

# ARES DEL MAESTRAT

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A wonderful lookout over the  
mountain scenery



**ELS  
PORTS**

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## HISTORY

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The history of Ares del Maestrat dates back to prehistoric times, as shown by the exceptional cave paintings belonging to the Levantine Cave Art found in the Remígia Cave. The castle, since the Iberian period, has been an active element in the ups and downs of the town throughout its history. The city, built and fortified by the Romans, was later destroyed, fortified and enlarged by the Muslims. Conquered in 1170 by Alfonso II, it was Pere II d'Aragó who granted the first Town Charter. James I reconquered it definitively in 1232. In 1234 it was transferred to the Order of the Temple and later to the Order of Montesa. Ares del Maestrat is located at the foothills of the Sistema Ibérico mountain range, with a rugged relief, characterised by grinding stone landscapes. The climate is Mediterranean mountain climate. The altitude of the area varies from 700 m to 1,300 m and temperatures can range from -10°C in winter to 30°C in summer.



## THE CASTLE CAVE

The different cultures that have inhabited Ares del Maestrath have recognised the geostrategic importance of the hill on which it is located. From the eastern plateau of this natural lookout, you can see a wide landscape and the vertical cliffs that surround it are a natural advantage in its defence. The castle of Ares was built on the highest point of the site, with two fortified, stepped, almost concentric enclosures, which made it almost impregnable. The population centre grew at the foot of the castle, also protected by a final walled enclosure.

In the Cave Museum you will travel through time, from prehistoric times to the present day, visiting this impressive place carved out of the rock.

## THE OLD "PERXE" MARKET

It is a clear example of medieval architecture with Gothic-Mudejar arches from the 14th century. Merchants and traders used to come here to hold the weekly market. In the mid-19th century, a municipal butcher's shop was set up here, and the ring from which the cattle were hung remains. It connects the main square with the church square.



## THE BUILDING OF THE CITY HALL

A unique building that stands out from the medieval layout. The façade overlooking the Main Square, with its semicircular arch, was part of the old wall that surrounded Ares. In this same building we find the entrance to a 13th century prison.



## THE MAIN SQUARE

Located in the centre of the village in front of the Town Hall, it is the starting point for all the roads in Ares. This square was outside the walled enclosure of Ares, which was accessed through the current "Portal del Perxe".

It is the meeting and celebration point for popular festivals and various cultural events in the municipality.

## THE CASTLE

Despite the few remains, a visit to the Castle of Ares is a must if you want to enjoy exceptional views. It overlaps structures from different periods, remains from the 13th to the 15th century with reforms from the 19th century. It was once made up of three walled enclosures. Various sections of the Arab wall, bastions and a sentry tower can be seen.

In its surroundings we find the Cave, a perforation that crosses the Castle's millstone created for defensive reasons. It is 43 m deep.



## PARISH CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION

The current church of Ares was built in the 18th century, together with the 14th century bell tower, which survived the destruction and burning of the old temple by Philip V's troops. The two structures form a unique architectural ensemble, as it is one of the few examples in which the church is taller than the bell tower. It is located in the centre of the town and its current imposing image is in the Baroque style. It was built between 1717 and 1739.



## Interest places

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| <b>1</b> Town Hall                         | <b>7</b> Local Multifunctional |
| <b>2</b> Tourist office                    | <b>8</b> Gate                  |
| <b>3</b> Major Square                      | <b>9</b> “El Portalet”         |
| <b>4</b> Ancient Lonja “Perxe”             | <b>10</b> Castle               |
| <b>5</b> Ancient jail                      | <b>11</b> Lookout              |
| <b>6</b> Iglesia Parroquial de la Asunción |                                |

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## DELS HORTS RAVINE

Dels Horts ravine is located in the municipality of Ares. It runs in a NE-SW direction, is about 5 km long and is between 680 and 1,160 m above sea level.

It is a 700-hectare forest estate, owned by the Caja Castellón Foundation since 1993, with an exceptional value, as it preserves a centenary monumental forest of small-leaved oaks and holm oaks, with more than 1,000 trees over 300 years old, which makes it unique.

In the undergrowth there are different species depending on the altitude: in the lower parts of the Barranco dels Horts there is an abundance of red gorse, while in the higher parts there are kermes oak, gorse and hedgehogs. There are also many other species such as lavender, thyme, sage, savory, white pennyroyal, ivy, lime trees and others.

In order to visit it, you must request authorisation from the Caja Castellón Foundation:

[medioambiente@fundacioncajastellon.es](mailto:medioambiente@fundacioncajastellon.es)

## LA MOLA D'ARES MUNICIPAL NATURAL SITE

With an altitude of between 1,200 and 1,321 m above sea level, the Mola d'Ares is the highest point in the municipality of Ares and therefore a privileged place to enjoy the best panoramic views of the valleys and mountains of the Maestrat and Els Ports. It is a plateau generated by differential erosion processes, with steep cliffs. The climate, orography and traditional uses, mainly for grazing, have favoured the development of numerous unique plant species, which have led to the inclusion of the Mola d'Ares in the network of micro-reserves of the Valencian Community.

It was declared a Municipal Natural Site by the Consell de la Generalitat Valenciana, on 3rd March 2006, for its ecological, scenic, scientific and recreational values. The local pathway SL-CV 46 Camino de la Mola d'Ares runs through this area.



## LA NEVERA DE ELS REGATXOLS

Natural cold, in the form of snow or ice, was used for centuries for medical, culinary and food preservation purposes. The Regatxols ice well, built in the 17th century, is a magnificent example of a snow deposit.

Restored in 2005, it has been converted into an interpretation centre: an exhibition and an audiovisual presentation explain the ancient ice trade that flourished in the Valencian Community from the 16th century onwards and reached its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries, coinciding with a climatic period that favoured frequent snowfalls in winter at altitudes of around 1,000 metres. You can also visit the spectacular 8-metre-deep well, a shed with a stone vault, where a scene has been recreated in which the "nevater" stores the snow.



## RAVINE OF THE MILLS

The Ravine of the Mills (Barranco de los Molinos) is home to a valuable set of natural, scenic and architectural elements that have led to it being declared a firstly as an Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC) with the category of Ethnological Space (Decree 67/2009, of 15 May of the Consell).

The name of the ravine comes from the five watermills built in the 18th century during a period of economic and demographic boom. It is a linear network of hydraulic constructions, each one consisting of a pond that retains the water, a waterwheel that conducts the water to the milling machinery, a farmhouse and a ditch that connects with the neighbouring mill. The last mill, the Sòl de la Costa mill, is now a museum. It has all the milling machinery restored and a complete exhibition of ethnological elements. In the milling room, a projection has been installed through which you can discover the heartwarming testimony of the last miller who worked in the Barranco de los Molinos.

## SANT ANTONI

This festivity takes place around 17th January and is usually scheduled on a Saturday. The day begins with the cutting of firewood for the bonfire. Once the wood has been cut, roast meat is eaten at the mas de Celma, after which the people go to the Main Square with the firewood to finish preparing the bonfire to be lit at night.

## BOOK FAIR IN ARES

It is held on the first Saturday in May, with book stalls, presentations, round tables, conferences and the awards Castell de Ares Literary Awards for narrative and Pere-Enric Barreda for poetry.

## PILGRIMAGE TO THE HERMITAGE OF SANTA ELENA

The hermitage of

The hermitage of Santa Elena is an interesting example of rural baroque. It was built in the middle of the 18th century and has a monumental baroque façade and an enormous temple, as well as a solitary bell at the top.

A popular pilgrimage, begun in 1742, is held on the first Sunday in May. It starts in the church square and when it reaches the hermitage, a mass is held. When the mass is over, "les primes" are distributed once they have been blessed.

## SHEPHERDS OF ARES CANINE CONTESTS

It is held on the third weekend in June. Participants usually come from the Valencian Community, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country, etc., who, together with their trained dogs, have to demonstrate their skills in controlling livestock. During the weekend of the competition, various cultural activities are programmed.

## SANT MARC

It is celebrated on the last Sunday in April with a mass and a rogation to the sanctuary of the "Mare de Déu de la Font" in Castellfort.

## ARES MUSIC FESTIVAL

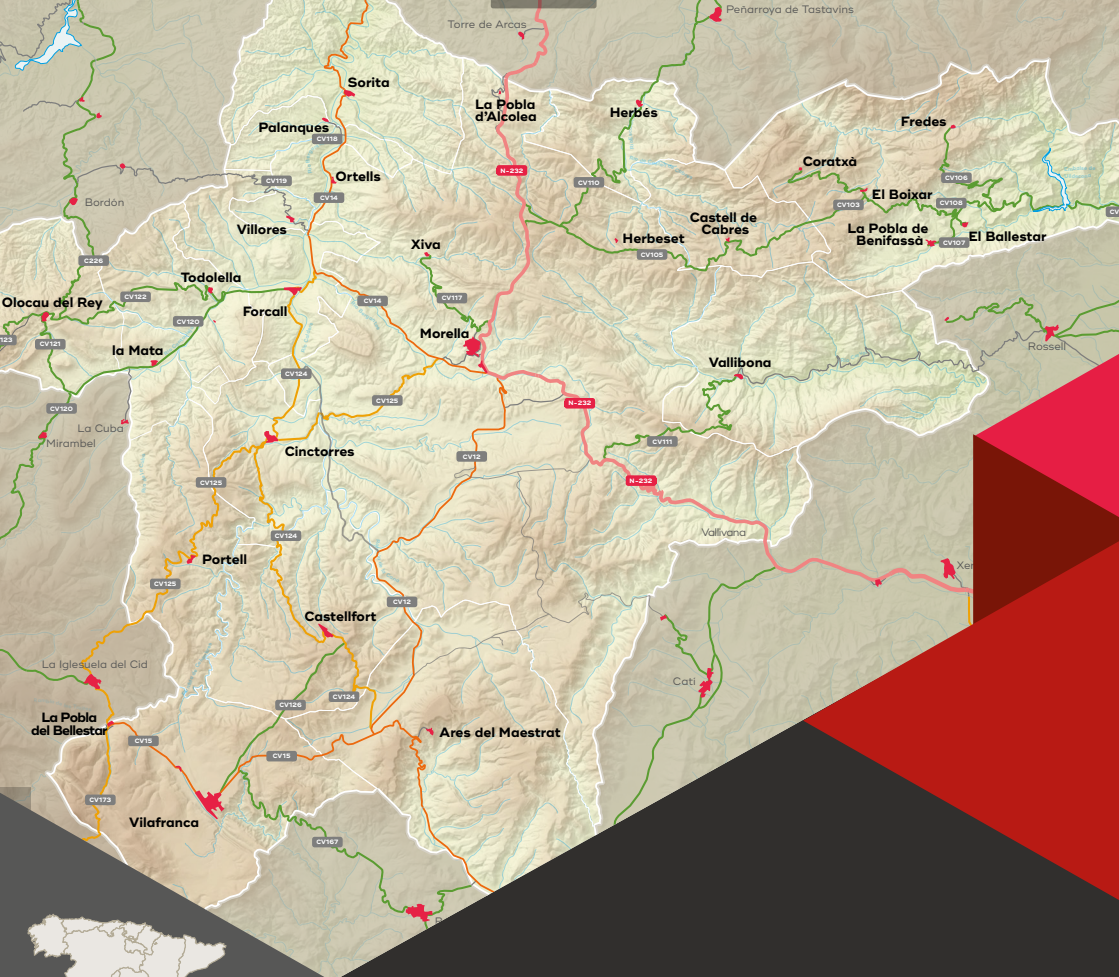
Under the artistic direction of cellist Pere Joan Carrascosa, it is held in the summer, in the most most singular enclaves of Ares: the Cave of the Castle, the Parish Church, etc.

## PATRON FESTIVITIES IN HONOUR OF SANT BARTOLOMÉ AND SAINT ELENA

Se celebran durante el mes de agosto coincidiendo con los días 24 (San Bartolomé) y 25 (Santa Elena). Son las fiestas del pueblo por excelencia y a ellas acuden además de sus vecinos y vecinas, familiares y descendientes del pueblo. Se programan multitud de actividades culturales dirigidas a toda la población.







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