

The best bike routes in and around Valencia



with Valeria Valdebenito



Introduction



Hi! My name is Valeria, and I am your expert guide to Valencia. First and foremost, I would like to thank you for purchasing this guide and entrusting me with your leisure time in my city. **Welcome!**



I am a professional tourist guide in the Region of Valencia and a qualified sommelier. I also run my own travel agency, **Ambia Tours**, as well as the online wine shop **BlancoTinto**.

I am Valencian by birth, although I consider myself a citizen of the world as my parents are from Chile and I have lived in different countries, something which has enabled me to learn several languages. Moreover, through my work, I have had the great good fortune to meet and guide through my city thousands of visitors of many different nationalities.

I am passionate about travelling and getting to know different cultures. I love sharing my experiences with others which is how this guide was born in a year that marked us all, 2020. My day-to-day work of showing Valencia to restless travellers was suddenly interrupted and, like everyone else, I had to stay at home. My travel agency and my personal website, **Private Tours Valencia**, were hit by a deluge of cancellations, it was relentless. Nevertheless, little by little, I regained my enthusiasm and decided to show

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you the very best of Valencia through a guidebook which views the city from the saddle of a bicycle, a clean and flexible means of transport which is in harmony with the environment, a key factor for the future of humanity and way of life in large cities.

I would like to describe Valencia to you. It is a comfortable city; it is neither too large nor too small and in 2020 it was awarded the status of a Sustainable Smart City by the United Nations. This is just one of the many reasons why you will discover that Valencia is a destination which is truly worth cycling around.

These routes are designed for you to enjoy at your own leisure, as you wish, when you wish and with whomever you wish. Each time you pass a place of interest, historical site, agreeable terrace bar or children's area, I will point it out to you. My guide is for you to get to know the city, it is not aimed at expert cyclists or geographers, for example, as the maps which are included are purely informative.

I will assist you every step of the way, by offering useful tips and, of course, suggesting where you may like to eat and drink in the capital of the Turia, the ancient river which used to flow through the city.

So, choose your route and... off we go!



Enjoying Valencia on two wheels



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- 3 Modernist Valencia, Ruzafa and Cánovas
- 4 The Turia Riverbed Gardens and Las Arenas beach
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- 6 The Northern Market Garden area: from Valencia to El Puig

A stroll through the history of Valencia



Country: Spain

Region: The Region of Valencia

Province: Valencia

Languages: Spanish and Valencian

Inhabitants: 800,215 (Source: National Statistics Institute - INE, 2020)

Surface area: 134.6 km²

Climate: Mediterranean

Average annual temperature: 17° C

Valencia is situated in the east of the Iberian Peninsula on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is the third most important city in Spain and the capital of the Region of Valencia, an autonomous region made up of three provinces: Castellón in the north, Alicante in the south and Valencia in the centre.

The city enjoys a privileged climate. When you come to visit, the chances are the sun will be shining. This is an important factor as it influences our lifestyle and the way in which we relate to one another, our social interaction is centred mainly around outdoor activities.

Valencia's economic activity, like that of many other cities, is based on the service sector which generates almost 70% of business and employs almost 85% of the population. Other sectors include industry and agriculture: in the borough alone, agricultural activity occupies a total of 3,000 hectares, most of which is dedicated to horticultural crops.

Source: Valencia City Council

Muslim *Balansiya* (718 – 1094)

The Muslims landed on the peninsula in 711, reaching the territory of *Valentia* in 718 and renaming it *Balansiya*. From 1010 onwards, the region enjoyed great splendour thanks to the Taifa kingdoms, small Arab kingdoms which converted it into an important capital. During this period new walls were built, making it the most impregnable fortress in the whole of *Al-Andalus*, the Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula. In 1094, a legendary mercenary from our history, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, otherwise known as El Cid Campeador, conquered the city. However, the glory did not last long and *Balansiya* was retaken by the Muslims.



Traditions and cuisine

Traditions

You can find the calendar of all the traditional festivals at the Tourist Information Office in the plaza del Ayuntamiento (City Hall Square), or alternatively, on their website.

Earlier in this guide, I mentioned that Valencia is a city which likes to live outdoors; this becomes apparent at the beginning of spring, because at this time of the year a series of intertwined folkloric, cultural and religious celebrations begin to take place. Below, I have outlined the most relevant ones.

Incidentally, I can tell you that we Valencians have a reputation for loving noise, gunpowder and partying, and I have to admit that there is some truth in this; if you are looking for a place with these characteristics, then Valencia is the perfect city for you.



Cuisine

I have to confess that I love to eat and drink. The Valencian cuisine is broad and varied, and below I recommend what I believe are the essential things you should try, so that you can experience my land with all your senses.

Valencian Paella: I am sure that you have heard of paella and, in case you were unaware, you are now in the region where this famous dish was born. Many of our traditional dishes are rice based because we grow our own rice in Valencia. By the way, did you know that the pan used for making this dish is also called a «paella»? Valencian paella is, without a doubt, the star dish. It represents the tradition of the *huerta*, the market garden type of agricultural lifestyle as its key ingredients are chicken, rabbit, *bajoqueta* (flat green beans) and *garrofó* (a Valencian variety of butter bean), rice and the water with which it is all cooked. There are other recipes for paella which use snails or duck. However, all the other rice dishes, such as seafood paella, vegetable paella, etc. are not considered Valencian paella.

Black rice: This is a daring dish which is cooked in squid ink and fish stock. It is highly recommended and tasty.



Fideuà: Another of the typical specialities of this region. It is made with similar ingredients to paella, but uses a special type of pasta, called *fideuà*, instead of rice.

All i pebre: Another typical dish for Valencians. Its name literally translated means garlic and paprika. Its main ingredients are garlic, chilli, red paprika and eel, stewed with potatoes. Eels are a highly prized blue fish which comes from the *Albufera* freshwater lake. There are numerous restaurants around the *Albufera* area which serve this dish as a speciality. If you like fish, don't miss it!

Esgarraet or esgarrat is a typical Valencian tapa. Of common peasant origin, it is made with salted cod and the vegetables one has on hand in the *huerta*. Its name comes from the way in which the cod is prepared as it is torn in strips or shredded (*esgarraet* means torn). It is then mixed with roasted red pepper, garlic, and a good extra virgin olive oil. It is a delicious tapa to enjoy with white wine.



El esgarraet o esgarrat

All i pebre

Essential Valencia 2.5 km



- ① City Hall ② Post Office Headquarters ③ Central Market
④ The Silk Exchange ⑤ Round Square ⑥ Palace of the Marquis of
Dos Aguas ⑦ Patriarca Square – Cultural Centre *La Nau*, University
of Valencia ⑧ Saint Vicent Ferrer Square ⑨ Palace Street ⑩
Cathedral of Valencia – Romanesque Door ⑪ Almoina Square
– Almoina ⑫ Virgin Square – Fountain ⑬ Manises Square –
Valencia Government Palace – Baylia Palace ⑭ Serranos Towers