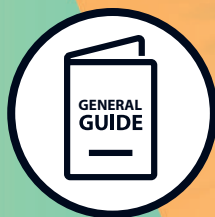


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TOURIST GUIDE

Naturally



*Aín | Alcúdia de Veo | Argelita | Ayódar | Espadilla | Fanzara | Fuentes de Ayódar | Ribesalbes | Sueras |
| Tales | Toga | Torralba del Pinar | Torrechiva | Vallat | Villamalur*

MANCOMUNIDAD ESPADÁN-MIJARES

Mancomunitat Espadà-Mijars
Espadán-Mijares Community

ESPADÁN-MIJARES COMMUNITY

TOURIST GUIDE



3

ESPADÁN-MIJARES COMMUNITY

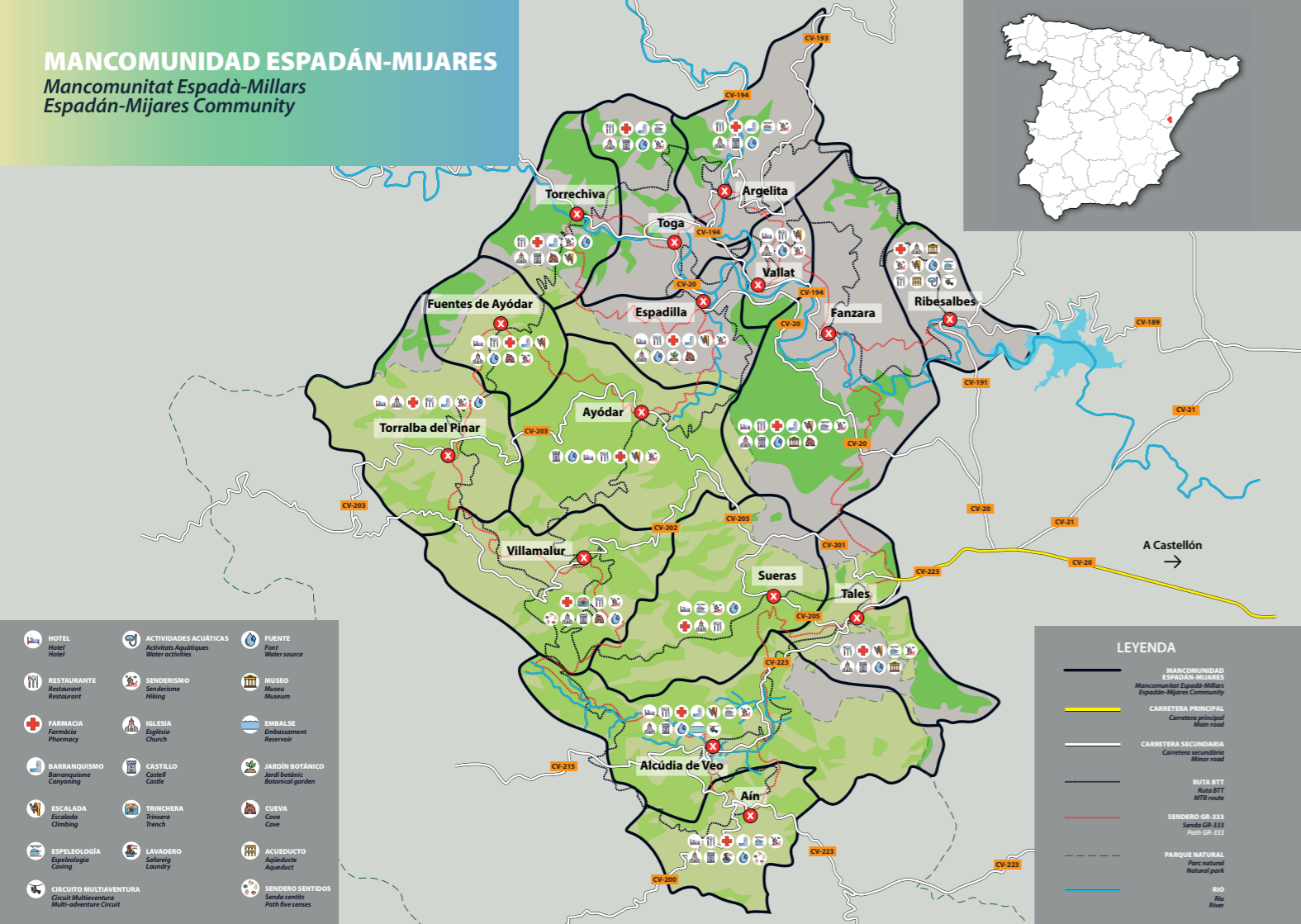
The Espadán-Mijares Community is located in the south west of the province of Castellón and is made up of municipalities from the regions of Alto Mijares and Plana Baja. It includes part of Sierra de Espadán Natural Park and the Mijares River and owes its name to these two geographical features.

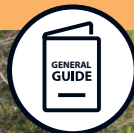
It is made up of fifteen municipalities: **Aín, Alcúdia de Veo, Argelita, Ayódar, Espadilla, Fanzara, Fuentes de Ayódar, Ribesalbes, Sueras, Tales, Toga, Torralba del Pinar, Torrechiva, Vallat** and **Villamalur**, ten of which are in Alto Mijares and five in Plana Baja. It covers an area of 257.1 km² and serves a population of about 4,000 inhabitants.

Part of the Community's area is located inside Sierra de Espadán Natural Park and has a great historical and cultural richness.

This mountainous massif, featuring numerous springs, leafy gorges and woodlands, is part of the Iberian System and separates the basins of the Palancia River to the south and the Mijares River to the north.

The Sierra de Espadán is one of the few areas of the Valencian Community in which outcrops of sandstone called “rodenos” predominate and give rise to a rough and rugged relief with mountains of up to 1,000 metres in altitude. Particularly interesting are the 18th and 19th-century stone buildings that can be found here which were used to store snow throughout the year.

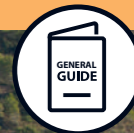




Its climatic, geological and edaphic conditions, as well as the richness of its flora and the actions of man on the environment, have given rise to different woodland formations: forests of pine and holm and cork oak, and riverside woods.

The fauna that inhabits the park is the result of the diversity of landscapes and environments that it offers. Several species of amphibians can be found there, such as the common toad, natterjack toad and Iberian ribbed newt. Reptiles are represented by different species such as the ocellated lizard, long-tailed lizard, ladder snake and Montpellier snake.

As for birds, particularly notable without a doubt are its birds of prey, such as the scarce and endangered Bonelli's eagle, short-toed eagle, booted eagle and goshawk. Among nocturnal birds of prey, the tawny owl, little owl and Eurasian eagle-owl can be found. Other common birds of this area include the jay, nuthatch, robin redbreast, wryneck and finch.



Among mammals, the boar, fox, beech marten, genet and badger coexist. There are also 16 bat species, seven of which are listed as endangered species.

The municipalities of the Espadán-Mijares Community possess a spectacular heritage as well as great beauty and antiquity. Most have a sparse population and their streets and houses are characterised by highly traditional architecture which gives them a unique charm. Its vast heritage, much of which is linked to the Moorish era, consists of castles and fortresses, churches and hermitages and trenches and bunkers from the Spanish Civil War.

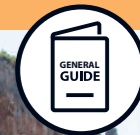


These municipalities are surrounded by beautiful landscapes of great ecological value in the easternmost part of the Iberian System.

Agriculture, both rainfed and irrigated, and the exploitation of natural resources, such as cork and beekeeping, stand out as the main economic activities. Although there are also industrial activities and ceramic crafts.

The GR-333 is a unique long-distance footpath that unites the 15 municipalities of the Espadán-Mijares Community and boasts a total distance of 104 km consisting of 15 different stages. Similarly, visitors can also explore the municipalities of the area along a properly signposted and approved MTB route that is more than 100 km long.

Throughout the area, there are a wide variety of outdoor sports available: hiking, climbing, vías ferratas, mountain biking, canyoning, kayaking, paddle surf, adventure sports and much more, with varying degrees of difficulty and physical demand. The most daring can also explore the depths of the earth by means of caving in the caves and chasms in the area.

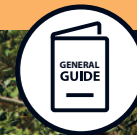


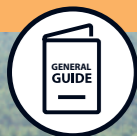


For hiking enthusiasts, there are several circular and linear routes that are ideal for enjoying nature without steep slopes and with average difficulty. Among the most notable circular trails are the GR-333 which runs through the 15 municipalities of the Community, the SL-CV103 “Pine Forest Trail”, the PR-CV 398 “Ayódar - Modroñal - Morrones - Ayódar” with stunning panoramic views of the Sierra de Espadán, the PR-CV 276 “Ayódar Trail”, the PR-CV 386 “Way to the Black Cave” and the PR-CV 314 “Saganta” which runs up to and over the most emblematic summit of a large Jurassic massif that extends from Torrechiva to Onda. Worth mentioning are the two new family hikes in Aín, and Villamalur, hikes that appeal to all of your senses. Finally, the SL-CV 91 “La Muela Trail” is one of our recommended linear hikes, the SL-CV 70 “Vasall Ravine”, the PR-CV 140 “Aín -Sueras, via Benitandus”, the PR-CV 139 “Tales - Peñas Aragonesas, Artana” and the PR-CV 136 “Villamalur - Sueras”.

For the most daring, there is also a wide variety of climbing routes.

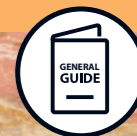
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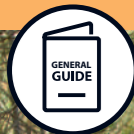




Among the best areas for climbing is Vallat, whose profile makes it one of the most striking, Torrechiva, located in a unique environment surrounded by a lush pine forest, Tales, Fanzara and Ayódar, located in an area of outstanding natural and environmental beauty ideal for outdoor sports.

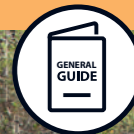
When going sightseeing, not only can the beauty of the landscapes and villages be enjoyed, visitors can also discover the gastronomy of the area and sample the traditional dishes that make it stand out from other places. Its Mediterranean mountain cuisine is particularly notable for its rice dishes, one of the most cooked hot meals in these communities, and its game, mainly wild boar and thrush, which are present in many of the typical dishes of the local cuisine. Other star dishes include the local stew, cabbage stew, rabbit with garlic and cod pottage. And to sweeten palates, the most typical sweet treats of the Community are “rollos, oreletes, buñuelos de higo, bollo de chicarrones, calabaza torrada, borrajas, higas albardás” and “pastitas de cabello de





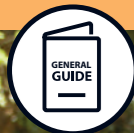
ángel y boniato". And for many dishes, the star ingredient is olive oil from the Sierra de Espadán, which is of great quality and highly appreciated in the culinary world.

When talking of festivals, each municipality traditionally retains its own customs and festivities, but the most deeply rooted and with a common denominator, not only in this area but in several communities in Spain, is Easter and its traditional Easter cake called "mona". The name comes from the Arabic term "munna" or "mouna", meaning 'provision for the mouth.' According to some texts, it was a gift offered by Muslims to their masters, for the Christians it symbolises the end of the abstinence of Lent. But what really matters is the tradition of enjoying the days of Holy Week and Easter Sunday in the open air in the municipalities of the Espadán-Mijares Community.



Naturally





All of the 15 municipalities of the Espadán-Mijares Community celebrate the festival of Saint Anthony on 17 January. They also follow the same ritual of lighting a bonfire and then handing out the famous sweet rolls of the area and blessing animals.

In the QR codes contained in this guide, you can download video guides to help you discover and learn more about the main attractions of the municipalities of the Espadán-Mijares Community. You can also find out more about Espadán-Mijares and the tourist attractions offered by companies in the area by visiting:
www.visitespadanmijares.com





AÍN



Aín is located in the region of Plana Baja in the heart of the Sierra de Espadán, 35 km from Castellón. It is a small village located in the midst of a landscape of rugged terrain. The origin of the settlement lies in the founding of a Muslim community here prior to the 12th century. Following its Village Charter granted by James I, coexistence between Muslims and Christians was possible until the Moorish expulsion in 1609. The village consists of whitewashed houses arranged along narrow streets that retain the appearance that they had during the Moorish era.

Its Arab fortification, Benalí Castle, is listed as a Site of Cultural Interest. During the 16th century, it was important for being an enclave of Moorish resistance. Its parish church, built in the 17th century after the expulsion of the Moors, was initially dedicated to Saint Michael and then to Saint Ambrose, the patron saint of the village. The Hermitage of Calvary, located on the outskirts of the village, on the way to the castle, is a rectangular dry stone site with Alcora ceramics.

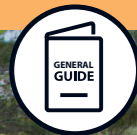
The Sierra de Espadán was an important enclave during the Spanish Civil War. As a result, a network of trenches and bunkers, known as the XYZ line, was built into the terrain. The area around Aín was configured as resistance point number 4.

Its cobblestone roads and dry stone buildings bear witness to the Moorish past of the village and can be contemplated from the many different paths that run through the municipality. Water is the most significant element of this village, being evident even in its name, a term of Arabic origin that means “spring”.

The Molino del Arco mill, dating back to between the 17th and 19th centuries, has been renovated and is now used as a private home. It is still possible to discern the infrastructure of the flour mill, a water channel and an animal watering system.

The municipal laundry is accompanied by a viewpoint that makes it possible to see the waters of the river. It is located just above Molinet and is fed by the waters of the large water channel.

Every year on 17 January, the animals are taken out in procession through the village to celebrate the festival of Saint Anthony. On 16 August, the Procession of the Christ and various popular, festive and cultural events take place. On 7 December, Saint Ambrose is celebrated with the lighting of a bonfire in the church square at midnight.





ALCÚDIA DE VEO

Alcúdia de Veo is located in the Plana Baixa region, right in the heart of Sierra Espadán Natural Park, covering an area of 30.7 km². It is 36 km from Castellón and 80 km from Valencia. The municipality includes three inhabited communities, Alcudia de Veo, Veo and Benitandús, and one uninhabited, Jinquer.

The greenery that surrounds this small village is rich and varied, with a predominance of pine and cork trees, but also chestnut trees and heather.

The origins of Alcudia de Veo are Arabic, with its name deriving from the word "al-judya" (hill), and located here are ancient remains of a small Islamic farmhouse. A Roman road linked the three communities of the municipality.

During the Arab period, between the 10th and 13th centuries, peace reigned, new villages were created and agriculture experienced great development. In 1238, it was reconquered by James I. In 1609, the village had about 600 inhabitants, who, with the expulsion of the Moors, joined the Sierra de Espadán uprising, with Alcudia bearing direct witness to the revolts. In 1612, it was repopulated by mainly Aragonese settlers and it was not until 1900 that it regained the same number of inhabitants.

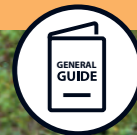
In the municipality, visitors can discover the Churches of Saint Michael, from the 17th century, Our Lady of the Assumption of Veo and Our Lady of the Forsaken of Benitandús. For their part, Alcudia de Veo and Jinquer Castles, both of Arab origin, offer the opportunity to enjoy beautiful landscapes despite their dilapidated condition. Also worth visiting is Jinquer, an uninhabited village that was home to the Moors first and later to the Christians. It was abandoned during the Spanish Civil War and even today it is possible to discern the remains of buildings and its rectangular church with neoclassical altar.

Alcudia de Veo boasts the highest peaks in the Sierra de Espadán, namely La Rapita at 1,103 metres, Pico Espadán, 1,099 metres, and Los Órganos, 724 metres, surrounded by forests of pine and cork tree.

Benitandús is the site of a small dam that holds back the waters of the Veo River and the impressive rock formations of Los Órganos de Benitandús, created by the erosion of the waters. The springs of Canaleta, Zurrón, Ullastre, Rodenal, Pistola, Toro, Jinquer and San Pedro with its picnic area enhance the natural and scenic appeal of the municipality.



Every year on 17 January in Veo, Saint Anthony the Abbot, Saint Marcellus and the Christ of Thirst are celebrated. The first festival of Alcudia de Veo is celebrated on 29 April, dedicated to Saint Peter Martyr and, on the following day, the procession of the Christ of Health takes place. On the second Sunday of May in Benitandús, the festival of Our Lady of the Forsaken is celebrated. During the first or second week of August, the patron saint festivities of Alcudia de Veo take place in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Francis Xavier, and include religious, bullfighting and cultural events. On 29 September, the procession of Saint Michael the Archangel takes place.





ARGELITA



Argelita is located in the Alto Mijares region next to the Argelita River, also known as the Villahermosa. Its municipality occupies 15.5 km² and it is 40 km from Castellón. It is located in the valley that forms the Villahermosa River and is surrounded by high mountains and irrigated orchards and groves that its inhabitants have cultivated throughout history. Its pleasant temperature and beautiful scenery mean that its population increases significantly in the summer.

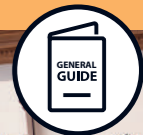
The municipality of Argelita is of Arab origin and belonged in the 13th century to Abu Zeyd, who was the last Almohad governor of Valencia. His enemies cornered him and he eventually retreated to the palace in this village, where he converted to Christianity and gave away all of his belongings to the church and the Christian nobility. After the Reconquest in 1491, the municipality belonged to the Crown and later passed into the hands of the Arenós family. On 5 October 1609, it was uninhabited so, on 23 February 1611, Don Pedro Escribá y Zapata, the new Lord of Argelita, granted a Village Charter to 24 new families to repopulate the village.

Before Castellón was a province, the Barony of Argelita belonged to the Marquis of Monistrol under the governance of Morella. Its history gives it a significant heritage of great importance. Particularly notable is its 17th-century, Baroque-style parish church with single nave and bell tower dedicated

to Saint Anne. Inside is the relic of the Holy Cross. Located next to it is the Square Tower, which was the main body of the palace of Abu Zeyd, and, next to this, the Round Tower, which was part of the exterior structure of the palace and currently houses two museums. Nestled on the top of an 800-metre-high mountain stands the Castle of La Mola del "Bou Negro", also known as "La Mola", an Arab fortification that is currently in ruins.

Argelita is also known for its springs: Barranco del Sabinar, Pescadón, Laguna, Pozo Negro and Santa Cruz. Also noteworthy is the Los Ignacios spring which emerges from between enormous rocks and next to which visitors can enjoy a pleasant day in its picnic areas. It is, however, on the Argelita River that local people and visitors most enjoy the area's crystal-clear waters.

Every year on 17 January, the Saint Anthony the Abbot festival is celebrated with a procession of animals, the handing out of sweet rolls and a bonfire in honour of the patron saint. On 3 May, a procession takes place for the festival of the Holy Cross. In the first half of August, summer festivals are celebrated, with dances and festivities, similar to those that take place on the first Sunday of October in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary.



AYÓDAR

Located in the Alto Mijares region, Ayódar is a charming village and municipality measuring 24.21 km² which occupies part of Sierra Espadán Natural Park and is 30 km from Castellón.

Boasting mountainous terrain, the village is located on the slopes of Peña Sarganta and is partially surrounded by the Chico River, which irrigates Ayódar's flora and makes this municipality a quiet and welcoming place for visitors.

It is of Arab origin and belonged to Abu Zeyd, the last Muslim governor of Valencia, before he agreed to surrender to King James I. In 1236, its population revolted and was crushed by Aby Zeyd's troops, with the municipality becoming part of his dominions. After the Moorish expulsion in 1609, it was repopulated by Christian families and, in 1611, it was granted a Village Charter by the Baron of Ayódar, Duke of Villahermosa. From that moment, it remained as head of the Barony, and comprised of Fuentes de Ayódar, Torralba del Pinar, Villamalur and Higueras. The seat of the Duke of Villahermosa, built at the beginning of the 17th century, was the palace of this village, now non-existent. At the top of a hill, a tower that was once part of the castle and is a reminder of the last Arab days of the municipality, presides over the village.



Of the Convent of the Dominicans, built in 1610, there remains a bell tower, which is listed as a Site of Cultural Interest. The 19th-century parish church, dedicated to Saint Vincent Ferrer since 1861, was built in 1853. Boasting a Valencian academicist style, it consists of three naves and an apse.

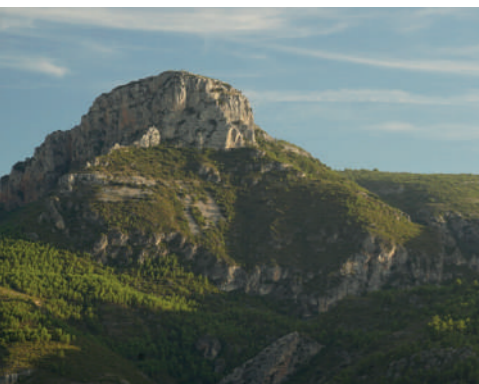
As it passes, the Chico River, known locally as the Narrows, creates pools of fresh crystal-clear water like a natural swimming pool on the outskirts of the village, before eventually flowing into the Mijares River. The municipality boasts numerous springs, such as Fuente Larga, at the foot of the castle, Turio, which is channelled to the village, and Santa Bárbara.

Its mountainous terrain means that the municipality is located at various altitudes, ranging from the village at 382 metres, through Peña Alta at 692 metres, to Cueva Negra at 834 metres.

Its festival calendar starts with Saint Sebastian on 15 January. Saint Anthony follows on 17 January with its bonfire, blessing of animals and handing out of sweet rolls. In June, it is Corpus Christi and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In August, its summer festivals and, in October, Our Lady of the Rosary.



ESPADILLA



Located in the Alto Mijares region, it is a small municipality through which the Mijares and Chico Rivers flow, which gives it a beautiful natural charm. It has an area of 12.04 km² and is 36 km from Castellón. Its landscape, dominated by pines, oaks and orange trees, its streets, the charm of its rivers and its springs make Espadilla an ideal place to visit.

After the Christian conquest, the municipality came into the possession of the Barony of Arenós until 1471. Its greatest demographic expansion was probably in the 18th century since, in 1609, the village only had 85 Moorish households.

The conquest of these lands was long and in stages in which donations were made to the Bishop of Segorbe, Don Guillermo, Frey Ximeno and the Church in Tarragona. These donations were made between 1235 and 1248. In the 15th century, John II of Aragon granted the title of Duke of Villahermosa to his son Alfonso and after the death of Alfonso II, the Duke of Gandia, the municipality became part of this dukedom.

The donation was made on Toga Castle by Gómez Suárez de Figueroa. The ducal house of Villahermosa was heir to the Barony of Arenós.

Visitors to the village can discover the parish church of Saint John the Baptist, built in the 18th century. It consists of three naves with Corinthian-style rib vaults that are well preserved, and features a

presbytery curtain and the Four Evangelists. The old restored 17th century Abbey House retains its ancient Gothic forms inside and is currently the local council building. Also worth visiting is the Hermitage of Saint Roch, which has been restored by the people of the village. Finally, beside Peña Saganta is Espadilla Castle, situated here for defence, many of whose ruins still remain.

The village of Espadilla has a wealth of beautiful scenery, with the slender Peña Saganta (723 metres) particularly standing out, as do the crystal-clear waters of the Mijares River, where visitors can enjoy the natural swimming pool and the beauty of the narrows of the Chico River. Natural springs such as those of Sastre, Melic and Piqueta, are well preserved.

In its Botanical Garden, there is a great diversity of trees, shrubs and a natural pond. On its paths and trails, visitors can discover cavities, caverns and caves such as Corral Blanco, Cueva del Morrón, Cueva de la Ereta and Cueva del Río Pequeño.

During the festival of Saint Anthony the Abbot, animals are blessed and sweet rolls are handed out. At Easter, a climb to the top of Peña Saganta is organised and, in August, the festivals of the patron saint Saint Roch, Our Lady of the Forsaken, Saint John the Baptist and Saint Raymund Nonnatus take place. In December, a 'day of cakes' is held and there is a living nativity scene.





FANZARA

A municipality located in the Alto Mijares region. Fanzara is situated in a valley formed by the Mijares River, is 32 km from Castellón and occupies an area of 34.50 km². The municipality consists of a dense pine forest with areas of holm oak and other rainfed and irrigated land under cultivation. The altitude of the village, at 220 metres, means that it enjoys mild winters and warm summers.

Although within the municipality there are remains of Iberian and Roman villages that suggest early occupation of the territory, the village was founded by the Muslims and there are still remains of two hamlets, Lleuxa and Alcúdia, from that era.

In 1259, King James I donated the village to his wife Teresa Gil and his son James, it later belonged to the Barony of Jérica and, in the 15th century, it was part of the Duchy of Segorbe until the abolition of the lordships in the 19th century.

The founding of the municipality by the Muslims gave it the appearance of a typical Arab village, with narrow winding streets, corners where the inhabitants would go about their daily lives and staggered houses that led to the Tosal, a structure that still remains today and entices visitors to lose themselves in its streets.

A must-go place to visit is the 17th-century parish church under the invocation of Our Lady of the Assumption, which boasts a Herrerian style and an interior featuring rich sgraffito decoration typical of the eastern region of Spain in the late 17th century. On a hill near the village, and offering exceptional views from the top, is the Hermitage of the Holy Sepulchre accessible by a steep path along which the Stations of the Cross are located. Outside the village, next to the road, the remains of the old Arab castle, known as the Castellet, can still be discerned and it is also possible to visit what little remains of the hamlets of Lleuja and Alcúdia.

In this short review of the municipality's points of interest, we cannot forget the Unfinished Museum of Urban Art (MIAU), which has made Fanzara world famous. Its more than 70 artistic interventions, all produced by artists, many of whom are internationally renowned, have turned this small village into a great open-air museum that is well worth visiting.

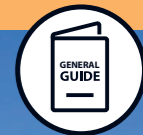
One of the goals of the Unfinished Museum of Urban Art is to democratise art by bringing it closer to the public, which is why it also offers guided tours and workshops of artistic activities linked to urban art. Get ready to enjoy amazing walls and spaces.



The Mijares River, with its lush greenery, is a place rich in flora and fauna where the water runs clean and transparent creating various natural pools that in Fanzara are known as puddles, among them Molino Bota and others along its course.

The municipality boasts numerous springs such as those of Alcudia, Bailesa and Canónigo. Its limestone terrain gives rise to a large number of important caves and caverns, such as those of Turio, Cabezo, Muela and others which are popular for caving. Also worth exploring is the Camino de Ribesalbes footpath and those of Muela and Fuente del Turio, all of which are paved in the heart of nature.

The festival of Saint Anthony in January is celebrated with a procession and blessing of animals and the handing out of sweet rolls accompanied by typical bonfires. The first Saturday of April is the pilgrimage to the Hermitage of the Holy Saviour of Onda, known as that of the Devotees, in which six kilometres are covered and typical sweet rolls are handed out at the Holy Cave. Taking place on the second Sunday of October, patron saint festivities are celebrated in honour of the Holy Sepulchre, Our Lady of Montserrat and Saint Roch, and include religious, musical, cultural and bullfighting events.





FUENTES DE AYÓDAR



A municipality located in the province of Castellón, in the interior of the Alto Mijares region. It has an area of 12.04 km² and is 42 km from Castellón. It sits in a tiered fashion beside the ravine of the Chico River and is located in the northern foothills of Sierra de Espadán Natural Park. The landscape of this village is Moorish in origin and its greenery Mediterranean forest covered with pines, oaks, cork oaks and aromatic plants.

The village originally belonged to the Moorish king of Valencia, Zayd Abu Zayd in the 13th century, who allied with James I, thus retaining his possessions even after the Christian conquest. After the expulsion of the Moors, families from Godella repopulated the territory in the 17th century and, in the second half of the 19th, it reached its maximum number of inhabitants.

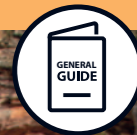
The mountainous terrain of Fuentes de Ayódar means that there are numerous gorges that lead to the Ayodar ravine, a natural tributary of the Mijares River. The scenic beauty of Fuentes is spectacular, boasting as it does numerous trails, paths and caves. Its springs are another of its main attractions, as are the natural pools of crystal-clear water that the Chico River offers.

On a cultural level, the church dedicated to Saint Roch stands out, with its unornamented Baroque style and built between the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is simple, with a single nave and side chapels between buttresses, a barrel vault with interior transverse arches and a gable roof on the outside.

The Lagar del Cubo is a curious construction with a quadrangular plan. It is an old wine press where grapes were trodden by feet, abundant in these lands in medieval times. The old 15th-century Molino de Arriba, located next to an irrigation reservoir and currently owned by the municipality, has been recently restored.

Every year on 17 January, the festival of Saint Anthony is celebrated with the blessing of animals. A pig slaughter day also takes place in the first months of the year. Fuentes celebrates its patron saint festivities in honour of Saint Roch and Our Lady of the Assumption in the week of 15 August.



RIBESALBES

A municipality in the region of Plana Baja, province of Castellón. It occupies an area of 8.44 km² and is 27 km from Castellón. Ribesalbes, which was once a parish of Onda, is the largest municipality by population in the Community with 1.210 inhabitants.

Ceramics, originally handcrafted and artistic and now industrial, has always been the main economic activity of Ribesalbes. Its proximity to the two ceramic focal points of the province, Onda and Alcora, and the founding of its first earthenware factory in 1781 by Josep Ferrer, has marked the village out as a leading artistic and ceramic centre.

This riverside municipality provides water to the mills and varnish plants to obtain mud and is surrounded by mountains from which the precious and indispensable clay for ceramics is obtained. Life in Ribesalbes is also linked to the Mijares River and the Sitjar reservoir, which regulates the waters in this low section of the river. In this area of the municipality, places of interest are plentiful.

One must-go place to visit is the museum, located in Casa de la Baronía. This stately three-storey building covered with Arabic tiles houses impressive collections of ceramic pieces and fossils found in one of the most important Early Miocene sites in Europe.



Also worth visiting is the neoclassical Church of Saint Christopher, the local one-arch aqueduct and the Chapel of Calvary, where a panoramic view of the village can be admired.

The Miramar viewpoint offers excellent panoramic views of the area, particularly of the course of the Mijares River, and, from there, visitors can explore the wooded recreation area that surrounds the Sichar reservoir. They can also visit Partida de Calicanto and enjoy its waters in the summer.

In the upper part of the village, there is a spring with three streams and, in the mountains, the Baita spring. In the area of Rinconá, there used to be a lake in which the first fossil remains dating back to the Miocene Age were found. The discovery included remains of frogs and lizards and also a large amount of insects and flora.

In the month of January, the festival of Saint Anthony is celebrated with a procession of horses and a traditional sweet roll is blessed and handed out to the crowd. In July, the festival of Saint Christopher, the patron saint of Ribesalbes, is celebrated and, in October, the festivals of the Christ of Calvary, Our Lady of the Rosary and the Blessed Sacrament take place with a great variety of religious, recreational and bullfighting events.



SUERAS



A municipality in the region of Plana Baja, province of Castellón. It has an area of 22 km² and is 30 km from Castellón.

The origin of Sueras dates back to the Muslim era. The ruins of its 12th-century castle (Castell de Mauz) bear testimony to the existence of the first settlements and farmhouses. After the Christian conquest, the population was grouped together to form what is now the village.

Sueras is located in one of the last foothills of the Sierra de Espadán before the terrain becomes flat. Pines and cork trees, as in almost all of the mountain range, populate the area.

Sueras has become one of the most economically active villages in the Community. Its ethnological fair called "Sueras: un poble al carrer" takes place at Christmas and seeks to revive old trades and traditions to prevent them from dying out. This fair has also garnered the support of the local population to enable the life of the village to be opened up to thousands of visitors.

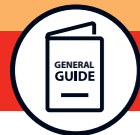
The municipality has a complete network of tracks, trails and paths ideal for hiking. The GR-36 long-distance footpath runs through Sueras as it crosses the Sierra de Espadán. Other signposted trails that run through the villages of the Community include the PRV-136, PRV-140 and PRV-161. The Monte de Castro spring with its sixteen spouts, the Avellano spring, the 500-year-old Algespar olive tree and the

parish church are other points of interest. Every year on 5 January, the municipality puts on a theatrical performance to celebrate the arrival of the Three Kings, followed by a procession through the streets. During the festival of Saint Anthony the Abbot, around 17 January, the locals light bonfires and a procession takes place in which animals are blessed and typical sweet rolls are handed out to the crowd. On 3 February, the festival of the patron saint of Sueras, Saint Blaise, is celebrated. A weekend of bullfights, lunches, dancing and a procession to the patron saint. The village's carnival is organised by the Sueras Cultural Centre, and features a parade and games for children. Easter is also celebrated with various processions and the Stations of the Cross, during which it is typical for locals to go to their houses in the mountains for a picnic or lunch. During the month of April, the village's Book Fair takes place. The festival of Saint Anthony of Padua is celebrated on 13 June. During August, Cultural Week, which is organised by the Sueras Cultural Centre, takes place and this is followed a week later, around 15 August, by festivities in honour of Our Lady of August.

In the month of October, the municipality celebrates its Major Festival in honour of the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Christ of Clemency. On New Year's Eve, the Festival Committee puts on a dinner followed by a concert.

Also worth noting are the magnificent concerts performed by the Sueras Saint Cecilia Musical Club.





TALES

The capital of the Plana Baja region and location of the Community's administrative offices. Tales, the village of the quintessential "Dolçainers i Tabaleters", has always felt especially proud of this tradition and is home to the School of Dolçainers i Tabaleters, the municipality's greatest cultural heritage. It is located at the confluence of the Sonella and Veo Rivers on the north-eastern border. Its houses occupy the skirts of a hill and become more traditional in design the closer they get to the castle at the top.

The origins of the village lie in a farmhouse of the Muslim era. After the conquest, it was donated to the nobleman Ximén de Foces, who brought families from Teruel to repopulate it, and these are still deeply rooted in the area today.

In 1242, after the restoration of the Kingdom of Valencia, Ximén de Foces followed King James I, ceding Tales to a knight from Tortosa named Guillem de Rocafort.

The coexistence between Muslims and Christians was harmonious. The current village is attributed to Pierre de Castelnau, who re-established it in 1248 with the expulsion of the Moors, and it was repopulated with Christians. In 1839, the troops of General Cabrera, who had barricaded themselves into the castle

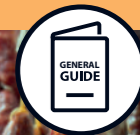
were defeated by General O'Donnell, after which the castle and Tales were razed to the ground. Tales obtained its legal independence from Onda in 1842.

A cultural and historical tour begins at the Portalet, an always open gate that leads the visitor through to the narrow streets and whitewashed walls of Arab origin. After a few steps, visitors can explore the Ethnological Museum to learn about the work tools of the local people and their customs in the 19th century.

At the end of the village, on top of a hill, stands its 12th century castle. The site today bears the scars of the wars of the 19th century when the building was practically destroyed. Another nearby structure is the Cabrera Tower which has had to resist numerous revolts over the centuries. The final stop on the tour is a visit to the 18th-century Church of Saint John the Baptist.

Although the highest mountain is El Espino at 665 m, the most important and best known among hikers because of its many trails and beautiful views, is El Montí at 608 m.

El Montí's spring is also the most representative, and well known by the spa-goers of the area for the quality of its waters.



Other springs that can be visited are Perera, which supplies water to the entire village, L'Assut, where a day can be spent in its picnic areas enjoying its views, Barranc d'Aín and Pardalet. El Racó de San Francesc is also a peaceful place and the location of a chapel that is a replica of the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, Italy.

Tales boasts a great variety of festive events. The first festival of the year, in honour of Saint Anthony the Abbot, begins on 17 January and involves a procession in which animals are blessed, bonfires are lit and typical sweet rolls are handed out.

During the last week of August, a Youth Festival is celebrated, with religious, bullfighting and cultural events. On 9 October, the "Dolçaires and Tabaleters" perform parades and organise brotherhood meals. On 22 October, musicians celebrate Saint Cecilia.

During the first week of November, the municipality celebrates its patron saint festivities with religious, bullfighting and cultural events.





TOGA

The municipality of Toga is located in the Alto Mijares region, next to the Mijares River. It occupies 13.5 km² and is 40 km from Castellón.

Due to its warm Mediterranean climate, it has large expanses of pine and holm oak forest, and, by the side of the river, in its lower part, there are orange groves. Its pleasant temperature and beautiful landscapes mean that its population increases significantly in the summer.

Some studies suggest that Toga dates back to the time of the Goths, but no historical documentation exists to prove it. What is possible to prove, however, is its Islamic heritage and origin as a Muslim farmhouse that belonged to Abu Zeyd, the last Muslim governor in the Kingdom of Valencia. In 1238, the troops of James I reconquered the village and it obtained the title of Barony, and was then acquired by María de la Concepción de Luna.

Toga was the scene of several battles in the 19th century, notable among which were the Carlist Wars, which wrought great destruction as the village found itself in its path. Today, visitors on a tour of the village can discern the influence of its Arab origins in the architecture of its streets and houses. Worthy of mention as monuments in the centre of the village are the Arches of Portalet and San Antonio, the latter of which supports the chapel that contains the image of the saint. Also notable is the 17th-century parish church

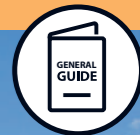


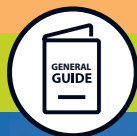
dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. The Feudal Palace is located next to an old mill and the so-called Caliente spring.

Toga Castle, which dates back to Arab times, is located next to the Mijares River, and also worth a visit is the Hermitages of Saint John and Saint Barbara, which are situated near the river, but in ruins. Next to them are the remains of a medieval site from the 14th century.

Worthy of special attention among the natural attractions of the village of Toga is the area through which the Mijares River flows, where beautiful natural landscapes can be admired and natural swimming pools can be enjoyed in the summer. Visitors can also admire the walls of the Azud Canyon. The locality's most well-known spring is the Caliente spring, recommended for digestive problems. The Tablar and Vasall springs are two that are usually visited by the locals, visitors and tourists.

Toga's festivals begin with Saint Anthony the Abbot on 17 January, where a procession takes place in which animals are blessed, bonfires are lit and typical sweet rolls are handed out. In May, in honour of Our Lady of the Forsaken, processions and masses are held. In the first week of August, patron saint festivities in honour of the Most Holy Christ of the Agony are celebrated, and include bullfighting, religious and cultural events.





TORRALBA DEL PINAR



Located in a green and mountainous area of the Alto Mijares region, 46 km from Castellón, Torralba del Pinar occupies 21 km² of Sierra de Espadán Natural Park. Because its altitudes range from 700 to 1000 metres, the municipality's terrain is made up of forests of cork oak, holm oak, pine and the protected species holly and yew. Its tranquillity and climate ensure that the visitor has a very pleasant stay.

Torralba has a Roman past as its watchtower bears witness to. Later, the ashlar of this Roman tower were used to erect the Christian temple. When converting to Christianity, Abu Zeyd ceded ancient Torralba and Vialeba to James I. A last will and testament exists by the son of Abu Zeyd in which he bequeathed to his heirs both Vialeba Castle and the municipality. The document is kept in Valencia Cathedral.

After the Christian reconquest, Torralba had a Moorish population until 1609, when the Moors were expelled. Later, with the village under the ownership of the Barony of Ayódar, together with Villamalur, Fuentes de Ayódar and Higuera, a Christian repopulation took place. A stroll through the village of Torralba del Pinar brings visitors to the 18th-century Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord, in which a highly valued 18th-century processional cross is preserved.

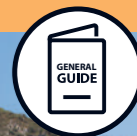
Its bell tower contains the bells of Saint Barbara, Saviour and Saint Saviour. On one side of the church, there are engraved crosses. According to the locals, they were engraved by the young men of the village

before going off to war to protect them and ensure their return. Located on the outskirts of the municipality is the Hermitage of Saint Barbara, which was built by the villagers on the site of a former mosque.

Among Torralba's different landscapes of outstanding natural beauty is El Tajar, a micro-reserve of great importance for its protected species. The local mountains are Los Morrones de Gil and, below, La Rambla Catalán, which refreshes the landscape with its waterfalls and rapids.

Another of the village's natural charms is its great wealth of springs such as Santa Bárbara, which can be found next to its hermitage, and El Río, which joins the municipality with Fuentes de Ayódar.

The locals are prolific in their festivals, among which of particular note are those of Saint Anthony the Abbot in January and the Most Holy Saviour, their patron saint, in August. In September, Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Giles, Abbot, and, in December, Saint Barbara and the Christ of the Agony, in which bullfighting, religious and cultural events take place.





TORRECHIVA

A municipality located in the Alto Mijares region, 42 km from Castellón. The village is located on the banks of the Mijares River and, in its 11.8 km² area, there are forests of pine and holm oak, and groves of irrigated crops, predominantly citrus fruits. Its beautiful scenery, charming village, climate and tranquillity make Torrechiva an ideal place to visit.

Its narrow streets and whitewashed houses, cool in summer and warm in winter, bear witness to the municipality's Arab origin and long existence. Although Torrechiva was conquered by James I in the 13th century, it was a Moorish place between 1565 and 1572, at which time there were 17 houses. After the expulsion of the Moors, the population was reduced to its minimums in 1646.

This municipality belonged to the Duchy of Villahermosa until the 19th century. During the civil wars of the 19th century, it was almost always occupied by the Carlists. Torrechiva has always had an agrarian economy, particularly between the 18th and 19th centuries, based on cereals, carob, almonds, olives and mulberries.

A stroll through its Moorish-style narrow streets of whitewash-walled houses brings the visitor to the 13th-century Chiva Tower located in the old part of the village, of which only its



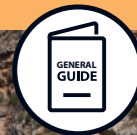
façade and circular structure attached to two houses is discernible. Visitors can also learn about its customs of life and work in the Ethnological Museum, founded in 1988 by two local ladies.

The 19th-century Church of Saint Roch features a lintelled façade, single rectangular plan and half barrel-vaulted ceiling, forming pilasters composed of semi-circular arches, with side chapels opening behind them.

The municipality also boasts a myriad of springs to be admired whose waters have medicinal properties, such Masadeta and Almayuz, which supplies water to the village. Also notable are El Pinar, San Pedro and Las Calzadas. Another great attraction and a must for caving enthusiasts is the Cueva de los Judíos, located in a hill called Mojonet, whose system also contains two other cavities.

El Pozo and Pozo de la Mortera are places of great scenic beauty and ideal for enjoying refreshing summer dips in their crystal-clear waters.

Torrechiva starts its festival calendar on 17 January by celebrating Saint Anthony the Abbot with the blessing of animals, bonfires and the handing out of sweet rolls and wine. On 24 June, the festival of Saint John is celebrated with cultural events and, on 15 August, its patron saint festivities dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption take place, and include various religious, bullfighting and dancing events.



VALLAT

A municipality located in the Alto Mijares region, 37 km from Castellón and at an altitude of 276 metres. It is bathed by two rivers, the Villahermosa and Mijares, which join at its border with Argelita.

It occupies an area of 5.09 km² consisting of large wooded expanses of pine and holm oak surrounding the village broken up by chasms and hills, which give it a unique landscape of great beauty.

This small municipality of Arab origin, but with Latin name, belonged to several lords, from the Arab Abu Zeyd in 1231, through the Barony of Árenos in 1242 to the Duchy of Villahermosa in 1465.

Later, it became the property of the neighbourhood following the Confiscation of Mendizábal in 1837. These historical upheavals have meant that the village has experienced notable demographic changes throughout its history. In fact, after the expulsion of the Moors, which marked the beginning of the period of demographic decline, it was not until the 1960s that its population experienced significant growth with the construction of the Vallat power station. The locals, after their work day, used to play traditional sports such as pelota against the wall of the old school.

A stroll through this charming village reveals its Arab origins, characterised by typical narrow streets, cobbled floors and whitewashed houses. In the centre stands its 18th-century Church of Saint John the Evangelist, the patron saint of the municipality, which

features a wide, simple plan and stone floors, bearing witness to the devotion of its people. Continuing the tour, visitors can admire the village's best views from the El Mirador viewpoint, behind the church. Located in the high part is La Santa Cruz, a religious monument that provides the backdrop to many festive events.

Vallat boasts numerous natural attractions, many of which are associated with water. The Villahermosa and Mijares Rivers give rise to emblematic places. Wells such as Roca del Molino, Pozo Vidal and Peña Negra, with its stone mass and springs such as La Salud, located in the village, Ramírez and La Señora, provide it with a landscape of great appeal for nature enthusiasts. Visitors can also enjoy a unique view of the Salto del Agua, an old water channel belonging to the power station, which provides an excellent photo opportunity when water is released from the reservoir.

Around 17 January, the festival of Saint Anthony the Abbot is celebrated with the lighting of bonfires, blessing of animals and making and handing out of traditional sweet rolls. In May, processions and masses are held in honour of the Holy Cross. The first two weeks of August see the celebration of summer festivals, in which bullfighting events, festivities and brotherhood meals take place.



VILLAMALUR



A municipality located in the region of Alto Mijares, 40 km from Castellón. It occupies 19.5 km² in which large areas of forest predominate. Its narrow streets and whitewashed houses bear witness to its origin and exploring its surrounding area along the GR-36 footpath means discovering natural landscapes of exceptional beauty. Deserving of special mention are Villamalur's cherries, which are well known in the municipalities of the area. Although its exact origins are unknown, ceramic remains have been discovered here which date it back to the 4th century BC. Villamalur Castle reveals that the municipality may also trace its origins back to the existence of an old Muslim farmhouse, about which little is known today. What is beyond doubt, judging by the structure of the village, with its narrow streets and whitewashed houses, is that there was a Muslim presence here for a number of centuries. After the Moorish expulsion by James I, it was repopulated by Aragonese settlers. From that time to the present, there has hardly been any variation in the number of inhabitants, except, of course, in the summer when tourists and visitors greatly increase its population in search of pleasant weather and enjoyment of its trails and beauty spots.

Located in the village is its 17th-century church dedicated to its patron saints Saint Dominic and Our Lady of the Forsaken and, in the distance, its 11th-century castle of Muslim origin can be glimpsed.

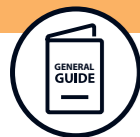
Today, its ten Moorish towers, which surrounded the entire mountain top, and were used until the 20th

century, can still be discerned. Visitors can also come across the Nevera de Cuatro Caminos, a circular-shaped former snow storage building with two entrances to its interior. On its roof, it has two parallel arches, one of which has collapsed, and its vault was possibly covered with tiles and in operation until the first decade of the 20th century.

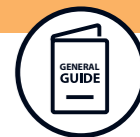
The municipality boasts numerous beauty spots and spectacular landscapes throughout. Particularly outstanding are the Alto del Pinar, a point from which breathtaking views can be enjoyed, the Nevera de Cuatro Caminos and the trenches and bunkers of the Spanish Civil War, monuments that are extremely well preserved. Villamalur also boasts a wealth of springs such as Chercoles, Berniches, Alá, Barrajau, Albar, Lartijuela, La Calzada, Cafuentes and La Olivera. Halfway up the Buitrera mountain is a cave known as the Cueva del Mas, whose interior galleries are well known and popular among caving enthusiasts.

The municipality's festive calendar begins on 17 January with the festival of Saint Anthony the Abbot, in which the locals light bonfires, go on a procession, bless animals and hand out traditional sweet rolls. The first Saturday in May sees the celebration of a mass and procession in honour of the Holy Cross and, on the second Sunday, it is the turn of Our Lady of the Forsaken. In September, its patron saint festivities take place with bullfights, street parties and the handing out of the typical sweet rolls of the village, known as "congretes".





Naturally



Naturally



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