



Routes Granada

Granada

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Practical city guide / Map



Geography and history

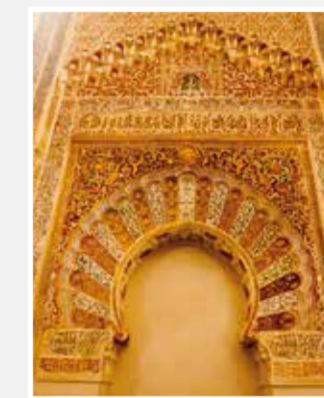
Monuments and museums

Festivals and traditions

Gastronomy and crafts

The Albaicín quarter and Sacromonte

The Secret Granada is an itinerary through the famous Albaicín quarter and into the heart of the gypsy quarter of Sacromonte. The narrow and steep streets take us to the centre of this ancient Moorish quarter of the city in just a few minutes from the Plaza Nueva. In the plaza de San Miguel Bajo, you can have a rest and a few tapas with a glass of good wine before visiting the **convent of Santa Isabel la Real (27)**. The plaza de San Nicolás is a compulsory stop because you can enjoy one of the best views of the **Alhambra (1)** and Sierra Nevada from the famous balcony. The churches of San Nicolás and El Salvador are nearby and so is the historic Carmen villas of the suburb. The Chapiz hill separates the Albaicín quarter from Sacromonte. The Calle de la Vereda de Enmedio leads to the picturesque cave suburb where the Interpretation Centre has opened its doors from the Negro ravine.



Churches were built here on the sites that used to house mosques, through the centuries they opted for the baroque principles. El Realejo is also a literary and musical suburb. In the streets and plazas here poets like Garcia Lorca and composers like Manuel de Falla found inspiration, whose house museum is visited everyday by followers of one of the most outstanding composers of the twentieth century. In the upper part of the suburb the **Carmen de los Mártires (5)** villa opens its doors, it is built on a site that tradition says was the position of the dungeons where the Christian captives were held. After they took the city, it became a Carmelite

Reminiscent of Carlos the fifth

To return to the Granada of the itineraries of Carlos the fifth, we have to leave the habitual circuits of the Medieval and Moorish city that the Romantic travellers made famous on one side to discover the city of Granada that the Emperor Carlos the fifth saw during his stay in 1526. Carlos the fifth inherited his affection for Granada from his grandparents, the Christian Monarchs. After his marriage to the beautiful Isabel of Portugal in Seville he came to Granada for a long stay. He became conscious, in situ, of the seriousness of the problem between the moriscos or new Christians and the tragedy of these people. He granted them a concession of fifty years during which they could keep their own customs without being persecuted, as long as they did not attack the Christian faith. When the Emperor Carlos entered Granada in the summer of 1526, he discovered



The Route of the gardens

The most emblematic gardens in Granada are the ones in the Alhambra and Generalife, together they have been declared to be a World Heritage Site the same as the nearby Albaicín suburb. The Alhambra has patios that are traditionally Islamic like the Machuca and Arrayanes patios, the latter is a typical patio with a central ornamental pond surrounded by hedging. The patio of the Lions, at present without ornamental vegetation, originally had sunken flowerbeds. The Reja and Lindaraja patios are Renaissance in style, both with central fountains. Other gardens combine different styles, the Adarve garden is Renaissance, it is a garden on a steep slope with beautiful views from its terraces. There are gardens of Spanish Moorish andalusí layout like the Partal gardens, the largest in the Alhambra, planted over the ruins of part of the ancient Moorish palace. The San Francisco and the Secano gardens are also interesting. The Generalife has special importance because of its extremely beautiful Moorish patio of the Acequia or pond and the Patio of the Cypress tree or the Sultana with a mixture of both Moorish and Renaissance elements. There are also Italian style terraced gardens where you can admire the Escalera de Agua water steps.



Before the city of Granada existed there was a settlement nearby, situated in the foothills of the Sierra de Elvira and named after this mountain range, a place the Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians passed through. Where the city of Granada is situated today the Romans built their Iliberis, a city that hosted the first Christian Council in Spain in the fourth century, between 300 and 303. Iliberis later passed into the hands of the Visigoths. In 711 the Moors invaded the Iberian Peninsula and the first chronicles praised the lands of Granada comparing them with Damascus. The new Moorish city was inhabited by a large Jewish community, that guaranteed its safety while the Moorish legions marched north. After the battle of Navas de Tolosa in 1212 the King al-Hamar de Arjona peacefully handed over the castle of Jaén and declared himself a subject of King Fernando the third under the condition that the King of Castile allowed him to found a new Kingdom in Granada. This was the beginning of the history of Moorish Granada.

Al-Hamar chose the Sabika hill as the site to build his new palace that he called the Alhambra. The Moors stayed in the Alhambra for over two hundred years. The arrival of the Christian King Fernando and Queen Isabella to the last Moorish bastion on the Iberian Peninsula involved a radical change to the model of the city. The Mosques, at this time converted to Christian churches, were the object of beautiful remodelling plans carried out by Mudejar craftsmen. The Cathedral, built beside the Royal Chapel, is a tribute to Gaudí, especially in the areas that the Renaissance architect Diego de Siloé projected. The Moorish Albaicín suburb still has its andalusí appearance and from the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries, Granada became a kind of mecca for Romantic travellers. The city of Granada enjoys over three thousand hours of sunshine a year with an average temperature of 22°C. Winters are hard and cold, summers are hot and the months of autumn and spring are pleasant with warm temperatures.

The Alhambra (1) is one of the most fascinating monumental complexes in the world. In 1238, the Andalusí Sultan Muhammad the first ordered the first stones to be laid on the red hill of Sabika. The earth is a darkish red colour, the peasants from the valley or vega of Granada called it al-kalat al-Hamrá (the castle built of red earth) and this is how the Alhambra got its name. The successors took even more care to consolidate the artistic and environmental ennoblement of the Red Castle, where nature and architecture exist side by side in a serene and sacred harmony. The erudite experts say that there is no other monument where architecture and water produce such symphony, like in the Patio de Los Leones, where the sound of the water is subtly integrated in the robust architecture. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Alhambra was a palace, citadel and fortress, the residence of the Moorish Sultans, high dignitaries, members of the Court and elite soldiers. Actually the monument is divided into four different areas: the Palaces, the military area or Alcazaba, the citadel or Medina and the market garden area or **the Generalife (4)**, all situated in a surrounding area of forests, gardens and orchards. It also integrates important buildings from different periods, like the Renaissance Palace of Carlos the fifth, which houses the



The day of the Toma or capture of Granada is celebrated on the 2nd January. This historic festival commemorates the day the Christian Monarchs took possession of the Alhambra, after signing the Capitulation in the nearby town of Santa Fe on the 25th November 1491. At dawn on the 2nd January 1492, in the hall of the Tower of Comares, the Moorish King Boabdil handed over the keys of the Alhambra and the city. Holy Week fills Granada with the story of the Passion in the weeks that announce the coming of springtime. This religious celebration has been celebrated in Granada probably since the Christian Reconquest. Around thirty religious guilds preparing pasos or floats depicting the Easter story for processions from Palm Sunday to Easter



Sunday, some days over half a dozen processions coincide through the streets of the city of Granada. They are typical of the processions in Andalucía, they are especially poignant in the Albaicín with the beautiful backdrop of the Alhambra illuminated. There are also festivals in spring, on the 3rd May the tradition dating back to 1625 has been revived, when an alabaster cross was erected in the suburb of San Lázaro and the occasion was celebrated

with dancing. At present the festival has spread all over the city, although the Albaicín quarter and the Realejo suburb having the most picturesque and curious urban landscapes. The aesthetics of the Crosses are mainly a scene of red carnations together with decorative elements used by the local people on a daily basis. The Town Hall organises a competition for the best cross in plazas and patios. In June, Granada celebrates the festival of Corpus Christi. This is the main fair and starts on the Wednesday with the procession of the Tarasca, a woman dressed in the latest fashion and riding on the back of a dragon, an allegory of the Virgin Mary stepping on a snake. On Thursday there is the procession of the Holy Sacrament. The Monstrance is carried through the streets of the old part of the city on the shoulders of the bearers, the streets have been specially decorated for the occasion with embroidered shawls and the road surface is covered with a carpet of flowers.



Earth, cultivated land, valley and sea, all these elements have inspired Granada with regard to its varied gastronomy, passed down from the Moorish period. Many of the dishes are prepared everyday in suburbs like the Albaicín and Sacromonte with a special appeal to that culture. The garlic soups and the San Antón stews have well earned fame as well as the

casseroles made with dried broad beans, lard and black pudding from the mountains. The Sacromonte omelettes, made with vegetables and meat, are one of the most famous dishes in the city of Granada cuisine. The cold gazpacho soup, snails, or baby broad beans and serrano mountain ham are other suggestions that are served everyday in the restaurants in the city. The remojón salad from Granada made with cod and oranges, poor man's potatoes crowned with a fried egg and fried breadcrumbs mixed with pork products are other dishes not to be missed. The Granada cuisine varies considerably depending on the district. On the Costa Tropical, fish and exotic fruit are the main ingredients of most dishes. In the fish restaurants there is no shortage of grilled fish, rice and shellfish dishes, pickled blue fish, dried octopus or sardines grilled over open fires. In Motril it is traditional to eat ajo cabanill, a kid stew cooked very slowly in a special sauce. However if the Costa Tropical is famous for one thing it is the exotic fruit where mango, papaya, avocado pear or custard apples are something more than a dessert. The emblematic pomegranate, a tree that is present in the



Spanish Carmen villas and gardens, is another delicious fruit the province has to offer. The crafts in Granada include guitar makers who have their workshops on the Gomérez hill and in the Realejo quarter, they have become points of reference for guitarists from all over the world. The collection of articles these craftsmen make include: chests, tables, boxes and decorated cabinets.



The centre explains the history of the place and it reproduces its secular forms of life. Sacromonte is crowned by the **Abbey (22)** of the same name, it has been a centre of religious pilgrimage for centuries. The Carrera del Río Darro street is at the foot of the Albaicín, one of the most beautiful streets in the world. The street starts in plaza Nueva and runs to the well-known Paseo de los Tristes, along the river Darro.

El Realejo

Some of the most beautiful corners of Granada are between Puerta Real and El Realejo. Situated at the foot of the Mauror hill, the Realejo suburb was ennobled after the Christian reconquest with manor houses and Renaissance palaces.

convent of which San Juan de la Cruz was the prior for some years. The building has features of Oriental taste from the nineteenth century in its decoration, although the most important feature of the villa is its gardens which mix French rationality and symmetry with the surprising romantic disorder of the English garden. The water from fountains and ponds and the magnificent views over Granada and the Realejo suburb make it worth a visit just for that. Go down the hill past the **Manuel de Falla Auditorium (6)** on the left, its other facade joins the **house museum (7)** where the genial composer from Cádiz lived. Almost at the doors of the hotel Alhambra Palace there is the alleyway of the Niño del Rollo, it gets its name from a nearby macabre fountain which has hooks where they used to hang the remains of those who



one of the most exotic cities in Spain: a concurrence of two civilisations, Christian and Moslem. However it was necessary to renew and extend its structures to transform the city and accommodate the ancient Moorish capital to the new functional and representative demands of an imperial centre. At first the Emperor Carlos



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