Vella / the Old Town.

The Colon Market / **Mercado de Colon**

2) L'Eixample

The Central Park / Parque Central +

Objects from digo:

5. Museo Taurino

6. Plaza de Toros

3) Extramurs

The Red House / Finca Roja + digo

7. **Estación del Norte**

16. Jardín Botánico

4) Campanar

**Bioparc Valencia** / Zoo of Valencia

Cabecera Park / **Parque de Cabecera** / Capçalera

Poligil Garden / Jardí de Polifil

+ Mislata

The Museum of History of Valencia / **Museu de Història de València.**

5) La Saïdia

The Bombas Gens Art Centre + digo





26. The Fine Arts Museum / **Museo de Bellas Artes**

27. The Park del Real / **Jardines del Real / Viveros +**

Natural Science Museum / Museo de Ciencias Naturales

46. Real Monasterio de la Santísima Trinidad

6) El Plà del Real

Municipal Palace of the Exhibition / Palacio Municipal de la Exposición

The Military History Museum / Museu Històric Militar

The Mar Bridge / **Puente de la Mar** / Pont del Mar + digo

28. **The Montforte Gardens** / Jardín de Montforte

29. The Alameda Boulevard / Paseo de la Alameda

9) Jesús

The Main Cemetery of Valencia / Cementeri General de València

10) Quatre Carreres

The Fallero Museum / **Museo Fallero de València**

The Gulliver playground / **Parc Gulliver**

The City of Arts and Sciences / **Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias** – CAC –

Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències

Pont l'Assut de l'Or

The Aquarium / **L'Oceanogràfic**

11) Poblats Marítims

The House- Museum of Blasco Ibañez / Casa-Museo Blasco Ibañez

The former Shipyard and Warehouse / The Joaquín Saludes Maritime Museum /

Atarazanas del Grao / Drassanes del Grau, 1338

The Rice Museum / Museu de l'Arròs

The Saint Week Museum / Museo Semana Santa Marinera

The best beaches in Malvarossa and Patacona

15) Rascanya

The Monastery / ***Monasterio de San Miguel de los Reyes,***

Site of the Valencian Library Nicolau Primitiu /

sede de la Biblioteca Valenciana Nicolau Primitiu

16) Benicalap

The Fallas Artist Museum / Museu de l'Artista Faller de València.

Park / ***Parque de Benicalap***

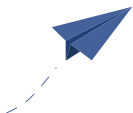
19) Pobles del Sud

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***The Albufera Lake.***

Pinedo. El Saler. Albufera. ***Gola del Pujol.***





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**We know, we know. The book is over, and there is nothing to speak about any more.**

But we still want to help. Many people like reading a book from the end. We have placed the Contents here, but then we thought a bit and decided to give you only the shortened Contents, only the Chapters.

By reading it, you will better understand the structure of our book. Isn't that cool?

**STOP! THE MOST IMPORTANT  
TOP of VALENCIA = VALENCIA BONITA  
MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES  
THE PLAN OF THE OLD CITY  
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George and Katherina GRISHIN

**DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS  
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**PRACTICAL SECTION: TRANSPORT. CUISINE. SPORT**

**TOP VALENCIA = VALENCIA BONITA  
MAIN MAPS AND LISTS OF INTERESTING PLACES**

**And now, goodbye for real!**

**Please write to us; we love to hear your views and thoughts.**

**Yours,  
George & Katherina,  
Paulina & Martina**