



Algeciras



Geography and history

Monuments and museums

Festivals and traditions

Gastronomy and crafts



Algeciras is situated in the south of the Iberian Peninsula on the Bay of Algeciras, opposite the Rock of Gibraltar on the foothills of the Sierra Luna and Algarrobo, part of the Montes de Tarifa. At present it has over 110.000 inhabitants. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Goths and Moors settle in these

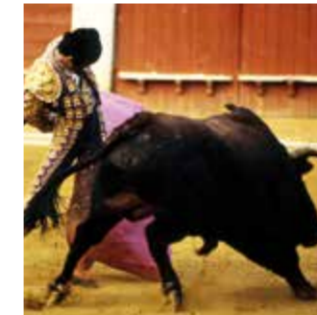
lands, among other factors attracted by its strategic situation. It was the "Portus Albus" Roman colony but no remains have survived to date as they are under the present-day town. The Moors founded Al-Yazira-Al-Hadra that became one of the Moorish Taifa Kingdoms and it was the birthplace of Almanzor. In 1344 Alfonso 11th conquered the town after a siege that lasted almost two years, he entered the town triumphant on the 28th March, dedicating his victory to Santa María of la Palma, the Patroness of Algeciras. A Papal bull issued by Clemente 4th made the town a Crusade Site and it was also a Cathedral Seat. In 1369, there was a change of roles and the town fell under siege to Mohamed 5th of Granada who surrounded the town and took it back. However, as he could not keep it, he destroyed it, leaving only its name for history, Al-Yazira-Al-Hadra, Isla Verde. The city reappeared in 1704 with the loss of Gibraltar. In 1906 the board room at the Town Hall hosted the International Conference on Morocco. Today, Algeciras is the capital of one of the most important districts in Andalusia. The climate is very mild with extremely mild winters and hot summers. The average annual temperature is 17° C.



In the town of Algeciras we can visit the **Roman ovens (2)** dating from the first century AD. that are in the Rinconcillo area. The **Villa Vieja (13)** dates back to Moorish times, a place where the medina of the medieval town used to be and where there are still some remains of the **Moorish mosque (15)** and the **Moorish city walls (16)**.

Out of the most interesting and picturesque places to visit in Algeciras we have the **San Isidro suburb (7)** with domestic architecture from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Christian legacy includes the **chapel of Our Lady of Europe (10)**, built in 1690 and reformed in the eighteenth century, in Palladian style with Baroque elements, situated in the **Plaza Alta (8)**. The parish **church of Our Lady of the Palma (9)**, built in 1736, a quadrangular temple, an example of Baroque art.

The examples of civic art include the **market (11)**, situated near to the port, a magnificent work in contemporary architecture built in 1935 by the engineer Eduardo Torroja. You also have to visit the **Las Palomas bullring (1)**, another emblematic building in the town. Algeciras also has a **Municipal Museum (14)**, which takes you through the history of the town, and several art galleries where the most important artists both local and from away exhibit their work.



In Algeciras the year begins with the "tin dragging" festival for children which takes place on the morning before the Cavalcade of the Three Wise Men, the children come out to drag tins and old pots through the streets. According to legend, the noise they make scares off the Botafuegos Giant, who on

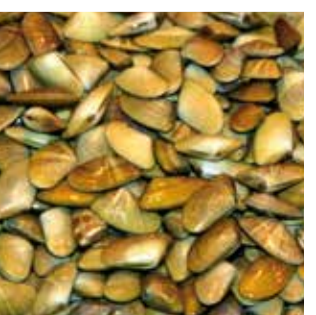
this special night of magic tries to cover the town with a grey cloud so that the Three Wise Men cannot see where the children live and consequently cannot leave the any toys. When the month of February comes round it is time for "Las Adas" in the Carnival Marquee, which is installed in the María Cristina Park, where all kinds of associations participate by preparing different dishes of food; one of the most well know of "Las Adas" is the famous "La Adobada", a special dish of fish, marinated and later fried, which is offered to all visitors. Easter is in March or April, celebrated with processions through the narrow streets of the centre of town, the religious images most admired are the ones that depict the Easter story in the San Isidro suburb. In summer, the main fair of Algeciras, the stock fair and the Bullfighting festival are all held in June, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is held on the 16th July, it includes a sea procession. Finally on the 15th of August the festival in honour of the Patroness Our Lady of the Palma is held, with fishing competitions and a romeria type pilgrimage to the beach where an image of Our Lady of the Palma is recovered from the seabed, in the Bodiones cave, and taken to the Rinconcillo beach.



The local cuisine and typical dishes that everyone who visits Algeciras has to try include peccadillo soup, garlic soup, shellfish soup, almond soup, fish soup and the famous noodle soup with cockles. Algeciras is a coastal town and fish has a place of honour on the table,



it is the basic ingredient of the local cuisine. In Algeciras you can eat fish cooked in many different ways: boiled, grilled, baked, barbecued, battered or fried, with the special dish of cod omelette. The shellfish is also first class like the crabs, shrimps, spider crabs legs or the burgaos. Some other dishes with fish as a main ingredient are the sea urchins, that should only be eaten fresh in January and February as well as the little omelette made of seaweed and the seaweed stir fry on the other. These specialties are, according to the experts, delicacies which taste of the sea. Other dishes include artichokes Algeciras style, snails with poleo and shish kebabs. The most famous dessert is the round sponge cake. Crafts in Algeciras are mainly based on the sea world, with specialists in building and repairing fishing boats, without forgetting the pottery and ceramics, wooden furniture manufacturing and wrought iron articles that are numerous in the area.



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Algeciras



- 1 Plaza de Toros Las Palomas
- 2 Cementerio
- 3 Parque María Cristina
- 4 Baños andalusíes
- 5 Parque Arqueológico de las Murallas Meriníes
- 6 Casa Consistorial
- 7 Barrio de San Isidro
- 8 Plaza Alta
- 9 Iglesia de Ntra. Sra. de Palma
- 10 Capilla de Ntra. Sra. de Europa
- 11 Mercado Ingeniero Torroja
- 12 Teatro Municipal Florida
- 13 Villa Vieja
- 14 Museo Municipal
- 15 Restos de la Mezquita Aljama
- 16 Murallas Andalusíes (s. XI-XIV)
- 17 Acueducto de los Arcos
- 18 Monumento a Paco de Lucía
- 19 Parque Centenario