

MURCIA

This region boasts over 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, and its coastline is bathed by the warm waters of two seas. In fact, its coast is known as the Costa Cálida (the balmy coast), and is home to endless beaches and small coves which offer multiple options for leisure, sports and well-being.

One of the most attractive areas is La Manga del Mar Menor, the ideal destination for relaxing and enjoying the sea and the activities in its marine resort. You'll also find long white sandy beaches such as those of San Pedro del Pinatar; unspoilt coves such as the ones in Cartagena, curious landscapes such as the rock erosions of Mazarrón, or fishing towns such as Águilas.

The region is also known for its wide range of wellness and beauty centres. Many of its beaches are considered open-air spas, due to the hyper-saline waters of the Mar Menor, and its therapeutic mud. The region is also home to several major spa resorts.

WHAT TO VISIT

Lorca Archaeological museum: origins of the city

Located in the historic-artistic centre of the town of Lorca, this building dates from the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries. The lower part of the façade has a sober style, while the upper part offers a wealth of ornamentation. The ten rooms of the museum take you on a journey through Lorca's archaeology from different historical periods, from the Palaeolithic through to the construction of Lorca Castle, including Romanisation, and the Iberian and Moorish cultures.

Location: Plaza de Juan Moreno s/n. 30800. Lorca. Murcia

For further information visit www.museoarqueologicodelorca.com

Tel.:+34 968745135

Cartagena Archaeological museum: The origins of Cartagena

The museum takes you from prehistory through to the 19th century.

Located on the site of the late Roman San Antón necropolis, the visit follows a strict chronological order from the Paleolithic and the Bronze Ages to the Roman period, and then on to architectural items and lower arts from the 19th century. The San Antón necropolis itself is one of the main points of interest, and is perfectly integrated into its architectural surroundings.

Location: Calle Ramón y Cajal 45, 30204 Cartagena (Murcia)

For further information visit www.museoarqueologicocartagena.es

Tel.:+34 968525149

Roman Theatre: an example of Roman Cartagena's monuments and architecture

The museum exhibits items discovered in excavations in the area of the Roman Theatre in Cartagena, built between the 5th and 1st centuries BC.

The museum is part of an integral project carried out by architect Rafael Moneo that comprises the restoration of part of the city of Cartagena and its Roman Theatre, which had remained hidden for several centuries. The museum is divided between two buildings and contains archaeological items accompanied by panels explaining the Theatre's restoration, permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as archive and study rooms. The visit to the museum includes a guided tour of part of the city and inside the Roman Theatre itself. It has capacity for 6,000 people and played an important role at the time of Ancient Rome. It has characteristic raked seating excavated out of the rock, a wealth of decoration and a stage measuring more than 43 meters in length.

Location: Plaza del Ayuntamiento, Palacio Pascual de Riquelme, Cartagena (Murcia)

For further information visit www.teatroromanocartagena.org

Tel.:+34 968525149

Salzillo museum

Dedicated to the famous sculptor Francisco Salzillo, born in 1707, the museum has various different rooms where you can see large sculptures created by the artist for the Easter week processions. They are property of the the Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno brotherhood. The Salzillo Crib is also on display: this is an exquisitely delicate work, comprising more than 500 pieces, which evokes rural Murcia of the period.

Location: Plaza San Agustín 3, 30005 Murcia (Murcia)

For further information visit www.museosalzillo.es

Tel.: +34 968291893

BEACHES

CALA ROJA

A small cove that is reached via a set of around 40 steps. It is comprised of grey stones. It has an excellent coastal track that is ideal for bike riding, which is quicker and more comfortable.

Type of beach: Gravel. Calm waters

Location: Cabo de Palos, Cartagena (Murcia)

CALA REONA

A big, easy to get to beach with parking space only a few metres from the sand. Despite the small houses at the foot of the beach, it still preserves an unspoiled air. It has an open-air bar and restaurant.

Type of beach: Golden Sand. Calm waters

Location: Cala Reona, Cartagena (Murcia)

CALA MEDINA

Located in a residential area, it is a very quiet beach. Its wild appearance is mainly due to the vegetation that surrounds the cove. The water is so transparent that you can see all the way to the seabed. There are showers on the way.

Type of beach: Gravel Calm waters

Location: Cartagena (Murcia)

THE CUISINE IN MURCIA

The Region of Murcia serves authentic Mediterranean cooking: cereals, vegetables and olive oil are the base of this cuisine, which finds its source of inspiration in the market garden - natural, authentic, tasty and with a character all of its own. The roasts, salted fish, fish and shellfish from the Mar Menor are equally appreciated. However, the Region of Murcia is also well-known for its rice, sausages, preserved foods, nuts, aromatic plants, fruit and confectionery.

The most important ingredient used in Murcian cuisine is the vegetable. Vegetables are found in nearly every dish. Fresh broad beans are fried with onion; dry broad beans are cooked in the famous "michirones" (ham and chorizo stews); sweet young garlic is present in nearly every casserole or can be served with scrambled eggs, with lightly fried onion and tomato and chard or in a potato omelette; thistle in almond sauce; "zarangollo" (pumpkin, onion and tomato); sweet broad beans to accompany salted meat, fish or sausage as a starter or side dish; artichokes with pine nuts; roast pepper salad; cauliflower, green beans, artichokes and peppers... are vital ingredients to prepare the typical rice and vegetable dish, a must for all visitors to Murcia.