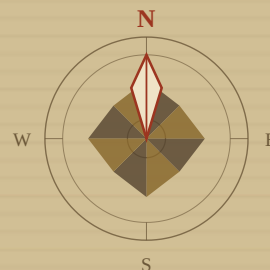


LEGEND

- main route
- stage stop
- △ highland

SCALE — KILOMETRES



MADE TO EXPLORE

THE CALA ROAD

Eight coves from Marseille to Almería, the finest beaches you can reach on wheels

8 stops · 1,500 km · by campervan

1

CALANQUES

Cassis, Provence — limestone and green water

THE COVE Between Marseille and Cassis the white limestone falls straight into the sea and cuts twenty-six deep inlets. En-Vau is the most photographed: hundred-metre walls, a shingle beach, green water. Sormiou and Morgiou still have a few fishermen's cabins left from another century. It has been a national park since 2012, and in summer the roads to Sormiou and Morgiou close to cars.

THE CAMPER The camper stays at Cassis or La Ciotat, on a campsite or a service area. En-Vau is reached only on foot: an hour there, on a stone path, with a steep drop at the end. Closed shoes, not flip-flops.

FREE Everything. The park is open, the paths are open, the beaches are open. The only thing that costs is the boat from Cassis, if you would rather not walk — and walking is better.

WHERE TO SLEEP Campsite · Aux portes de Cassis, Route de Cassis · GPS 43.24594, 5.57001

Cassis → Montpellier → Perpignan → Cadaqués, about 400 km on the A9 · ~5½ h by camper. You cross the border without stopping.

2

CAP DE CREUS

Catalonia — where the Pyrenees end

THE COVE Here the Pyrenees run into the sea and stop: Cap de Creus is the easternmost point of mainland Spain, with rock twisted by the wind that Dalí painted all his life — his house is at Portlligat, a few kilometres away. The coves below the lighthouse — Cala Culip, Cala Jugadora — have no road, no shade and no sand. They have clear water and stone.

THE CAMPER Campsites at Cadaqués and Port de la Selva. The road up to the lighthouse is narrow and winding but driveable; the car park at the top is small and fills early. From there the paths drop in twenty minutes.

FREE The nature park, the lighthouse, the paths and the coves are all open. Dalí's house has a ticket and compulsory booking. Cadaqués, the white town, is walked on foot.

WHERE TO SLEEP Campsite · Càmping Cadaqués, Avinguda de Salvador Dalí · GPS 42.29262, 3.28273

Cadaqués → Roses → Begur, about 80 km on coast roads · ~2 h by camper. Slow, but beautiful.

3

AIGUABLAVA

Costa Brava — white sand among the pines

THE COVE Costa Brava means rugged coast, and between Begur and Palafrugell is the best-preserved stretch of it. Aiguablava, Fornells and Sa Tuna are small coves with white sand and blue water, and between them runs the Camí de Ronda, the coast path of smugglers and border guards, which links everything on foot. Cala Pola and Cala Giverola, further south, are more hidden still.

THE CAMPER Campsites in the pines above the coves, at Begur and Tamariu. The roads down to the water are narrow with car parks of twenty spaces — the camper stays up, you walk down in ten minutes.

FREE The Camí de Ronda is the best thing on the route and it is free: kilometres of path cut into the rock, from one cove to the next, with steps and tunnels. All the beaches are public.

WHERE TO SLEEP Campsite · Càmping Begur, Begur · GPS 41.94126, 3.19925

Begur → Barcelona → Tarragona, about 220 km · ~3½ h by camper. Barcelona is bypassed on the motorway.

4

CALA FONDA

Tarragona — the beach at the end of the wood

THE COVE Ten kilometres from Tarragona, in among the coastal apartment blocks, a patch of Mediterranean woodland survives all the way down to the water, and at the end of it is Cala Fonda — which locals call Waikiki. Fine sand, pines down to the sand, and no road. It is the closest to a city of the eight and the least likely.

THE CAMPER Campsites at Tarragona and along the coast. You park at the edge of the wood, at Platja Llarga, and walk twenty minutes on a path through the pines.

FREE The beach, the wood and the path are open. And Tarragona has the best-preserved seaside Roman amphitheatre in Spain — you see the whole of it from the cliff above, without a ticket.

Tarragona → Ebro delta → Peñíscola → Valencia → Xàbia, about 350 km · ~5 h by camper. The longest stage and the only one without coves.

5

CALA MORAIG

Benitatxell, Levante — the steps in the rock

THE COVE Under the cliffs at Benitatxell, a beach of white stones sits at the foot of a hundred-and-fifty-metre wall, and in the rock opens the Cova dels Arcs, a cave from which an underground river runs out. You see it from above, on the Ruta dels Penya-segats, the cliff path that links Moraig to Granadella along the edge of the drop.

THE CAMPER Campsites at Xàbia and Moraira. At Moraig a narrow road drops to a small car park, but a camper has no business there in summer — leave it above and walk down the steps.

FREE The beach, the cave and the cliff path are open. The path from Moraig to Granadella takes an hour and is the most spectacular stretch of coast in the Levante.

WHERE TO SLEEP Campsite · Camping Jávea, Camí de la Fontana 10, Xàbia · GPS 38.78305, 0.17278

Cala Moraig → Granadella, 8 km by road, an hour on foot. The path is better.

6

GRANADELLA

Xàbia, Levante — the finest in Spain

THE COVE Granadella has been voted the finest beach in Spain year after year: a narrow cove between two walls of pine and rock, with white shingle and water that changes through three colours. The 2016 fire burned the pines above and they have grown back. It is small, and that is precisely its problem.

THE CAMPER The road down to Granadella is narrow and the car park holds about seventy. In summer the town hall closes it when it fills — around nine in the morning — and runs a bus from Xàbia. The camper does not go down at all: it stays up at the campsite and you come by bus or on foot.

FREE The beach is free, as all Spanish beaches are. The summer bus costs about as much as a coffee. And if you arrive at seven in the morning you have the whole cove to yourself and pay nothing.

Xàbia → Alicante → Cartagena → Agua Amarga, about 380 km on the A7 and AP7, through Murcia · ~5½ h by camper.

7

CALA DE ENMEDIO

Almería — an hour on foot and nothing else

THE COVE Between Agua Amarga and Los Muertos, on the northern coast of the Cabo de Gata park, a beach of white sand lies between two tongues of volcanic rock smoothed by the water, like two waves of stone. No road leads there. It is reached on foot, an hour, on a path with no shade along the cliff. It is the hardest of the eight to reach and the emptiest.

THE CAMPER Campsites at Agua Amarga and in the park villages. You park in the village and set off early or late — the path at midday in August is not a good idea. Water with you, two bottles.

FREE All of it. There is nothing to pay for over ten kilometres: no car park, no kiosk, no parasol. Only the path and the beach.

Agua Amarga → Níjar → San José, about 60 km through the interior of the park, on desert roads · ~1½ h by camper.



MÓNSUL

Cabo de Gata — the lava and the dunes

THE COVE	Mónsul is a sand beach between a huge dune and a boulder of lava rounded by the wind, in a landscape that resembles nothing else in Europe — Cabo de Gata is the continent's only true desert, with under 200 mm of rain a year, and the coast is volcanic. Spielberg filmed Indiana Jones here. Next to it, Genoveses, longer and backed by dunes.
THE CAMPER	Campsite at San José. In summer, between June and September, the dirt road to Mónsul and Genoveses is closed to vehicles and a bus runs from San José. Out of season you can drive in, but the camper stays at the first car park — the road is sand.
FREE	The beaches, the dunes and the park are open. The summer bus is cheap. The Cabo de Gata lighthouse and the salt pans, with their flamingos, are on the way and cost nothing.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Campsite · Camping Tau, San José · GPS 36.76790, -2.10486

End of the route. Almería is 30 km away, Granada 170, and Barcelona 800 up the coast.

THE ROUTE IN BRIEF

Distance	~1,500 km
Driving time	~23 h in all, without stops
Recommended time	14–18 days
Stage coves	8
Countries	FR · ES
Ferries	none
Direction	north → south
Best months	Jun · Sep

GOOD TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAVE

En-Vau can only be reached on foot: an hour there, on a stone path, with a steep descent at the end.

In summer, the council closes the road to Cala Granadella when it fills up, around nine in the morning, and runs a bus from Xàbia.

Between June and September, the dirt road to Mónsul and Genoveses is closed to vehicles; a bus runs from San José.

WHEN TO GO

Ideal: June or September. The water is warm, the paths are bearable, the car parks do not close and the campsites have room.

Workable: July and August, but with the rule of the hour: on the beach before eight in the morning. After nine the roads to Granadella and Mónsul close and the car parks are full.

Avoid: the middle of the day on the paths in August. Cala de Enmedio at midday, without shade, at 38 degrees, is dangerous, not uncomfortable.

May and October: the water is cold, but the coves are empty and the light is better. For photography it is the best moment.

ACCESS, COVE BY COVE

Calanques: on foot, an hour to En-Vau, on a stone path. The roads to Sormiou and Morgiou close in summer.

Cap de Creus: by road to the lighthouse, then twenty minutes on foot to the coves.

Aiguablava and the Costa Brava: small car parks above, ten minutes down, or the Camí de Ronda on foot between them.

Cala Fonda: twenty minutes through the wood from Platja Llarga. No road.

Cala del Moraig: steps cut in the rock, a small car park below, a cliff path on to Granadella.

Granadella: a car park of seventy spaces, closed when it fills; a bus from Xàbia in summer.

Cala de Enmedio: an hour on foot from Agua Amarga, no shade, no road.

Mónsul and Genoveses: road closed in summer, bus from San José; the rest of the year, a sand road.

WHERE YOU SLEEP

The campsites are above the coves, not at them, and that is normal: at none of the eight do you sleep down at the water.

France has service areas in almost every coastal commune. Spain has municipal areas at Cadaqués, Begur, Tarragona, Xàbia and San José. Book in season.

Free overnighting on the Spanish coast is banned almost everywhere and fined, above all in the nature parks. In Cabo de Gata and in the Calanques it is enforced. Not worth it.

Large campers do not go down the access roads. If the vehicle is over 6 metres, plan to leave it above at every stop — which is the idea of the route anyway.

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU

The rule of the hour In summer, the difference between an empty cove and a full one is two hours. At seven in the morning the car park is free, the path is cool and the water is still. By eleven the road is shut.

Shoes Half of these beaches are reached on stone paths with steep drops. Flip-flops are the commonest mistake and the most painful.

Water and shade Cala de Enmedio and Mónsul have no kiosk, no shade and no water. Two bottles a head and something to rig above you.

Jellyfish They arrive on the Spanish coast in waves, a few days a year, in summer. The beach flag and the local apps report them. Not a reason to stay away, a reason to check in the morning.

What it actually costs Nothing, apart from the campsite and the summer buses. There is no entrance ticket anywhere on this route — beaches in Spain and France are public by law, down to the last metre.

What time do you need to reach the coves in summer?

Before eight in the morning. After nine, the Xàbia town hall closes the road to Granadella when the car park fills, and in Cabo de Gata the road to Mónsul is shut altogether in summer.

Can you park a camper at the beach?

No, at none of the eight coves. The camper stays above, at a campsite or at the roadside, and you go down on foot, by steps or by bus.

Is there an entrance fee for these beaches?

No. Beaches in Spain and France are public by law, down to the last metre. You pay only for the campsite, the car parks and the summer buses.

When is the best time for the route?

June or September. The water is warm, the paths are bearable, the car parks do not close and the campsites have room.

THE RULE OF THE ROAD

*“No road leads to any of these coves, and that is why they have stayed beautiful.
What it costs you is an hour on foot, a decent pair of shoes and an early start.
The sand, the water and the path are free, and that is written into the law.”*

Documentary check: September 2026. Places, hours and conditions change — check them before you leave.