

Secret Sierras of the Costa Blanca

Trip Code: CBS

Version: CBS Secret Sierras of the Costa Blanca



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking holiday in a region of Spain that enjoys more than 300 days of sun!
- The dramatic limestone mountains of the Sierra de Aitana, Serella, Aixorta and Bernia
- Walk and relax from our 3 comfortable hotel bases with minimum transfer time
- The Mediterranean ambience of the Spanish Alicante countryside

AT A GLANCE

- 5 days walking
- Max altitude 1558 metres
- Join at Alicante

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 6 Lunches
- 4 Dinners
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This excellent one-week guided Spanish walking holiday explores the 'Secret Sierras' of the Sierra de Aitana, la Serrella, Aixorta, and Bernia, which form the famous backdrop to the Costa Blanca. Just a short journey inland from the package holiday crowds of Benidorm, there is a very different side to the Costa Blanca amongst the rugged limestone peaks of these sierras and the traditional, white-painted villages of the Marina Baixa and Marina Alta regions. From three different hotel bases in Benimantell, Castell de Castell, and Albir, we will set out to walk the best routes in the region, including airy ridges and summits such as Aitana (1558m) and Puig Campana (1408m). Each of our carefully selected bases provides a comfortable place to stay in stunning locations.

Albir is an attractive traditional coastal town with a historic centre and the perfect Mediterranean ambience. This is a great walking holiday, offering a variety of moderate walks, options for more challenging days, virtually guaranteed sunshine, easy access through Alicante, and even a chance to try one of our guide's delicious home-cooked Spanish Paellas and share a beer with the locals after a great day's walking! This isn't just a taste of the region; this is living the Mediterranean life!

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday in the Marina Baixa and Marina Alta regions of the Costa Blanca is intended to provide a week of walking in the Spanish Mediterranean sunshine, suitable for regular hill or back country walkers. Mostly the walking is on good trails and mule tracks but we will encounter some rocky paths and very short sections of easy scrambling. We will be walking between 7 and 9 hours on most days with ascents up to and above 1300 metres.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group accommodation in Benimantell. A single timed transfer from Alicante Airport is provided.

The holiday start at the group hotel in Benimantell. A single timed transfer from Alicante Airport will be provided. The 1 hour drive will take us through the Guadalest Valley of the Marina Baixa to our first base, which is at the foot of the Sierra Aitana.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Walking in the Sierra Aitana. Ascent of Aitana (1558m). Return to Benimantell.

Our first walk explores the heart of the Sierra Aitana including a climb to its highest point, Aitana (1558m). Along the way we enjoy far-ranging views and have some easy scrambling on the 'Pas de la Rabosa' and simply superb ridge walking on the east side of the range. An interesting feature that we will see today are the 'snow wells', excavated hollows in which ice was preserved as part of a trade that was important during the period from the 16th to the 19th century. We also see a couple of springs renowned for their water quality at Font de la Forata and Font de Partagas. This first day of walking is also great for characteristic Mediterranean flora. A great way to start our week. We return to spend a second night at our accommodation in Benimantell.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
622M



Descent
622M



Time
4 - 5 hours walking



Distance
11KM

DAY 3

Ridge walk to Mallada del Llop (1361m). Descend to Castell de Castell.

After a short transfer to Abdet we begin a steep climb leading to one of the most impressive views in the

Marina Baixa. Then, we can expect a 'top of the world' feeling as we hike the superb ridge between Pico Serrella (1319m) and Mallada del Llop (1361m). After this section, we descend into the scenic Barranco de la Canal, where we meet a track that will take us to the day's second highlight, the 'Castellet', which is one of the oldest Moorish remains in the region and was formerly a strategic outpost controlling all of the surrounding valleys. Finally we descend to Castell de Castell, a village with a wild location and great views, where we check in at our next hotel base.

Meals: **B L D**

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
|  Accommodation Hotel |  Ascent 1070M |  Descent 1200M |  Time 8 hours walking |  Distance 18KM |
|---|--|---|--|---|

DAY 4

Walking in the Sierra Serella. Ascent of Aixorta (1221m). Return to Castell de Castell.

Our walk today is in the Sierra Serrella, a circular route including a climb its highest peak, Aixorta (1221m). Our walk is mostly on good tracks, as we traverse the range from west to east. After the optional ascent to the mountain's summit, we turn west again and return by the famous 'postman trail', an old route linking Tarbena and Castell. Back in Castell we will have time to visit the local museum if we wish.

Meals: **B L D**


| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
|  Accommodation Hotel |  Ascent 1000M |  Descent 1000M |  Time 8 hours walking |  Distance 20KM |
|---|--|---|--|---|

DAY 5

Walking in the Sierra Bernia. Descend to the coastal village of Altea.

We have a short transfer to the start of today's walk in the Sierra Bernia. Our walk takes us across this spectacular serrated range of mountains by the incredible 'El Forat', a tunnel carved through the rock. During this wonderful walk, we have views over the Guadalest and Xalo valleys, as well as having the constant backdrop of the sea to the east. We finally descend via the 'Cami de les Revoltes', a stone built, zig-zagging trail, which leads us all the way to Altea, where we check into our hotel.

Meals: **B L**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  Accommodation Hotel |  Ascent 450M |  Descent 1000M |  Time 7 hours walking |  Distance 17KM |
|---|---|---|--|---|

DAY 6**A free day to explore Altea. Enjoy a traditionally prepared Paella lunch!**

This is a free day to explore the old village, one of the best preserved of the whole Mediterranean coast. With its old cobbled streets, beautiful blue domed church, local tapas bars, art and craft shops and a host of great view points, Altea has managed to hang onto something of its traditional past. If you are still keen to do some walking today, there is also the option to have a half a day walk in the Sierra Gelada, a small mountain range which runs parallel to the sea and connects El Albir with Benidorm, to visit a lighthouse. Another interesting option is to hike to the top of the Penon de Ifach in nearby Calpe, a striking limestone peak that commands fantastic coastal views. Today we will also enjoy a traditionally prepared paella lunch, which we can watch being prepared (or help participate in preparing!). We spend a second night at our accommodation in Altea.

Meals: **B L**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 7**From Polop to Finestrat, via the summit of Puig Campana (1408m). Return to Altea.**

Our final walk starts from the village of Polop and takes us by way of the slopes of Ponoch (1183m) also known as the Sleeping Lion to reach the summit of Puig Campana (1408m). After this fitting finale to our week of walking in the Marina Baixa, we will return to spend a third night at our hotel in Altea.

Meals: **B L**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
1025M



Descent
1210M



Time
8 hours walking



Distance
16KM

DAY 8**Departure day. A single timed transfer to Alicante Airport is provided.**

The holiday ends after breakfast. A single timed transfer to Alicante Airport will be provided.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on Day 1 and on Day 8
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers (other than the one or two group transfers described)
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Tips for support staff and guide
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc...

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

In some cases you may choose to take a ferry and/or train to your holiday start and end destination. Please see further information on [Travelling by Train](#).

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

The group will meet at the group hotel in Benimantell on Day 1.

A single transfer from Alicante Airport to the group hotel will be provided in late morning of Day 1.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer back to Alicante Airport timed to meet the check-in for flights departing in the late morning.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 5 packed lunches, 1 traditionally prepared Paella lunch and 4 dinners are included in the holiday price. You will need to pay directly for dinner for the 3 nights in Altea. We recommend you allow €20 - €30 per meal for these 3 meals.

Food & Water

Breakfasts are typically continental - a combination of orange juice, tea, coffee, yoghurt, fresh fruit, freshly baked local bread and jam. Lunches will usually be picnic-style, made up from bread, cheese, cold meats, tomatoes, salads and fruit. Dinners are taken either in the hotel or in local restaurants which serve a range of dishes including traditional southern Spanish options, including paella and a locally famous 'farmer's stew'. Vegetarians can be catered for.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

There are three separate bases for this walking holiday.

We will spend 2 nights in a charming family-run hostel in Benimantell. In Castell de Castell we stay for 2 nights at a family-run rural hotel with great food. Our base for the remaining 3 nights is a hotel in either the coastal village of Albir or Altea, both located on a wide bay surrounded by an amphitheatre of unspoiled mountains. All rooms are en suite.

All accommodation is twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

We estimate that €150 should be sufficient to cover all personal expenses, including the 1 lunch and 2 evening meals in Altea that you will purchase directly (allow €15-€20 per meal), as well as tips for your guide. Cash can be withdrawn from ATM's in Alicante Airport and in Altea. Credit and debit cards can be used to pay for most goods and services.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

The Costa Blanca has a Mediterranean climate, characterised by lots of sunshine (3000 hours each year - that's about 325 days of sunshine). Sea breezes and the general elevation of the walks we undertake (around 1000 metres) help to moderate the temperatures that we will encounter. At the season that we travel to this region (outside of the hottest Summer months) we can expect daytime highs of between 15 and 25 degrees centigrade depending on the elevation. At night, the temperatures will fall to 10-15 degrees centigrade.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Costa Blanca Walks (Vols 1 and 2). Cicerone Guide.
- Mountain Walks on the Costa Blanca. Bob Stansfield.
- Valencia and the Costa Blanca (Lonely Planet Regional Guides)
- Costa Blanca Berlitz Pocket Guide (Berlitz Pocket Guides)
- Costa Blanca and Alacante (AA Essential Guides Series)

Maps

Marina Baixa: Serra d'Aitana. 1:20,000 Scale & Marina Baixa: Serra de Bernia. 1:20,000 Scale.

Marina Baixa: Serra d'Aitana & Marina Baixa areas at 1:20,000 in a series of GPS compatible maps from Editorial Piolet with cartography based on Spain's civilian topographic survey overprinted with hiking routes and other tourist information. Road network indicates locations of petrol stations. Local villages are annotated to show what facilities can be found there, including accommodation, restaurants, etc.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for

further details.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking/walking boots
- Trainers / sandals / evening footwear
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Lightweight windproof/waterproof jacket
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack c. 30 litres
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)

- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash

Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium),
■ painkillers, plasters and blister treatment. Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

The following items are optional:

- Gaiters
- Shorts
- Towel (for swimming)
- Swimwear
- Trekking poles
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Spare laces
- Insect repellent - (DEET)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts at the hotel in Benimantell and ends in Altea. A single timed transfer from/to Alicante Airport is provided.

Transport SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

If flying from the UK there are a number of low cost airlines offering flights to Alicante. A flight search website such as Skyscanner or Kayak may be useful to research your options.

If you would prefer to book a 'flight inclusive package', using scheduled airlines from the UK, please contact our flights department for a quote. Whilst flight prices are likely to be more expensive, you will benefit from full financial protection.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Our expert local guide, Jose Molina Lopez, has led trips for KE all over the world from Peru to Nepal and Bhutan, but he especially loves showing people around his own backyard!

Please Note This document was downloaded on 22/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change