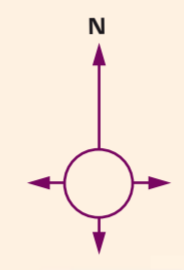




Pueblos Blancos

Guía práctica zonas / Mapa

Pueblos Blancos



Municipio con declaración monumental Town with declared monuments	Hotel	Castillo Castle	Puerto comercial Commercial Ports	Cueva Cave	Refugio Mountain Shelter
Municipio con incoación monumental Town with monuments in process of declaration	Pensión Pension	Torre Tower	Puerto deportivo Marina	Jardín Botánico Botanical Garden	Bañero Spa
Oficina de Información de la Junta de Andalucía Junta de Andalucía information office	Hospital	Museo Museum	Faro Lighthouse	Centro de Interpretación Interpretation Centre	Golf
Oficina Municipal de Turismo Municipal Tourism Office	Centro de Salud Health Centre	Monumento Monument	Área recreativa Recreational Area	Mirador Mirador	Senderismo Walking
Parador Parador	Autobús Bus	Restos arqueológicos Archaeological Remains	Vista panorámica Panoramic View	Camping Campsite	Cicloturismo Cyclotourism
	Oficina de Correos Post office		Punto de Información Information	Albergue Lodgings	Parapente Paragliding



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Informes: Estándar Gráfico Europeo, S.A. - Dep. Legal: SE-1487-2022
Agosto 2022 - NPJ-140-220047-ENG

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Pueblos Blancos

The provinces of Cádiz and Málaga are home to a number of towns and villages that appear to hang in bunches from the mountains, creating a picture-postcard scene in what is known as the Pueblos Blancos area. The origin of this name lies in the custom popular among the local inhabitants of whitewashing the outside of their houses and decorating them with brightly-coloured potted flowers which combine with the golden sun, the brown mountain peaks, the green hilltops and the blue skies to create a veritable explosion of colour. The area is home to the natural parks of Sierra de Grazalema, with its highly-varied flora and fauna, which is the wettest area in the whole of Spain, and the enormous Los Alcornocales, where cork oaks abound.

A visit to the Pueblos Blancos really is a must, as we will discover something new every step of the way in this haven of spectacular scenery and tiny nooks brimming with colour.

The central route

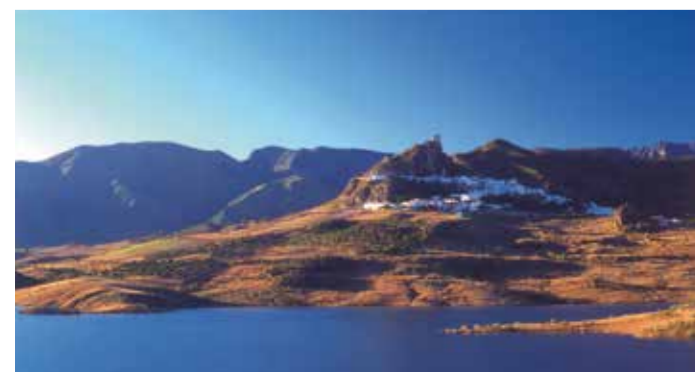


We will begin our journey at the heart of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, in Zahara de la Sierra, to be precise. Dominated by its Nazari castle, it has been officially declared a Complex of Historical and Artistic Importance. Next comes Grazaalema itself, a village of Roman origin whose surroundings are a veritable paradise for nature lovers, hikers and climbers alike.



A winding road from which we can glimpse spectacular views between the Spanish firs that line it will take us on to Villaluenga del Rosario. This is the highest village in the province of Cádiz, and is characterised by its steep streets lined with whitewashed houses. Heading back down, we will travel along a short stretch of the old Roman road before reaching Benaocaz, while Ubrique, with its backdrop of breathtaking scenery, is a pleasure to behold. Nearby, we will find the old Roman town of Occurri atop a peak

known as Salto de la Mora. Reaching the old centre of Ubrique requires a certain effort, but it is one that is well worth making, since the natural vantage points from which we can admire spectacular views provide ample reward. El Bosque awaits us to the north. Rich in trout, this area was awarded a National Beauty Prize and is a must for fishing enthusiasts. After passing through Benamahoma, the gateway to the pine forest, our last stop is at Prado del Rey, tucked between the mountains and the countryside among olive trees and vineyards, and just four kilometres from here we will find the remains of the Roman town of Iptuci.



The northern route



Between the Cádiz mountains and the River Guadalete lies Puerto Serrano, where our journey begins. This town of whitewashed houses is a haven of peace and tranquillity. Following a visit to Algodonales, home to Santa Ana Church, we will head for El Gastor. Nicknamed "the Balcony of the White Towns", its highest point affords breathtaking views, particularly of the dolmen known as El Gigante. Our next port of call is Setenil de las Bodegas, whose unusual urban design features houses which are cut from the mountain side and whose rooftops are provided by the rock itself.



Alcalá del Valle, which has been a refuge for Moors, clergymen and Franciscan monks over the years, uses its natural and monumental charms to attract all who come in search rest and relaxation. Continuing through Torre Alhaquime, we will come to the last stop on this route. Officially declared a Town of Historical and Artistic Interest, Olvera's main attraction is the town itself, its whitewashed houses and



narrow streets converging on the imposing silhouette of La Encarnación Church and the Arabic castle that stands on the top of the hill. El Peñón de Zafmagón, located in the westernmost area of the town and officially declared a Nature Reserve, is home to the largest colony of tawny vultures in Andalusia.

The eastern route



The gateway to the Pueblos Blancos, Arcos de la Frontera stands atop a rocky peak completely surrounded by the River Guadalete. Its beauty and originality make it one of the most outstanding towns in Spain, a fact that has been acknowledged by the award of National Monument of Historical and Artistic

Importance status. Arcos de la Frontera is the typical town of sun, whitewashed houses, window grilles and flowers. After a visit to Algar, a delightful town of Arabic origin, we will head on to Espera, where Fatetar Castle and its adjoining chapel stand on a rocky peak, affording breathtaking views. Surrounded by fields brimming with crops, the white town of Bornos stands on the



banks of the reservoir of the same name. As we depart, we should take the opportunity to visit the old Ibero-Roman town of Carissa Aurelia. Villamartín is home to a variety of landscapes, the white houses contrasting with the green countryside and blue sky and water. The tower of the church of Santa María de las Virtudes stands head and shoulders above the surrounding houses, while the dolmens of Alberite and El Tajaral are well worth a visit.



The western route



This route begins in Cortes de la Frontera, where a visit to the remains of the Roman town of Saepona, El Paso Tower, the Mozarabic temple, the Casita de Piedra, and the impressive La Saucedá Park are a must. After a trip through Almatocín, where the town centre still retains the atmosphere of its Moorish past, our next stop is Benadalid, whose narrow, winding streets are reminiscent of its Arabic past. A trip through Atajate, where



the landscape is marked by contrasts, will lead us to Jímera de Líbar, a peaceful village an ideal place to take a well-earned rest. In Benaoján, the undulating terrain makes the houses appear to scale the hillside, like splashes of white on a green canvas. The two main geological formations in the area are the Hundidero-Gato system with its caves and lakes and La Pileta Cave, whose paintings have earned it National Monument of Cave Art status.

Last but not least, we come to Ronda, one of the oldest towns in Spain. La Pileta cave provides one of the finest examples of Paleolithic cave art to be found anywhere in Andalusia. Its spectacular gorge, which is over 200 metres deep, divides the town into two parts that are joined by a stone bridge. The Arabic Baths, the Rey Moro Palace, the Bullring, the Ocho Caños Fountain and the Tajo vantage point are just some of the delights on offer in Ronda.



Active tourism



A wealth of activities can be enjoyed in the White Towns. Mountaineering, hiking, rock climbing and potholing are all catered for, and there are a number of paths which can be negotiated on foot, on horseback or by bicycle. Thanks to its synergetic riches, the area is ideal for hunting big and small game alike. Other pursuits possible here include paragliding, hang gliding, river fishing and water sports in lakes such as Molinera.

Cuisine

Cuisine in the White Towns is characterised by both its quality and its variety, typical dishes including broths and stews such as sopa tostá and guisote, cooked meats and sausages, home-made cheeses, farmhouse soups, dishes based on the asparagus grown in Alcalá del Valle, El Bosque trout and the pastries baked in Setenil de las Bodegas.



Handicrafts

The White Towns are renowned for their handicrafts: Ubrique is famous for leather goods and complements, Grazaalema for textiles, blankets and pottery, Zahara de la Sierra for its blankets, Prado del Rey for leather complements and hand-made furniture, Algodonales for guitars and El Gastor for the bagpipe-like instrument known as the gaita gastoreña.

