

Tarifa

Andalusia · Spain

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Tarifa is a walled town at the southern tip of Spain, where the Atlantic meets the Mediterranean in the Strait of Gibraltar. It is the southernmost town of continental Europe, and on a clear day the mountains of Morocco are visible, about 14 km away.

It is known for strong winds that make it one of Europe's best kitesurfing and windsurfing spots, for long white beaches, and for a relaxed old town with a Moorish castle. Whale and dolphin watching trips run from the harbour.

When to visit

The wind season for kitesurfing runs from spring to early autumn, and the beaches are best from June to September. Summer is warm but windy, which keeps it cooler than the rest of Andalusia. Winters are mild and wet.

The *levante* (east wind) and *poniente* (west wind) shape the weather. The levante can blow for days and can be strong, so check the forecast before you go.

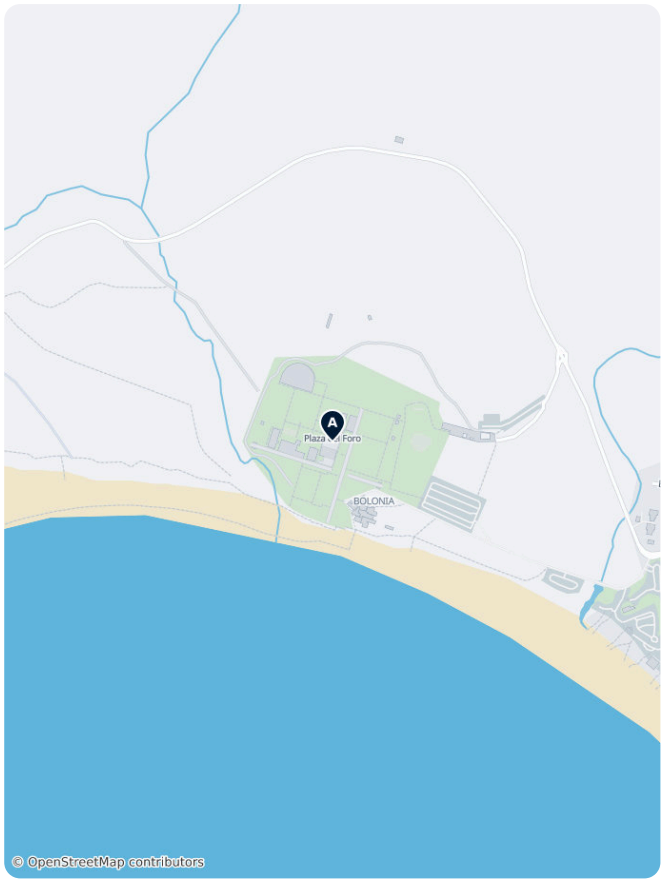
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	16° / 19° Feels like 13°	11° / 8°	Dry air
February	Great Great for wildlife watching	16° / 19° Feels like 13°	11° / 8°	Dry air
March	Good Good for wildlife watching	18° / 22° Feels like 15°	12° / 9°	Dry air
April	Great Great for wildlife watching	19° / 23°	14° / 11°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 27°	16° / 13°	
June	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 30°	19° / 17°	24 sunny days · Humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Great Great for the beach	29° / 33°	21° / 19°	28 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	29° / 33°	22° / 20°	26 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 8 (Very high)
September	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 29°	20° / 18°	Muggy, humid air
October	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 26°	18° / 15°	Humid air
November	Great Great for wildlife watching	19° / 22°	14° / 11°	
December	Good Good for wildlife watching	16° / 19°	12° / 9°	Dry air

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

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

Top sights

- The Castillo de Guzmán el Bueno is a 10th-century Moorish castle in the old town, linked to the legend of Guzmán el Bueno who refused to surrender in 1294.
- The old town has whitewashed lanes, Moorish gates such as the Puerta de Jerez, and the Iglesia de San Mateo, a church with a Baroque façade.
- A Baelo Claudia museum is the museum at Baelo Claudia, a Roman town on Bolonia beach, with ruins of a basilica, forum and fish-salting works, about 20 km from town.
- Playa de Los Lances is a wide windy beach north of the old town, and Playa de Valdevaqueros has a large dune and kitesurfing schools.
- Playa de Bolonia and its dune have white sand and Roman ruins at the end.
- The Punta de Tarifa and the lighthouse mark the southernmost point of continental Europe, linked to the town by a causeway.
- Zahara de los Atunes and Atlanterra, further west, have long sandy beaches.



Tarifa – Plan Your Trip

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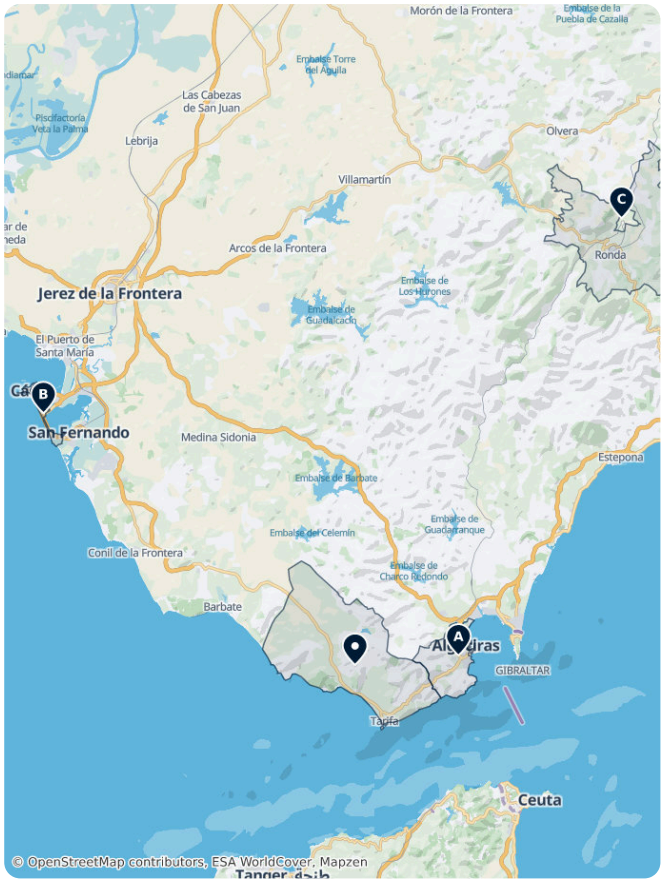
What to experience

- Try kitesurfing or windsurfing, with a lesson at a school on the beaches.
- Go on a whale and dolphin watching trip in the Strait.
- Walk the old town and climb to the castle at sunset.
- Visit the Roman ruins of Baelo Claudia and the Bolonia dune.
- Take a day ferry to Tangier.

Day trips

- **Tangier, Morocco** (1 hour by ferry): a day trip with a passport. Check entry rules.
- A Algeciras (about 20 km): a port town with ferries to Africa.
- **Gibraltar** (about 40 km): a British territory with a rock and nature reserve. Take your passport.
- B Cádiz (about 90 km): one of the oldest cities in western Europe.
- C Ronda (about 120 km): a town on a gorge.



Where to explore

Other places nearby:

- **Southern Andalusia**: Algeciras, Cádiz, Jerez de la Frontera and Ronda.
- **Costa del Sol**: Estepona and Marbella.

Getting there

- **By air**: Málaga airport is about 150 km away, Jerez about 130 km and Gibraltar about 40 km. A rental car is the easiest connection.
- **By bus**: Buses run from Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga and Seville. There is no railway station.
- **By ferry**: Ferries run from Tarifa to Tangier in Morocco in about an hour.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town is compact and flat. The beaches at Los Lances are about 1 km away, and the Valdevaqueros dune is about 10 km out.
- **Bus**: Local buses run along the coast road to the beaches in summer.
- **Cycling**: The coast is flat, but the wind can be strong.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town is compact and flat, with the nearest beach about 1 km away.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The coast is flat, but the wind can be strong.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Useful to reach the beaches and Baelo Claudia, but the town itself is easy on foot.
- **Parking**: Paid parking is available near the old town. Beach car parks fill up in summer.
- **Roads**: The N-340 coast road is exposed to crosswinds, so drive carefully with a high-sided vehicle.

Food & drink

Tarifa's food is based on Atlantic seafood. The local specialty is red tuna (*atún rojo de almadraba*), caught with a traditional trap method on the coast, and served raw, grilled or in stews. Also look for fried fish, *urta a la roteña* (a baked fish dish) and fresh seafood.

The influence of North African cooking is visible in some restaurants.

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.

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Safety & health

Tarifa is a safe town. The wind and currents are strong, so beginners should only kitesurf or windsurf with a school and not in strong offshore wind. Use sun protection, as the wind hides the heat. If you cross to Morocco, take your passport and check the entry rules.

History

The town is named after the Berber commander Tarif ibn Malik, who landed in 710, a year before the Moorish invasion of Spain. The castle was built in 960 by the caliph of Córdoba.

In 1292 the Christian forces took the town, and in 1294 the governor Guzmán el Bueno defended it against a siege. The Battle of the Río Salado in 1340 was fought nearby. In the 1980s the wind made Tarifa a center of windsurfing and later kitesurfing.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Spain at a glance:

CURRENCY

EUR €

EMERGENCY

112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

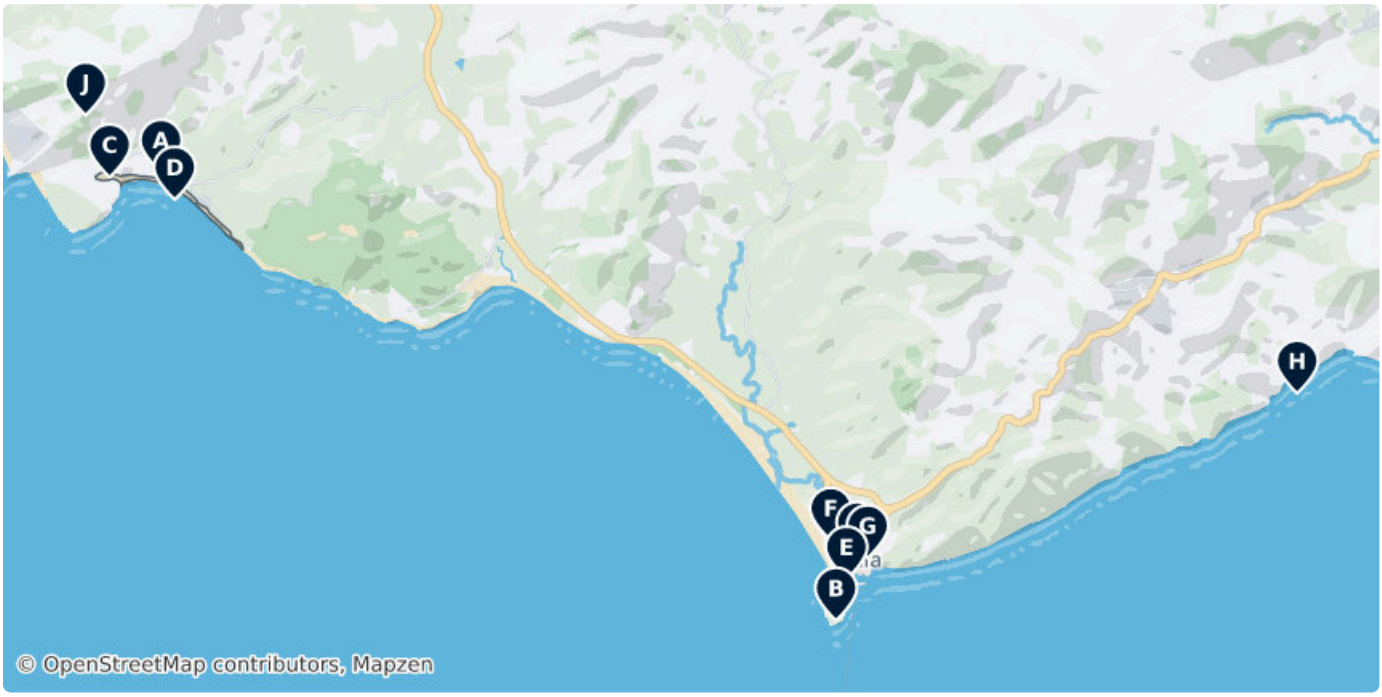
Spanish

TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Tarifa's Absolute Essentials

Tarifa sits at the southernmost tip of continental Europe, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea. This collection features the well-preserved Roman ruins of Baelo Claudia and the massive Bolonia sand dune. The town's historical architecture is represented by the 16th-century San Mateo church and the medieval Puerta de Jerez. Natural highlights include the El Estrecho Natural Park, spanning coastal cliffs and diverse ecosystems, and the Cueva del Moro, which contains Paleolithic rock art overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar.





A Baelo Claudia

Baelo Claudia was an ancient Roman town in Hispania, located 22 kilometres outside of Tarifa, near the village of Bolonia, in southern...

Acceso a Playa Cañuelo (36.08976, -5.77483)

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B Lighthouse Tarifa

Located on the Isla de las Palomas, this 19th-century lighthouse marks the southernmost point of mainland Europe at the geographical divide between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

Isla de Tarifa o de las Palomas 11380, Spain (36.00116, -5.60958)

diariodejerez.es/article/provincia/1067601/una/torre/alm...



C Duna de Bolonia

A massive natural sand dune exceeding 30 meters in height, located at the western end of Bolonia beach. It is a protected natural monument shaped by the region's strong easterly winds.

11380, Spain (36.08882, -5.78739)

andalucia.org/listing/duna-de-bolonia/15532102/



D Bolonia Beach

A 3.8-kilometer stretch of white sand situated adjacent to the Roman ruins of Baelo Claudia. It is known for its clear waters and remains largely undeveloped compared to other coastal areas.

Spain (36.08441, -5.77145)



E Castillo de Santa Catalina

A Renaissance-style palace and fortification built in the early 20th century. Its design mimics a 16th-century castle and it has served as both a coastal lookout and a telegraph station.

Calle del Alcalde Juan Núñez, Tarifa 11380, Spain (36.00928, -5.60705)

F Mirador de la Playa de los Lances

A coastal observation point offering panoramic views of Los Lances beach, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Rif mountains of the African coastline.

(36.01697, -5.61090)

G Iglesia de San Mateo

The town's main parish church, built in the early 16th century in Gothic style with a 17th-century Baroque facade. It was constructed on the site of a former mosque.

(36.01351, -5.60185)



H El Estrecho Natural Park

El Estrecho Natural Park is a natural park in Spain, located on the northern side of the Strait of Gibraltar.

Spain (36.04610, -5.49672)

I Puerta de Jerez

The only remaining gate of the four original medieval entrances to the city. This 13th-century Moorish archway serves as the primary gateway into Tarifa's historic old town.

4 Puerta de Jerez, Tarifa 11380, Spain (36.01415, -5.60439)

J Cueva del Moro

A rock shelter containing Upper Paleolithic engravings and paintings, primarily depicting horses. It is a significant site for prehistoric rock art overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar.

(36.10107, -5.79324)

Panoramic Viewpoints and Lighthouses

This collection spans the Strait of Gibraltar, featuring vantage points from the southernmost point of continental Europe. It includes historical maritime landmarks like the 19th-century Faro de la Isla de Tarifa and the 16th-century watchtower of Faro de Camarinal. The list highlights critical bird-watching observatories such as Cazalla and Guadalmesí, essential for monitoring seasonal migrations between Europe and Africa. Visitors can also observe the massive mobile dunes of Valdevaqueros and clear vistas of the Moroccan coastline across the narrow 14-kilometer strait.





A Lighthouse Tarifa

Located on the Isla de las Palomas at the southernmost tip of mainland Europe, this 19th-century tower marks the geographical divide between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Isla de Tarifa o de las Palomas 11380, Spain
(36.00116, -5.60958)

diariodejerez.es/article/provincia/1067601/una/torre/alm...

B Mirador de la Playa de los Lances

A wheelchair-accessible wooden boardwalk and viewpoint overlooking a protected wetland area and a wide sandy beach known for kite-surfing.

(36.01697, -5.61090)

C Mirador del Estrecho

Located on the N-340 road at 300 meters above sea level, this spot offers clear views across the Strait of Gibraltar to the Rif Mountains and Jebel Musa in Morocco.

Plaza Miramar, 11380 Tarifa, Spain (36.01180, -5.60134)

D Duna De Valdevaqueros

A massive active sand dune formed by Levante winds, offering elevated views over the Valdevaqueros cove and surrounding pine forests.

(36.06725, -5.69922)

E vista panoramica Africa

An elevated roadside lookout point positioned for direct views of the North African coastline across the narrowest part of the Strait.

Carretera Nacional 340, 11380, Spain (36.05373, -5.55041)

F Centro Expositivo de la Migracion de Aves

An educational center and vantage point dedicated to the study of the millions of birds that migrate through this corridor annually.

(Unnamed Road), 11380, Spain (36.01659, -5.58717)

fundacionmigres.org

G Observatorio Migración de Aves

A specialized bird-watching platform used by ornithologists to monitor raptors and storks during their seasonal crossing to Africa.

11380 Tarifa, Spain (36.01447, -5.58714)

H Obsevatorio de Aves La Peña

An observatory located on the slopes of the La Peña mountain, providing a high vantage point for watching soaring birds of prey.

(36.06455, -5.64812)

I Facinas

A viewpoint in the white village of Facinas overlooking the rolling cork oak hills of the Alcornocales Natural Park.

(36.14019, -5.70053)

J Dunas

A vantage point atop the Valdevaqueros sand dunes showcasing the impact of wind-driven sand accumulation on the local landscape.

(36.06805, -5.69770)

K Dunas

Observation point within the sand dunes of Punta Paloma, offering perspectives of the coastal inlet.

(36.06888, -5.69633)

L Mirador

Local lookout point near the coast offering views of the Estrecho Natural Park.

(36.10134, -5.73288)

M Puerto de Facinas

A mountain pass viewpoint near the village of Facinas providing perspectives on the inland sierras and wind farms.

(36.13253, -5.71342)

N Mirador Cueva del Moro

Viewpoint near a cave site containing Paleolithic rock art, overlooking Bolonia beach and the Atlantic.

(36.10029, -5.79328)

O Mirador Camarinal

Coastal lookout near the Camarinal lighthouse, providing views of the Playa de los Alemanes and the rugged shoreline.

CA-8202, 11380 Tarifa, Spain (36.09577, -5.79955)

P Bird Observatory Cazalla

A premier bird-watching site equipped with platforms for monitoring the migration of thousands of eagles, vultures, and storks.

(36.03317, -5.57665)

Q Observatorio de Aves

Ornithological station located near the Cazalla observatory for tracking migratory patterns.

(36.03332, -5.57444)

R Observatorio de Aves Los Lances

A wooden hide located near the Los Lances beach lagoon, designed for observing waders and coastal bird species.

Carretera del Mediterráneo, 11380 Tarifa, Spain (36.03360, -5.62432)

S Observatorio de Aves Guadalmesi

Coastal observatory at the mouth of the Guadalmesí river, a primary exit point for birds crossing the Strait.

(36.03627, -5.52270)

T Cala Arenillas

Coastal vantage point overlooking a small rocky cove and the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean.

(36.04900, -5.49833)

U Mirador Puerto de Ojen

High-altitude viewpoint in the Sierra de Ojén offering panoramic vistas of the Alcornocales Natural Park forests.

(36.14388, -5.59414)



V Faro Camarinal

A 16th-century military watchtower converted into a lighthouse in 1990, situated between Bolonia and Atlanterra.

11380, Spain (36.09003, -5.81046)

apba.es/faro-de-camarinal

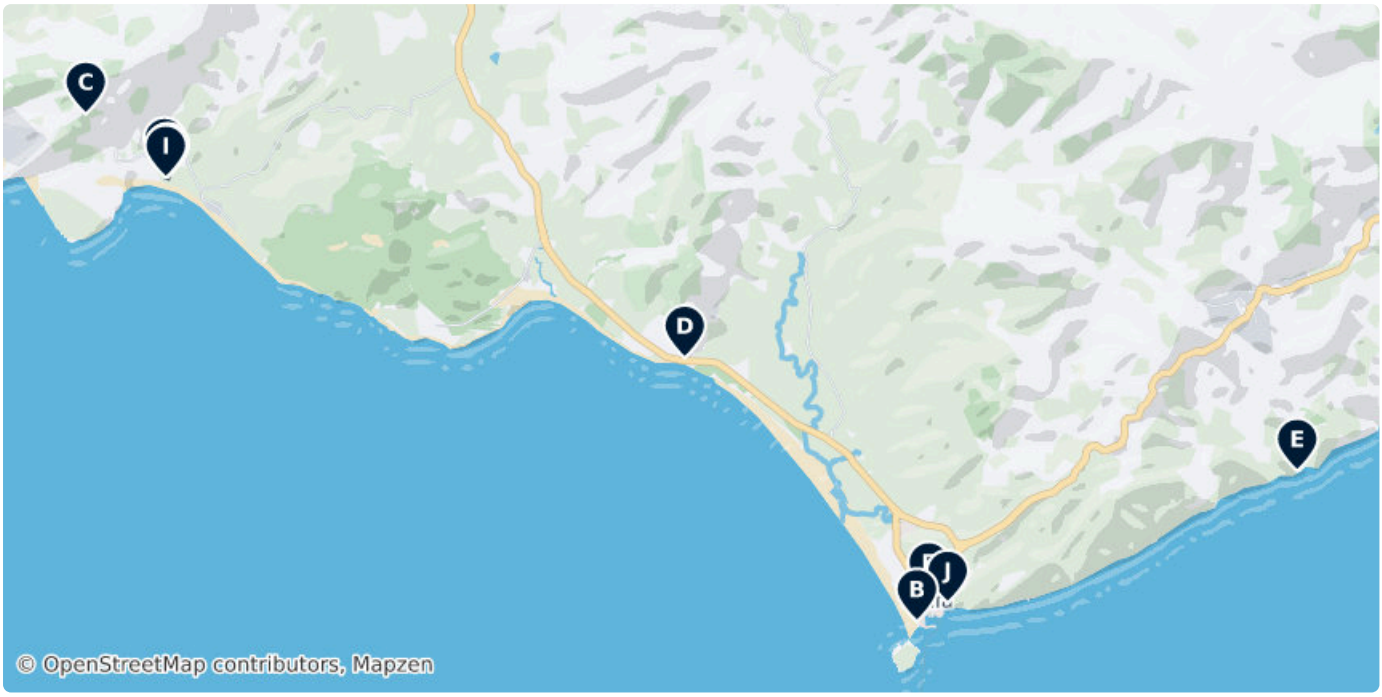
W Sierra de Ojen

Mountain peak providing high-elevation views over the dense cork oak forests and the distant coastline of the Strait.

(36.09916, -5.54001)

Ancient Ruins and Towers

This collection highlights the diverse architectural heritage of Tarifa and the surrounding coastline. It features the exceptionally well-preserved Roman town of Baelo Claudia, including its forum, theater, and market. The list also encompasses strategic coastal watchtowers like Torre de la Peña and Torre Vigía Guadalmesi, which once defended the Strait of Gibraltar. Within the town, the 13th-century Puerta de Jerez and the Gothic-Mudejar Iglesia de Santa María showcase the region's medieval history and military significance.





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B Castillo de Santa Catalina

Renaissance-style palace and former fortification built in 1929 on a hill overlooking the port.

Calle del Alcalde Juan Núñez, Tarifa 11380, Spain (36.00928, -5.60705)

C Cueva del Moro

Rock shelter containing Upper Paleolithic cave paintings, including notable engravings of horses dating back over 18,000 years.

(36.10107, -5.79324)

D Torre de la Peña

Medieval coastal watchtower situated on a prominent rocky outcrop, once used for monitoring the Strait of Gibraltar.

(Unnamed Road), 11380, Spain (36.05697, -5.65905)

E Torre Vigía Guadalmesi

16th-century stone watchtower built to defend the coast against pirate raids, offering views across to the African coast.

(Unnamed Road), 11380, Spain (36.03649, -5.52186)

F Puerta de Jerez

Historic 13th-century city gate serving as the main entrance to Tarifa's old town, featuring a plaque commemorating the 1292 reconquest.

4 Puerta de Jerez, Tarifa 11380, Spain (36.01415, -5.60439)

G Foro

The rectangular central square of the Roman city of Baelo Claudia, formerly surrounded by administrative buildings, shops, and temples.

(Unnamed Road), 11380, Spain (36.08987, -5.77482)

H Teatro

Well-preserved 1st-century Roman theater built into a natural slope, designed to accommodate roughly 2,000 spectators.

(36.09093, -5.77559)

I Mercado

Remains of a Roman market, or macellum, featuring a central courtyard once lined with small shops for local commerce.

(36.08953, -5.77528)



J Iglesia de Santa María

Tarifa's oldest church, constructed in the 13th century over a mosque, displaying Gothic and Mudejar architectural influences.

4 Plaza Ponponio Mela, Tarifa 11380, Spain (36.01261, -5.60016)

DATA SOURCES

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