

# Hiking Retreat Costa Blanca 52

*Mountains, Memory & the Mediterranean*

**November 7-14 2026: 8 days, 7 nights, 7 hikes**

Join me for a week of my favorite trails, with stunning viewpoints, lesser-known local gems and delicious regional gastronomy. There will be a structured daily program, coordinated evening meals, and time to relax and take it all in. The hiking is at a moderate level.

Historical background information will be woven into each landscape as we walk. There will be focus on the Morisco and Christian history, their final battle, the expulsion of the Moors in 1609, and the Mallorcan resettlement that followed.

We will also visit the Fontilles Sanatorium, a haven for patients with Hansen's disease (leprosy). It was founded in 1909, 300 years after the Moorish expulsion. There will be a guided walk of the grounds, the setting of my next book (a historical novel).

- guided by Kendra Hoover Noddeland, author of Costa Blanca 52
- small group, no grumps!
- cultural & historical insights
- a week of hiking, local food, and quiet landscapes
- guided visit to Fontilles Sanatorium
- stay at charming mountain refuges
- Optional extras (wine tasting, suites, visits to local shops)



## Itinerary

### Day 1 – Saturday, November 7. Arrival, Hike 23- Tàrbena

Arrival, meet in Albir (or Benidorm bus station). Transfer to Tàrbena. Introductory hike ending at the summit of Sa Caseta des Moros (6.3 km, +290) overlooking the village to the sea. Welcome dinner (included) and overview of the week. *Overnight: Hotel Tàrbena*

### Day 2 – Sunday, November 8. Hike 28- El Castellet

We kick off the week with this forest loop above Castell de Castells, ending with views of Guadalest valley from the summit of El Castellet (7.5 km, +420), with Euro Goat Trekkers. Return to Tàrbena, optional visit to Ethnographic museum. Dinner in Tàrbena. *Overnight: Hotel Tàrbena*

### Day 3- Monday, November 9. Hike 51- La Forada (from Alcalà de Jovada)

Scenic drive to La Vall d'Alcalà (stop at Pla de Petracos). Hike from Alcalà de la Jovada, birthplace of Al-Azraq (12 km, +450, moderate). We pass through terraced farmland, ruins of a Muslim farm, and ascend to the summit at La Forada, a stone arch overlooking the Gallinera valley. Scenic drive to through Vall de Laguar to Benimaurell. Dinner at the hotel. *Overnight: Hotel Alahuar*

### Day 4 – Tuesday, November 10. Hike 46- El Cavall Verd

We awake at the foot of the mountain, and hike the historic Cavall Verd ridge (7 km, +360, moderate). This area was the site of the last battle between the Moors and Christians before the expulsion of the Moors from Denia in 1609. Bird's-eye views of the Fontilles Sanatorium and its wall. Dinner at the hotel. *Overnight: Hotel Alahuar*



### **Day 5 – Wednesday, November 11. Hike 48, alternative 3.**

A route including Presa Isbert, Orba castle, and a guided visit to Fontilles Sanatorium and its wall (10 km, +350, moderate). We explore the local history and agriculture, the sanatorium, its founders and its opening in 1909, and the fight against the spread of leprosy. Optional visit to local ceramic shop in Orba. Short drive to Jalón. Dinner in Jalón.

*Overnight: Cuatre Finques*

### **Day 6 – Thursday, November 12. Hike 19- Sierra Bernia loop**

Today, we hike the most iconic trail on Costa Blanca: Sierra Bernia (10 km, +450, moderate/steep). Starting from Pinos, we ascend to El Forat, and pass through the tunnel, with views of the coastline. We follow the loop to the ruins of Fort de Bernia and back, with panoramic views of coast and mountains. Dinner in Jalón. Optional wine tasting at Bouquet Xalo.

*Overnight: Cuatre Finques*

### **Day 7 – Friday, November 13. Hike 14- Cala Granadella**

Our final hike is in Granadella natural park (8.3 km, +350, moderate/steep), with stunning Mediterranean views, ruins of a former watch tower, traditional buildings and (last, but not least) its protected cala. Farewell dinner at the finca (included).

*Overnight: Cuatre Finques*

### **Day 8 – Saturday, November 14.**

Final reflections over breakfast. Departure to Albir or Benidorm.

*Option to extend stay at Cuatres Finques after the retreat.*



## Included

- 7 nights shared accommodation (double or twin room). Single room supplement available at extra cost.
- daily breakfast and packed lunches
- Welcome dinner and farewell dinner (Day 1 and 7)
- all guided hiking days, historical interpretation
- all local group transport during the program
- dinner reservations

## Not Included

- Flights/airport transfers
- Travel/accident insurance
- Dinners 5 nights (reserved)
- Optional add-ons
- Alcoholic beverages



## Accommodation

### Hotel Tàrbena- Tàrbena

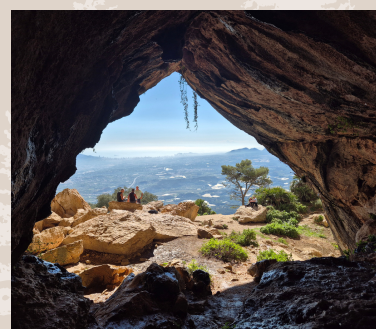
A small, welcoming village hotel. Run by descendents of one of the 7 Mallorcan families who repopulated the village after the Morisco expulsion.

### Hotel Alahuar – Benimaurell

A stone-built mountain hotel with panoramic views over the Vall de Laguar. Limited number of suites available (views of Barranc d'Infern).

### Cuatre Finques- Jálón

A unique, family owned Spanish-style finca in peaceful mountain landscape and quiet countryside just outside of Jálón.



# Important information

## Price & Booking

- **€1590 per person** (shared twin/double room), €198/day
- **€1490 early-bird** (book before June 1/first 4 participants), €186/day
- Single room supplement: **€400**
- 2 suites available at Hotel Tarbena for + **€50**
- 4-6 suites available at Hotel Alahuar, regular +**€30**, deluxe +**€68**
- Deposit required upon registration: **⅓ of total price, non-refundable**
- **Final payment** required within 2 months of start date (**Sept 6**)
- **Optional extra driver discount:** contact Kendra

## Physical Level

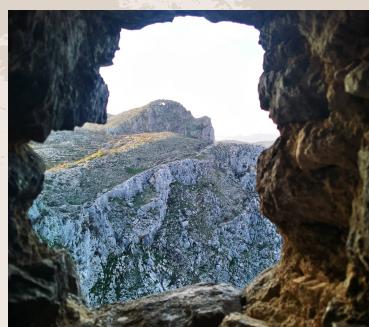
Participants should be comfortable **hiking 10–15 km per day** with elevation gain up to 500 meters. Terrain is varied: rocky mountain paths, forest tracks, and terraced valley trails. The pace is steady, with time for rest, conversation, observation, and photography.

The guide reserves the right to withhold participants without sufficient physical level from particular hikes.

Each participant is required to carry travel or medical insurance, and **participates at their own risk**. Hikes may be changed due to inclement weather or rain.

## To pack:

- Sturdy hiking boots (already broken in)
- Comfortable hiking socks (bring several pairs)
- Backpack (20–30 L for day hikes)
- Refillable water bottles
- Snacks/energy bars or other snacks. Packed lunches will be provided. Please advise in case of food allergies or medical conditions.



## Recommended Reading

The mountains we walk hold layered histories, from the Morisco communities expelled in 1609 to the early 20th-century founding of Fontilles. For those who wish to go deeper, the following books offer historical and cultural context for the landscapes shaping both this retreat and my current research.

### **Cañas y Barro – Vicente Blasco Ibáñez**

A classic Valencian novel set in the rural landscapes shaped by agriculture, pride, and survival. It captures the Mediterranean atmosphere and social tensions that still echo in the region.

### **Blood and Faith – Matthew Carr**

A vivid account of the 1609 expulsion of the Moriscos, particularly in Valencia. Essential reading for understanding the historical layers beneath villages like Tàrbena.

### **The Ornament of the World – María Rosa Menocal**

A beautifully written account of convivencia, the coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in medieval Spain. While focused largely on Al-Andalus more broadly, it provides essential cultural background.

### **Moloka'i – Alan Brennert**

Set in the Hawaiian leprosy settlement of Kalaupapa, this novel offers insight into isolation colonies and the human realities behind them — a meaningful parallel to the history of Fontilles.

### **The Second Life of Mirielle West – Amanda Skenandore**

A story of stigma, resilience, and transformation within a 1920s American leprosarium. This novel illuminates themes central to early 20th-century sanatoria. Set in Carville, Louisiana, where the cure for leprosy was discovered in the 1940s.

### **The Return – Victoria Hislop**

Though set in Granada, this novel explores memory, generational silence, and Spain's historical fractures — themes that resonate deeply in rural communities across the country.

