

Murcia
Spain

Costa Cálida

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Spain

Costa Cálida



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
European Regional
Development Fund



CONTENTS

Introduction

Travel Routes along the Coast

The Mar Menor

El Mojón, Regional Park of Las Salinas and San Pedro del Pinatar

Lo Pagán and «therapeutic mud baths»

From Santiago de la Ribera to Playa Honda

La Manga del Mar Menor

1

2

2

3

4

5

6

6

8

9

11

12

14

18

24

The Mediterranean

From Cabo de Palos to the Regional Park of Calblanque

Cabezo de la Fuente, Los Belones, and Sierra Minera

Cartagena

From El Portús to Isla Plana

Mazarrón and Águilas

City of Murcia

Leisure Activities and Events

Useful Information

11

12

14

18

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

24

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T travel routes along the coast

The Mar Menor

Southeast in the Region of Murcia, you come upon the Mar Menor, "the world's largest pool", as the beautiful Olympic swimmer and Hollywood star Esther Williams once proclaimed; a shallow lagoon 170 square kilometers (66 square miles) in size with warm waters, gentle winds, and a modern infrastructure with hotel and sports facilities, making it one of the best places in Europe to learn and practice all kinds of water sports.

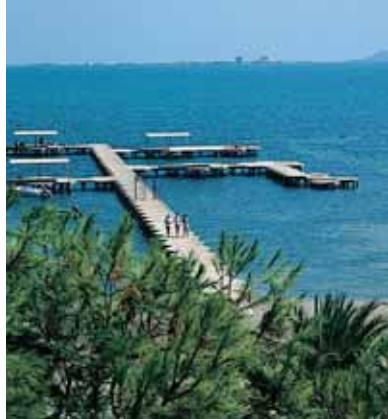
First the Phoenicians and later Arab kings made this "Little Sea" their summer retreat. Today the Mar Menor attracts visitors in search of a warm inviting spot to spend a pleasurable and relaxing holiday any time of the year.

El Mojón, Regional Park of Las Salinas and San Pedro del Pinatar

The Costa Cálida begins at El Mojón, an old fishing village with a superb Mediterranean beach

surrounded by reed beds, and is bounded on the north by the province of Alicante.

A short distance from El Mojón, you encounter the **Regional Park of Las Salinas y Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar**, the most important wetlands in the region of Murcia. Flocks of pink flamingos stop over here each year on their journey to north Africa at the end of the summer.



San Pedro del Pinatar

Accesses:

From San Pedro del Pinatar, it is possible to reach the park by the road to El Mojón, the one leading to the port of San Pedro del Pinatar, or either from Lo Pagán by a road that goes to the end of the town and continues to Molino de San Quintín.

From Las Salinas, the road by the port takes you to San Pedro del Pinatar, where a visit to the *Casa del Reloj*, now a restaurant located on the San Sebastián farm, is well worthwhile.

A visit to the *encañizadas*, a traditional fishing method in this area formerly used by the Arabs, is a must. Located near the spot known as Puntas de Algas, it is one of the three points of exchange of water between the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean Sea.

Lo Pagán and "therapeutic mud baths"

A journey through the Mar Menor proper commences in Lo Pagán, a town two



Villananitos Beach. Lo Pagán

kilometers (1^{1/4} miles) from San Pedro del Pinatar with the largest area of open-air mud baths in all of Europe. These mud baths, known as **Las Charcas de las Salinas**, are recommended for all types of skin and rheumatic ailments. A good idea is to combine these mud baths with saltwater baths since Mar Menor waters have excellent therapeutic properties due to the high content of mineral salts and iodine. Hotels and other establishments offer specialized treatments.

In addition, Lo Pagán has various tranquil beaches, ideal for boating and swimming, including Villananitos, La Puntica, and the area of Los Molinos. The *Lonja de Pescado* (fish exchange), located at the

esplanade of the port, can be visited during the early morning hours from Monday through Saturday. Nighttime diversion can be found in the area known as La Curva.

From Santiago de la Ribera to Playa Honda

From Lo Pagán, taking the road that skirts the Mar Menor, you arrive at **Santiago de la Ribera**, site of the Air Force Academy. Its main nucleus, the municipality of **San Javier**, organizes an interesting Festival of Theater, Music and Dance every summer.

Leaving Santiago de la Ribera, the N-332 near the airport leads to **Los Narejos**, an enclave of the *Centro de Alto*

Rendimiento Infanta Cristina

, where many top athletes train and reside. Close by you have **Los Alcázares**, chosen by Arab kings for a residential retreat. Near the village, you can visit the *torre Rame*, a Moorish tower remodeled in the 16th century. *La Encarnación Hotel*, with its turn-of-20th century ambience, is a pleasant spot to undergo treatment with the waters of the Mar Menor submerged in ancient marble baths.

Typical in this area are the health spas built of wood and painted in various colors with long walkways leading to the sea and cabanas which served as bathhouses on the beach not too long ago.

Near the water's edge, you can find residential developments and fishing villages, including **Los Urrutias**, **Los Nietos**, **Islas Menores**, **Playa Honda** and **Mar de Cristal**, popular vacation destinations of the inhabitants in the region.

Los Alcázares



San Javier. Santiago de la Ribera

La Manga del Mar Menor

The Mar Menor is separated from the Mediterranean by a narrow strip of land only 22 kilometers (14 miles) wide called **La Manga del Mar Menor**. Its sandy beach and crystal-clear waters have made it one of the highest regarded tourist resorts on the Mediterranean, a paradise between seas for all types of water sports and activities that can be practiced at its numerous clubs and sports schools.

La Manga offers swimmers the possibility of choosing between the two seas: on one side, the warm placid waters of the Mar Menor, Cala del Pino, El Galán or El Pedruchillo; on the other, the open waters of the Mediterranean with beaches which include Punta del Estacio, Ensenada del Esparto, and Galúa.





La Manga del Mar Menor

Rounding out the tourist facilities are golf courses, a casino, Tomás Maestre marina, with more than one thousand moorings, magnificent hotels, recreational centers, all types of restaurants, and a lively nightlife during the summer in the area of Plaza Bohemia and the Zoco.

If you proceed to the end of La Manga, passing Tomás Maestre bridge, you come to Veneziola, an area of canals and channels connecting the two seas. Here you can gaze upon the reed beds, where the waters from the two seas mix together naturally, and in the distance, the salt flats, a unique landscape on the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean

From Cabo de Palos to the town of Águilas, the Murcian coast becomes a succession of cliffs and abrupt terrain of great beauty, solitary coves with turquoise waters accessible only by sea or by trails through unspoiled mountains studded with palmettos and terebinthe trees. This stretch of coastline is ideal for skin diving, sailing, cave diving, hiking and climbing.

From Cabo de Palos to the Regional Park of Calblanque

Located only a few minutes from La Manga is **Cabo de Palos**, a charming seafaring

village with an unmistakable mid-19th century *lighthouse* perched atop a hill that affords a wonderful panoramic view of La Manga. This coastal enclave is also known for its delicious fish and *caldero*, (a soupy rice dish) served at restaurants around the port; the *Sunday market* where anything can be found (fruit, handicrafts, salted fish, leather articles, records, etc.); and for being one of the best sites in Spain for skin diving.

Cabo de Palos has two bathing areas: Playa de Levante, an endless beach connected to La Manga, ideal for long walks during quiet months, and Calas de Poniente, steep and rocky coves with crystal-clear waters and spectacular underwater scenery.

Very nearby at the exit point to Murcia is Cala Reona, a popular cove to visit during the summer. From this cove,

following a trail on foot between the cliffs of the Atalayón hill marked by parallel yellow and white bands, you can reach the **Regional Park of Calblanque**. If travelling by car or bicycle, the road between Cabo de Palos and Cartagena and then a few kilometers later a dirt road on the left in good condition will take you to the park.

Calblanque is one of the areas on the Murcian coast that still preserves all of its natural beauty intact; a section of coast left in its virgin state with arid mountains, dunes, long beaches and an intensely blue sea, an ideal place to hide from the crowds, even in August. This nature haven can be visited on foot, by bicycle, or on horseback and is home to interesting vegetation (juniper, palmetto, terebinthe trees) and birds (flamingo, heron, and stork) which inhabit the Salinas de Rasal.

Cabo de Palos



Cabezo de la Fuente, Los Belones, and Sierra Minera

From Cabo de Palos, the road to Cartagena heads east through **Los Belones**. From here, take the road to Los Corralones and make a short detour to visit **Cabezo de la Fuente**, an exceptional observation point 342 meters (1,120 feet) high to admire the best panoramic view of the Mar Menor. The climb takes approximately 45 minutes and is not very difficult, but comfortable shoes are recommended and mid-day heat should be avoided. From this privileged observation point, visitors can see the five islands of the Mar Menor: Barón, Redondela, Sujeto, Ciervo and Perdiguera; the latter is a destination for travelers wishing to enjoy a relaxing swim, delicious sardines and an unforgettable "caldero" rice. Boats make the crossing to Perdiguera from various points on the coast.

Former public market in La Unión



8

Descending in the direction of Atamaría, you can visit **La Manga Club**, a modern complex beneath palm trees with three golf courses, tennis courts, a gym, and a wide range of accommodations, including a five-star hotel.

At the exit of this plush resort, a road amidst pine trees and landscapes of great beauty takes you to **Portman**, the Roman Portus Magnus.

From Portman it is possible to make a side trip north to **La Unión**, a town developed as a result of intensive mining activities where Carthaginians and Romans once mined tons of iron and other ores and shipped them all over the empire from Portman. Symbol of an era, today the **Sierra Minera** of La Unión is only a distant memory with its old abandoned mines and scarred landscapes.

Mines in Portman



9

In the 19th century, silver fever produced and attracted new-found wealth to La Unión, the same as the California gold rush. The prosperity during this period is reflected in a number of handsome Modernist (Art Nouveau) buildings in the center of the town, such as the **Casa del Piñón** on the Calle Mayor, and a **public market**, an authentic treasure. Memories of mining days are also vivid at the museum with its interesting collection of old tools, and the **Mining Song Festival** in August, featuring the best singers in the country for more than forty years.

Cartagena

Our visit to the city commences at the **harbor**, considered by the English Admiral Nelson to be the safest on the Mediterranean. **Muralla del Mar** (1), built by order of Charles III above the harbor, is a wall surrounding the old quarter of the city. At the end of the city, you can admire the original prototype of the **submarine** (2) invented by Isaac Peral and launched from Cádiz on September 8th, 1888.

Leaving the harbor behind, no sooner do you enter the city than you see the **Ayuntamiento** (3), a Modernist Town Hall



Ayuntamiento (Town Hall) in Cartagena

capriciously adorned and with a majestic marble staircase. The Calle del Cañón takes you to the Cuesta de la Baronesa and from there to the **Old Cathedral** (4), the oldest church in the city (the exact date of construction is unknown, but appears to be around mid-12th century), and the **Roman Theater** (5) (first century B.C.), considered, along with Mérida, one of the most important Roman theaters in Spain. Discovered in 1987, today the theater is still undergoing excavation. Walking further down, you encounter the Calle Mayor, main thoroughfare of the city where the Modernist style is apparent at every step; **Casa Cervantes** (6) and **Llagostera** (7) with its curious tile facade, **Gran Bar**, the **Casino** (8), a place to meet and chat in the city.

9

CARTAGENA



- 1. Muralla del Mar
 - 2. Isaac Peral's submarine
 - 3. Ayuntamiento (Town Hall)
 - 4. Old Cathedral
 - 5. Roman Theatre
 - 6. Casa Cervantes
 - 7. Casa Llagostera
 - 8. Casino
 - 9. Church of Santa María de Gracia
 - 10. Gran Hotel
 - 11. Casa Maestre
 - 12. Casa Dorda
 - 13. Casa Zapata
 - 14. Palacio Aguirre
 - 15. Roman column
 - 16. Palacio Pedreño
 - 17. Castillo de la Concepción
 -  Tourist Information
 -  Post Office
 -  Hospital
 -  Parking
 -  Railway Station
 -  Bus Station



Concepción (17), a Punic, Roman, Visigoth, Moorish and Castilian fortress. On the hillside, two representative constructions can be found: the old **Naval Hospital**, future site of the Polytechnic University, and the **bullring** with a Roman amphitheater underneath.

Parallel to Calle Mayor on Calle del Aire, the **Church of Santa María de Gracia** (9) houses the four saints, patron saints of the city, a work by the well-known Murcian sculptor Francisco Salzillo. Further along in the Plaza of San Sebastián, the **Gran Hotel** (10), now occupied by a bank, is a symbol of the Modernist style. Other interesting Modernist buildings scattered throughout the city are the **Train Station**, **Casa Maestre** (11), **Casa Dorda** (12), **Hotel Zapata** (13), and **Palacio Aguirre** (14).

Near the ancient medieval gateway to the city, Puertas de Murcia, Calle Morería Baja has the remains of a **Roman column** (15). **Palacio Pedreño** (16), at the intersection of Carmen and Sagasta streets, is a palace with a splendid marble staircase and a ballroom. To complete our tour, a flight of steps leads up to **Torres Park** and the 11th century **Castillo de la**

From El Portús to Isla Plana

The Cartagena-Mazarrón road takes you to **El Portús**, a small, tranquil tourist town with nudist camping facilities. From El Portús, it is possible to make an excursion through a stretch of steep craggy coast that leads to secluded coves. The trail is marked by yellow and white bars that start at the

beach and continue some 12 kilometers (7½ miles). From this trail, it is also possible to begin the climb to **Sierra de la Muela**, which affords excellent views of the coastline and the areas of **Cabo Tiñoso** with some of the most spectacular underwater scenery on the coast of Murcia, and steep cliffs, along with a wide variety of fauna and flora.

In the direction of La Azohía, a turnoff to the left leads to **Campillo de Adentro** where you can reach the military battery of Castillitos by taking a military road, now open to the public. The battery, abandoned several years ago, preserves among other things, two of the largest coastal canons in the country. The views are also impressive.

Descending a few kilometers in the direction of Mazarrón, you encounter **La Azohía**, a fishing village where tuna is still captured using an ancient

fishing method. There is also a pristine beach lined with palm trees. Upon leaving the town, a side road branching off to the left leads to **Isla Plana**, a peaceful vacation spot with clear waters and rocky beaches.

Mazarrón and Águilas

Leaving Isla Plana and skirting the coast, you reach **Puerto de Mazarrón**, a seaside resort town with excellent hotel facilities and a lively nightlife. A visit to the fishing port is recommended, as well as to La Lonja where a typical fish auction can be observed.

Opposite Bolnuevo beach (its beachside leantos are a good spot to have lunch or enjoy a refreshment break) is **Ciudad Encantada**, one of the most unusual landscapes in the area where time and wind have eroded the sandstone into bizarre shapes.

Torres Park in Cartagena



Along 35 kilometers (22 miles) of coast, Mazarrón unveils lovely spots, such as the beaches of La Reya, Bahía, Nares and El Castelar, in addition to unspoiled coves, including Cala Amarilla, Percheles, and Puntas de Calnegre, in the direction of Águilas, one of the few areas in a virgin state remaining on the Mediterranean.

The little town of **Mazarrón**, three kilometers (almost two miles) from the coast, contains some notable buildings, including the **Ayuntamiento** (Town Hall) and the old **Ateneo Cultural**, both Modernist in style. Also meriting our attention is the 14th century **Church of San Andrés** with lovely Mudéjar coffer-work, as well as the ruins of **Vélez Castle**.

A little inland, leaving the road that continues to Murcia, you travel across colorful landscapes now dotted with abandoned mines.

The coastal road takes you southwest to **Águilas**, an old Roman fishing port. Hornillo wharf, where iron was once loaded for shipping, still stands as a reminder that this was a 19th century mining town.



Mazarrón

In the center of Águilas, it is worthwhile to visit the lovely gardens brimming with ficus plants in the **Plaza de España**, the 19th century **Ayuntamiento** (Town Hall), and the **Parish Church of San José** which houses a lovely statue of the patron saint. In the high part of the old quarter stands the **castle-fortress of San Juan de Águilas**, built in 1579 as a defensive bulwark. At the foot of the castle is the harbor and a typical black and white striped lighthouse, in operation since the middle of the 19th century.

This sea-faring town boasts extensive solitary beaches with crystalline waters (La Higuera, La Carolina, Calabardina, etc.) and is also one of the best areas for skin diving.



Calabardina. Águilas

City of Murcia

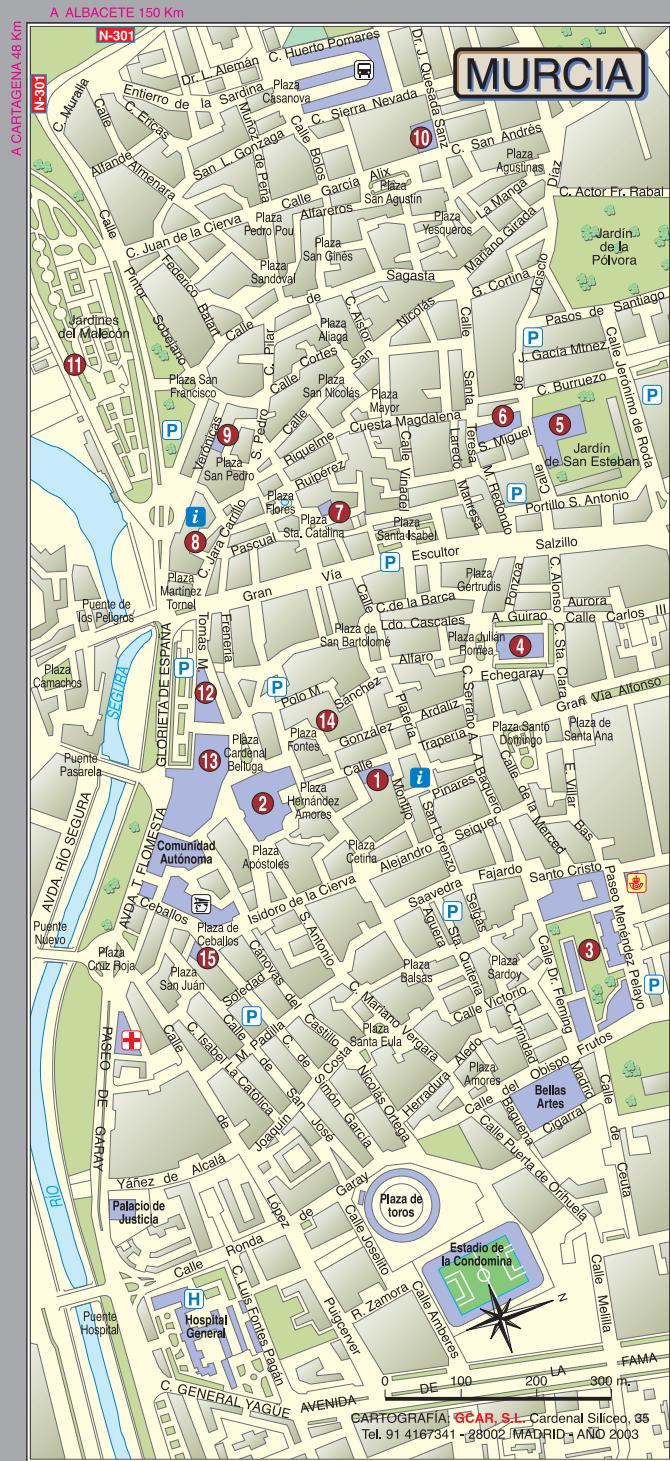
The street called La Trapería is the perfect starting point for a visit to the capital city of Murcia. It is a virtual showcase of the city with a varied array of banks, snack bars and coffee houses, ice cream parlors, traditional shops, and the **Casino** (1), a 19th century treasure (the elegant ballroom, library, and if possible the ladies restroom should be visited). Intersecting La Trapería, you find another historical street in the city called Calle de la Platería. La Trapería comes to an end at the **Cathedral** (2) where the first stone was laid in 1394 by Bishop Fernando de Pedrosa over the foundation of an Arab mosque, though the Cathedral itself was not finished until the 18th century. Especially noteworthy is the ornate Baroque façade of the cathedral made of limestone and marble facing the Plaza de Belluga (a nice spot to stop for refreshment), as well as lovely chapels, including Capilla de los Vélez (15th century) or Junterones (16th century), and the tallest tower in Spain (92 meters/over 300 feet) with 18 ramps and 200 steps that can be climbed for an excellent view of the city and the surroundings.



Cathedral of Murcia

1. Casino
2. Cathedral
3. University
4. Teatro Romea
5. Palacio de San Esteban
6. Church of San Miguel
7. Ramón Gaya Museum
8. Palacio Almudí
9. Convent of Verónicas
10. Salzillo Museum
11. Malecón
12. Ayuntamiento (Town Hall)
13. Palacio Episcopal
14. Palacio de los Fontes
15. Palacio del Conde de Floridablanca

- Tourist Information
- Parking
- Red Cross
- Hospital
- Bus Station
- Police
- Post Office





Ayuntamiento (Town Hall) in Murcia

From the Plaza de Santo Domingo, via the Calle de la Merced, you arrive at the **University** (3), a 16th century convent which preserves a handsome cloister formed by two stories of marble columns. Behind the old arch of Santo Domingo is the Plaza Julián Romea containing the **Teatro Romea** (4), an Isabelline-style theater that presides over an esplanade brimming with cafés, particularly inviting on sunny mornings.

On the other side of the Gran Vía, the main street in the busy commercial area, you encounter the Renaissance **Palacio de San Esteban** (5), seat of the regional government, as well as the church of the same

name. Nearby is the **Church of San Miguel** (6) which preserves a striking Baroque altarpiece.

Strolling along the Gran Vía, you come upon the Plaza de Santa Catalina where you can visit the **Ramón Gaya Museum** (7), a famous universal Murcian painter. Adjacent to it is the Plaza de las Flores, one of the liveliest spots in the city for "tapas" (appetizers), to buy flowers, or to savor the exquisite meat pies from Bonache. Next to it is the Plaza de San Pedro.

Heading towards the Segura River, you come upon the former Mudéjar **Palacio Almudí** (8) (commodities exchange), with its impressive room of Doric columns, transformed into an art center by Town Hall authorities. Next to the palace, you find the only distinct remains of the Moorish walls that encircled the city long ago, as well as the art museum in the **Convent of Verónicas** (9), (a visit to the Plaza de las Verónicas is a must). Close by is the **Salzillo Museum** (10) housed in the Church of Nuestro Padre Jesús. The museum boasts an adjacent chapel, beautifully decorated by the Italian artist Sistori, with several of the best

processional wooden sculptures by Murcia's celebrated native son, Francisco Salzillo. In the church, a magnificent nativity scene with more than 500 figures by the sculptor is on display, as well as several other sculptures and sketches.

After exiting the museum and proceeding towards the river, you come to the **Malecón** (11), a wide jetty extending inland several kilometers. It was originally built by the Arabs to contain the river when it flooded. Next to it, a beautiful lush garden; a pleasant place to walk especially on a hot summer day.

A stretch of land bordering the river separates the Malecón from Plaza de La Glorieta, the most popular and dearly loved spot in Murcia where the **Ayuntamiento** (12) (Town

Hall) stands. Close by is a series of singular buildings, comprising the interesting Baroque **Palacio Episcopal** (13), and the 18th century **Palacio de los Fontes** (14).

Calle de Correos takes you to **Palacio del Conde de Floridablanca** (15), a former palace transformed into a first-class hotel. Next to it is the popular **Arch of San Juan** which runs into the Plaza of the same name, an ideal spot to patronize one of the taverns and bars and try some of the excellent local cuisine.

In the outskirts of the cities, we recommend visiting the **Sanctuary of La Fuensanta** where the patron saint is venerated in the heart of the mountain; **Monteagudo**, a favorite place of King Alfonso the Wise, housing a priceless Muslim palatial complex; the **Monastery of Los Jerónimos**, "The Murcian El Escorial", exhibiting all the grandeur of the Spanish empire amidst the lemon trees; Alcantarilla and La Ñora where ancient Roman waterwheels are displayed; and the 9th century **Castillo del Valle**, a castle evoking all the Caliphal splendor.

Church of Santo Domingo in Murcia



Leisure activities and events

Museums

As a general rule, museums and art galleries are open to the public from Tuesday to Saturday in the morning and afternoon, on Sundays and Public Holidays during the morning only, and are closed on Mondays. For fuller information kindly contact your nearest Tourist Information Office.

Museo Arqueológico Municipal de Cartagena

Ramón y Cajal, 45 The Municipal Museum of Archeology is constructed over the early Christian basilica of San Antón and preserves an interesting collection of objects from the Bronze Age. Of special interest is the 6th century tomb of Byzantine general Comencio.

Muralla Bizantina de Cartagena

Calle Nueva Soledad. Cartagena. Vestiges of the wall the Byzantines erected around the city can be viewed.

Museo Nacional de Arqueología Marítima de Cartagena

Dique de Navidad. Cartagena. The National Museum of Underwater Archaeology

displays a collection of amphoras used on the Iberian Peninsula during ancient times.

Museo Naval de Cartagena
Calle Menéndez y Pelayo, 6
Cartagena. The Maritime Museum possesses an excellent collection of maritime art and objects. Deserving particular attention are the ship models from the 13th century and a room devoted to Isaac Peral and his first submarine.

Museo Minero de La Unión
Plaza del Liceo. The Mining Museum of La Unión provides a didactic presentation of the evolution of mineral extraction techniques in 19th century Murcian mines.

Colección Municipal del Mar de San Pedro del Pinatar
Edificio Cofradía del Mar. Calle Lorenzo Morales. San Pedro del Pinatar. A permanent collection of objects related with the sea, articles of adornment, toys, and maps is exhibited.

Isaac Peral's submarine



18

Sports

Nautical Tourism

The Estación Náutica Mar Menor, the Consorcio Náutico de Mazarrón and Consorcio Águilas Villa Náutica offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy a unique experience: nautical tourism. The main ingredients have already been provided by nature: the sea, an average annual temperature of 17°C (63°F) and more than three hundred days of sunshine a year. Man's contribution has been to equip the various nautical resorts to provide visitors with the possibility of practicing sailing, canoeing, diving, etc.

For the visitors' convenience, these resorts offer travel packages that include lodging, practicing the sport of choice and "Sports Vacation" insurance. In addition, it is possible to purchase day tickets at very reasonable prices that include equipment rental, liability insurance and the use of the services at each of the schools.

Centro de Alto Rendimiento Deportivo Infanta Cristina
Located on the shores of the Mar Menor, the CAR Sports Center provides instruction in



Cave Diving

sailing, canoeing, underwater sports, water skiing, rowing, etc., although its main purpose is training top athletes. Carretera del Aeropuerto. Los Alcázares.

Scuba Diving and Cave Diving

A wide variety of underwater settings and the good visibility of its transparent waters make the Murcian coast one of the foremost places in the country for scuba diving. The best areas are located on Cabo de Palos (Carthaginian Cabo Tiñoso) where a huge variety of flora and fauna exists, as well as interesting shipwrecks that have sunk along these shores. Along the entire coast, clubs organize expeditions, give instruction, and rent equipment.

19



Club de Golf de La Manga

Underwater caves are located between Cartagena and La Azohía with large underwater vaults and galleries. Maps of the caves should be used since some are several kilometers long with maze-like galleries.

Hiking: The old roads used by miners and fishermen along the coast between Cabo de Palos and Portman, between Cartagena and the bay of Mazarrón, or in Calnegre Park and Cabo Cope, provide splendid countryside for hiking or walking.

Mountain Biking: The trails and roads between Cabo de Palos and Cartagena are in good condition and afford an impressive landscape through the mountains once devoted

to mining. Salinas de San Pedro is also recommended for a pleasureable ride.

Horseriding: From the Mar Menor, it is possible to arrange rides through the mountains along the coast or through the vast plains of the Campo de Cartagena and lovely farmland and winter pastures. **Cuadras El Puntal:** Carretera del campo de golf, km. 1.200. Los Belones. **Centro Hípico Rancho de la Fuente:** Avenida de la Fuente. Los Belones.

Golf: La Manga Club has three 18-hole golf courses set among swaying palm trees, as well as all types of sports facilities.

Torre Pacheco, near the Mar Menor, has a smaller club with a 9-hole course.

Molina de Segura, Club de Golf Altorreal, 18-holes.

Fishing: Saltwater fishing is popular all along the Mediterranean coast. Especially recommended are the areas of **Águilas** and **Mazarrón** because of the depth and transparency of the waters.

Balnearios (Health Spas)

Archena Health Spa

On the shores of the Segura river, amidst orange and lemon trees and other lush tropical plants, is the health spa of Archena, an ideal spot for a healthy and restful vacation. Specializing in respiratory, dermatological, and rheumatic ailments, its thermal waters surface at a temperature of 52 ° Centigrade (125 ° F.) and have a high mineral content. Medical staff on the premises. Facilities include an outdoor thermal pool, tennis and paddle tennis courts, bicycle excursions, a golf course 15 km. away, casino, nightclub, and library.

Fortuna Health Spa

The waters containing sodium bicarbonate and sodium chloride at the health spa of Fortuna surface at a temperature of 53 ° Centigrade (127 ° F.) and are especially recommended for the treatment of asthma, rheumatic ailments, colds and allergies, as well as

Archena Health Spa



gynecological problems. The ancient baths were used by the Arabs and Romans but today offer modern facilities, a three-star hotel directly connected to the spring, an outdoor swimming pool with thermal water, ideal for cold winter mornings, and medical staff on the premises all year round.

Festivals

Carnival

Águilas: February. Spectacular parades and nightly celebrations held outdoors along with a National Contest of "Salsa" Music. Declared of interest to the tourist at a national level.

Cartagena: February. The entire city dresses in costume and takes to the streets. Lively evening celebrations. Declared of interest to the tourist at a regional level.

Holy Week

Cartagena: The most popular processions are: Los Marranos brotherhood on Good Friday and Los Californios on Holy Wednesday, as well as the procession of the Encuentro in the early morning hours on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Declared of interest to the tourist on a national level.
Murcia: Holy Week in Murcia is noted for its baroque-

inspiration, penitent garb and customs, including giving candy to acquaintances who come to watch the processions. Do not miss the parades held on Easter Monday and Holy Wednesday with the popular procession of the "coloraos", and the morning of Good Friday with processional figures by Murcian sculptor Francisco Salzillo exhibited in all their splendor.

Lorca: Spectacular biblical/passion-inspired processions where passages from the Old Testament are reenacted. Floats, chariots and triumphal vehicles parade down the main streets.

Mar Menor: Donning penitent garb, everyone along the Mar Menor takes to the streets with their colorful processions.

■ Spring Festival in Murcia (week after Easter)

Bando de la Huerta: Most important day of Spring Festival. Thousands of Murcians and visitors dress in typical costume and take to the streets for the day. Activities include flowers for the patroness, the Virgin of La Fuensanta, "barracas" set up to savor the

Holy Week in Lorca



exquisite cuisine, and during the afternoon, a big parade with dance groups and movable "barracas" to dispense wine and food to spectators.

Entierro de la Sardina: On Saturday, a colorful climax to the celebrations includes a curious parade with giants and big-headed figures and a score of floats honoring the gods of Olympus. Millions of toys are given away also. The Sardine is burned near the river. The night continues with a display of fireworks and dancing.

■ Festival of the Virgin el Carmen

San Pedro del Pinatar: July. Boats tied together with ropes cruise the waters of the Mar Menor carrying the figure of the Virgin el Carmen. Spectacular local flavor.

■ Mining of Song Festival

La Unión: August. In the Modernist-style market, prestigious singers, musicians and dancers get together each year at this Festival to compete for the coveted "Mining Lamp". The festival has been declared of interest to the tourist at a national level.

■ International Week of the "Huerta"

Los Alcázares: August. Showcase for the handicrafts,

cuisine and customs of the fertile Murcian plain. A Folklore Festival held simultaneously features national and international groups.

■ Festival of Theater, Music and Dance

San Javier: August. A variety of groups assemble with the most attractive productions of the season.

■ Carthaginians and Romans

Cartagena: September. Fifteen days of confrontation between Romans and Carthaginians include encampments, parliaments, parades, battles and speeches.

Cuisine

The Murcian coast is proud of its *caldero*, a soupy rice cooked in an iron cauldron according to seafarer's recipes with different types of fish and bell peppers, as well as other rice dishes. The fish is excellent by the sea, baked under a mound of coarse salt, especially mullet, dorado and sea bass, and baked in the oven with white wine and slices of fresh tomato, lemon and bacon; grilled (typical of the area of Mazarrón); or marinated; fried, even better when "chanquetes" (a small fish eaten whole) are used; cured,



"Paella huertana"

especially the exquisite *mojama*; or baked wrapped in algae, Aguileño-style. The seafood is exceptional (especially the prawns from the Mar Menor); exotic, such as the *pastel cierva* from the area of the Mar Menor, a pie filled with meat, pigeon, rabbit or fowl and eggs. For dessert, a slice of melon, if possible from Torre Pacheco, figs, a piece of *tocino de cielo* (a sweet made of eggs and syrup), grapes from Cartagena, or goat cheese. To top off a meal, perhaps an *asiático*, a delicious coffee concoction with cinnamon, condensed milk, liqueur and coffee beans from the area of Cartagena.

Handicrafts

Centro de Artesanía de Cartagena (Calle Capitanes Ripoll) exhibits a wide-range of handicrafts produced in the area priced the same as in the workshops. It is possible to discover how clay, glass, cloth, and esparto-grass are handcrafted.

USEFUL INFORMATION

How to get there: Murcia Airport, San Javier, next to Mar Menor and 47 kilometers from Murcia, has direct connections with several Spanish capitals, as well as charter flights from a variety of European cities. Rental cars are available at the airport.

By road, Costa Cálida is reached from Murcia by Autovía Murcia-Cartagena which connects with Mar Menor, La Manga and Cabo de Palos. To get to Águilas and Mazarrón, take the Autovía Andalucía from Murcia or the N-332 from Cartagena. Daily bus service connects Murcia with the Costa Cálida.

RENFE (Spanish National Railways) provides a daily train service between Murcia and Cartagena, as well as to the rest of Spain, and a special coastal service during the summer months.

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

Murcia

☎ 968 358 749 ☎ 968 358 748
www.murciaciudad.com

Águilas

☎ 968 493 285 ☎ 968 446 082
www.aguilas.org

Los Alcázares

☎ 968 171 361 ☎ 968 575 249
www/ayto-losalczares.es

Calasparra

☎ 968 745 325 ☎ 968 723 000
www.calasparra.org

Caravaca de la Cruz

☎ 968 702 424 ☎ 968 700 952
www.caravaca.org

Cartagena

☎ 968 506 483 ☎ 968 526 912
www.cartagena.es

Cieza

☎ 968 453 500 ☎ 968 453 500
www.ayuntamiento.cieza.net

La Manga del Mar Menor

☎ 968 146 136 ☎ 968 564 958
www.marmenor.net

Lorca

☎ 968 441 914 ☎ 968 466 157
www.lorca.es

Mula

☎ 968 661 501 ☎ 968 637 009

Puerto de Mazarrón

☎ 968 594 426 ☎ 968 594 426
www.mazarron.es

San Javier

☎ 968 571 704 ☎ 968 573 963
www.turismosanjavier.com

San Pedro del Pinatar

☎ 968 182 301 ☎ 968 183 706
www.sanpedroturismo.com

PARADORS

Central Reservation Office:

Calle Requena, 3. 28013 Madrid
☎ 902 547 979 ☎ 902 525 432
www.parador.es

Puerto Lumbreras

☎ 968 402 025 ☎ 968 402 836

TRANSPORT

Aena (Spanish Airports and Air Navigation) ☎ 902 404 704
www.aena.es
ADIF-RENFE ☎ 902 240 202
www.renfe.es
International Information
☎ 902 242 402 / 902 243 402

www.renfe.es – www.adif.es
Murcia Bus Station
☎ 968 292 211
Highway Information
☎ 900 123 505
www.dgt.es

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergencies ☎ 112
Medical Emergencies ☎ 061
Civil Guard ☎ 062
National Police ☎ 091

Municipal Police ☎ 092
Citizen Information ☎ 010
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