Priego de Córdoba

Geography and history

Priego de Córdoba is at the heart of Andalucía, in the Subbética region. It is recognized as a Special Protected Area for birds (SPA) by Europe. It is a Natural Park and also a UNESCO Geopark.

Priego consists of the town itself. It is compact nuclear villages and 17 villages of dispersed houses, offering a range of sustainable rural tourism. This great variety of ecology and countryside provides a number of opportunities for enthusiasts of mountaineering, trekking, fishing, or ornithology (the study of birds).

Our ornithology centre, Jardín Micológico de la Trufa in the village of Zagrilla is the only one of its kind in Europe.

Priego has been inhabited since the 3rd century B.C. due to the fertile countryside, abundance of water and the natural defences of the steep cliff at the Adarve. From 5th - 3rd centuries there was an Iberian-Roman settlement, but it was the Arabs that were the real founders of the town itself. It started as a military encampment (8th - 9th century A.D.).

Later becoming the town of Madinat Baguh later becoming the town of Madinat Baguh, Priego regained its former prosperity. Best illustrated by the construction of many historically important public buildings.

After the difficulties of the 17th century, marked by several outbreaks of the plague, the financial boom provided by the silk industry enabled 18th century Priego to reach its artistic zenith expressed by the Baroque movement. In 1881, Alfonso XII confirmed the title of city to Priego de Córdoba. Nowadays, local development relies on the agricultural production of extra virgin olive oil of Protected Origin Designation, and also from the textile industry, business services and the tourist sector.

Situated between the mountains and the olive groves, in the heart of Andalucía, Priego de Córdoba owes its origins to the Muslim culture. The most powerful examples are the austere Castle (4) or the La Villa neighbourhood (1) with its narrow winding streets or even the Adarve, the natural vantage point that encircles it and formed the historical defences of the original medieval town.

Priego is the capital of Córdoban baroque and there are numerous examples of this artistic style. Most notably the sanctuary of the Church of the Assumption (3); the Iglesia de la Aurora (22); the Saint Francis Church (23); the Saint Peter’s Church (8); the Iglesia de las Arcas (10); the Church of St. John of God (9); the Iglesia del Carmen (19); the Iglesia de las Mercedes (12) and of course the Fuente del Rey (17), with a statue of Neptune encircled by 139 jets of water.

An historic destination with numerous examples of civic architecture, such as the monumental style of the Fuenàlvez house (8); the extraordinary Plaza de Toros (26), which has been dug out of the rock; or the grand private houses of Carle Río and Carmen Ávarez. In order to properly understand what makes Prieguenses (people from Priego) special, visit the towns seven museums: the Casa Natal of Adolfo Lozano Sidro (11), the great painter and illustrator; the Almond museum (24) in Zamoranos; the Jardín Micológico de la Trufa (Fungi Museum) (27) in Zagrilla; and the Museo Etnográfico (25) in Castil de Campos.

Monuments and Museums

Festivals and traditions

The most important are those for Holy Week and the Festival of los Domingos de Mayo. Both have been declared to be of special tourist interest. During Holy Week the local brotherhoods undertake processions leading up to the morning of Good Friday with the issue of Nazareth procession up to the Mount of Calvary. The religious float is borne along by a great crowd of people, each desiring to play their part. Once the current is reached, thousands of people raise the symbolic host (a small pastry in the form of a chicken containing a hard-boiled egg) above their heads to receive the blessing of the Lord, performed by the statue itself.

The Domingos de Mayo festival goes back to the 17th century and is celebrated on the weekends of the month. Its various religious celebrations involve famous singers, choirs and orchestras alongside spectacular processions and lively auctions.

On the 3rd weekend in June, the pilgrimages, Romería de la Vega de la Calavera, heads from the town to the area above the village of La Concepción; Corpus Christi is also celebrated on the Thursday and the Barrio de la Villa neighbourhood is still a place of pilgrimage, though not as famous.

The Festival of los Domingos de Mayo is one of the most important in the province and is celebrated in every town on the last Sunday of May. During the festival, the town is decorated with flowers and lights, and people dress in traditional clothes.

Priego has a rich and varied tradition of gastronomy. A style of cooking that is strengthened by the exceptional quality of one of the main ingredients, extra virgin olive oil with Priego Protected Origin Designation. It is the greatest preserving olive oil in the world. In Priego there are a great number of bars and restaurants that will prepare regional dishes for you to enjoy, all done with meticulous care: novela de colillas (scrambled eggs with the spots of the campion plant), rato de toro (ox tail stew), salmorejo (a emulsion of olive oil and tomato traditionally thickened with peeled breadcrumbs), remojón de montejaquir (mixed salad of oranges, egg, and salted cod), carmita (a pork skin). In different pathways and conlockios you will be able to taste local pasties, some available throughout the year whilst others are associated with specific festivals and religious festivals. Turntable, pollo de la cuesta, pollo de la montaña, pastelito, etc., are the most delicious range of pastries and sweets delicately sweetened with natural ingredients such as cinnamon or honey to satisfy even those with the sweetest tooth.

The most popular festival is the Feria de los Domingos de Mayo. It is held on the last Sunday of May and is characterized by its traditional clothing, music, and dance. The Feria is also known for its gastronomic offerings, particularly the local olive oil.

The festival takes place in the town square, which is decorated with flowers and lights, and people dress in traditional clothes. The main event of the festival is the procession of the statue of the Virgin of the Assumption, which is carried by the local brotherhoods. The procession is accompanied by music and singing, and the atmosphere is lively and energetic.

Gastronomy and crafts

Throughout the year there are other festivities to enjoy: carne a la llatina (suckling pig), a festival of competitive satirical music and singing, the Feria de los Domingos de Mayo, and the Festival of los Domingos de Mayo. Both have been declared to be of special tourist interest. During Holy Week, the local brotherhoods undertake processions leading up to the morning of Good Friday with the issue of Nazareth procession up to the Mount of Calvary. The religious float is borne along by a great crowd of people, each desiring to play their part. Once the current is reached, thousands of people raise the symbolic host (a small pastry in the form of a chicken containing a hard-boiled egg) above their heads to receive the blessing of the Lord, performed by the statue itself.

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