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ENGLISH



TOURIST INFORMATION GUIDE



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Olvera

Contacts

Olvera Tourist Office: Opening hours Tuesday to Sunday

in winter from 10:30 am to 02:00pm and 04:00 pm to 06:00pm.

in summer from 10:30 am to 02:00 pm and 04:00 to 07:00 pm.

For more information, telephone number: 956 120 816/665 940 087

Plaza de la Iglesia, s/n - 11690 Olvera

info@turismolvera.es

Olvera Town hall

Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 1 - 11690 Olvera

Tel: 956 13 00 11

ayuntamiento@olvera.es

El castillo árabe



Next to Plaza de la Iglesia(Church Square). Access by the Calzada street or slope to the Church.

Declared a Property of Cultural Interest in 1985, the Castle has an uncertain origin. Possibly built in the Muslim era or even a previous century, it formed part of the defensive system of the **Nazari kingdom of Granada**. Squeezed into the rock at the top of the town, it forms an irregular elongated triangle-shaped to fit the very form of the rock. The only entrance, which shows every sign of having been heavily protected, is also guarded by a watchtower. The fortress, itself, consists of a keep, stepped pannelled walls all the way round, two towers, a subterranean chamber and two wells, one of which supplied water to the towers. The castle, as we know it today, has obvious Christian features; the product of successive renovations from its takeover by the Spanish. Close to la Villa, sections of the surrounding walls have been restored to their former glory.

Opening hours: 10:30 am to 02:00 pm and 04:30 pm to 06:30 pm. Monday closed.

Entrance costs 1 to 2 euros. Endowed as a Cultural Centre, there is a permanent exhibition on show entitled **"The Border and The Castles"**.

La Iglesia de Ntra. Sra. de la Encarnación

Plaza de la Iglesia. Access by the Calzada street or slope to the Church.

From Tuesday to Sunday from 11:00 am to 01:00 pm

Built by the **Dukes of Osuna**, this is a superb example of a **neoclassical building** of the late 18th century. Built on the site of an ancient Arab mosque it replaced an early Gothic church, whose remains are still preserved in the baptismal chapel. It consists of three wide naves covered with marble imported from Italy. The exterior presents two facades to the Church Square with the main feature being the twin towers with their front walls closing in on the principal nave. In addition to the main entrance and the two small doors to the towers, the front side also provides another access door to the temple.



Santuario Ntra. Sra. de los Remedios



From Monday to Sunday from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm and from 05:00 pm to 09:00 pm

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Remedies is only 2 km far from the town centre (direction Torre Alháquime). It was constructed in the 18th century, in Andalusian style on the foundations of a small hermitage. It venerates the patron of the locality, **Nuestra Señora de Los Remedios**, who is loved by the town of Olvera and many towns around, known collectively as “las cientos sierras” (the 100 mountain ranges). Unknown persons created an original statue to her during 16th century, which was restored 10 years ago. The Archbishop of Seville, Don Good Jose Maria Monreal, was crowned here in 1966.

Since 1715 The y celebrate near the sanctuary the famous **ROMERÍA DEL LUNES DE QUASIMODO** pilgrimagethe second Monday after Easter Sunday.

Conjunto histórico y barrio de la

Villa



Olvera itself presents an architectural beauty. In 1983 it was declared a Historic-Artistic monument. This neighborhood occupies what was the first settlement on top of one of the many rocky hillocks. It was formerly walled, and its remains are still preserved in towers and canvas walls. The Moorish castle and the neoclassic church preside the white mass of small houses that are arranged in a series of curved streets and parallel, narrow and irregular layout which has not forgotten its Islamic roots.

Near these other buildings, in the “**Casco Antiguo**” (the ancient town center) within the old town walls is la villa (the village). To walk its streets is to travel 700 years back, to when an older Olvera existed. This was where the **Visigoth town** called Wubira existed. The town’s origins are evident here, (narrow streets, strategic corners, old cottages, etc.), exposing the visitor to the old architecture of the **Muslim town** entwined with the modern.

Museo 'La Frontera y los Castillos'



Plaza de La Iglesia 7, Within "La Cilla" House

Visiting hours:

Winter 10:30am to 02:00 pm and 04:00 pm to 06:00 pm.

Summer 10:30am to 02:00 pm and 04:00 pm to 07:00 pm.

Mondays closed.

Entrance fee (Museum and Castle): 2 Euros except for local inhabitants. Located in the "La Cilla" House, this museum was opened in the summer of 1999 and is dedicated to the frontier and castles at the time of the Christian recapture of Spain. The museum was the first in all Andalusia to deal with this topic. There are two halls: Hall I : The Frontiers of the Iberian Peninsula. The Andalusia Frontiers.

The geography of Olvera. The Andalusian Castles and Castle in the "Sierra". The Conquest of Olvera by Alfonso XI.

Hall II: The Frontier as a war zone. Daily Life on the Frontier.

Fábrica de aceite cooperativa de los Remedios



Cooperativa de aceite de los Remedios

Address: Ave Manuel de Falla, s/n

Olvera, 11690 Cádiz Spain

Phone: 956130083 Fax: 956131304

info@scalosremedios.com

Las Pilas Almazara(phone before if you want to visit it)

Calle socorro, 48

Tel 956 130 730

La Vía Verde de la Sierra



The Via Verde de la Sierra is situated at the foot of the southernmost mountain range of the Iberian Peninsula. Originally laid out for a railway line which was never built, it runs for 36 km between the villages of Cadiz **Puerto Serrano** and **Olvera**.

This stunning route, running parallel to the banks of many rivers, passes through spectacular countryside such as the Peñon de Zaframagón, one of the most populous vulture reserves in Europe.

Reserva natural Peñón de Zaframagón



Peñón de Zaframagón

The Rock of Zaframagón Nature Reserve is situated at the rear of the Sierra de Lijar between the provinces of Cadiz and Seville in the heart of the Via Verde de la Sierra (some 6 miles from Coripe and 15 from Olvera).

This is a Nature Reserve of major importance, especially for accommodating and harbouring one of the largest colonies of griffon vultures in Europe. With its' sheer and prominent crags, together with the fact that, hitherto, it was practically totally isolated from populated areas, the Rock provides the ideal habitat for the vultures to build their nests, usually in the steep walls, taking advantage of the presence of hollows, ledges and overhangs, and rear their young. Up to 250 breeding pairs have been recorded. The colony survives on scavenging food from the large farms in the region.

Near the Coripe station, you will find an Andalucian National Monument, the Chaparro de la Vega. It is a magnificent 13m-high holm oak, measuring 30m in diameter in its entirety and having an estimated age of 700 years. The tree provides shade during the pilgrimage of Coripe villagers for the fiesta of Coripe's patron saint, the Virgen de Fátima.

One of them is the interpretive centre (Centro de Interpretación de Zaframagón), where a powerful remote controlled camera allows close study of the vultures on the cliffs. An Ibex stood guard high up on a ridge for a few brief moments, while a dark phase juvenile Booted Eagle and two Bonelli's Eagles (an adult and a

juvenile) circled above one of the highest pinnacles. A ruined farmhouse shaded a roosting Little Owl in the remains of its chimney. In the scrub at the base of the cliffs the harsh calls of a Sardinian Warbler preceded a brief appearance of the bird from the depths of a wild Olive tree. An aqueduct on the old railway below the cliff provided a ringside view of the spectacle.

Opening hours

Monday to Sunday: 10:00 a.m. in the morning to 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

Children and people over 65 years: 1 €

Adult: 2 €

Groups (more than 20 people): 1 € per person.

Contacts

<http://www.fundacionviaverdedelasierra.com>

Antigua Casa del Guarda. Vía Verde de la Sierra

11659 Puerto Serrano (Cádiz)

Tel: 956 136 372 Fax: 956 136 357 info@fundacionviaverdedelasierra.com

Phone Green Patrol: 638280184

Tarjeta verde holders: 50% discount. Número de teléfono dela Patrulla Verde: 638280184

SURROUNDINGS

Antiguo Convento de Ntra. Sra. de Caños Santos



Caños Santos Monastery

The Canos Santos monastery is perched on a small promontory of land that overlooks the lofty and foreboding crags of the Grazalema Mountains. From here the views are spectacular. Declared a monument of cultural importance in 1985, it can be found in the Valle Hermoso Mountains. Its origins have been linked with a Celtic settlement called Caricus and the legendary Gran Cenosia, until it was reduced to a small Visigoth town. Following the Islamic invasion, its inhabitants hid an image of the Virgin in a nearby mountain and was discovered in 1512 by the cowboy Tello Pascual in the rocky hollow of a spring. A small chapel was erected and by the middle of the 16th Century, a magnificent church and convent occupied by Franciscan monks had been built. To see what is inside you must come on 1st of May the only day of the year that it's open to public. The rest of the year you will enjoy it only from outside.

For more information:

www.alacaladelvalle.es

Setenil de las Bodegas



This small town (pueblo) is located 157 kilometres (98 mi) northeast of Cadiz. It has a distinctive setting along a narrow river gorge. The town extends along the course of the Rio Trejo with some houses being built into the rock walls of the gorge itself, created by enlarging natural caves or overhangs and adding an external wall.

Modern Setenil evolved from a **fortified Moorish town** that occupied a bluff overlooking a sharp bend in the Rio Trejo northwest of **Ronda**. The **castle** dates from at least the **Almohad period** in the 12th century. However, the site was certainly occupied during the Roman invasion of the region in the 1st century AD. It is an open area, so you can visit it whenever you want to.

Given the evidence of other **nearby cave-dwelling societies**, such as those at the Cueva de la Pileta west of Ronda, where habitation has been tracked back more than 25,000 years, it is possible that Setenil was occupied much much earlier.

Over the intervening centuries, Setenil also gained a reputation for its meat products, particularly **chorizo** sausage and cerdo (pork) from pigs bred in the surrounding hills. As well as meat, it has a reputation for producing fine pasteles (pastries), and its bars and restaurants are among the best in the region.

There are some **beautiful walks** in and around the village. The most famous of which, is walking the length of the river past the **troglodyte dwellings** and the various bars/restaurants that line it.

The **Iglesia de la Encarnacion** built on the top of the hill that overlooks the village is also worth visiting but it is not open to the public except during services.

To get to Setenil from the campsite you have to take direction Torre Alháquime, pass this village and then you arrive to Setenil.

Contacts

<http://www.setenil.com/turismo@setenil.com>

Tel 659 54 66 26.

Yacimientos Arqueológicos de Acinipo.

Acinipo was a city created for retired soldiers from the **Roman** legions more than 2,000 years ago, about 20 kilometers from **Ronda**, near **Seville**, southern **Spain**. The Acinipo ruins include a **Roman theater** still in use today. Acinipo is known locally as **Ronda la Vieja**, Arunda or Old Ronda, though it has a separate origin and history from Ronda.

The impressive stone built entrance gate looks out of place as it leads into a farmyard complete with chained but friendly dogs. Don't be put off. Walk up the hill in the direction of the large monument past numerous large piles of stones marking the location of houses. The piles of stones were made by farmers over the ages to recover arable or grazing land area. There is a little evidence of excavation in this area

NAMED "DOMUS"



The ruins of this **32 hectare city** are located at **1.000m above sea level**. In the first century AD it had a population of 5.000. It was mentioned in Plini and, inscriptions to Geninn Oppidi, to the god Marse and to Victoria Augusta have been found. The city even minted its own money, which features bunches of grapes. It later gave way to the town of Arunda where Ronda now sits, probably because the new site was easier to defend. Acinipo fell in 429 AD.

There was also a Bronze age settlement here between 1,100 and 750 BC.

Near the car park the visitor can see the **foundations of circular huts** with the floor paving still in place. In one area a sign identifies the forum. Some large foundation stones and troughs can be seen. In this area excavations

have found numerous buildings with emblems. This has lead archaeologists to believe that they must have belonged to public buildings.

Reaching the top of the escarpment behind the large monument, the visitor is suddenly rewarded with the sight of the Roman theatre, large enough to seat **2,000 people** and in good condition - complete with an orange tiled orchestra pit and actors' changing rooms. It is suggested the theatre was started in 65 AD and completed about 200 AD. A modern steel stage has been constructed.

No information is available at the site. The casual tourist arriving at the entrance by car would not even realise the existence of the theatre and would miss this archaeological gem by deciding not to climb the hill to look behind the large monument visible from the entrance.

The latest area to be excavated and partially restored is the "**Thermas**" or baths. These are located near the lower perimeter fence and can be visited on the way out.

Opening Hours

Monday: Closed

Tuesday to Saturday: 10.00 to 5.00 pm

Sunday: 09.00 to 02.00 pm

Entrance: Free

How to Get to Acinipo

Turn right when you leave the campsite and go direction Algodonales. Then when you almost arrive to Algodonales you will se direction Ronda. Follow Ronda on A 374. Then take Carretera de Montecorto. Ma 8400 road until you arrive to Acinipo

Torre Alháquime

This pretty white town in the Sierra de Cadiz dates from Muslim times; it closely resembles Berber towns in the hills of north Africa. Torre Alhamique's name comes from the Arabic Al Hakin family, meaning "the wise" or "the learned". This family owned the tower-fortress, **located 4km from Olvera**, which became the basis for the town. You can still see the ruins of this **old Nazari tower-fortress**.

Torre Alhaquime played a key role in the struggle against French troops during the War of Independence in the 19th century, its inhabitants joining the various bands of guerrillas which sprang up in the Cadiz and Ronda mountains.

One of the most famous of these bandits was the notoriously charming one-handed **El Tempranillo**, who spent much time in the town (although he was actually born in Alameda in Malaga province). Torre Alhaquime was also the birthplace of his unfortunate wife, María Gerónima Francés, who died in childbirth while their house was under siege by soldiers. The bandit later "went straight" and became a police man, head of the precursor of the Guardia Civil. He was fatally wounded in a shoot-out with another bandit, El Barbarello, from Estepa. You can see the ruins of El Tempranillo's house in the town.

The parish church is **Nuestra Señora de la Antigua**, and dates from the 18th century. Another highlight of the town is the **Cemetery Castle**, which dates from the 13th century; part of its walls remain.

The town is a popular **hiking destination**, and also offers good hunting, cycling and horse-riding facilities. Fishermen are well catered for too, with the nearby river **Guadalporcun**.

Local dishes include game stews, and other specialities feature asparagus, thistles and snails; sweeter options are **roscos** (round Easter cakes), **almond pastries** and "**El Hornazo**", decorated eggs with sugar.

Olive oil is produced locally under the DO "Sierra de Cadiz". Handicrafts which you can find in Torre Alhaquime are esparto grass, wicker, wood, ceramics and embroidery.

Important festivals are the Romeria de San Juan (22-24 June), and Carnival in February, as well as Holy Friday and Easter Sunday in the Semana Santa processions. The town's saint, San Roque, is celebrated from 13-17 August.

Torre Alháquime is only **4 km far from the campsite**. Turn left when you leave the campsite then on your right it would be indicated

Torre Alháquime
Plaza Constitución 1
CP 11691 - Torre Alháquime

Teléfono: 956 12 51 24

e-Mail: torrealhaquime@dipucadiz.es

Ronda

Despite being Andalucía's fastest-growing town - it overtook Córdoba in the big three Andaluz tourist attractions, behind Sevilla and Granada, in the early 21st century - Ronda retains much of its historic charm, particularly its old town. It is **famous worldwide** for its dramatic escarpments and views, and for **the deep El Tajo gorge** that carries the rio Guadalevín through its centre. Visitors make a beeline for the 18th century Puente Nuevo 'new' bridge, which straddles the 100m chasm below, for its unparalleled views out over the Serranía de Ronda mountains.



Ronda is also famous as the **birthplace of modern bullfighting**, today glimpsed once a year at the spectacular Feria Goyesca. Held at the beginning of September, here fighters and some of the audience dress in the manner of Goya's sketches of life in the region. Legendary Rondeño bullfighter **Pedro Romero** broke away from the prevailing Jerez 'school' of horseback bullfighting in the 18th century to found a style of bullfighting in which matadores stood their ground against the bull on foot. Otherwise the bullring, Plaza de Toros, is now a museum, and visitors can stroll out into the arena.

Ronda also holds a lovely '**romería**' **pilgrimage** each year. This is in honour of the **Virgen de la Cabeza** and is organised by the local Catholic brotherhood of the same name. For those wishing to see the lighter side of

life in Ronda this is a wonderful way to participate in a local tradition that dates back to the beginning of the 20th century.

Across the bridge, where an **elegant cloistered 16th century convent** is now an art museum, old Ronda, La Ciudad, sidwinds off into cobbled streets hemmed by handsome town mansions, some still occupied by Ronda's titled families. The **Casa de Don Bosco** is one such, its interior patio long ago roofed in glass against Ronda's harsh winters. Its small, almost folly-like gardens lose out, however, to the true star, a few minutes' walk to the furthest end of the Ciudad, the **Palacio Mondragón**. Clumsily modernised in parts during the 1960s, this still has working vestiges of the exquisite miniature water gardens dating from its time as a Moorish palace during Ronda's brief reign as a minor Caliphate under Córdoba in the 12th century.

The cobbled alley to the Mondragón leads naturally on to Ronda's loveliest public space, the leafy **Plaza Duquesa de Parcent**, which boasts a convent, two churches, including the toytown belltower of the **iglesia Santa Maria de Mayor**, and the handsome arched ayuntamiento (council) building. Nearby calle Armiñan leads down to the spacious plaza of the traditional workers' barrio, San Francisco, with excellent bars and restaurants. Back from the Mondragón, the **Plaza del Campillo** overlooks steps that zigzag down to a dramatic eye-level through the Puente Nuevo. The town's pedestrianised 'high street', calle Espinel, opposite the bullring, is nicknamed 'La Bola' and is where Rondeños go for virtually everything



OFICINA MUNICIPAL DE TURISMO 10:00-19:00 (Lunes a Viernes) Y FAX: 952 18 71 19

Paseo de Blas Infante s/n 10:00-14:00 / 15:00 -17:00 (Sábado) informacion@turismoderonda.es

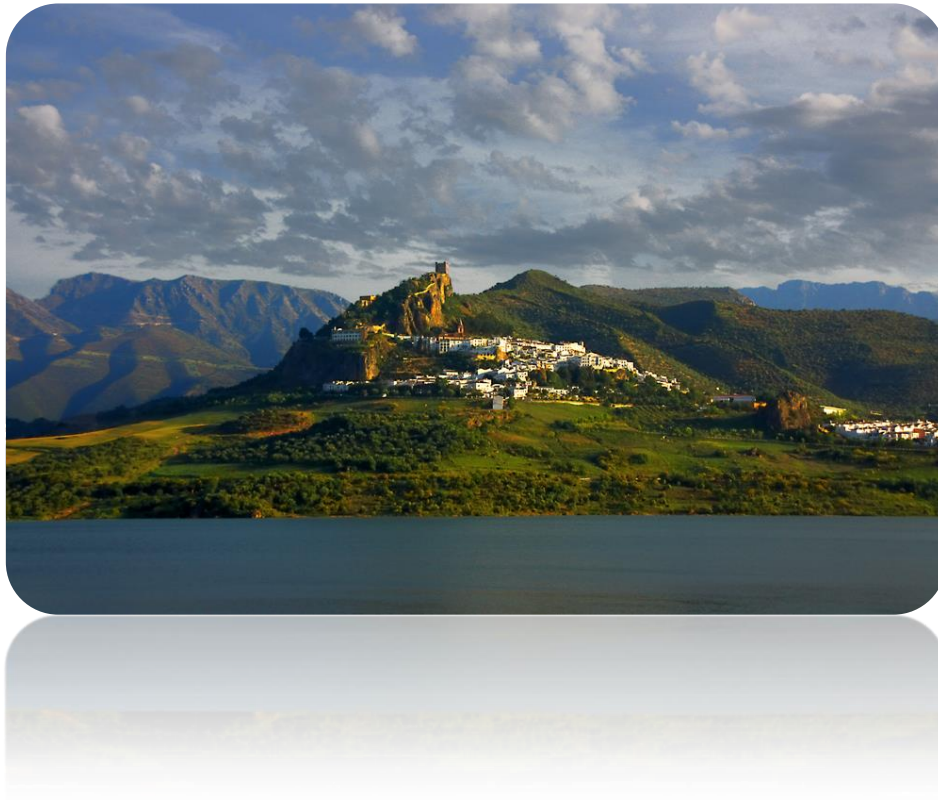
10:00-14:30 (Domingo y Festivos) www.turismoderonda.es

PLAZA DE TOROS Y MUSEO TAURINO 10:00-19:00 (Lunes a Domingo) Individual: 6 € 952 87 41 32 // 952 87 15 39

C/ Virgen de la Paz nº 15 Colegios con documento acreditativo (menores de 16 años): 4 €

CASA DEL GIGANTE 10:00-15:00 (Lunes a Domingo). Individual: 2 €. NO _ 678 63 14 45

Zahara de la Sierra



The white village of Zahara de la Sierra is one of the most stunning images in the Province of Cadiz. As you drive on the A382 road, which links **Arcos de la Frontera** with **Antequera**, or the A376 from **Seville** to **Ronda** you see a castle built high on a rocky mountain peak and scattered below it are the whitewashed houses of Zahara de la Sierra, which lead down to a man made lake at the foot.

In fact, the town dates back to **Moorish times**. The inhabitants lived in constant danger as Muslims and Christians fought over ownership. In 1407 the Christians were in control, thanks to the conquest of Don Fernando. In the 18th century the **Duke of Arcos** had a stately home in Zahara, giving great importance to the area.

Today's Zahara de la Sierra is becoming ever more attractive to the more discerning tourist of Andalucia and this is especially true at the **famous fiesta of Corpus Christi**, which has been declared to be of National Tourist Interest. The people of Zahara dress up the fronts of the houses with branches and rushes, making the whole place look as if it were part of nature. It is well worth visiting during this festival.

The reservoir, which is a relatively new edition to the area, has made it even more popular with visitors, who also have the option of **water sports and swimming**, which didn't exist 10 years ago.

There are many interesting sights, such as the **Watch Tower**, dating back to the 16th century, the Torre del Homenaje, the Church of Santa María de la Meza with its baroque altarpiece and the Arch of the Town. Indeed Zahara de la Sierra was given the title of Artistic Centre in 1983.

From a social point of view, over the last 30 years or so, more than 2,000 of the population have migrated, mainly to the Costa del Sol in search of work in the hotel industry. Many of these people work the summer season and come back in winter to the peace and quiet of their hometown. Since the town, which covers an overall area of over 70 square kilometers, is built on the sides of the hill ranging from a height of 300 meters above sea level in the north and 1,100 in the south.

Just outside the town an **old olive mill** has restored its original British manufactured Victorian presses and invites visitors to see how the **olive oil** is produced. Well worth a visit.

Access

From the campsite direction Algodonales on A384 then direction Zahara.

Grazalema



Located in a high valley over 800m in the **Sierra del Endrinal** and dominated by the magnificent rocky outcrop known as **Peñon Grande**, the pretty mountain village of Grazalema is most popular base for visitors to the **Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park**.

Grazalema is a lively village whose population of 2,250 swells hugely with the influx of visitors to the park. Its steep, cobbled streets are immaculately kept and are lined by whitewashed houses with windows covered by wrought-iron rejas and plant pots spilling over with colourful flowers.

In the heart of the village there is an attractive main square, the **Plaza de España**, lined with bars and restaurants. On this square is Grazalema's central sight, the **18th-century church of La Aurora**. Also here is the village hall (ayuntamiento) and the parish church, the **Iglesia de la Encarnación**. Up Calle Mateos Gago from the square is the **17th-century Iglesia de San José**, a former Carmelite convent with paintings by a disciple of Murillo. Close to the church is a viewpoint that looks out over the village.

The village was established in Moorish times by Berber settlers who discovered a striking similarity with the mountains of their homeland and those of the Sierra de Grazalema. They introduced sheep to graze the lush mountain pastures and produced wool for ponchos and

WALKING

Sierra de Lijar

Belonging to the Olvera and Algodonales municipal districts, it has an area of approximately **3,090 hectares**. It appears like a huge limestone mass with a **maximum height of 1,051 m at the Lijar peak**.

We can enjoy numerous walks (El canalizo – Fuente de la Víbora, La Muela – El Canalizo.....), as well as the barbeques, tables and benches at the source of the river Ramos and an area of La Muela.

For the lovers of **wild flowers**, more than 700 varieties have been recorded in the area (Aparacio, 1982). Regarding the area's wildlife there are a number of birds of prey such as the **Griffon vulture**, the **short toed** and **Bonelli's eagles** and the **eagle owl**... Amongst the mammals are foxes, genets, badgers and the mountain goat as the star attraction. Amongst the reptiles we can find vipers, and a variety of snakes. There are an equal number of birds such as the thrush, jackdaw, and robin redbreasts amongst others.

Two of the most popular tourist attractions of the sierra are **paragliding** and **hang gliding**

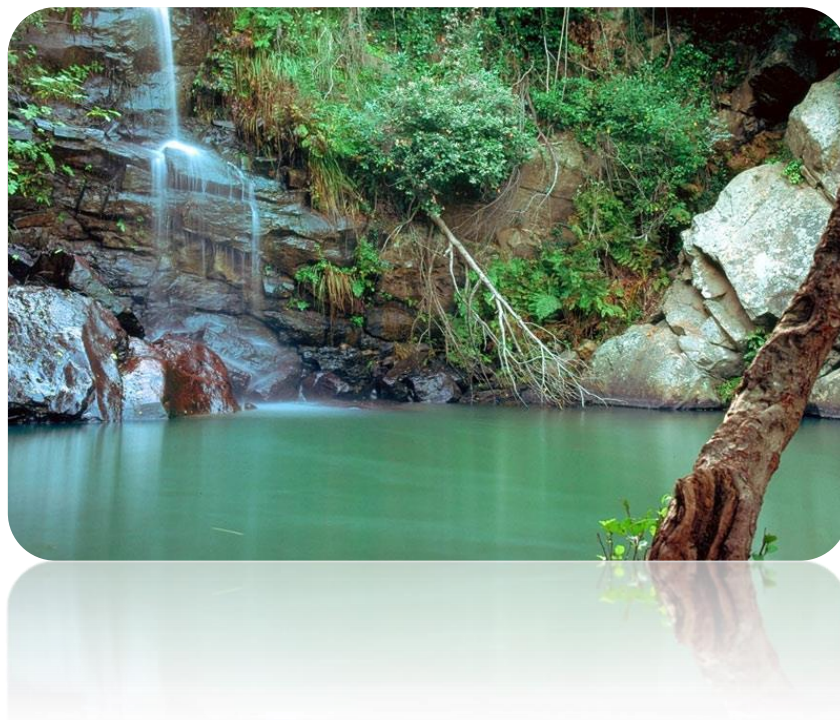
How to get there

La Muela-Los Nacimientos path: 6,5 km (3 hours) Before arriving to Algodonales (A 384) Turn direction Coripe-La Muela in A8126. Then follow La Muela and you arrive to "Sendero La Muela-Los Nacimientos". There is a small area for parking and the entrance of the trail is marked by a wooden pergola and a stone table with a spectacular view to the Rock of Zaframagón.

Los Nacimientos-Algodonales path is 11 km long (5 hours). Access through the road connecting the towns of La Muela with Olvera , or from the A-384 that goes from Algodonales to Olvera , being one of the most interesting parts of the Sierra de Lijar both with regard to scenic as the botanist, the cool and damp place responds with his presence many plant and animal species.

El Parque Natural Los

Alcornocales



This vast park covers **167,767ha** from Tarifa in the south to the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park in the north. It is named after its handsome and beautifully kept cork tree grove, the largest in the Iberian Peninsula and one of the most important ones in the world. It is the best example of what the densely wooded, primeval Iberian forests may have been like.

The far south of the region is crossed by humid, deep, narrow V-shaped valleys, called **canutos**, which have been eroded by rivers and provide the ideal habitat for subtropical forests of great ecological value. Today, these forests only exist in Spain and Turkey but they used to grow in many other parts of Europe. There are over **40 species of fern** in the area; one botanical jewel here is the rare fern *psilotum nudum*, the only other examples of which occur in the southern hemisphere. Typical canutos are those of the Gallina, Hortela and Jautor. **Information**

There are two visitors' centres: Huerta Grande is south of Algeciras at Km 96 on the N340 coast road. El Aljibe is in Alcalá de los Gazules, on the road to Benalup at Km 1. For both centres, call 956 679 161.

Access

The area is easily accessible via road, the main road crossing the northern section being the A375 between Ubrique in the northeast and Alcalá de los Gazules in the west. Between Algar in the north and Jimena de la Frontera in the east is the C3331, whilst the A381 crosses the southern section from Alcalá de los Gazules to Algeciras. There are also many minor roads and forest tracks crisscrossing the park. From the campsite get to El Bosque/Prado del Rey..

Sierra de Grazalema



Designated a **Unesco Biosphere reserve** in 1977, the Sierra de Grazalema was declared the first natural park in Andalucia in 1984 and is one of Spain's most ecologically outstanding areas. The **51,695ha** park is famous for its spectacularly rugged limestone landscape of cliffs, gullies, caves and gorges. By far the most impressive gorge is **Garganta Verde**, with its exceptional griffon vulture colony and rocky walls that tower vertically for 400m. Andalucia's largest cave system is also here, the **Hundidero-Gato** with its biggest cavern measuring 4km long and an entrance of 60m tall.

The region is well known for being the rainiest place in Spain, with an annual rainfall of 2,200mm, which means that the **1,300 Mediterranean plant species** that have been registered here, many of them endemic and some of them unique to the Sierra, flourish.

There is a magnificent and well preserved forest of the rare Spanish fir, a relic from the Tertiary period, in the Sierra del Pinar on the slopes of Cadiz province's highest peak at **1,654m, El Torreón**.

Dotted around the sierra are attractive pueblos blancos (white villages), the one in the most dramatic setting being **Grazalema**, which nestles between the two rugged peaks of **Pico del Reloj** and the **Pico de San Cristóbal**. Other picturesque pueblos blancos include **Cortes de la Frontera**, **El Bosque** and **Zahara de la Sierra**.

Around 3,000ha of the park is called an Área de Reserve, with the most fragile ecosystems, Spanish fir forests and black vulture colonies. Conservation measures are more strict than the rest of the park and visits

are controlled in terms of dates and numbers. At times when fire risks are greater (July to September) walks to this area are closed. For walks in the rest of the park, except for Sendero Garganta Verde, you must go with an authorized Turismo Activo company. For the rest of the year, you need to obtain permits from the El Bosque information office. The principal rivers are the Guadalete, Guadiaro, Tavizna and Ubrique.

Information

There is a Centro de Visitantes (visitors' centre) in Cortes de la Frontera (952 154 599), with information on geology, flora and fauna of the park.

In El Bosque is the main park office (956 727 029), which has maps, walking routes and issues permisos (permits) for walks. The tourist offices in Cadiz (956 258 646) and Malaga (952 213 445) can also provide information.

In Grazalema is an information office (956 132 225) that has walking maps and can obtain walking permits from El Bosque office for you.

Access

The park is easily accessible by car or on foot. The main roads crossing the Sierra are the A372 Ronda to El Bosque road and the A374 Grazalema to Ubrique road. From the campsite you have to take direction Algodonales, then Zahara, then Grazalema. In Grazalema it would be indicated.

Los Pueblos Blancos

