

Cartagena

Region of Murcia · Spain

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Cartagena is a port city on the southeast coast of Spain, in the region of Murcia. It was founded by Carthage in the 3rd century BC, and it has Roman, Byzantine and Spanish naval history, with a well-preserved Roman theatre.

It also has a deep natural harbor, Modernist buildings and good beaches nearby. It suits a day or two, and it is close to Murcia and the Mar Menor coast.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are the best seasons, with warm sunny weather. Summers are hot and humid, with water warm enough for swimming from June to October. Winters are mild and dry.

The Carthaginians and Romans festival in September recreates the city's ancient history with parades and camps. Holy Week is also a major event.

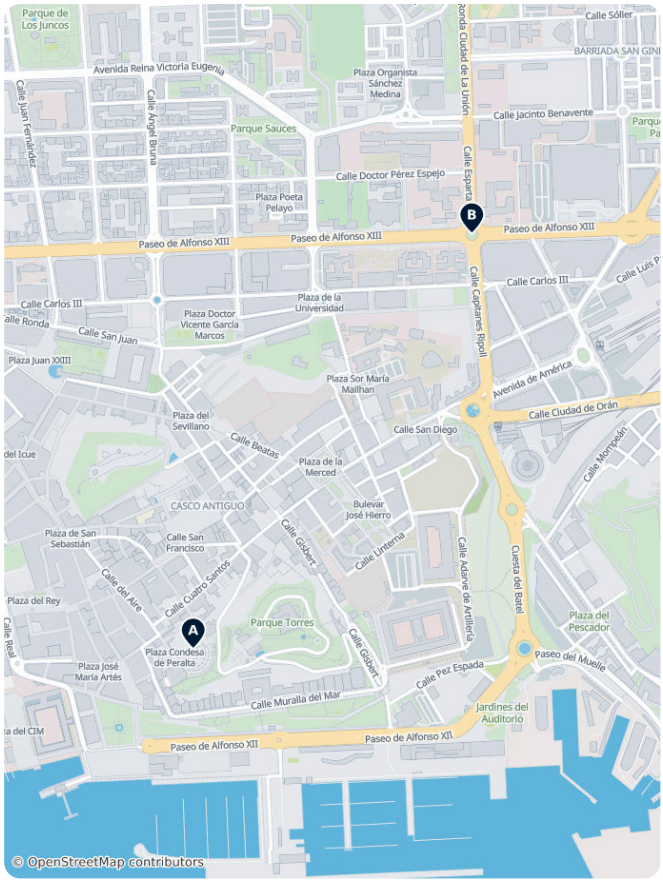
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for sightseeing	15° / 19° Feels like 12°	10° / 7°	Dry air
February	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 19° Feels like 12°	10° / 7°	Dry air
March	Great Great for sightseeing	17° / 21° Feels like 14°	11° / 8°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 22°	13° / 11°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 25°	16° / 13°	20 sunny days
June	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 29°	20° / 17°	23 sunny days · Humid air · UV 8 (Very high)
July	Great Great for the beach	28° / 31°	23° / 20°	24 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	29° / 31°	24° / 21°	22 sunny days · Muggy, humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 29°	21° / 18°	Muggy, humid air
October	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 26°	18° / 14°	
November	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 22°	14° / 10°	Dry air
December	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 19° Feels like 13°	11° / 7°	Dry air

Best months: March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Teatro Romano is a Roman theatre from the 1st century BC, found under the old town in 1988. The museum next to it explains the finds.
- The Roman Forum Quarter (*Barrio del Foro Romano*) has Roman streets and houses, with a mosaic and a harbor museum.
- B Maqueta Submarino Peral is a model of the Peral submarine, an early electric submarine launched at Cartagena in 1888. The original is on display on the waterfront.
- The Concepción Castle sits on a hill above the old town, with a panoramic lift and views over the port.
- The Naval Museum and the ARQUA National Museum of Underwater Archaeology are both on the waterfront.
- The Civil War Refuge Museum is a shelter that was dug under the city to protect civilians from bombs.
- Calle Mayor has Modernist buildings, such as the Casino and the Gran Hotel.



Cartagena – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

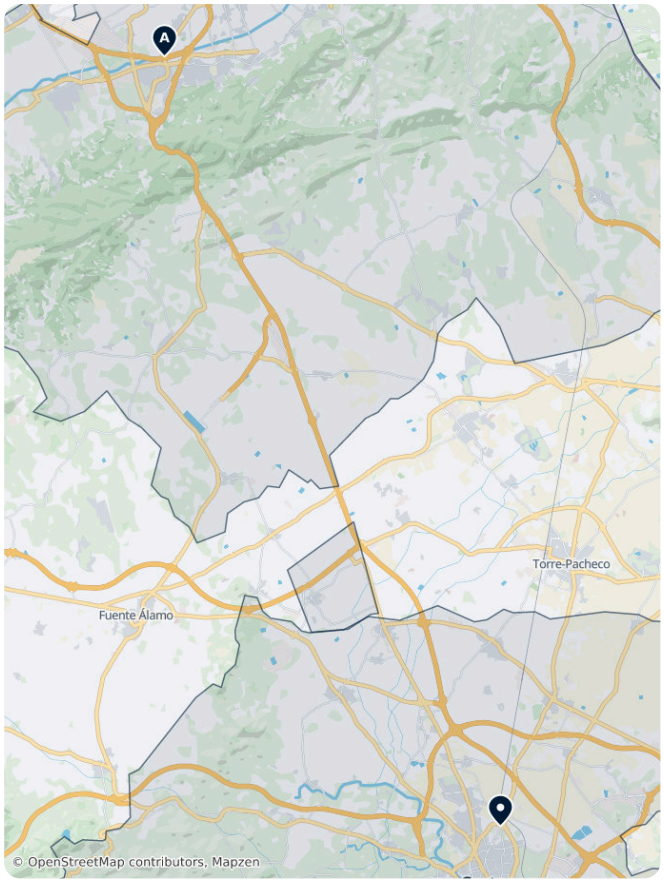
Scan to download the app

What to experience

- Walk through the Roman theatre and the Forum, and take the lift up to the castle.
- Take a boat trip around the harbor.
- Spend a day on the wild beaches of Calblanque or diving at Cabo de Palos.

Day trips

- **Cabo de Palos** (about 25 km): a cape with a lighthouse, known for diving in the marine reserve.
- **Calblanque** (about 15 km): a regional park with wild beaches and dunes.
- **La Manga** (about 35 km): a narrow strip of land between the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean.
- Ⓐ Murcia (about 50 km, 45 minutes): a university city with a baroque cathedral.



Where to explore

Other places nearby:

- **City**: Murcia and Alicante.
- **Coast**: Benidorm.

Getting there

- **By air**: The Región de Murcia airport (RMU) is about 25 km away and has limited flights. Alicante airport is about 100 km away and has many more.
- **By train**: Trains run to Murcia, with connections to Madrid and the Mediterranean coast. Book on Renfe.
- **By bus**: Coaches serve Murcia, Alicante, Madrid and Almería.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town and the harbor are compact, and most sights are within a 15 to 20 minute walk. There are hills near the castle and the Roman theatre.
- **Cycling**: Cycling is practical along the waterfront and the flatter streets.
- **Public transport**: City buses cover the wider area.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The old town and harbor are compact, with some hills near the castle and theatre.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Cycling is practical along the waterfront and flatter streets.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the old town. A car helps for the beaches and nearby parks.
- **Parking**: Use an underground car park near the harbor.
- **Restrictions**: Parts of the old town are pedestrian only.

Food & drink

Cartagena's food comes from the sea and the farms of Murcia. *Caldero* is a rice dish cooked in a fish stock, and seafood from the Mar Menor is common. *Asiático* is a local coffee with condensed milk, brandy, liqueur and cinnamon.

Vegetables and salads from the Murcia region are widely used.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Churros · Churros con Chocolate
Fried dough sticks served with a thick, dark hot chocolate for dipping — a classic Spanish breakfast or late-night snack.

LUNCH

Paella Valenciana
A saffron-scented rice dish cooked in a wide, shallow pan. The traditional Valencian version uses chicken, rabbit, and green beans — best eaten at midday.

Gazpacho
A cold, blended soup of raw tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, garlic, olive oil, and vinegar, originally from Andalusia. Served as a drink or a starter, especially in summer.

DINNER

Pulpo a la Gallega
Boiled octopus sliced onto a wooden board and dressed with olive oil, coarse salt, and smoked paprika — a signature dish of Galicia.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Jamón Ibérico
Dry-cured ham from acorn-fed Iberian pigs, sliced paper-thin and eaten on its own or with bread. The finest grade, jamón ibérico de bellota, is one of Spain's most prized products.

Tortilla Española
A thick potato and egg omelette, served warm or at room temperature, found in virtually every bar in Spain. Often eaten as a tapa or a quick meal.

Patatas Bravas
Fried potato chunks served with a spicy tomato sauce or aioli — one of the most common tapas across the country.

Pintxos
Small snacks anchored to slices of bread with a toothpick, the Basque Country's answer to tapas. Found in bar counters across San Sebastián and Bilbao, often with elaborate toppings.

Croquetas
Crispy breaded cylinders with a creamy béchamel filling, typically made with jamón, bacalà (salt cod), or mushrooms.

DRINKS

Rioja Wine · Vino de Rioja

Spain's best-known wine region produces full-bodied reds from Tempranillo grapes, aged in oak. The crianza, reserva, and gran reserva labels indicate increasing age and complexity.

Cartagena – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Cartagena is a safe city. Summer heat and humidity are strong, so avoid the midday sun, drink water and wear sun protection. Take care on the rocky beaches, where currents can be strong.

History

Cartagena was founded as Qart Hadasht ("new city") by the Carthaginians in 227 BC. The Romans took it in 209 BC and made it a major port and mining center.

It was a Byzantine and Spanish naval base for centuries. In the 20th century it was the main base of the Spanish navy on the Mediterranean, and it was an important Republican stronghold during the Civil War.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Spain at a glance:

CURRENCY

EUR €

EMERGENCY

112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

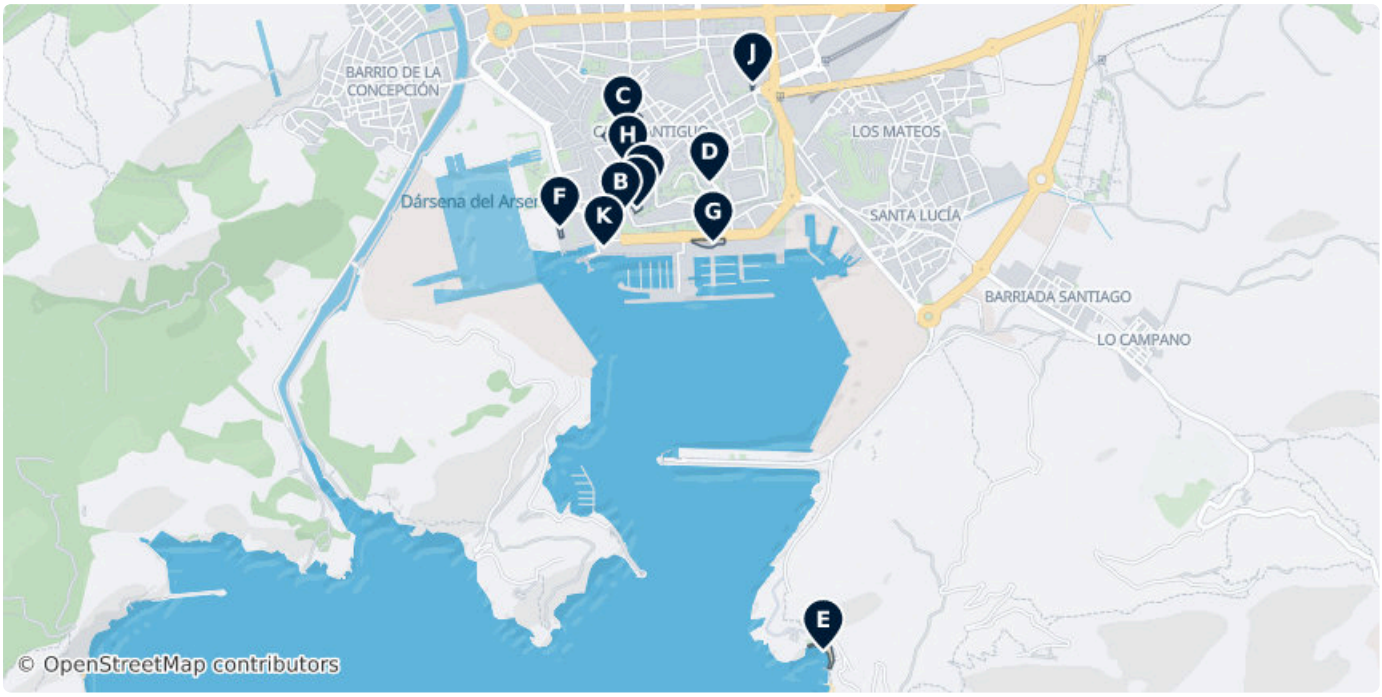
Spanish

TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Cartagena Essentials

Cartagena's 3,000-year history is anchored by the remarkably preserved Roman Theatre and the Roman Forum District, one of Spain's largest urban archaeological sites. The city's maritime identity is showcased at the National Museum of Underwater Archaeology and the Naval Museum, home to the pioneering 19th-century Isaac Peral submarine. Defensive history is visible at the Punic Wall remains, while Modernist architecture defines the Ayuntamiento. A panoramic elevator connects the port to the hilltop castle, providing views over the harbor and the bronze El Zulo monument.





A Roman Theatre

The Roman Theatre of Cartagena is a Roman theatre in the Roman colonia of Cartago Nova—present-day Cartagena, Spain.

17 Calle de Don Gil, Cartagena 30202, Spain
(37.59961, -0.98414)

teatroromano.cartagena.es



B Museo del Teatro Romano

Designed by architect Rafael Moneo, this museum houses archaeological finds from the site and provides the entrance to the theatre via a tunnel beneath the ruins of Santa María la Vieja Cathedral.

Plaza del Ayuntamiento 9, 30201 Cartagena
(37.59890, -0.98535)

teatroromano.cartagena.es, +34 968 525 149



C Barrio del foro Romano

One of Spain's largest urban archaeological sites, featuring the remains of a Roman thermal complex, the Atrium Building used for banquets, and a sanctuary dedicated to the gods Isis and Serapis.

4 Calle Balcones Azules, Cartagena 30201, Spain (37.60235, -0.98525)

Mo–Su 10:00–20:00



D Ascensor panorámico

A 45-meter-high glass elevator connecting the port level to the hilltop Castillo de la Concepción, offering panoramic views of the city's Roman theatre and harbor.

32 Calle de Gisbert, Cartagena 30202, Spain (37.60012, -0.98086)



E Cala Cortina Beach

Popular isolated beach accessible by road. Set in a beautiful arid landscape, this beach is ideal for relaxing.

Calle de Jorquera Martínez Francisco, 57, 30202 Cartagena, Spain (37.58133, -0.97509)



F Sala Isaac Peral - Museo Naval

A dedicated wing of the Naval Museum housing the Peral Submarine, the world's first fully functional electric battery-powered submarine, launched in 1888 by local inventor Isaac Peral.

30201, Spain (37.59831, -0.98845)

submarinoperal.com



G National Museum of Underwater Archaeology

The National Museum of Subaquatic Archaeology in Cartagena, Spain is an underwater archaeology museum.

Paseo de Alfonso XII, 30201 Cartagena, Spain
(37.59771, -0.98067)

museoarqua.mcu.es, +34 968 121166

H Ayuntamiento de Cartagena

An early 20th-century Modernist masterpiece designed by Tomás Rico Valarino, featuring a triangular floor plan, a white marble facade, and ornate zinc domes.

(37.60078, -0.98499)



I Catedral de Santa María

The ruins of the 13th-century cathedral, largely destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. It stands on the site of a previous mosque and overlooks the excavated Roman Theatre.

7 Travesía Santa Isabel, Cartagena 30202, Spain
(37.59911, -0.98454)



J Centro de Interpretación de la Muralla Púnica

This site preserves the remains of the 3rd-century BC Carthaginian defensive walls, one of the few Punic archaeological finds in Spain, alongside a 16th-century funerary crypt.

27 Calle de San Diego, Cartagena 30202, Spain
(37.60410, -0.97866)

puertodeculturas.cartagena.es/ficha_muralla_punica.asp

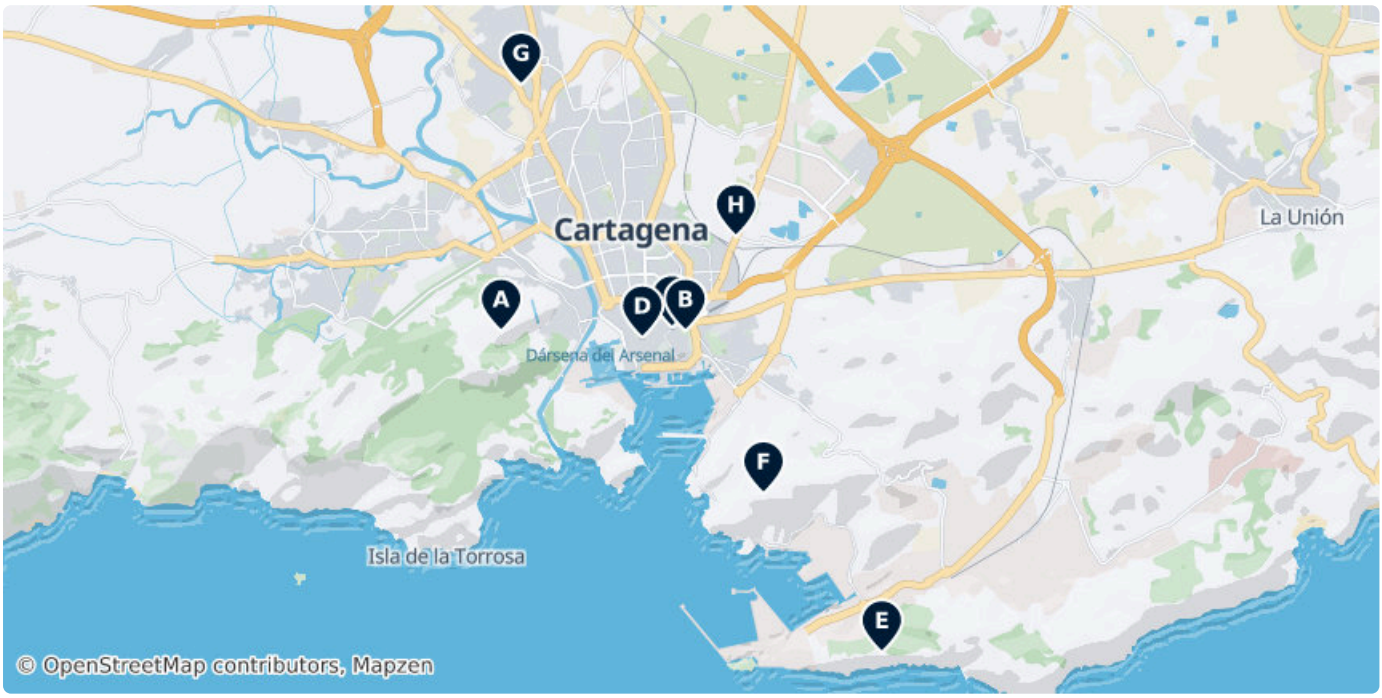
K El Zulo

A 4.8-meter-tall bronze sculpture by Victor Ochoa depicting a seated man in reflection. Erected in 2009, it serves as a memorial to the victims of terrorism.

Plaza de los Héroes de Cavite, 30201 Cartagena, Spain
(37.59754, -0.98620)

Historic Cartagena

Cartagena's strategic Mediterranean port has shaped its architecture for over two millennia. This selection highlights the city's defensive evolution, from the 1st-century BC Roman funerary monument of Torre Ciega to 18th-century coastal fortifications like Castillo de la Atalaya and San Julián. The collection also features civil heritage landmarks, showcasing Modernist masterpieces like the Palacio de Aguirre and Neoclassical residences like Palacio Molina, illustrating the urban transformation driven by the 19th-century mining boom.



A Castillo de la Atalaya

An 18th-century Neoclassical fortress built to defend the naval arsenal. It features a trapezoidal plan with four bastions and sits atop Atalaya hill.

Calle Canciller de Ayala, 30205 Cartagena, Spain
(37.60258, -1.00877)

B Castillo de Despeñaperros

19th-century fortification built upon medieval foundations on one of Cartagena's five hills, serving as a strategic defensive bastion for the city's eastern side.

Travesía de la Lealtad, 30202 Cartagena, Spain
(37.60258, -0.97862)

C Palacio de Aguirre

Modernist palace completed in 1901 by architect Víctor Beltrí. It features a distinctive ceramic-tiled dome and ornate facade carvings, currently housing the Regional Museum of Modern Art.

(37.60304, -0.98079)

D Palacio Molina

18th-century Baroque and Neoclassical palace characterized by its austere stone facade. The building now serves as a public exhibition space and cultural center.

(37.60170, -0.98566)

E Batería de Conejos

20th-century coastal artillery battery located on the eastern approach to the harbor, originally designed to protect the naval base from maritime attacks.

(37.56095, -0.94649)

F Castillo de San Julián

Large 18th-century fortress situated 293 meters above sea level. It was designed to provide crossfire with other coastal batteries to protect the port entrance.

(37.58153, -0.96584)

G Palacio de los Marqueses de Fuente Sol

18th-century noble residence reflecting the civil architecture of Cartagena's local aristocracy during the Enlightenment period.

(37.63443, -1.00549)

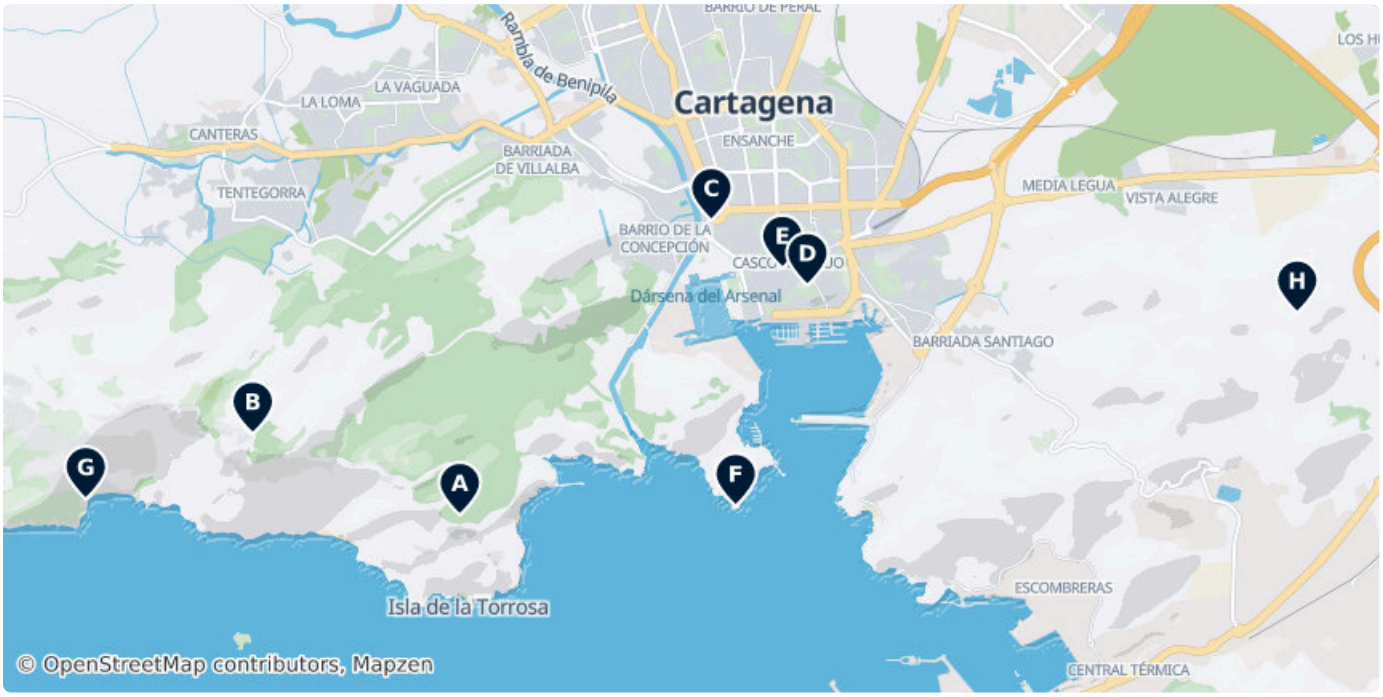
H Torre Ciega

1st-century BC Roman funerary monument decorated with opus reticulatum. It is one of the few surviving remains of the ancient city's northern necropolis.

2 Avenida de Tito Didio, Torreciega 30392, Spain
(37.61481, -0.97035)

Hidden Gems of Cartagena

Cartagena's coastline and urban center are defined by a complex network of 18th and 19th-century military fortifications and commemorative monuments. This selection highlights strategic coastal artillery batteries like La Parajola and the anti-aircraft Batería de Roldán, which historically guarded the Mediterranean port. Within the city, statues honor figures like the Carthaginian founder Hasdrubal the Fair and actor Isidoro Máiquez. The list also includes natural landmarks, such as the Cueva del Gigante, showcasing the region's rugged maritime geography.



A Batería de la Parajola

Also known as C-3, this 20th-century coastal artillery battery is situated on Mount Galeras. It played a significant role during the Spanish Civil War, famously sinking the transport ship Castillo de Olite in 1939.

(Unnamed Road), 30310, Spain (37.58105, -1.01859)

B Batería de Roldán

Known as C-51, this anti-aircraft fortification sits atop Mount Roldán at 495 meters. Built in the 1920s and 30s, it retains its Vickers 105mm guns and offers views over Cabo Tiñoso.

(Unnamed Road), 30310, Spain (37.58786, -1.04051)

C Pilón de los Burros

A historical stone drinking trough located near the Muralla del Mar. Originally used by livestock entering the city, it is a remnant of Cartagena's 18th-century urban infrastructure.

(37.60576, -0.99195)

D Asdrúbal el Bello

A bronze monument dedicated to Hasdrubal the Fair, the Carthaginian general who founded the city of Qart Hadasht in 227 BC. The statue is located near the Punic Wall archaeological site.

(37.60031, -0.98179)

E Isidoro Máiquez

Located in Plaza de San Francisco, this monument honors the renowned 18th-century Spanish actor born in Cartagena. The bronze sculpture was created by José Alcoverro and inaugurated in 1927.

Plaza de San Francisco, 30201 Cartagena, Spain
(37.60177, -0.98443)

F Batería de la Punta de la Podadera

Originally built in 1739 and renovated in the 19th century, this coastal defense battery sits at the entrance of the port. The site contains ruins of powder magazines and artillery emplacements.

(37.58180, -0.98937)

G Cueva del Gigante

A large sea cave located at the base of the cliffs of Mount Roldán. Accessible primarily by water, the cave features significant geological formations and a small interior beach.

(37.58238, -1.05820)

H Cueva El Mani

A coastal cave situated near the eastern side of the port entrance, showcasing the limestone karst topography characteristic of the Cartagena coastline.

(37.59802, -0.92991)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikipedia, Tripomatic, Official websites

IMAGE CREDITS

- Roman Theatre — Michelle Harding, CC-BY-SA
- Museo del Teatro Romano — "Recreación_3D_del_Teatro_Romano_de_Cartagena" by DaniRJ, Public domain
- Barrio del foro Romano — "Edificio del atrio toscano en el barrio del foro romano de Cartagena (España)." by Nanosanchez, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Ascensor panorámico — "The bullring of Cartagena, under which is the Roman amphitheater, view from the..." by Puntin1969, CC BY 2.0
- Cala Cortina Beach — "Cala Cortina Beach" by Ga Go, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Sala Isaac Peral - Museo Naval — "Museo Naval del Caribe, Cartagena" by Marcin Gwizdon, CC BY-SA 3.0
- National Museum of Underwater Archaeology — "National Museum of Underwater Archaeology" by Ga Go, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Catedral de Santa María — "Saint Mary's Cathedral in Murcia (Spain), Diocese of Cartagena." by Murcianboy, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Centro de Interpretación de la Muralla Púnica — "The Interpretation Centre of the Punic Wall (Centro de Interpretación de la..." by VIATOR IMPERI, CC BY-SA 2.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 10, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.