



VILAFRANCA

The humanized landscape of dry stone



**ELS
PORTS**

és Autèntic



ENJOY VILAFRANCA

Vilafranca is a municipality of the Comarca dels Ports, in the north of the province of Castellón. It is located in the easternmost spurs of the Iberian System, at 1,126 meters above sea level. It has a steep orography, with heights ranging from 730 meters to 1,656, the highest point in the region. This pronounced unevenness makes the native flora very varied and that Vilafranca is considered one of the areas with the greatest faunal wealth in the Valencian Community.

The gullies, the mountains, the dry stone constructions and the farmhouses disseminated by their municipal term, give us an idea of how it was and how life is in these places. The Barranco de la Fos, Las Cuevas del Forcall, El Picaio, Mosorro Plan, Las Los Fuentes del Losar, Palomita Forest, Montlleó River, La Gotera, Virtuts or Tossal dels Montllats are very interesting areas for enjoyment of rural tourism.





URBAN WALK

Walking the streets of Vilafranca means going back in time, from the era of industrialization to the Middle Ages. The historical center retains the charm of past times: modernist buildings; houses with shields; a Renaissance church built in record time, with a Tower of Conjurar; a Museum of the Dry Stone; a town hall with a Gothic altarpiece; And a whole set of uneven alleys that are difficult to cross when the snow covers them, which reach the Portal de San Roque, the only gateway to the medieval wall that is preserved.

Outside the old town stands the Plaza de Toros, the third largest in the province; the hermitages of Santa Bárbara and San Roque; or the sculptures of Explorer Andrew, the Child of the Star and the one of homage to the workers of the textile industry. In short, corners that differentiate the old part of the modern, as if they were a town and a small city.

To finish the tour you can visit the Sanctuary of the Virgen del Losar, 2 km away from the urban center. It is an architectural complex formed by the hermitage of the Virgen del Losar, from the 17th century, the hospedería, the dwellings, the corrales, a porticoed building from the nineteenth century, known as the Plácid's father's arches, and the Peiró del Losar. The image that was worshiped in this hermitage was found by a farmer, probably at the end of the fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries.

It is also worthwhile to approach the Pobla del Bellestar, an extraordinary historical-artistic complex, located next to the river of the Truchas River, which serves as a boundary between the Valencian Community and Aragón, between the provinces of Castellón and Teruel, between the municipal term of Vilafranca and the one of La Iglesuela del Cid. It is the original nucleus where Vilafranca was founded. There, Don Blasco de Alagón granted the town letter "Riu de les Truites" in 1239. In this way, he gave his life to the municipality and was born Vilafranca, but with the name of "Riu de les Truites".

Among the various buildings and ethnological elements are: the hermitage of San Miguel, from the transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic and primitive parish of Vilafranca; the gothic bridge, a true jewel of medieval architecture and used by King Jaime I to go from Aragonese lands to the conquest of the Kingdom of Valencia; the customs tower of the Brusca; the adjacent masías; the raft and the mill. In short, La Pobla del Bellestar is one of the best exponents of medieval Valencian rural architecture.





THE ARCHITECTURE FROM THE STONE IN DRY

In all of the Ports region, but especially in Vilafranca, its inhabitants have struggled to dominate the stones, as they have done in other geologically similar areas, throughout the Mediterranean coast.

The dry stone architecture is the cultural heritage that our forefathers have inherited, the expression of a previous way of life, with their own characteristics, marked by the climatology and the orography of this mountainous region.

To increase the surface and quality of arable land, here it has always been necessary to extract stone and ground. With stone, ingenuity and hands, the villafranchins (farmers and shepherds) made hundreds, perhaps

thousands of kilometers of dry stone walls to separate the cultivated farms of the roads (tugs and “caletxes”), hundreds of huts and all the constructions for the use of water in times of drought.

In short, dry stone constructions, integrated into a physical medium of great landscape and ecological value, created a territory built and wisely modified by human intervention.

The construction technique of dry stone, traditional in Cyprus, Croatia, Slovenia, Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Switzerland, has been declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by Unesco in 2018.



MUSEUM

FROM THE STONE IN DRY

To preserve this legacy and put it into value, Vilafranca Town Hall created the Stone Museum in Seco in 2006. This museum space, located on the upper floor of the medieval Lonja of the fourteenth century, allows visitors to know the world The architecture of dry stone, its technique and its uses, from a tour of panels, models, recreations and projections. In addition, it also gives the opportunity to enjoy one of the most privileged views of the entire Vega.



PATHS

FROM THE STONE IN DRY

The visit to the Museo de la Piedra en Seco can be completed by performing three itineraries that show the different uses of dry stone technique, depending on specific economic activities: El Pla de Mosorro, with its hooves and the sounds of the herds of sheep brought by the wind; Les Virtuts, with seedlings planted with wheat and potatoes; and La Parreta, with the aroma of holm oaks, pine trees and oaks that grow between the stones.

Punts d'interès / Puntos de interés / Interest places

- 1 Ajuntament i Museu de Vilafranca**
Ayuntamiento y Museo de Vilafranca
Town Council Building- Museum
- 2 Casa pairal dels Brusca**
Casa solariega de los Brusca
Ancestral house
- 3 Casa dels Penyarroja**
Casa de los Peñarroya
Ancestral house
- 4 Hospital de Caritat**
Hospital de Caridad
Charity hospital
- 5 Portal de Sant Roc**
Portal de "Sant Roc"
Gateway
- 6 Llotja i Museu de la Pedra en Sec**
Lanja y Museo de la Piedra en Seco
Llotja and Museum
- 7 Església de Santa Maria Magdalena i Museu de la Torre de Conjurar**
Iglesia de Santa Maria Magdalena y Museo de la Torre de Conjurar
Church
- 8 Confraria de Santa Maria la Major**
Cofradia de Santa Maria la Mayor
Confraternity
- 9 La Nevera**
La Nevera
Snow well
- 10 Cases modernistes**
Casas modernistas
Modernist buildings
- 11 Antic Col·legi de la Consolació**
Antiguo Colegio de la Consolación
Ancient school
- 12 Estàtua d'homenatge als treballadors de la indústria tèxtil**
Estatua de homenaje a los trabajadores de la industria textil
Statue
- 13 Ermita de Santa Bàrbara**
Ermita de Santa Bárbara
Chapel
- 14 Escultures d'homenatge a l'Explorador Andrés**
Esculturas de homenaje al Explorador Andrés
Statues
- 15 Plaça de Bous i estàtua del "Niño de la Estrella"**
Plaza de Toros y estatua del Niño de la Estrella
Bullring and statue

Serveis / Servicios / services

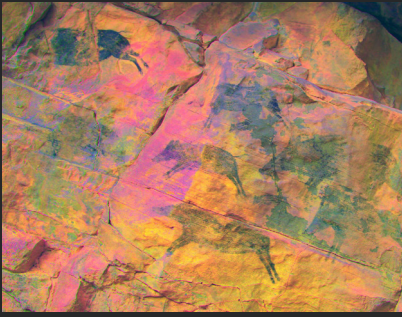
- 16 Oficina Turisme Vilafranca**
Oficina Turismo Vilafranca
Tourist office
- 17 Mancomunitat Comarcal Els Ports**
Mancomunitat Comarcal Els Ports
Mancomunitat Comarcal Els Ports
- 18 Farmàcia**
Farmacia
Pharmacy
- 19 Oficines Municipals de l'Ajuntament**
Oficinas Municipales del Ayuntamiento
Town Council offices
- 20 Casa Social**
Casa Social
Community centre
- 21 Guàrdia Civil**
Guardia Civil
Civil Guard
- 22 Instal·lacions Esportives (Camp de Fútbol, Frontó, Piscines, Gimnàs, Poliesportiu)**
Instalaciones Deportivas (Campo de Fútbol, Frontón, Piscinas, Gimnasio, Polideportivo)
Sport facilities
- 23 Centres Docents (Escola Infantil, CEIP, IES)**
Centros Docentes (Escuela Infantil, CEIP, IES)
Schools
- 24 Parador de Festes**
Parador de Fiestas
Festival place
- 25 Centre Parroquial**
Centro Parroquial
Parish house
- 26 Correus**
Correos
Postal service
- 27 Casa de Cultura**
Casa de Cultura
House of Culture
- 28 Centre de Salut**
Centro de Salud
Medical centre
- 29 Casa de la Música**
Casa de la Música
House of Music
- 30 Creu Roja Vilafranca**
Cruz Roja Vilafranca
Red Cross
- 31 Gasolinera**
Gasolinera
Petrol station

CASCO ANTIC CASCO ANTIGUO OLD QUARTER





STREET MAP VILAFRANCA



PREHISTORY

The first inhabitants of the area left their mark thousands of years ago. The Vilafranca term preserves three sets of Levantine rock art. This millenary artistic tradition was included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1998. In the whole of La Covatina del Tossalet del Mas la Rambla or Barranco de les Carabasses, the variety of archers of different styles stands out; in the Ferranda a wild boar hunt is observed; and in the Volta Espessa, various figures of bovids and archers.

ENVIRONMENT NATURAL

Barranco de la Fos: The most important ravine in Vilafranca, for its landscape, fauna, plant and ethnographic richness. It is a deep valley with steep slopes, which highlights the agricultural exploitation that had once, thanks to the construction of a multitude of small terraces with dry stone walls, to better take advantage of water and useful land, and allocate it to crops of dry land.

Cuevas del Forcall: Natural environment very attractive. Formations of stratified limestone, which nature has modeled capriciously over time. There is a set of 16 cavities, hung on a rocky mass of about 200 meters high, sometimes with deep caves and sometimes simple shelters. It can be accessed in 45 minutes by a path that leaves Vilafranca.

Las Fuentes del Losar: Picturesque place of recreation. It is used as a recreation and play area for children, snacks and walks. It is also an important resting place and watering hole for transhumant herds.



Paraje Natural Municipal de Palomita
 “The Enchanted Forest”

Area of great natural value, conditioned by the hardness of the climate and altitude, in which a dense pine forest mass predominates. In addition, in the shadows of the Font d’Horta ravine, there are Eurosiberian species of great interest such as holly, linden or yew. This space, from the botanical point of view, is integrated into the Natura 2000 Network.

The fauna of the environment is very diverse and we can find mountain goats, it is common to observe griffon vultures flying over the space, as well as some raptors such as the golden eagle and the golden

eagle, the peregrine falcon and the common kestrel.

Tossal dels Montllats: With 1,656 meters high, els Montllats is the highest mountain in Vilafranca, dels Ports and the fifth highest in the Valencian Community. It is an environment of great landscape diversity, with forests of wild and holm oak groves, cultivation areas and meadows. From here you can contemplate extraordinary panoramic views.

Río de las Truchas: One of the best intact river beds of the Valencian Community, in an environment of great beauty and ecological value for its floro and fauna.





TREKKING

Vilafranca maintains an extensive network of marked paths and paths, which cover about 250 km. for itineraries of little difficulty for any hiker. Along the way, pure air, beautiful views and the varied fauna and flora that inhabit these lands are guaranteed.

Depending on the time available, we can make walking routes of only 1 hour or more than 8 hours with the longest route. Many roads in Vilafranca take advantage of the route of old cattle routes where large flocks of sheep circulated during the transhumance since the end of the Middle Ages. This is the case, for example, of the Empriu azagador, who crosses the northern part of the municipality



GASTRONOMY

Un aspecto importante de Vilafranca es su gastronomía. Su cocina – tradicional o moderna – se basa en materias primas naturales y autóctonas, que se trabajan de manera sencilla. La situación, el clima y la tierra se combinan para ofrecernos setas y trufas, el oro negro de la cocina. Las carnes, de cordero, cerdo o ternera se crían en la zona, lo que les proporciona una calidad extraordinaria. Los guisos, sopas y ollas no faltan en un menú tradicional, así como unas buenas croquetas o napoleones. Los embutidos, el jamón y la cecina, así como los quesos, ponen el aroma, color y sabor en la mesa. Y el toque dulce, lo dan las cuajadas. Además, según la época del año y la festividad que se celebra, es tradición cocinar diferentes platos: en Navidad las “pelotas”; para Pascua la rosca tapada; los pasteles de confitura de calabaza por San Antonio y el Losar.



PARTIES AND EVENTS

Vilafranca can be enjoyed during the four seasons of the year. It has a varied cultural, sports and leisure program, with activities that combine tradition with current affairs and interest for many visitors. Thus an attractive agenda of events is formed, which can be enjoyed if one approaches the town of the interior of the Ports.

In Vilafranca, as in all the villages of these lands, popular festivals are also deeply rooted.



The year begins celebrating San Antonio Abad. During three weekends they are collected, with cavalries, the trunks, the bars and the suitcase, to build a Barraca, which is lit after the representation of the Life of the Saint. In addition, the mayorales invite pumpkin pies and prepare the Almoneda (auction).

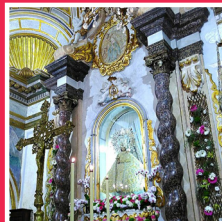
In February the festival of San Blas takes place. The next celebration to highlight is Holy Week, with several liturgical acts and the processions of Calvary, Holy Wednesday, the Holy Burial, Good Friday, and the Encounter, Easter Sunday.

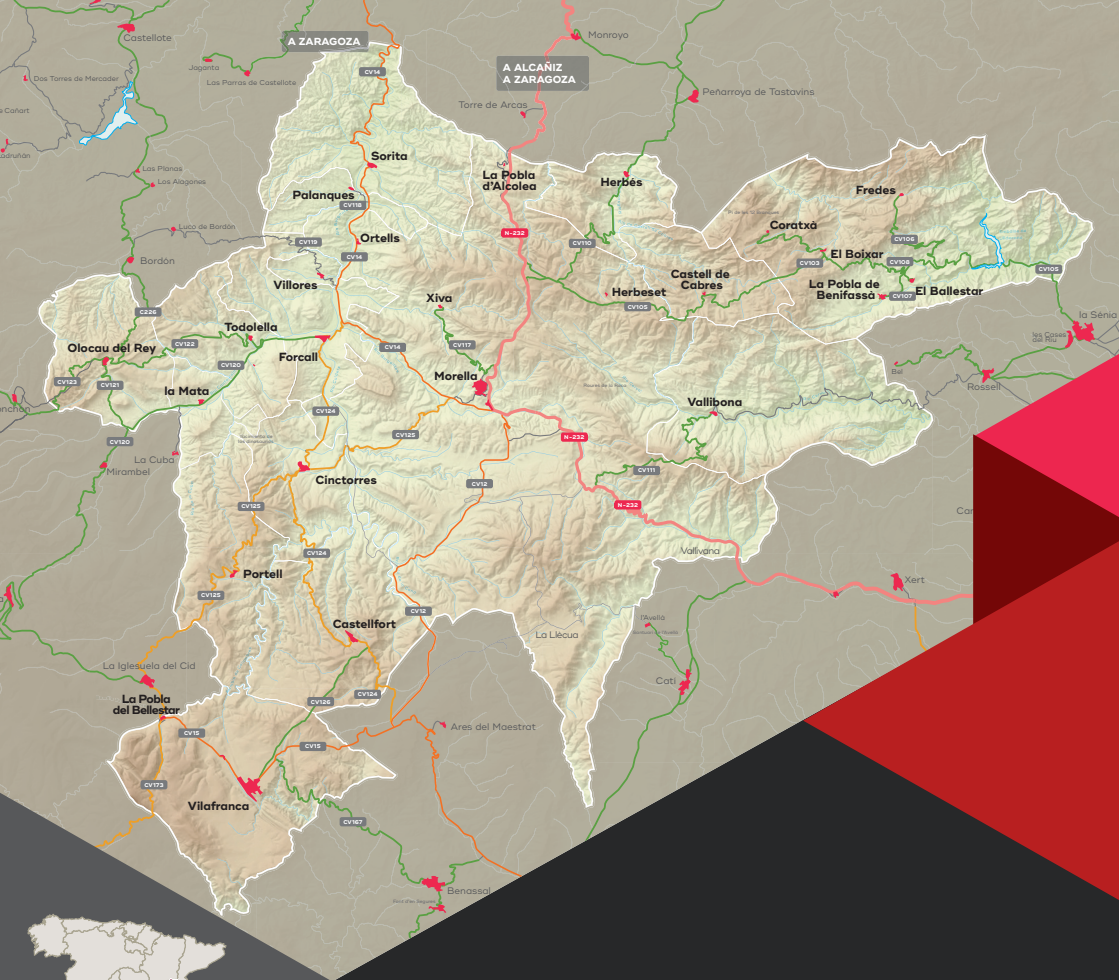
With the arrival of spring the rogativas begin, whose origins go back to medieval times. On Easter Monday of Pentecost the party moves to the hermitage of Losar, where, after mass, milk and pastries are distributed. And in May we visit the hermitage of San Miguel, in the Pobla del Bellestar.

The first bullfighting events of the year are organized by the Peña Taurina the first weekend of June. And the following weekend Vilafranca is filled with theater with the Capsigrany.

In July, San Cristóbal, patron of the drivers, is celebrated in the hermitage of the Virgen del Losar; and at night the traditional "Ball Pla". The Magdalena Fair, livestock, trade, crafts, etc. also takes place on the third weekend of this month.

The month of August begins with the Music Festival, a summer event of reference in the region. Subsequently, ten days of patron celebrations dedicated to San Roque, with bullfighting, cultural, sports, children, religious events, etc., help to forget for a few days the routine and stress of work. September 8 is the feast of the Virgin of Losar. And at the end of the month, the pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Miguel.





Tourist Info Vilafranca
C/ San Roque, 1
12150 - Vilafranca
Tel.: 964 44 14 32
Fax: 964 44 01 83 (Ayto.)
E-mail: vilafranca@touristinfo.net



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