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A Full Guide to Valencia's Neighbourhoods

A Comprehensive Guide to All 19 Districts

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Introduction

As a city Valencia is just about the perfect size for modern living — not too big, but large enough to have plenty going on all year round. You are generally never far away from the centre, whichever of the 19 districts you are in.

This guide brings together all four parts of our district-by-district series, covering everything from the historic Old Town right out to the villages and towns on Valencia's edges. Whether you are looking to buy, rent, or simply get to know the city better, we hope it helps.

One quick note on terminology: Valencia's 19 districts are each divided into several neighbourhoods (barrios). When people talk about Ruzafa, El Carmen, or the Cabanyal, they are usually referring to a neighbourhood within a larger district. Both terms are used throughout this guide.

Part One: The Central Districts

In this first part we look at the heart of the city — the areas most people think of when they picture Valencia. These are the districts closest to the centre, well served by transport, packed with cafes, restaurants and culture, and where demand for property is consistently the highest.

1) Ciutat Vella — The Old Town

Ciutat Vella is the historic heart of Valencia. It is made up of six neighbourhoods: El Carmen, La Seu, El Mercat, Sant Francesc, El Pilar and La Xerea. The narrow streets, the Cathedral, the Central Market (one of the most beautiful in Europe), the Torres de Serranos and the Torres de Quart all make Ciutat Vella the natural starting point for any guide to the city. Property here tends to be older and often requires renovation, but the location is unbeatable. El Carmen in particular has become an internationally known neighbourhood famous for its street art, bars and bohemian atmosphere.

2) Ensanche / L'Eixample

Comprised of three neighbourhoods including the ultra trendy Ruzafa, and the more expensive Pla de Remei and Gran Via, Ensanche is where traditionally Valencians aspire to live. Close to the centre of the city — close enough to walk and not need a car — yet far enough away for the streets to be wider and the apartments lighter, with more space than in the Old Town.

Attractions in Ensanche include the excellent Mercado de Colón for meeting friends, the restaurants of Conde Altea and the area around Calle Salamanca, and the new Central Park. Ensanche is popular with foreign buyers too, due to its location, traditional facades and the outdoor lifestyle of pavement cafes, restaurants and parks. The district is also now criss-crossed by a huge network of bike paths — Valencia expanded its cycle lane network from 31km to 159km in just a couple of years.

3) Extramurs

The area to the west of the Old Town, comprised of El Botánico, La Roqueta, La Pechina and Arranpins, is similar to Ruzafa in the sense that you are close to the centre and it has a large cafe society area. Its own attractions include the Botanical Gardens, a good stretch of the riverbed, the Abastos market and the Chinatown area near the main railway station.

It is popular with students for going out, especially around Calle Juan Llorens and Abastos, and has some wide avenues such as Fernando el Católico with extremely handsome buildings overlooking the trees. Traditionally not as popular as the aforementioned areas for foreign buyers, Extramurs is now coming into its own as people discover the delights of this area and the ease of getting there both by metro from the airport and on foot from the centre.

4) Campanar

We move to the north side of the riverbed for our next area. Campanar, Les Tendetes, El Calvari and Sant Pau comprise the area of Campanar. The best known is Campanar itself, with Old Campanar being a closely packed

pedestrian area of two-floor houses and Nou Campanar having lots of high-rise buildings with shared pools and padel courts.

El Calvari and Les Tendetes are cheaper areas of mostly 1960s and 70s buildings congregated around the old La Fe hospital and the Nuevo Centro shopping centre — and yes, they are pretty ugly. Sant Pau continues the extension of Valencia into new areas of high-rise buildings with shared facilities.

Campanar has the great advantage of being near both the Old Town via the riverbed park and the Bioparc Zoo at the other end, with the Parque de Cabecera at the end of the riverbed. There are plenty of places to eat and drink, and it is a great spot for getting out on your bike and into nature within the city.

5) La Zaidía

Again to the north of the riverbed and east of Campanar, La Zaidía gives easy access into the centre of the city. Comprising Marxalanes, Morvedre, Trinitat, Tormos and Sant Antoni, La Zaidía is more rough and ready on its western part, with buildings similar to those in El Calvari and Las Tendetes. However, once you get to Morvedre and Trinitat you find more considered architecture, and the excellent Jardines del Real borders it to the east.

It is well served by the metro with the terminus at Pont de Fusta leaving you a short five-minute walk to the riverbed and Old Town. The riverbed in this area has rugby and baseball grounds and much more, making it an attractive place to live at a reasonable price. The area is also home to the Bombas Gens arts centre, the Carne Theatre, the Teatro Flumen and the Museo de Bellas Artes — it radiates creativity, albeit less known than the Carmen in the Old Town.

6) El Pla del Real

Comprising Mestalla, Exposició, Jaume Roig and Ciudad Universitaria, Pla del Real has some of the most attractive lesser-known buildings in Valencia — including the impressive Westin Hotel, the converted Tabacalera buildings, the Palau de Música by the riverbed, and some of the most impressive bridges crossing the Turia: the Puente de las Flores, La Peineta and La Puente de la Mar.

Valencia FC are still at Mestalla here, and you also have the art house cinema Babel just off Avenida de Aragón. The traditional university faculties — Medicine, Law and more — can be found along Blasco Ibañez, making this area popular with students, doctors and nurses. Avenida Blasco Ibañez is a wide, tree-lined avenue with medium and high-rise buildings stretching down towards the beach.

Part Two: The Southern and South-Western Districts

In this part we look at some of the more peripheral areas to the south and south-west of the city. Some have their limitations; others are rapidly becoming much more interesting — especially as the central park expands and prices in the centre keep rising.

7) L'Olivereta

Not to be confused with Monteolivete (a part of district 10), L'Olivereta is comprised of five areas: Soternes, Nou Moles, Tres Forques, Fuensanta and La Llum. These are areas traditionally ignored by anyone looking to buy property in Valencia, but with the advent of the riverbed park and the opening of the Parque de Cabecera to the north, Nou Moles especially is becoming more and more popular. Soternes is also being discovered. The metro running through this area from the airport into the centre gives it excellent accessibility.

Nou Moles tends to have medium-rise buildings from the 1950s and 60s without any remarkable qualities. The riverbed park marks its northern edge and to the west you have the old prison, now the City of Administration. It is essentially a residential area with prices well below the centre, without losing that city feel.

Soternes has the Valencian History Museum, opened in 2003 in a 19th-century underground reservoir. Tres Forques has the large Parque del Oeste and a lot of schools. La Llum is to the south of Avenida del Cid — extremely cheap property in ugly 1950s blocks. Fuensanta is best known for the University Hospital. None of these three areas are particularly appealing except for buy-to-let.

8) Patraix

Patraix is comprised of five areas: Patraix itself, Sant Isidre, Vara de Quart, Safranar and Favara. Vara de Quart is an area of warehouses and car repair places hemmed in by the motorway — skip it. Much the same can be said for Sant Isidre. Favara is mostly hospitals, so better for buy-to-let targeting health workers. Safranar and Patraix itself are more residential.

Patraix, being closer to the city centre, is becoming popular due to its proximity, reasonable prices and good-quality property. It is largely residential — full of coffee shops, smaller supermarkets and amenities — and a 15 to 20-minute walk from the centre. The Mercado de Jesus marks its border with the Jesus district.

9) Jesus

The district of Jesus comprises five areas: La Raiosa, L'Hort de Senabre, La Creu Cubierta, San Marcelino and Cami Real. For practical purposes we focus on the first four, as Cami Real is mostly waste ground, transport hubs, motorways and cemeteries.

La Raiosa is the closest to the centre and is popular due to its proximity, facilities and price point. It will eventually be on the western edge of the expanded Central Park, and currently lies next to the AVE railway station. L'Hort de Senabre borders La Raiosa and Patraix — largely residential with varying quality and price. Creu Cubierta is similar but cheaper, and looks a bit dilapidated as it mainly serves as a through road from towns to the south. San Marcelino is a bit out on its own, surrounded by Cami Real and Avenida de Tres Cruces, but does have the Espai La Rambleta arts centre next to the Rambleta Park — a quiet area with its own

community feel.

10) Quatre Carreres

Quatre Carreres includes some very interesting areas: the City of Arts and Sciences, Monteolivete, En Corts and Malilla. The latter three border Ensanche and Ruzafa along with the new Central Park. Malilla, for example, will house part of the extended Central Park in the future, and is already a pleasant walk through the park to the centre.

En Corts is a more rough-and-ready version of Ruzafa, with prices to match — well below its more famous neighbour. Monteolivete borders both Ruzafa and Ensanche to the north, and the City of Arts and Sciences and the riverbed park to the east — almost perfectly situated to have everything to hand while also being affordable and attractive. We highly recommend Monteolivete. Among its attractions is the Fallas Museum, a wonderful hour-long visit to see the models rescued from the flames each year.

The areas around the City of Arts and Sciences itself are much more modern: high-rise buildings, many with terraces overlooking the CAC, shared pools, gyms and gardens, and open-plan living. Shopping centres and malls rather than smaller shops. It comes with a price — the better the view, the bigger the terrace, the higher the floor, the higher the cost. But it is worth paying for a decent view.

Part Three: The Beaches, University Quarter and Northern Suburbs

In this part we cover the beach districts of Valencia, the area between the centre and the sea, the university neighbourhoods and the northern suburbs of the city proper.

11) Poblados Marítimos — The Beach Districts

The beach area of Valencia is known as the Poblados Marítimos, comprised of five different areas: El Grao (around the Port), the Cabañal/Canyamelar to the north of the Port, the Malvarrosa (a continuation of the Cabanyal beach), Beteró (between the Malvarrosa and the University), and Nazaret (to the south of the Marina and El Grao).

The Cabanyal

The Cabanyal continues to be the most popular area for international clients in Valencia's beach zone. It keeps smartening itself up, with new cafes and restaurants opening weekly and the sound of works happening inside apartment blocks everywhere you go. Prices have risen sharply — a flat overlooking the Cabanyal market was on for 160k when it had been 75k the previous year, after only a basic modernisation. The beach is excellent and easily accessible, and getting to other parts of the city by metro, train, bus or bike is easy.

The Malvarrosa

The Malvarrosa continues the Cabanyal to the north. Where the Cabanyal was where Valencia's fishermen lived, the Malvarrosa was where the catch was landed. It attracted Sorolla, and many of his most famous paintings were set on this beach. Over the years it became a working-class area away from the port and developed its own life around Avenida de la Malvarrosa. Over the last decade it has become very popular with students and younger buyers looking to get their first step on the property ladder. Like the Cabanyal, international buyers have picked up property here well below the average price for Mediterranean homes.

El Grao, Beteró and Nazaret

All three share one characteristic: despite being classed as Poblados Marítimos, none of them actually sits next to the beach. Nazaret backs onto the commercial port and previously had a reputation for drug dealing and prostitution — that is changing with new metro access and greater police presence. El Grao lies between the future expansion of the riverbed park and the Cabanyal — a bit grubby in places (especially by the old F1 circuit) but well positioned for the future. Beteró lies between the Malvarrosa and the University. Many of its blocks are ugly 1960s constructions and quite a few had squatters in the past. It can work for buyers seeking a cheap, well-situated option, but the construction quality of many older buildings leaves something to be desired.

12) Camins al Grau

Composed of five areas — Ayora, Albors, La Creu del Grau, Cami Fondo and Peña Roja — Camins al Grau lies to the north of the riverbed and the City of Arts and Sciences.

La Peña Roja borders the riverbed and is full of high-rise buildings and offices, many with shared pools, tennis, padel and gyms. Prices are higher here due to proximity to the riverbed and the fact most buildings were

put up post-2000. The stretch of riverbed it borders runs from Gulliver Park all the way to the Oceanografic. It is a really nice residential district for families — some describe it as a little soulless compared with the Cabanyal or the Old Town, but if you want modern facilities with an easy walk or cycle to the centre or the beach, you could do a lot worse.

Cami Fondo is one of the smallest separately-named areas in Valencia, hemmed in by Avenida del Puerto. Albors and Ayora lie to the north of Avenida del Puerto — excellently connected by metro and bus, easy to walk or cycle to the beach and the centre. The Ayora gardens are excellent and sit right next to the metro station. The area is popular with students due to the university faculties on Blasco Ibañez and the Polytechnic on Avenida de Naranjos.

13) Algirós

Algirós is a large district composed largely of properties surrounding Avenida Blasco Ibañez, along with the faculties of the University of Valencia and the Polytechnic. It has five areas.

To the south of Blasco Ibañez and east of Cardenal Benlloch we have L'Amistat, Ciutat Jardí and L'Isla Perdida. These are largely 1950s and 60s buildings. As the name suggests, La Isla Perdida (The Lost Island) was once surrounded by fields — developed after the 1957 floods to rehouse slum dwellers. Nowadays it is connected on all sides. Amistat gets its name from the good relations among the railway workers who used to live around Aragón station.

To the north of Blasco Ibañez, La Bega Baixa is set out around Plaza Xuquer — think student nights out, loud bars and restaurants. La Carrasca is a huge area with very few apartments to buy; it is mostly University Campus.

14) Benimaclet

Benimaclet used to be a village outside Valencia, and as the city expanded it became part of it. It still retains the feeling of a village in the low-rise central part, and the rest is largely student and bohemian in character — lots of artists and interesting arts and music projects.

Property in Benimaclet is eclectic: from the central village two-floor houses in a warren of streets, to 1960s developments on the outskirts overlooking allotments reclaimed by the bohemian population after the 2008 crash, to the extraordinary Espai Vert building. A lot of different types of property and lifestyle in one place.

15) Rascanya

Rascanya has three areas, and its reputation is largely undeserved these days. Torrefiel and Els Orriols are where that reputation comes from — hemmed in between the inner and outer ring roads, they were considered rough in the past. Certain streets (Calle Daroca and Padre Viñas come to mind) still have buildings with squatters, which explains why some apartments appear suspiciously cheap. But the rest of the two neighbourhoods do not deserve the reputation given to them by those streets.

The newer part, Sant Llorenç (surrounding the Levante Football Ground, the Arena shopping centre and plenty of new-build apartments), is shiny and modern — similar buildings to those in La Penya Roja, developed at the same time. Another plus: its proximity to Alboraya for the horchaterías and Patacona beach. All three areas in Rascanya border the Valencian Huerta, so getting out into nature is very easy.

16) Benicalap

Benicalap comprises two areas: Benicalap itself and Ciutat Fallera. Benicalap is a continuation of the feel of Torrefiel and Orriols — mostly four or five floor buildings from the 1950s and 60s, a bit grubby in parts. It will eventually have Valencia's new football ground, currently half-finished as it has been for ten years.

Ciutat Fallera is another place that feels out on a limb. Traditionally built for and populated by Fallas artists, it retains a load of warehouses where you can find Fallas artists working all year round, and also has the excellent Benicalap park. Property here is generally cheap and excellent for renting out, though it is not the most visually appealing.

Part Four: The Edges of the City and Beyond

In this final part we look at the districts right on the edge of the city limits, plus the towns and villages just outside Valencia that are often just as well connected to the centre as some of the city's own districts.

17) Poblados del Norte

Valencia is surrounded by a Green Belt known as the Huerta — the orchard, where typical Valencian produce from oranges to artichokes to tiger nuts for horchata are grown. Interspersed in this large flat expanse of small farms and allotments you find the Poblados del Norte.

Officially there are seven towns: Benifaraig, Pueblo Nuevo, Carpesa, Casas de Barcena, Nahuella, Masarrochos and Borbotó. They feel like isolated islands in the fields. Houses here often have character — large wooden doors, interior patios — but the area lacks something, and the houses tend to sit by the through road of the village, meaning significant traffic. For most property buyers we do not pay much attention to this area, with one exception: Masarrochos, which sits beyond Godella and Rocafort and has a few estates around it offering houses with shared facilities and views towards the Mediterranean.

18) Poblados del Oeste

Much more interesting from a property point of view are the two Poblados del Oeste: Benimamet and Beniferri. The latter is very small and mostly known for the Casino and the Congress Palace.

Benimamet is a small town in its own right with some very interesting buildings and very interesting prices. A working-class village on the metro line from Liria into Valencia, with good public transport links and a ten-minute bike ride into the city through the Huerta. It is rather overlooked by people seeking apartments, largely because some of the apartment buildings are, to put it kindly, not easy on the eye. But for investors looking for rental yield, or for young people and families wanting to get on the property ladder, Benimamet is an excellent option — decent nurseries and schools, cafes, supermarkets and independent shops giving it a life of its own. A new park built over the underground metro line adds a nice touch. Bear in mind that the top part of Benimamet contains the Trade Fair buildings, which host over 30 events a year including the huge Cevisama.

19) Poblados del Sur

There are as many as eight different towns in the Poblados del Sur. If you are looking for property with views over water — the sea or the inland Albufera lake — then this area may interest you.

The Albufera lake dominates the south of Valencia. It is a huge inland lake for boat trips, birdwatching and, most importantly, the best paella in the world. Most of the action is based around El Palmar — surrounded by the lake and the marshes, it fills up with paella-hungry Valencians most weekends. Property coming up for sale here is rare, and when it does a local will snap it up before it hits the market and convert it into a paella restaurant.

Between the Albufera and the sea lies the semi-peninsula of Pinedo, El Saler and El Perellonet. Pinedo is the closest to the city, just to the south of where the Turia river meets the sea. It is out on a limb and a bit scruffy, but does have some great eating options by the beach, a go-kart track and a dog beach. El Perellonet and El

Perelló are eyesores worthy of the worst development of the 1960s and 70s. The good point is you are never more than a couple of hundred metres from the sea. The bad point is you are still in El Perellonet.

The other four areas — Faitanar, Horno de Alcedo, Castellar-Oliveral and La Torre — are all overshadowed by the V30 southern bypass and are best known for being driven past on the way to IKEA. They do not offer much for property buyers.

Beyond the City Limits

Although these towns fall outside Valencia's official 19 districts, they are so well connected to the city that we include them here. Many of our clients choose them precisely because they offer the best of both worlds.

Alboraya

Our first recommendation beyond the city limits. Alboraya is divided into three separate areas, two of which can be considered parts of Valencia even though they are not. The Patacona beach is lovely, though most property there consists of new-build apartments from the post-2000 boom. The old town of Alboraya is lovely and now an extension of the city of Valencia itself, with its own metro stop. The third part, just 4km to the north, is the Marina of Port Saplaya — beloved by sailors and beach lovers alike. It can feel a little out on a limb though, as access is from the motorway and it is hemmed in against the sea.

Burjassot

Burjassot can almost be considered part of Valencia now, though it retains its own character and life. Just across the CV35 from Benimamet, on the metro line, with a defined centre, regular cultural events and concerts, and housing parts of the University Campus and Valencian TV. Property ranges from apartments to townhouses, very well priced, with a wide variety of styles. Easy access to international schools, easy in and out of the city, and the beach is no problem on the metro either.

Godella, Rocafort and Paterna

Going further out from Burjassot, Godella and Rocafort are both on the metro line. Paterna is a continuation of Benimamet. All three have a defined centre with shops, cafes, restaurants and other facilities. Godella and Rocafort have areas of huge mansions and large houses with beautiful gardens, as well as townhouses and apartments. Paterna is more of a working town with a large military base, well positioned between the city and the airport. It also includes the Valterna development where you can find apartments with shared pools and gyms on the edge of the city by the Liceo Frances school. All three are good options for living and working in or around Valencia.

And that's it — our complete guide to Valencia's 19 districts, plus the towns and villages that sit just beyond the city's edge. We hope it has been useful, whether you are planning a visit, considering a move, or just curious about the city.

If you have any questions about any of these areas, or want to talk through where might suit you best, get in touch. We have been doing this since 1999 and we know every corner of the city.

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