



PLACES OF INTEREST

HISTORY *continued*

Civil wars would occasionally break out between the empire's rival generals and factions. One such war erupted in 75 BC between General Quintus Sertorius, Rome's ruling authority in Hispania, and General Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Pompey the Great. The citizens of Valencia supported the popular General Sertorius. This would prove to be tragic. Sertorius was murdered at a banquet held in his honor. Pompey crushed the rebellion and turned his wrath upon Valencia. Those not slain were driven out or sold as slaves. Valencia was destroyed and left desolate for the next half century.

In the 400s AD the Roman Empire declined as the Germanic Visigoths marched in to fill the vacuum. By 625 AD Muslim armies had crossed from North Africa and proceeded to conquer most of the Iberian Peninsula. The Muslims entered Valencia in 711 AD. The first thing they did was change the name of the town to Balansiya.

Moorish rule of Valencia was benevolent and enlightened. In one hand they brought the scimitar while in the other they brought science, mathematics, medicines, spices, the previously unknown orange as well as advanced farming and irrigation techniques. The Moors were a desert people and they understood the value to be found in a single drop of

water. Under the Moors, figuratively and literally... Valencia blossomed.

Eventually, however, Muslim rule would be overthrown by Roman Catholic kings during what would become known as La Reconquista, the re-conquest of Spain. On October 9, 1238 King James I of Aragon, with his army of English, Germans, Italians and French, rode triumphantly into Valencia. Fifty-thousand Muslims were driven out. Valencia would now come under the tight control of the power behind the throne, the Roman Catholic Church. Many in Valencia and throughout Spain would eventually pay a terrible price for ecumenical zeal and unchecked ecclesiastical power that would grow out of control. In the meantime, through trade and commerce, over the next 200 years Valencia would develop into one of the largest, most affluent and important cities in Europe.

By the early 1400s, Roman Popes appointed and empowered their representatives to diligently seek out and punish "heretics"... anyone who denied or did not scrupulously follow Catholic dogma and bow in submission to Papal authority. Despite the fact that thousands of them, in light of this threat, converted to Roman Catholicism, the first victims in Valencia were the Jews. Imprisonment, torture, forced confession, confiscation of property and death by public burning at the stake was the fate of the guilty and innocent alike. On March

31, 1492 having had the title of "Most Catholic King and Queen" bestowed upon them by the Pope of the "Holy Mother Church" Alexander VI, Ferdinand and Isabella signed the Edict of Expulsion, the Alhambra Decree. On pain of death "excepting their gold and silver or minted money... it was... agreed and resolved that all Jews and Jewesses be ordered to leave our kingdoms...". The last execution in Valencia to be carried out by Spanish Inquisitors took place in July 1826... four centuries after it all began.

In the early 1600s Valencia kicked out the remaining Moors who were the backbone of the agricultural work force. Chaos and panic ensued as the economy again crashed and near famine set in. Again when Valencia backed the losing Austrian Habsburg claim to the throne in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14) the victorious French king, Philip V, would banish the local nobility and strip Valencia of all rights. And finally during and following the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), as the seat of the leftist communist backed government, Valencia again paid a heavy price when the fascist forces of General Francisco Franco proved victorious.

After a long dictatorial rule General Franco died in 1975. This led to the establishment of Spain's constitutional monarchy and the popular reign of King Juan Carlos I. Since that time, once again, Valencia has slowly grown and prospered.

Places of Interest

1 The City of Arts and Sciences is famous throughout Spain as one of Valencia's most popular tourist destinations. The beautiful complex is home to the interactive Science Museum, the Hemispheric Planetarium, the Oceanographic Marine Park and Aquarium and finally the Palau de les Arts Opera House.

2 La Lonja, the Silk Market, was founded in 1483. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The market is one of the finest and most beautiful examples of classic Gothic architecture to be found in Europe.

3 The Mercado Central is a beautifully designed, large, and colorful market that offers patrons just about anything they can imagine. It is a wonderful and exciting place to explore and take in the sights and sounds of the city.

4 El Miguelete Bell Tower was built in the 1300s and rises over 160 feet into the sky. The largest bell weighs over 10 tons and was raised into place in the early 1500s.

5 The Plaza de la Virgen is located on the site of an earlier Roman forum. Today, with its refreshing fountain as the centerpiece, the plaza offers views of some of the most beautiful buildings in Valencia.

6 The Serranos Towers are a well preserved, massive and inspiring defensive fortification that helped to protect Valencia beginning in the 1300s. From the top of the towers visitors have a great view of the city and Turia River.

7 The Fine Arts Museum San Pio V is home to one of Spain's best art collections. Its gallery includes works Velázquez, El Greco and Goya.

8 Santos Juanes Church was constructed in the 1300s and was one of the first churches in Valencia. The interior dome of the sanctuary is covered with beautiful frescos.

9 San Juan del Hospital is another of Valencia's striking churches. Built in the mid 1200s the church houses a number of newly discovered historic murals.

10 The Gonzalez Marti National Ceramics Museum was refurbished in the rococo style in the mid 1700. The original palace dates back to the 1500s. The museum is home to a wonderful collection of ceramics and tiles many of which were originally created in Spain's Royal Ceramics Factory. In addition to ceramics the museum also displays an interesting collection of pieces from the 1700s and 1800s.

11 The Monastery of San Miguel de los Reyes, on the site of an older abbey, dates back to the 1500s. The building is a combination of Renaissance and Baroque styles. Today the beautiful monastery is home to Valencia's library.

12 The Instituto Valencia de Arte Moderno is home to one of Spain's best collections of modern art. Before you enter, if you look closely at the tower you will see where cannon fire struck the building when Napoleon attacked Valencia during the Peninsula War (1808-1814).

13 Plaza de Toros, Valencia's bull ring is among Spain's largest. Bull fighting is one of the nation's oldest and most deeply ingrained cultural traditions. It is considered an art rather than a sport.

Beyond Valencia

The **Albufera Nature Reserve** is about seven miles south of Valencia. The park is located in the famous rice growing region of Valencia. The park consists of a large lagoon and wetlands. It is home to numerous migratory birds. Boat rentals are available to help visitors get deeper into the wetlands for close-up bird watching.

El Saler Beach is a beautiful setting about three miles outside of Valencia. The sand is soft and clean, the water is warm and the pine groves and dunes add a nice touch to the natural surroundings.

Xàtiva is an old Spanish town that has hundreds of refreshing fountains and a majestic medieval castle.

Requena is another medieval town close to Valencia. This is the wine growing region. Here visitors can learn about the history of wine growing and sample some of the local favorites.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Valencia and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

- When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.
- Take plenty of bottled water and sun screen.