

Island of Tabarca



This is the only inhabited island in the Valencian community. No vehicles are allowed on the island, which help to make this truly "a paradise island". The area surrounding Tabarca was declared an underwater nature reserve in 1986. A regular boat service connects Tabarca to Alicante and Santa Pola. The island is renowned for its selection of fine seafood restaurants. Tabarca also has a very romantic and stylish hotel. In the 18th century, the original settlers of Tabarca were Genovese families, formerly prisoners on the Tabarca peninsula in North Africa. One of their original tasks was to fortify the island and offer resistance to the Barbary pirates from Africa. The island has a hospital helicopter service and the major shops in Alicante and Santa Pola offer a delivery service.

Museum of Miniature Paintings: Located in the incomparable setting of a typical Tabarca house from the time of King Charles III, This museum of miniature paintings is unique in the world, for its extraordinary artistic value and for the material used to carry out the works here exhibited: Pebbles of only 6 x 10 cm., upon whose surface many of the most famous Works of Arts of the Universal Painting have been portrayed in oils. 120 replicas of exceptional beauty in this Museum are the works of the Miniaturist Painter Angel Ruiz, who has dedicate 8 years and more than 7,000 hours to them

To visit the Island: There are hourly ferries crossing from the mainland ports of Santa Pola, Torrevieja and Alicante, it takes about 25 minutes.

Salt Lakes La Mata and Torrevieja

The history of Torrevieja (meaning Old Tower) derives from the two lakes of Torrevieja and La Mata. Torrevieja is the bigger lake but La Mata is historically the more important. The salt lakes traditionally belonged to the crown and served as royal hunting grounds. Today salt is extracted from the lagoons where the water is allowed to heat up in La Mata lagoon, but the actual extraction of the salt takes place in Torrevieja lagoon where the water is transferred by means of an artificial channel. In the fifteenth century conditions in the lake of Torrevieja were not as favourable for the harvesting of salt. The lake, which by then had been granted to the town of Orihuela, was converted into a fishery. This was achieved by constructing of a canal linking the lake to the sea. When seen from above the saline and mineral content give a different colour to the lagoons. Both the lakes lie below sea level and today they are a natural park and a protected area. The wetlands provide an important habitat for flamingos, hoopoes, storks and other birds. You will find a useful tourist centre in the park with lots of information about the area.

Salt Museum in Torrevieja

The sea and salt museum in Torrevieja (in Spanish, it's called the Museo del mar y de Sal), is an excellent place to visit and is full of history. It is tucked away in a side street - Calle Patricio Perez and is open most days from 10am to 1.30pm and 5pm to 9pm (mornings only on Sundays and festival days, closed Monday afternoons). It's a great place to learn about the history of the salt industry in Torrevieja/La Mata - it helps if you brush up your Spanish before you go as everything is labelled in Spanish (quite right too!).

For directions to the salt museum in Torrevieja, just go along Caballero De Rodas and when you go past the Church on your right and the Constitucion) on your left, down Patricio Perez, across a little way along on the left



Church square (Plaza de la take the second turning on the left, the 1st junction and the museum is