

# Vistas of Valencia

Single center   guided walking

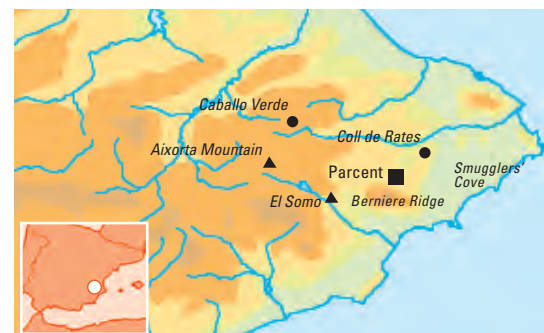
- Superbly contrasting walking; majestic mountain and coastal scenery, panoramic views at every turn
- Spectacular peaks, dramatic gorges, tumbling waterfalls, sun-filled valleys, ancient Arabic trails
- Traditional white villages, stunning turquoise bays, citrus groves, olives, almond blossom
- Intimate and exquisitely restored hotel in heart of wine village; wonderfully friendly hosts, superb value
- Over 200 varieties of wild flowers; butterflies, eagles, red kites, griffon vultures



Just south of Valencia's architectural splendor, the mountains of the high Marina Alta crash together like limestone waves on a stormy ocean, and shattered peaks guard citrus valleys, vineyards and steep almond terraces that blossom candyfloss pink in the early part of the year. It's a contrasting and dramatic region where traditional villages, perched on sharp ridges and valley sides, seem a world away from the popular Mediterranean coastal resorts just 20 minutes distant.

This holiday is based in hilltop Parcent, a colorful Spanish *pueblo* where tourism is virtually unknown. You stay as guests of David and Sue Eaton, in their exquisitely restored  Casa Carrascal townhouse in the heart of the jasmine-scented village. There are just six en-suite bedrooms, each lovingly adorned with antiques and equipped with fans/ heaters. You'll also benefit from the in-room tea/ coffee making facilities – a rarity in Spain! – and there's a comfy lounge/ library where you can enjoy aperitifs from the well-stocked honesty bar. David presides in the kitchen and his mouth-watering menus (wine included) are served either on the terrace or in the rustic dining room (with a cozy wood burner for winter months).

The walks are led by Sue, David and their trusted guides and mostly follow the extensive network of ancient Arab trails and mule tracks that lace the surrounding sierras and villages. Twice a year – in spring and autumn – the paths are alive with daisies and plateaux of spectacular orchids perfume the hillsides, but whenever you travel, you'll be bowled over by the dramatic scenery, outstanding natural beauty and great value for money that this holiday offers.



## VISTAS OF VALENCIA | DAY BY DAY

### Saturday You arrive in Parcent

A private transfer (70 mins) to Parcent - welcome drink and a stroll around the village before dinner.

### Sunday El Somo Circuit 12km/7.5mi/4hr

Today's walk winds between three inland gorges each more spectacular than the last! Farm paths through cherry orchards lead over open ridges, with ever more expansive views of the coast before we picnic in a ruined farmhouse below an impossible castle on a ragged vertical peak. From here we wind past bright pink velorium above a sunken chasm, and descend through almond terraces perfumed with camomile back the start. Tonight David cooks a huge wagon-wheel sized paella on the terrace!

### Monday Caballo Verde 12km/7.5mi/4hr

A ferocious battle between the Moors and Christians - the last on mainland Spain during the Spanish Reconquest - took place on the Caballo Verde Ridge high above Parcent village in 1609. Today we follow a steady stepped trail cut centuries ago by Arab traders through almond terraces leading up to this ancient battlefield, marked by a lonely cross on the rocky hillside. We picnic with views out to the distant Balearic Islands before descending from a rocky saddle into Benichembla Village for a drink in the lively local bar.

### Tuesday Coll de Rates 11km/7mi/4hr

We walk through orange groves into the Carrascal range, ascending the Barranco Negro and picking wild blackcurrants as Bee-eaters wheel and chatter overhead. Look out for jonquils - perfect tiny daffodils - while thyme and wild Angelica line our mountain path almost all the way to the summit, from where we have views over several surrounding sierras. On returning to the village, look out for the *pelota* players in the late afternoon thrashing a ball to and fro along the main street to the cheers of local supporters!

### Wednesday Independent exploring in Valencia

After breakfast we give you a lift to the station to catch the train (45mins, tickets included) to the splendid city of Valencia. Visit the Plaza de Mercado, cathedral, Museo de Bellas Artes (original works by Goya and El Greco) and the world-heritage site of the Lotja de la Seda (Silk Market). The landmark of the city is undoubtedly the City of Arts and Sciences, and avant-garde museum complex that attracts in excess of 4 million visitors a year.

### Thursday Smugglers' Cove Walk 7km/4mi/4hr

Many coves and beaches near Parcent were well used as smuggling depots in olden days. Our route winds down a rocky defile filled with lavender and wild fig to a stunning turquoise bay, where the surrounding cliffs are honeycombed with illicit storage caves connected by mule tracks. We ascend to a superb seaside trail leading below soaring cliffs and walk below tumbling waterfalls, before returning to the beach for a swim, and a transfer back to the hotel.

### Friday Berniere Ridge 14km/8.5mi/5.5hr

Few walks offer as many high impact views as today's circular route around the 1000m high Berniere Ridge near the coast. A steady ascent leads to an amazing natural cave - after ducking through it (just 15m) fabulous coastal views stay with us to our picnic spot - a ruined C16 Moorish fortress! After exploring the extensive ruins we pass over a saddle to Echo Gorge and follow a breathtaking traverse to the sound of cicadas and skittering lizards, before an easy descent back to our starting point.

### Saturday You leave Parcent



## Dates and Prices

### Departs selected Saturdays Tour Only

#### 2012 departures

Jan 14, 28, Feb 25, Mar 3, 10, 24	\$2,347
Feb 4, 11,	\$2,347
Mar 31	\$2,347
Apr 7, 21, 28, May 5, 19, 26	\$2,310
Sep 22, Oct 20	\$2,473
Nov 17	\$2,473
Dec 22	\$2,595

#### 2013 departures

Jan 12	\$2,471
Mar 9, Apr 13	\$2,498
Feb 9, May 11	\$2,498

**Singles:** Add \$49 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

**Child:** This holiday is unsuitable for children under 14.

**Room upgrade:** Two bedroom apartment add \$26 per person, per night.

**Holiday type:** Guided walking, single center, groups of typically 4-12 people on each tour.

**Departs:** Selected Saturdays from Jan 14 2012 to May 11 2013.

**Duration:** 8 days (7 nights).

**Meals:** All meals (including wine).

**Other details:** For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

### Tailor-made travel choices

#### Nearest Arrival Airport: Alicante Airport

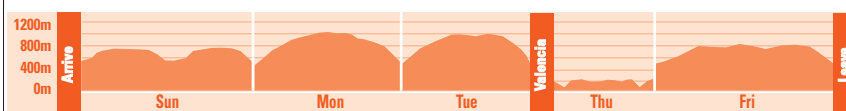
Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

**The above prices include our standard transfers:** Alicante Airport at 09:50 (May, Sept-Oct 2012 & May 2013) or 09:45 (Mar 31-Apr 2012, Nov-Dec 2012 & Jan-Apr 2013), (transfer to hotel, 1hr 10mins, provided). **Return:** Alicante Airport by 08:50 (May, Sept-Oct 2012 & May 2013) or 08:55 (Mar 31-Apr 2012, Dec 2012 & Jan-Mar 2013) or 08:45 (Nov 2012 & Apr 2013), transfer provided.

**Tour only:** Transfers included from Alicante airport at 09:50, and back to Alicante airport departing the hotel at 07:15.

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## VISTAS OF VALENCIA | WALKING DETAILS



The walks on this holiday are on uneven mountain tracks, and paths can be stony in parts. Walkers should be confident and moderately fit, with hill walking experience. Short stretches of Smugglers' Cove and the Berniere Ridge are unsuitable for vertigo sufferers. Walking boots are essential, walking poles are recommended.



Average daytime temperature (°C):

16 16 18 20 24 24 22 18 16  
JAN FEB MAR APR MAY SEP OCT NOV DEC



Average monthly rainfall (mm):

21 23 17 46 36 35 22 37 35  
JAN FEB MAR APR MAY SEP OCT NOV DEC