



Tour

# Monumental Almería Alcazaba and Cathedral

**Capacity:** Up to 40 people    **Duration:** 5 hrs. (approx.)



## Tour description

The history of Almería is rich in culture, traditions and diversity.

On the one hand, the Muslim Almería, known at the time as Al-Mariyya Bayyana was a prosperous port city in Islamic Spain during the Middle Ages, especially from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onward. Under Muslim rule, the city achieved significant economic, cultural and military development, becoming one of the most important centers of commerce in Al-Andalus by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Thanks to its strategic location on the Mediterranean coast, Almería was the most important port for maritime routes connecting the Mediterranean Sea with North Africa, Egypt, and the Near East.

Muslim Almería was also a vibrant cultural center where the arts and science flourished.

The Medina was the primitive core of the Muslim city, founded by Abd al-Rahman III, and it is presided over by the city's stronghold: the Alcazaba.

The Muslim community in Almería coexisted with Jewish and Christian minorities. The history of Jewish Almería is one of the great unknowns, as no vestiges have survived, but the locations where they were settled can still be known and, in fact, are marked by plaques. Sefarad is the name that Spanish Jews gave to Spain during the Middle Ages, and the Sephardim were those Spanish Jews expelled in 1492.

After the capture of the city by the Catholic Monarchs on December 26, 1489, Almería endured centuries of very poor prosperity. In fact, the 16<sup>th</sup> century is considered the





century of decline and abandonment for the city and the province. Several factors contributed to this. Firstly, Almería was isolated from any American trade routes, and thus, could not benefit from the wealth and activity brought by the New World. Furthermore, there were significant earthquakes and constant attacks from Berber and Turkish pirates. In the following century, they were succeeded by attacks from the English navy.

The earthquake of 1522 was particularly devastating, which almost destroyed the city and reduced the population to just 700 inhabitants. The Medina was left depopulated, and the outskirts of La Musalla (from La Reina Street to Rambla Obispo Orberá), where the new Cathedral was built in 1524.

## STOPS

### The Cathedral of Almería

The Cathedral of Almería is a great example of a defensive building at that time, as evidenced by its cathedral-fortress structure. The first cathedral was located in the Medina, and after the city was taken by the Catholic Monarchs, the former Mayor's Church was converted into the First Cathedral of Almería. However, the earthquake of 1522 almost destroyed it.

In 1523, Bishop Fray Diego Fernandez de Villalán arrived in Almería, and Charles I of Spain ordered the construction of a new cathedral in the old suburb of the Musalla. The first stone was laid in 1524, construction began that same year, and the first mass was celebrated in 1551. Fray Diego Fernandez de Villalán ordered that the new cathedral temple should be built under the patronage of Our Lady of the Incarnation.

Its exterior has a clear military appearance, making it one of the only cathedral fortresses in Spain: solid buttresses, defensive towers, thick walls, lack of stained glass windows... The three naves are of equal height, providing a spacious area for the installation of cannons and military surveillance. Only two Renaissance façades of Juan de Orea embellish it. The main facade, which is located in the Cathedral's Square, is richer in decoration and it is presided over by the large coats of arms of Fray Diego Fernández de Villalán and the coat of arms of Charles I of Spain and V of Germany. The most austere side façade can be found on Velázquez Street.

On the wall facing the street of the Cube, a "Sun" is carved, the Sun of Villalán (another of the city's symbols, which, although it has always been believed to refer to Bishop Portocarrero of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was already sculpted from the earliest times of the Cathedral in the 16<sup>th</sup> century). Inside, it has three chapels, the ones in the aisle behind the main altar stand out: that of Saint Indalecio, which houses the

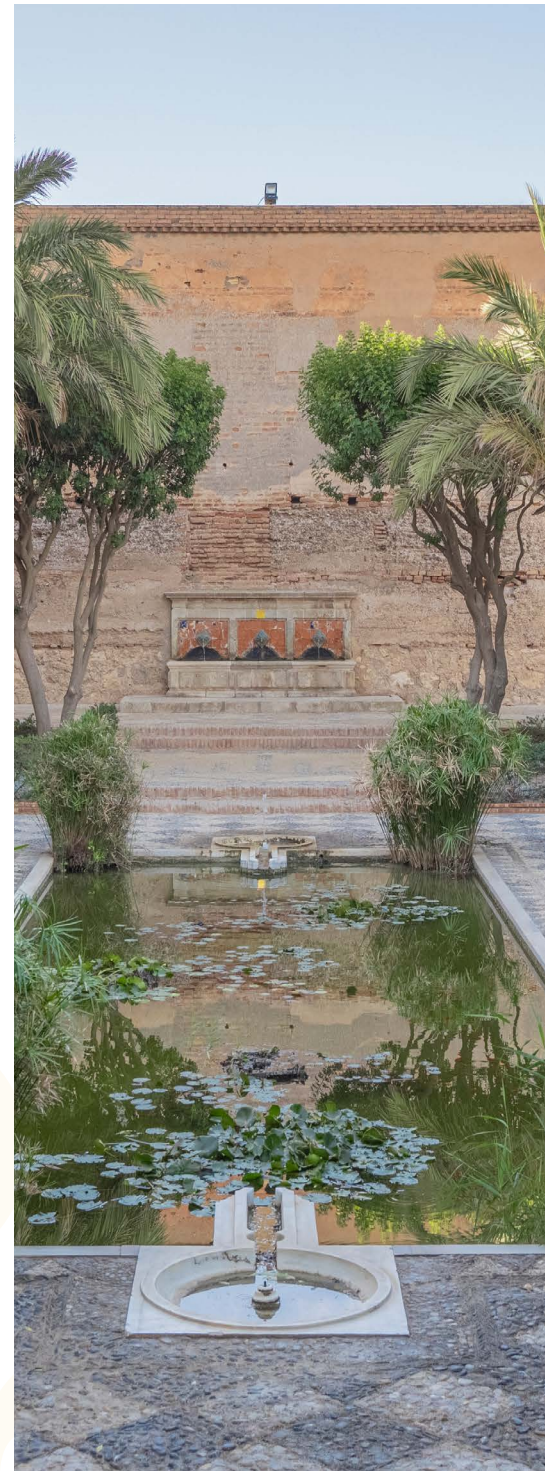
traditional image of the Holy Christ of the Listening, along with the marble tomb of the reclining body of Bishop Villalán, presided over by the image of Christ. This chapel, on the outside, is a tower where the "Sun" is carved. The last of the chapels is that of the Virgin of Piety, which on the outside is a semicircular tower (a Cube), located at the corner with the Plaza de la Catedral. The late Gothic ribbed vaults, the Renaissance choir, and the sacristy are artistic treasures. The temple contains works by Alonso Cano, Murillo, and Ribera. The image of the Patron Saint of Almería, Saint Indalecio, and the image of the Christ of the Listening, were destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. The former image of Saint Indalecio was created by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Murcian sculptor Francisco Salzillo.

Both images were rebuilt by the Almerian artist Jesús Pérez de Perceval in the 1940s. San Indalecio is the patron saint of the city, and his relics were brought to Almería from the Abbey of San Juan de la Peña, in Huesca. Saint Indalecio was one of the Seven Apostolic Men, evangelizers of Andalusia, who, according to old traditions found in Mozarabic writings, joined Saint James the Greater in the evangelization of southern Spain in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Talking about the Cathedral of Almería is talking about the history of the city over the last five centuries, as the spiritual life of the Almerian community is guided and centered around the Cathedral-Fortress of the Incarnation, where the seat of the ancient bishopric of this region in southern Spain is located, evoking two thousand years of Christianity in its historical evidence. When Bishop Fray Diego de Villalán arrived in Almería in 1523, he found a poor city, devastated by the great earthquake of 1522 and without defenses against the Berber threats, with its existence in danger. He was the one who would provide the definitive boost to the Christian city, and the construction of the Holy, Apostolic Church Cathedral of the Incarnation began in 1524, with its remarkable exterior fortress-like appearance designed for defense against the continuous Berber pirate attacks that plagued the Mediterranean coasts.

To achieve this, he relied on the skill of architect Juan de Orea, who, following the path of Diego de Siloé and Pedro Machuca, planned the realization of the new cathedral under the principles of the most classical 16<sup>th</sup>-century Renaissance art, which can be felt in the various spaces that make up this sacred building. The works were later promoted and expanded under the episcopate of Fray Juan de Portocarrero, a great patron and promoter of the construction of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, annexed to the Cathedral.

In the following centuries the Cathedral was provided with a rich sculptural and ornamental heritage, which, unfortunately, was almost totally destroyed during the tragic events of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), in which part of the Almerian clergy, along with their bishop, the Blessed Diego Ventaja, lost their lives. Once the







conflict was over, and during the following decades, the Almerían bishops promoted the reconstruction of the damaged, though not lost, heritage. Furthermore, this heritage continued increasing, and today it can be admired in the magnificent Permanent Exhibition Rooms –east and west wing– located next to the neoclassical cloister of the Cathedral, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

For all these reasons, a visit to the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Almería represents a journey through two thousand years of Christianity, and a delight for the senses due to the artistic excellence employed in its execution.

**Further info:**

**Hours:** Open Monday to Friday from 10:00 AM –2:30 PM and 4:00 PM–7 PM. Saturdays from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM and Sundays: 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

**Phone:** +34 605 42 99 79

**Address:** Plaza de la Catedral 8, Almería. [How to get to the Cathedral](#)

[Web](#)

**Access:** 7€ general admission. 4€ tickets for groups of more than 20 people.

**You cannot miss:**

- The beautiful cloister.
- The cathedral museums.
- The Chapel of the Holy Christ of the Listening with the Tomb of Diego de Villalán.
- The Renaissance choir of Juan de Orea and its double seating.
- The transept of Ventura Rodríguez (18<sup>th</sup> century).

**THE ALCAZABA**

The fortified Alcazaba, surrounded by defensive walls, presides over the city. It was built in the year 955 by order of Abd al-Rahman III, the first Umayyad caliph of Córdoba, being one of the largest of its kind in the Iberian Peninsula that protected the city. It consists of 3 enclosures: two Muslim and a last Christian enclosure built after the city was captured by the Catholic Monarchs in 1489.

As we approach the monument, we can already see its main entrance presided over by the Tower of the Mirrors.

Take a stroll through the garden areas of the first enclosure and archaeological remains, such as some cisterns, and enjoy the viewpoints overlooking the city and the sea. Let yourself be carried away by the sound of water from its fountains. Accessible pathways you will reach the Wall of the Tower of the Candle from where the views of the city extending to Cape Gata are a pleasure to behold. In the second enclosure, admire the magnificent palatial structure with its archaeological remains, including cisterns, baths, and a wall belonging to the Private Residence of

King Almutasim. If we have time, we can enter the third Christian enclosure, built after the Catholic Monarchs conquered the city, and observe its large parade ground, the characteristic Keep Tower, and a large viewpoint over the sea, where you can see the Fishing Port and the traditional neighborhood of Pescadería-La Chanca.

And what better way to end our tour than with a snack in a lovely tea shop next to the Alcazaba or, with some tapas in one of the many bars in our city?

**Further info:**

**Hours:** Open from March 21 to June 20: Tuesday to Saturday from 09:00 AM – 9:00 PM From June 21 to September 20: Tuesday to Saturday from 09:00 AM – 3:00 PM and from 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM.

From September 21 to March 20: Tuesday to Saturday from 09:00 AM – 6:00 PM. All year: Sundays, public holidays, and Monday eve of public holidays, from 09:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Closed Mondays, except eve of public holidays

**Phone:** +34 950 80 10 08

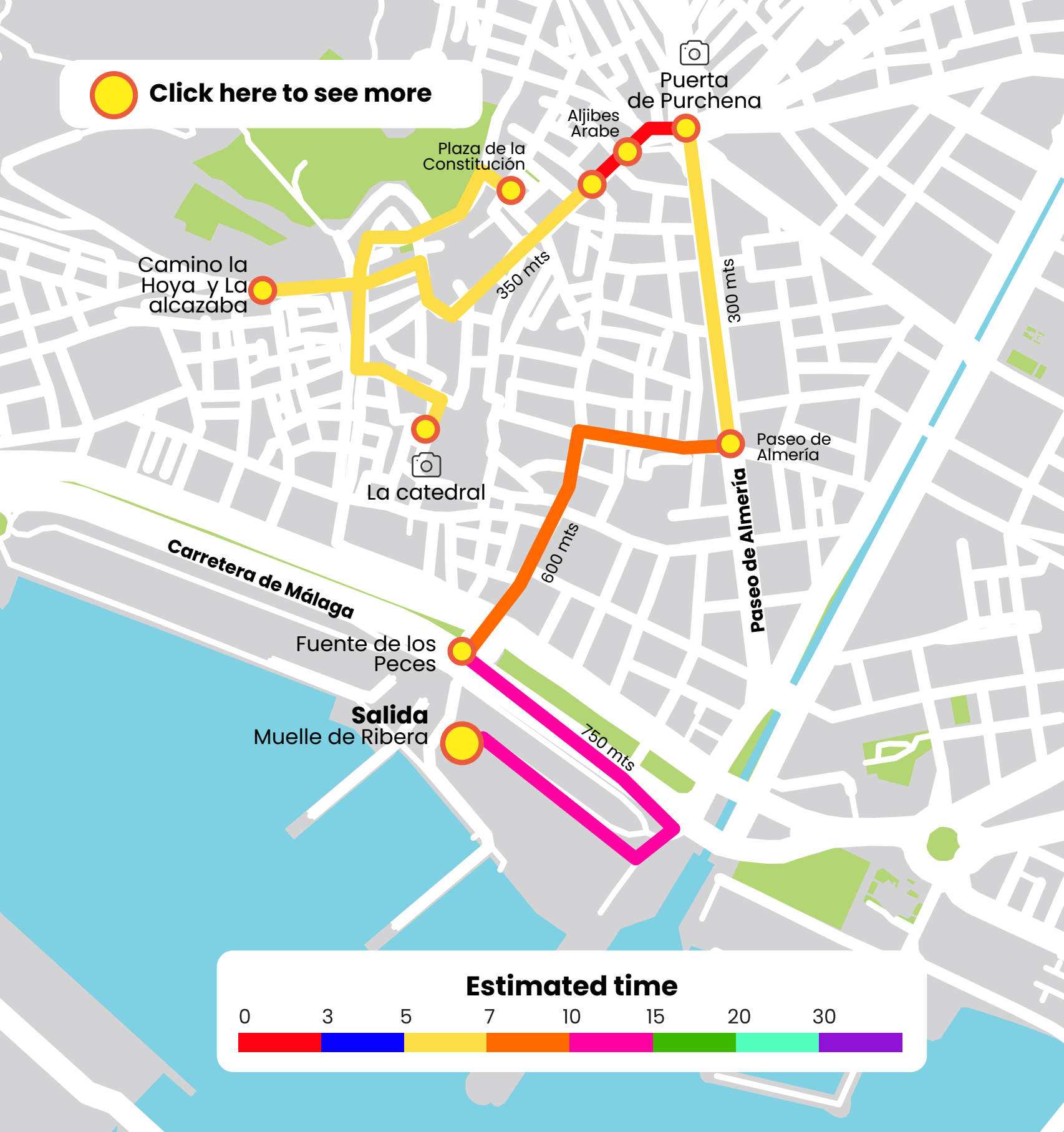
**Address:** Calle Almanzor s/n Almería. [How to get there.](#)

[Web](#)

**Access:** free

**You cannot miss:**

- The cisterns and the waterwheel.
- The views from the tower of the Vela and the viewpoint of the third enclosure.
- The soldiers’ baths.
- Take a picture at the pool area where scenes from *Game of Thrones* were filmed.



# OPTION 1 WALKING ITINERARY FROM PUERTA PURCHENA

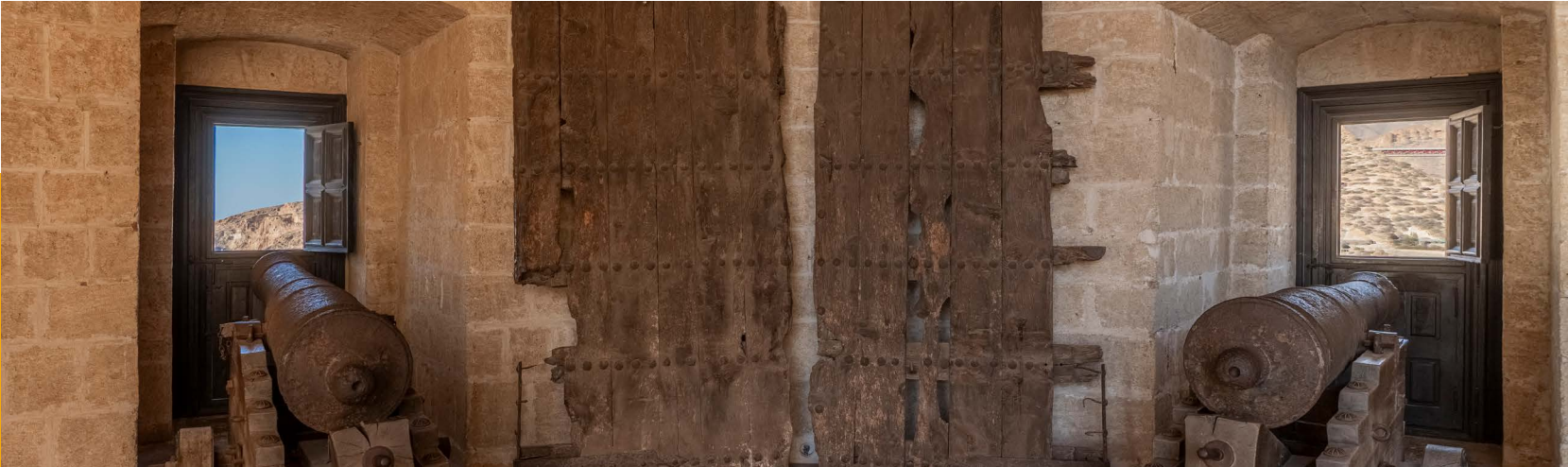
## STOPS

**CATHEDRAL OF Almería**  
From the base of the boat, we will go to the **Fountain of the Fish**, located right in front of the entrance to the maritime station in the heart of **Nicolás Salmerón Park**, considered a green lung with a sea-facing façade. It is surrounded by a forest of tall palm trees and century-old trees that have become a landmark in the urban transformation of the city of Almería towards the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, since its configuration between 1842-1845 until the demolition of the walls, the construction of the Port, and the demolition of the “Fishermen’s Quarter.” The Park, conceived as a connecting axis between the streets of the Historical Center and the city’s fishing port, will be our main guide to the heart of the city along the **Path of Almería**.

The construction of the Path of Almería and its current layout in 1856 coincided with the demolition of the city walls. It marks the line dividing the old walled city from the new expansion towards the east and the sea. This made it the main street of the city. Since then, it has been a commercial and business area, as well as a central space for public activities: recreational, civic, and religious.

The buildings along this avenue tell the history and development of the city: from its origins as an elite bourgeois promenade to the present day, including the aggressive construction development of the 1960s and 1970s.

Pathing along the Path, we will reach **Purchena Gate**, the neuralgic center of the city. In 1855, when the walls were demolished and the end of the “convent city,” the square began to transform into the heart of the modern city, where the main arteries of the new city







converged: the Path to the south, Obispo Orberá to the east, and the working-class neighborhoods to the north (now Pablo Iglesias Street).

This area stands out for being one of the best representations of 19th and 20th-century bourgeois architecture in the city, with buildings such as the monumental **House of Butterflies**, an outstanding example of historicist architecture built by the prestigious architect Trinidad Cuartara Cassinello, and for its vibrant atmosphere, surrounded by shops and cafés.

Due to its importance and beauty, Purchena Gate has been a Historic Complex since 1991, being the first declaration under the newly established **Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage (IAPH)**.

From here, we will Path to **Shops Street**. This street, of Arab origin, still has a narrow and winding design and is one of the most typical streets from the 11th-century Muslim period. During the Muslim era, Shops Street was the old road to Pechina that ended at the Pechina Gate, the main gate of the 11th century. This pedestrian street is named after the number of shops that are located here. Originally, this street was also a commercial one.

Before entering Shops Street, we can visit the **Arab Cisterns**, which date back to the 11th century and were ordered to be built by the first king of the Taifa of Almería, Jairán. Divided into three sections, the most characteristic material is brick.

From there, we will continue towards **Alcazaba**. Passing through Constitution Square, also known as Old Square, where the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Almería City Hall stands, we will head towards **La Hoya** path. This is located on the edge of the historic city, between the monumental complex of the Alcazaba and Saint Cristobal's Hill. From here, we will observe the line of walls with the square towers of the Jayrán wall. Previously occupied by a neighborhood during the medieval period, which was later abandoned, the pre-existing terracing has been preserved, restoring its walls. The system of channels and water distributors that allowed irrigation of the various existing crops on the terraces has been restored, and two old irrigation ponds have been put back into use.

From La Hoya, our destination, the Alcazaba is only 10 minutes away along Almanzor Street, a steep street that takes us to the entrance of the largest monument of its kind in Spain.

After leaving the Alcazaba, we will head towards the **Cathedral of Almería** by **Rest Street**. Located in the Almedina neighborhood, it is one of the most beautiful streets in Almería. It preserves the typical architecture of Almería houses. Its name comes from the rest that the porters used to take, leaning on a stone located on this same street, in order to continue their way carrying the “paso” (a religious parade float).

After leaving behind the south façade of the Monument and the sculpture of the first king of the Almerían Taifa, Jairán (king from 1014 to 1028), placed in 2015 to commemorate the 1,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Kingdom of the Taifa of Almería and of Jairán, its founder, we will take **Almedina Street** (the main street of the original Medina)

towards **The Queen Street** to reach the Cathedral, whose entrance is located about 300 meters away.

But halfway, we will not forget to stop at the small and beautiful square known as **Barn Square**, whose white marble fountain is a replica of the original limestone one in the Cathedral Square. The fountain was removed to enable the filming, in 1969, of the movie **Patton** and its famous scene of the triumphal Allied entry, accompanied by cannons, in the city of Messina. This is particularly noteworthy as Almería is the “Land of Cinema.”

After visiting the Cathedral, why not enjoy a tapa or a snack in one of the local bars?

☀ **Back to the ship .....** ☀





 Click to see more

Camino la  
Hoya y La  
alcazaba

Calle de la  
Almedina

Calle de la  
Reina

 La catedral

Carretera de Málaga

Fuente de los  
Peces

**Salida**  
Muelle de Ribera

750 mts

Estimated time

0 3 5 7 10 15 20 30



## OPTION 2 WALKING ITINERARY ALONG THE STREET REINA STREET

### STOPS

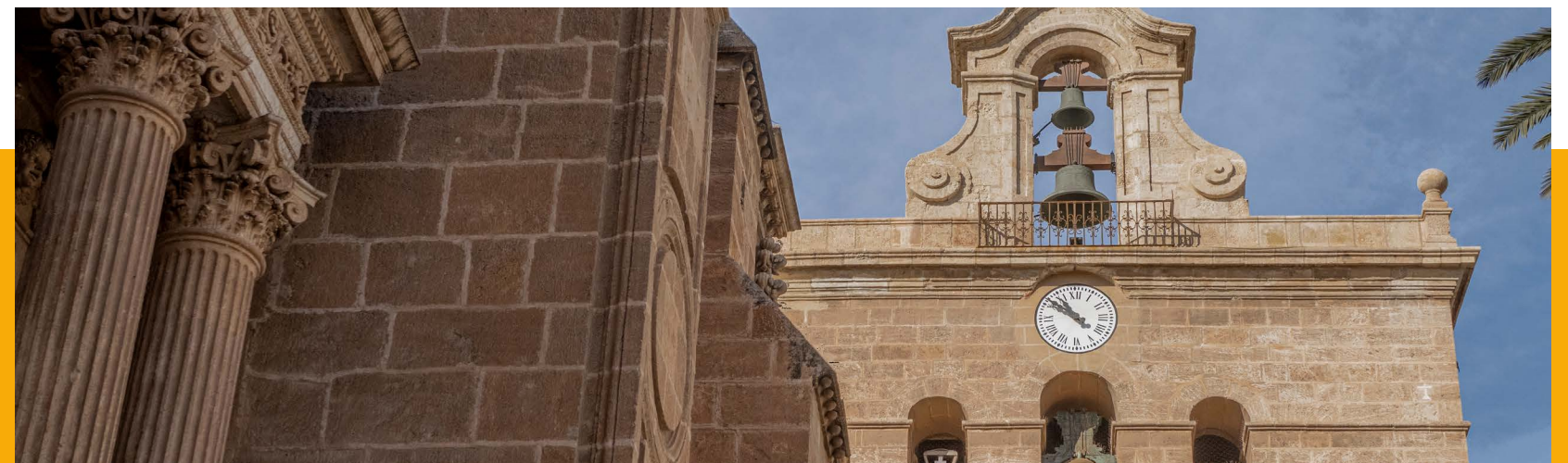
#### CATHEDRAL OF Almería

From the base of the ship, we will go towards the **Fountain of the Fish**, right in front of the entrance to the maritime station, located in the middle of **Nicolás Salmerón Park**, which is considered a green lung facing the sea. It is surrounded by a forest of tall palm trees and centennial trees, which have made it a landmark of the urban transformation of the city of Almería towards the south during the 19th and 20th centuries, from its configuration between 1842 and 1845 until the demolition of the walls, the construction of the port and the demolition of the “Fishermen’s Neighborhood.” The park, which was conceived as a connecting axis between the streets of the old town with the city’s fishing port, will be our main guide to **The Queen Street**.

The Park is divided into two areas: the so-called “**Old Park**” created between 1842 and 1845, notable for its centennial trees; in 1860 the “**Saint Louis’ Path**” was established with the demolition of the bastion, and from 1942, it was extended with the “**New Park**”. Between the New Park and the Old Park, there is a separation. During the Muslim period, the most important gate of the maritime façade, the Sea’s Gate, was located there. In the 1950s, the monumental Fountain of the Fish was built by Jesús de Perceval, with the design being approved by architect Guillermo Langle.

Pathing through the **Park** towards the highway, we will go up to the yellow marble staircase of **The Queen Street** and we will see the so-called “Gardener’s House,” which will lead us to the new “**Museum of Contemporary Spanish Realism**”, with a 19th-century restored façade. This museum is in the old **Royal Hospital of Saint Mary Magdalene**, a Renaissance-style building restored in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Neoclassical period. It is the oldest civil building in our city from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Directly through The Queen Street, we will arrive at **Almedina Street**, the name of the neighborhood in which we will dive.





Located at the foot of the Alcazaba, in the heart of the Almedina, we find the first houses, very characteristic due to their gates and windows: Almanzor, Molino Cepero, and Clarín Streets. These are very narrow and steep streets, where the Muslim heritage is very present. The 1522 earthquake left Medina almost destroyed, but in the 19th century, it was transformed into a unique and historic neighborhood that is worth visiting.

The oldest neighborhood of Almería, **La Medina**, was established when Caliph Abd al-Rahman III granted the governor of Bayyana (ancient Pechina) the status of “medina” for what had been, until then, the port suburb of Pechina. Thus, defensive walls were erected, the main mosque was built, and the city of Al-Mariyya expanded with two suburbs on its sides: La Musalla (from The Queen Street to Obispo Orberá) and that of Al-Hawd (the Aljibe, the cistern), the current Fishmonger’s -La Chanca. After the 1522 earthquake, Almedina suffered a centuries-long abandonment until, in the 19th century, a good part of the old walls were demolished and new houses began to be built, which gave this neighborhood a 19th-century appearance.

Only 400 meters from The Queen Street, we will find **Rest Street**.

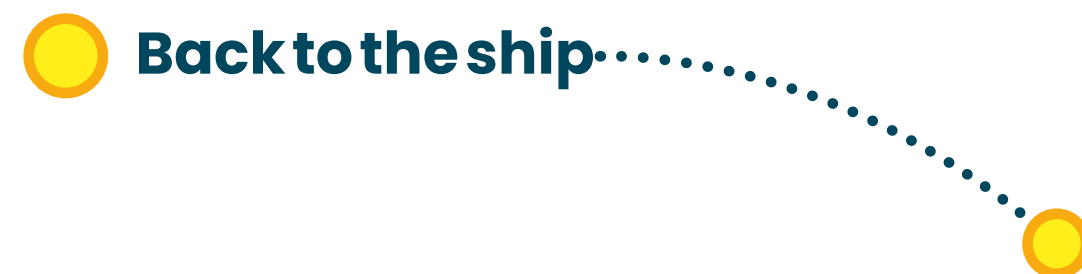
Located in the Almedina neighborhood, it is one of the most beautiful streets in Almería. It preserves the typical architecture of Almería’s houses. Its name comes from the rest that the porters would take, leaning on a stone located on this very street, before continuing their journey carrying the “paso” (religious parade float).

Facing the south façade of the **Alcazaba** and the sculpture of the King of the Almería Taifa, **Jairan** (king from 1014 to 1028), placed in 2015 to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of the creation of the Kingdom of the Taifa of Almería and its founder, Jairán, we will find ourselves at the gates of this monument, the largest one of its kind in Spain.

After visiting the monument, we will head towards the **Cathedral of Almería** retracing our steps towards **Queen Street** to reach the Cathedral, whose entrance is located about 300 meters away.

But halfway, do not forget to stop at the small and beautiful square known as **Barn Square**, whose white marble fountain is a replica of the original limestone fountain that existed in the **Cathedral Square**, removed at the time to enable the filming, in 1969, of the movie *Patton* and its famous scene of the triumphal Allied entry, accompanied by cannons, in the city of Messina. This is particularly noteworthy as Almería is the “Land of Cinema.”

After visiting the **Cathedral**, why not enjoy a tapa or snack in one of the bars in the area?



**The Ultimate undiscovered treasure**

