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PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

Cartagena

SPAIN

GENERAL INFORMATION

Cartagena is a historic port city located on the southeast Mediterranean coast of the Iberian Peninsula. As it has been from ages past, Cartagena remains an important outlet to the Mediterranean. When sailing into port it is easy to imagine that this is the exact same sight that awaited the ships of the early Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Moors, Barbary Coast pirates, the Spanish Armada and ships from France and Great Britain. From as far back as the 1500s up through today, Cartagena functions as the Mediterranean home port for Spain's navy. Always linked with the sea, whether through trade, the military, fishing or recreation, Cartagena provides a safe anchorage for all.

Cartagena is in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia, one of the seventeen Autonomous Communities that make up Spain. The capital of the region is in the city of Murcia while the Regional Assembly meets in Cartagena. The southern coast of Spain is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. But this is also a working city with a history stretching back well over 2,000 years.

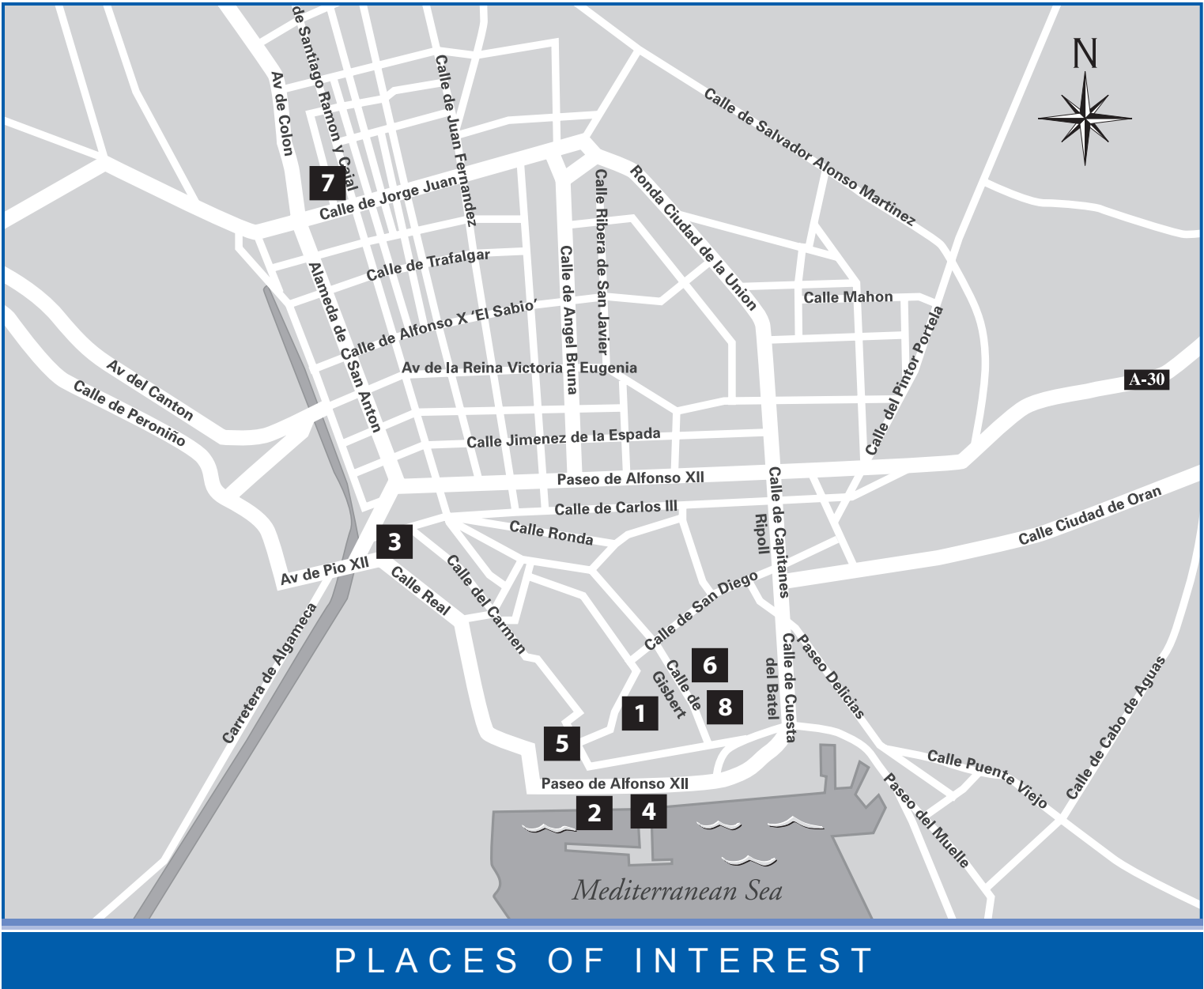
The mines, just outside the city, have been worked from the time of antiquity. In fact, a locale boy used the silver from the mines of Cartagena to buy some elephants way back in 218 BC ... more on that later. The region also produces a large quantity of flowers, fruits and vegetables as well as wine and olive oil for domestic consumption and export throughout the European Union. Cartagena is an easy city to walk. The sites tend to be in relatively close proximity to each other. There a plenty of small cafes, especially near the waterfront, where guests can get a cool drink and order up some delicious seafood. But perhaps the best feature that Cartagena has to offer a visitor is the genuine warmth and friendliness of her people. You won't have to look deep to find it.

HISTORY Archeological evidence of human habitation along the southeast coast of the Iberian Peninsula dates back to the Bronze Age, 3,000 years BC. Artifacts from this period have been discovered throughout this part of Spain. As they had done throughout much of the Mediterranean, by the 1st millennium BC intrepid Phoenician sailors, soon followed by the Greeks, established numerous trading posts all along the Iberian coast. By the early 200s BC, Carthaginians were spreading colonies throughout the coastal regions of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. According to some historical records the Carthaginians reached a commercial and defense cooperation treaty with a port city named Mastia. That city would become Cartagena, meaning “New Carthage”.

Having grown up in the city, it would be from Cartagena, in the spring of 218 BC, that the great General Hannibal would lead his 60,000 man army, with his famous 37 war-elephants, off of the Iberian Peninsula, across southern Gaul and over the Alps into Italy. For the next fifteen years Hannibal would fight the Romans on their own soil. Meanwhile Cartagena the center of Carthaginian power in Iberia would fall to the Romans under the command of General Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Major in 210 BC. The town and the entire region would grow and prosper for centuries. As the Roman Empire continued its slow decline, in the early 400s AD, Germanic tribes known as the Vandals swept south onto the Iberian Peninsula.

They would be followed a century later by another Germanic tribe, the much-feared Visigoths. During two centuries of occupation the Visigoths, resting upon Roman cultural laurels, contributed virtually nothing of their own to the peninsula. Strife and dissention inside the ruling dynasty, combined with widespread famine and disease to dangerously weaken Visigoth rule.





There was little that could be done when the Arab, Islamic Moors crossed the Straits of Gibraltar out of North Africa in 711 and began their conquest of Iberia (al-Andalus to the Moors). The Muslims would rule much of Spain for nearly seven centuries. This would become Spain’s “Golden Age” as the Moors made great contributions to improving agriculture, literature, art and astoundingly beautiful architecture. The Moors would also expand the boundaries of mathematics, the sciences and medicine.

By mid 1,000 AD Moorish rule was being overthrown in some parts of Spain. This became known in Spanish history as the Reconquista. Roman Catholic Castilian and Argon Kings fought among themselves for control of newly reconquered regions. In 1492 Islamic rule in Spain was completely overthrown.

In the 20th century, after years of tension, in July, 1936 civil war broke out in Spain. Those that supported the government of Spain’s Second Republic were opposed by rebel military forces under the leadership of General Francisco Franco. It was a horrible war, a prelude by proxy to World War II, and as usual innocent civilians paid the price. Cartagena and much of the surrounding region supported the Republic

against the General Franco’s Nazi and Italian backed fascists. General Francisco Franco died in 1975. This led to the establishment of the constitutional monarchy of the popular King Juan Carlos I. Since that time the port city and region of Cartagena has slowly grown and prospered.

CARTAGENA PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Concepcion Castle is the ruins of a fortress that formed part of the city’s defenses. The castle is set in beautiful Torres Park and overlooks the city and harbor.

2 The sea wall of Cartagena is a very popular site in the city. This is a great place to stroll along the waterfront. The wall was built in the 1700s at the direction of King Carlos III.

3 The Naval Museum is contains an interesting collection of charts and maps, model ships, celestial navigation instruments together with numerous other objects used in the maritime profession.

4 The National Museum for Underwater Archeology is one of the few in Spain that undertakes aquatic research to learn more

about the tools, ships and methods used by ancient seafarers.

5 The Palacio Consistorial (the old Town Hall) has recently been carefully restored to its original beauty after being closed and neglected for many years. Construction began on the intricately designed building in 1900 and was dedicated by King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenia in 1907. The Town Hall is near the waterfront and open to the public.

6 The Roman Theater was long forgotten and buried under nearly 2,000 years of construction until finally discovered in 1987. Cut into the hillside in one of the city’s old neighborhoods, the 6,000 seat theater is undergoing careful archeological excavation. Sculptures and bas-reliefs recovered from the site can be viewed in the Municipal Archaeological Museum. Great care is being taken to develop the site and surrounding area into one of the city’s most treasured features.

7 The Museo Arqueológico Municipal (Municipal Archaeological Museum) has on display an interesting selection of artifacts that range from the Paleolithic era and the Bronze Age through the Carthaginians and Romans and completing the city’s historic timeline with the Ottoman Moors.

8 The Plaza de Toros (The Bull Ring) is a very interesting structure with a great deal of history. The bull ring was built in the 1850s upon the foundation of a Roman gladiatorial arena. Visitors can only view the arena from outside where it is possible to look into the subterranean entrance through which gladiators passed on their way to prepare for battle.

Beyond Cartagena

Murcia is the capital city of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia. The city is north of Cartagena set along the banks of the Segura River. The city was founded in the 800s (a latecomer compared to Cartagena) on the orders of Abd-al-Rahman II, the Muslim emir of Córdoba. There are a number of beautiful sites in Murcia including Cardinal Belluga Square, the city’s cathedral from the late 1300s, The Monastery of the Virgin of Fuensanta and the Episcopal Palace which was built in the 1700s.

Elche, on the coast northeast of Cartagena, is a great little town known for its huge palm tree garden. The scent of flowers combined with waterfalls and small lakes all make for a serene setting in which to unwind. This is a wonderful place to walk and explore.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Cartagena and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Prices are usually fixed.

Tipping: If a service charge is not included, 10% is a good guideline.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES The region’s cuisine is based upon its proximity to the Mediterranean. Rice (arroz) is an important staple. Some favorite dishes include: Arroz de mero y gambas, prawns, grouper and rice. Arroz a la alicantina, chicken, shellfish and rice. Arroz de magro, fresh vegetables, meat and rice.

Arroz Negro, calamari and assorted seafood with rice. Touron nougat is a popular desert in the region. It is an almond, sugar and honey bar (sometimes with cinnamon and lemon).

It is no secret that this region of Spain produces some fine wines with denomination of origin - Jumilla, Yecla and Bullas. However, there is a popular local drink of which you might not have heard... an after-dessert coffee called asiático. The drink combines layers of condensed milk, espresso, brandy, cream and cinnamon.

SHOPPING The best shopping is to be found in the city center, a short walk from the terminal. Espacio Mediterráneo Shopping Center and El Corte Inglés Department Store are also popular.

Value added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCI cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in Spain is the Euro. ATMs are plentiful. Major credit cards are usually welcomed.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES The Main Post Office is located at Plaza San Francisco.

Calls using a personal calling card may be dialed using the following access numbers:

AT&T: 900.99.0011

MCI: 800.099.357

TRANSPORTATION Taxis are generally available near the Pier. There are few English speaking drivers and it is advisable to negotiate a fare prior to departing. Car Rental: Drivers must be 21 and have held their license for 1 year.

TOURIST INFORMATION The Tourist Information Center is located at the Town Hall, Plaza del Ayuntamiento.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

- Yes • Si
- No • No
- Good Day • Buenos Dias
- Good Bye • Adios
- Thank-you • Gracias
- You’re welcome • De Nada