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Alicante Spain – How to explore it in one day

By Robert Carlton

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Imagine some of you will come over and spend these summer holidays around the Costa Blanca in places like Benidorm, Torrevieja, Denia or Calpe. After two weeks of sunbathing and party at night, you finally get your act together and do a one day visit to Alicante - just to be able to tell the loved once at home that you have seen some culture and arts as well.

Come and join me for a foot walk around Alicante

Before we start a quick overview. Alicante, with about 310.000 habitants lies about 6 hours down from Barcelona along the Mediterranean coast of Spain. Within the summer months about 6 million tourists visit the Costa Blanca area. Depending on different sources, about 4.5 Mio come from the U.K. alone. Cities like Benidorm (population 50.000) host up to 4 Mio visitors every year. Alicante is the second largest city in the province of Valencia.

The city is best explored by foot starting at the harbour area, where many parking areas are available. So we leave our car next to the Melia Hotel right on the harbour entrance. (A quick tip at the beginning, if you arrive at Alicante Airport you can get a very good Alicante map right at the tourist information centre at the arrival hall.)

Just behind the Melia Hotel at the foot of the Santa Barbara Castle you find the beach of Postiguet, where at the end of our little walk through Alicante, we will have our sunbath. But let's go on and get some culture and historical buildings to see.

Directly in front of the Melia Hotel we enter a little road which brings us to the Plaza del Ajuntamento, which means Plaza of the City Hall. Alicante's city hall was originally built in 1688 by the French, later heavily damaged and rebuilt in the 18th century. Guided by two 35 metre. tall towers, the city halls stairs measures the "Cero-Point" concerning sea level. All measurements of height in Spain - refer to this "cero-point" as base for their calculations. Within the city hall you can visit the blue salon with its wonderful mirror gallery (Monday to Saturdays). Just passing the city hall at the right you will find the Plaza de Santissima Faz, a lovely little area surrounded by palm trees.

The nativity scene museum of Alicante

A little bit further, particularly if you are with children, you should visit the nativity scene museum at San Augustin Street. I have to admit it is a rather strange feeling to watch Christmas cribs around the summer time, but it's worth it. The museum contains such a variety of hundreds of different scenes and figures from all over the world, that it will impress every visitor. As entrance is free, just have a look - you will not regret it.

Just around the corner from the nativity museum, you will find the concathedral of San Nicolas de Bari. With the neighbour city of Orihuela being the residence of the bishop of the province, Alicante got a "sub-cathedral" granted by Pope John XXIII in 1959. With an impressive 45 metre high blue dome the

concathedral the building is one of the landmarks of Alicante. At one of the two entrances you will find a sculpture of the holy Nicolas done in black marble.

Just when you walk out of the old city centre of Alicante and pass the rather modern street of Rambla de Mendez Nunez, you should enter the Avenida Del Teatro. There you will find Alicante's huge theatre with massive roman style columns guiding the entrance. Just the right place for a pleasant evening entertainment, by the way. Walking down in the harbour direction, you will find the Plaza Nueva Alicante. Here you will find a little aquarium within lovely plaza. The modern display sits within palm trees and an alley. Just the right place to have a break in one of the bars around, enjoying the sun.

Alicante Bars and Parks

I think now is the best time to take a break from our traditional Alicante sightseeing tour and leave the path of historic buildings and museums. There are so many different churches, museums and places particularly around the old city centre, which you can spend many days discovering them. However, as you might visit the city during the rather hot summer months allow me to have a little step back and go up to the Plaza de C. Sotelo.

The lovely garden is the ideal rest place and the best starting point for a little shopping tour in Alicante. Right at the opposite you will find the El Corte Ingles, the famous Spanish department store chain with an impressive outlet. Not that you might just go there for shopping, but as it is air-conditioned it might just be the right thing to "cool things down" a little. So after a nice "shopping-rest" just coming out of the El Corte Ingles, we walk the Avenida Doctor Gadea down to the harbour area.

Next to statue of D. Eleuterio Maisonnave former minister of state and famous sun of the city of Alicante, the Avenida guides you down to the harbour with beautiful flowers along the way. It is this kind of alleys you find all around Alicante and make the city such a wonderful place for a walk around. The city is full with peaceful places and gardens its all up to you if you prefer going for the quiet site of Alicante. Down the Avenida Doctor Gandeia we reach the harbour area again.

Before turning left to where we came from, you should visit the Panoramis shopping mall directly at the harbour. Just when you go there you will pass the Real Club de Regatas - the royal regatta club. If you

are lucky you might even see members of the Spanish royal family, who sometimes spend some time here. Similar to an American style shopping mall, the Panoramis offers you a breathtaking view over the Alicante harbour area. With a huge variety of different restaurants, most of them with perfect view over the city, it is a lovely point of reference for every walk around the city.

Finally we turn back to the area around the Melia Hotel, where we started our walk through Alicante. Along the harbour at the Paseo Explanada de Espana our way takes us in between an alley of palm trees right back.

Further sightseeing tips on Alicante

Having completed more or less our walk through Alicante - which might take anything in between 4 to 6 hours, there are obviously many more things to see and visit around this impressive city. Among others you could go up the castle of Santa Barbara (take the car to get there if it's too hot), see the bullfighting ring or visit the Park Ruiz de Alda north of Alicante just to name a few. However you might reconsider your plans when you are actually visiting the Costa Blanca area, because above everything

stands usually the beach, the sand and the sea.

Robert Carlton lives with his valencian wife and daughter in the

suburb of San Joan. Running

a marketing company he started setting up a website for some of his international customers visiting him. You can reach him via his website

Alicante Is A Great Place To Rent An Apartment

By Rent A Place In Spain

Alicante is the second largest town of the Valencia region in Spain, with a population of around 300,000. Unlike its coastal neighbours, Alicante is a real town living for much more than tourism alone. With a wonderfully warm, Mediterranean climate and miles of white, soft, sandy beaches, Alicante is an ideal holiday destination.

One of the fastest-growing cities in Spain, Alicante is steeped in history and is a truly cosmopolitan, vibrant town with plenty to see and do. It has shops, bars and restaurants galore, and museums too, so you can be as cultural as you want to be.

Things to see and do around Alicante:

· Santa Barbara castle · Golf · Water sports · Theme parks · Safari Parks

You won't get a true feeling for Alicante by staying in a large chain hotel. By renting an apartment in

Alicante Spain – How to explore it in one day

Alicante you'll be able to live as a local inhabitant and do as they do. It's a good opportunity to visit the local shops and bustling markets to get your daily groceries.

Transport

Alicante is easily accessible and with its excellent road and rail links, it is easy to visit nearby places of interest. It has its own airport which is six miles outside the city. There are regular connections throughout the day all year round to almost every major European city and with many more cheap flights available from the UK, this makes Alicante a particularly attractive place to go on holiday.

A bus service shuttles passengers from the airport to the Plaza del Mar, southwest of the city centre, or you can catch a taxi. Departure tax is factored into ticket prices. You can get to and from Alicante on the bus, tram and train. Public transport is relatively cheap, which means you can afford to make journeys just to take in the spectacular views.

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