

Route of Washington Irving



This Route is one of the vital links of al-Andalus: through Málaga, Seville and Granada, it joins two outstanding cities, two essential cities in the Hispano-Muslim civilization.

This itinerary reviews the road followed in 1829 by this romantic American writer who was fascinated by the exotic and exuberant Moorish remains in Andalusia. This was a historical road that in the Middle Ages served as an important trade route between the Nasrid kingdom of Granada and Christian territory. All this area may be considered border country, covering the lowland plains of the Guadalquivir valley and the fertile plains surrounded by mountains near Granada (vega). The way includes large towns and villages perched on hills, below *alcazabas* and castles, places with an extraordinary heritage in the midst of widely differing attractive landscapes through the province of Seville, the north of the province of Málaga through Antequera and Granada. The customs and traditions still existing in these villages, where agriculture is the principal occupation, provides an extra inducement for a fascinating journey. The legendary feature of this route is further emphasized in this area by the fact that in the 19th c. it was famous for contraband and highwaymen, such as the well-known *Siete Niños de Écija* (seven children from Écija) and José María *El Tempranillo*.



The Route of Washington Irving follows the historical road between Seville and Granada, from the fertile plains of the Guadalquivir valley, to the sierras and rich valleys north of Málaga and west of the province of Granada. Nowadays, this is covered in the main by the A-92 dual-carriageway, branching off at times on the N-IV and other local roads, such as the 339 and 335. An alternative means of transportation is the railway, very nearly parallel with the highway.



Altitudes vary between Seville at only 15 m. asl. to plains between 200 and 400 m. asl. Estepa, around 700 m. asl. lies at the beginning of higher land; Antequera at 577 m. marks the average altitude of the road to Granada. On either side, however, there are places at a higher mark. Archidona for example, at about 1,000 m., Montefrío with 833 m., and Alhama de Granada with 888 m. asl.

WASHINGTON IRVING



The leading player in this route was an American diplomatist and writer (1783-1859) who is the prototype of the romantic traveller. Charmed by Europe, he was totally bewitched by «exotic» Andalusia. In 1829 he travelled from Seville to Granada where he stayed for a time. His writing at this period was full of Hispano-Moorish references, such as his *The Alhambra tales* that contributed so much to the romantic image of Andalusia.

TRADITIONS



FOOD

The food in this part of Andalusia is made from local produce and the results are very appetizing. Alcalá de Guadaíra is famed for the simplest form of food

–bread–, and so is Antequera and many other places near Granada. Olive oil is widely produced in the countryside of Seville, Carmona, Estepa and La Roda. Then from Antequera, center of production with the *bojiblanca* variety of olive, extending as far as Loja and the valley. Huétor-Tájar is known for the excellence of the asparagus produced there and on the whole, the vegetables of this region are very good and widely used in dishes, such as *porra*, *gazpacho*, salads, etc. All the different types of sausage products made in the different places along the way are also very tasty, as it is meat, game and fish. Mention must be made of the sweets, from those made by cloistered nuns in many of the villages, to the widely known *mantecados*, *polvorones* (mostly eaten at Christmas time) and *roscos*, *alfajores* and many other delightful confections.



HANDICRAFTS

There are countless workshops between Seville and Granada where some of the most representative Andalusian handicrafts are made. For example, there is a wide range in the pottery line in both provincial capitals, as well as in other towns and villages on the way. Wrought iron is also a significant chapter under this heading and so are carpentry and leatherwork, as applied to harness makers and saddlers, and bookbinders. Work with vegetable fibers and other specialities, such as jewellery and the making of guitars complete this view of artisan crafts in the area.



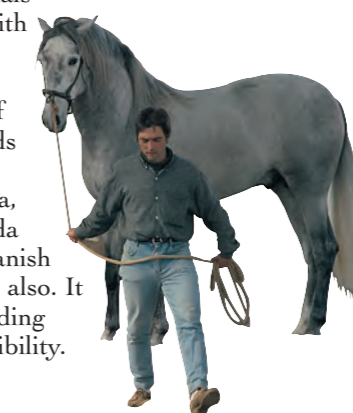
FEASTS

The cycle of festivities in places along the route of Washington Irving follows the usual pattern in Andalusia. It includes Easter, fairs and celebrations in honour of patron saints. The season begins in spring, followed by a very full agenda in summer; Corpus Christi is very popular and so are the different pilgrimages. Flamenco is an unmistakable feature of popular culture throughout this area, to which many festivals and fairs stand witness.



HORSEMANSHIP

An old saying maintains that the reason why horses in the countryside of Seville are so fleet of foot is because the mares are made pregnant by the wind; this is an example of equine lore surrounding the tremendous popularity of the local breed along the route. An image of these swift animals is associated, furthermore, with travellers and with the legendary bandits that frequently featured as part of the landscape. There are studs along the way in Écija, Marchena, Osuna, Antequera, Loja and even nearer Granada devoted to thoroughbred Spanish horses and sometimes, Arabs also. It is therefore, a route where riding part of the way is a real possibility.



ITINERARY AND DISTANCES

The route proceeds between Seville and Granada, separated by about 250 km. (155 miles), largely on the A-92 dual-carriageway. From Seville it reaches first of all Alcalá de Guadaíra, then Carmona, Marchena, Écija and returns to the A-92 once again. After passing Osuna, Estepa, La Roda de Andalucía, Fuente de Piedra, Humilladero and Molina, the road gets to the plains of Antequera. Then the way crosses Archidona, Loja and Huétor-Tájar. From Moraleda de Zafayona, it leaves the main road in order to visit Alhama de Granada to the south. North of the A-92, the road takes us to Montefrío and Íllora, returning by Fuente Vaqueros and Chauchina to the main route, ending in Santa Fe and Granada.

LANDSCAPE

The road travels along gently rolling plains of the province of Seville until Estepa is reached and we come to rougher outlines. On the way every now and then we come upon lagoons, among which, that of Fuente de Piedra is particularly interesting. Around Antequera there are some extraordinary limestone formations known as *El Torcal de Antequera*. The hills of the *sierra* become higher and wilder at the side of the cultivated valley leading to Granada.



ARCHITECTURE

MUSLIM, BAROQUE, POPULAR

The considerable architectural heritage in towns and villages along the route provides, in the first place, an extraordinary selection of Hispano-Muslim buildings. This later becomes Mudéjar, Baroque and popular, forming the basis for the large number of Historical-Artistic monuments in the area. Together with the outstanding examples of Muslim art in Seville –Giralda and Alcázar– and in Granada –city of the Alhambra–, towns and villages along the way also provide equally notable buildings –castles and fortresses such as those of



Left, a romantic view of Carmona. In the background, the tower of San Pedro inspired by the Giralda tower, looking like a minaret, and the thick walls of the Alcázar of the Seville Gateway, originally Roman, reformed by the Almohads.

Below, typical Moorish baths, *al-hammam* in Arabic, origin of the name Alhama. They consist of a courtyard, hall, cold room, warm room with pool and the hot room, where the steam and hot water is produced by a boiler.



The sober elegance of popular architecture to be found between Seville and Granada is sometimes expressed in a surprising ability to compose a harmonious mixture of textures and colours.



Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science

The Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science in the Macroscopic building of the Science Park of Granada offers the visitor a view of the Arabic scientific legacy and the different contributions made by Andalusian civilization. Its exhibits offer an insight into the period of al-Andalus, the Arabic-Muslim scientific legacy and its contributions to the world of science, and its subsequent development. The museum resources used in the different permanent and temporary exhibition spaces are spread over two floors that house the different subject areas, lecture rooms, a bookshop and a multi-purpose hall. It covers almost 4,500 square metres and aims to promote cultural exchanges between Spain and the Arab World by implementing the latest trends in museology and an up-to-date, diverse methodology.



View of the Macroscopic. The Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science is inside. Science Park. Granada.



Route of Washington Irving

From Seville to Granada
The Routes of El legado andalusí

Information Points

- SEVILLA**
Oficina de Turismo de la Junta de Andalucía
Carrera, 82. Antiguo Hospital
Tel. 954 787 878
- OSUNA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Carrera, 82. Antiguo Hospital
Tel. 954 815 732
- MORALEDA DE ZAFAYONA**
Ayuntamiento
Ctra. del Canal, 6
Tel. 958 443 002
- ESTEPA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Ayuntamiento
Plaza del Carmen, 1 y 2
Tel. 955 914 704
Tel. 955 912 717 (Ayto.)
- ALHAMA DE GRANADA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Paseo Montes Jeweller s/n
Tel. 958 360 686
- LA RODA DE ANDALUCÍA**
Ayuntamiento
Real, 35
Tel. 954 016 002
- ALCÁZAR DE GUADAÍRA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Juez Pérez Díaz s/n
Tel. 955 621 924/964 (Museo)
- ARAHAL**
Oficina de Turismo
Veracruz, 2. Casa del Aire
Tel. 955 841 417
- CARMONA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Alcázar de la Puerta de Sevilla s/n
Tel. 954 190 955
- MARCHENA**
Oficina de Turismo
Puerta de Morón
Calle San Francisco nº 43
Museo Lorenzo Colliant Valera
Tel. 955 321 010 Ext. 175
- ÉCIJA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Elvira nº 1
Edificio Palacio de Benamejí
Tel. 955 902 933
- ÍLLORA**
Museo Municipal
Plaza de San Rogelio s/n
Tel. 958 433 162
- FUENTE VAQUEROS**
Ayuntamiento
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- CHAUCHINA**
CIE. Centro de Iniciativas Empresariales
Ronda Exterior 3º, 1ª
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- SANTA FE**
Oficina Comarcal de Turismo
Isabel la Católica, 7
Arco de Sevilla
Tel. 958 531 110
- GRANADA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Plaza Nueva, Santa Ana, 4
Tel. 958 575 202
- ALHAMBRA Y GENERALIFE**
Anda del Generalife s/n
Tel. 958 544 002/003
- LOJA**
Oficina Municipal de Turismo
Comedias s/n
Tel. 952 323 949
- HUÉTOR-TÁJAR**
Centro de Información Juvenil
Plaza Gregorio Paláez s/n
Tel. 958 334 261
- Oficina de Información Turística**
Plaza del Carmen s/n
Tel. 902 405 045

SEVILLA

History, scenery, art and atmosphere come together in one of the most captivating cities, where light, air and colour create a gamut of sensations on the banks of the Guadalquivir, 'big river' in Arabic. The legend says that Seville was founded by Hercules over 2,500 years ago; it flourished in the times of Tartessos and Rome and achieved the rank of what might be termed metropolis in the course of the nearly 550 years of Muslim history. The extensive old town centre –surrounded by walls of which there are still extant sections, such as that of La Macarena– was formed in the 12th and 13th centuries, when *Tibbītiya* became the peninsular capital of the Almoahd caliphs, vying with Marrakech in grand buildings. Signs of that past are visible in countless corners and buildings: the Santa Cruz district, the Jewry, centre, Triana and the Alameda quarter, as well as the neighbourhood of the Cathedral –where the mosque's courtyard is now the Cathedral's courtyard and the Giralda tower, the Alcázar, a set of palaces and gardens built between the 10th to 15th centuries; the Atarazanas –the old shipyards–, the towers of Silver and of Gold by the river and the old mosque where El Salvador church now stands are all outstanding among the places in Seville that are worthy of note.



ALCALÁ DE GUADAÍRA

This is the first stage on the journey. Here Irving noticed *packs of mules and donkeys loaded with large baskets of loaves and rolls* referring to the well-known baking tradition in Alcalá, still applicable nowadays. The Arabic name *al-Qalat*, the fortress, reveals its importance at the time. The Almohads built a gigantic fortification on a hill overlooking the village with some splendid buildings, as well as a pretty Mudejar church. Below, the Guadaira river, *Wād-Shīra* –river of abundance–flows, whose current moved the old flour mills that can still be seen. From Alcalá to Carmona, the village passes Gandul, an enchanting village with an Almohad tower beside a Baroque palace, among Roman ruins and medieval remains.

ARAHAL

We drive ahead on A-92 dual carriageway, going across the core of the Sevillian fertile countryside until we reach Arahal, a land of uncertain origin that seems to deepen its roots in Arab times. A great variety of tourist attractions can be enjoyed in the town, from its assorted range of cooking specialities to the deepest traditions. Arahal displays a rich architectural heritage, with many monuments worth visiting, among them the Church-Hospital of Santo Cristo de la Misericordia and the Church of Santa María Magdalena.



CARMONA

Perched on the highest point of Los Alcores, an area of hills extending eastwards from Seville, we come upon Carmona, whose name apparently has Punic origins –*Kar-Hammon*, city of the god Hammon. In Roman times it became one of the leading towns in this part of the countryside, deduced from the monumental size of the Gateways of Córdoba and of Seville, as well as from the remarkable Necropolis in what used to be the outskirts, but is now in the town, which also shows that it must have been quite important. In times of

al-Andalus, *Qarmana* even turned into the main town of an independent principality and provided itself with staunch walls. The Alcázar de Arriba belongs to this period and so do the reinforcements to the Gateway of Seville and layout of the old centre of town. In the neighbourhood of San Fernando square, the church of Santa María is worth pointing out, built over the main mosque, it still has the courtyard of ablutions and minaret. Also in this area are the town's museum in a lovely Baroque palace beside the church, and other handsome mansions, churches and convents. The church of Santiago is interesting and there are several Mudéjar churches such as that of San Felipe and the convent of Santa Clara, that has a revolving 'dumb waiter' that mysteriously dispatches delicious sweetmeats.

MARCHENA

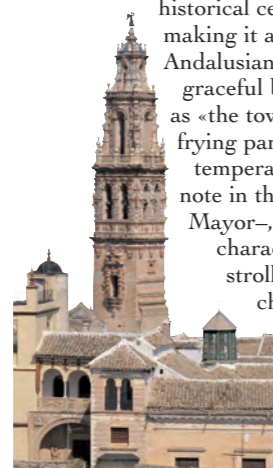


Lying to the south west of Carmona, Marchena is an essentially farming community with a most remarkable artistic heritage. It was known as *Colonia Martia* by the Romans and *Marsona l'amb* in Arabic. After the reconquest by the Christians, it was awarded to the Duke of Arcos who provided it with many imposing buildings. La Mota castle is in the higher part of

the town, it was the bastion of the Almohad precincts of the 12th and 13th centuries with the Gates of Seville and of Morón. Santa María, Plaza Ducal, the church of San Juan Bautista, that houses nine paintings by Zurbarán, the municipal archaeological collection and a permanent exhibition of the sculptures of Coullaut-Valera are some of the things that can be seen on a visit.

ÉCIJA

The route continues over rolling cultivated fields, only some patches of scrub and olive groves, till we get to Écija in a dip in the landscape, bathed by the Genil river, with cool waters from Sierra Nevada. This town has remote origins and it was one of the three main towns of Roman Baetica. It was *Atigi* to the Romans and there are a few remains from those times, on view in the church of Santa María and of El Cabildo, together with vestiges of medieval art and other later ones. At the time of al-Andalus, Écija flourished and it even became the centre of one of the countless Taifa principalities for a very brief moment. The Almohads built walls and towers in the 12th c. and it achieved its present general outlines at that time. There is a compact



historical centre and numerous 18th c. buildings, making it an outstanding representative of Andalusian Baroque, with a skyline of many graceful bell towers. Apart from being known as 'the town of towers', it is also called 'the frying pan of Andalusia' for the very high temperature that is reached in summer. Of note in this town is the main square –Plaza Mayor–, called El Salón, showing characteristic houses with galleries. While strolling about the town, we can see the churches of Santa María, Santa Cruz, Santiago and San Gil, the palaces of Peñalfor and Benamejil and other delightful buildings, among which we can get glimpses of artisans' workshops.

OSUNA

Standing on the slope of a low rise, this town has one of the most remarkable architectural and artistic heritages in the country. It was known as *Uruo* to the Iberians and Romans and it was *Ovuna* in Arabic until it became Osuna when it was reconquered by the Castilians. It became the main town of a powerful dukedom. There are examples of its past in the higher part of town: the quarries and the Roman necropolis, the University building in front of another outstanding Renaissance building, the Collegiate church –a really imposing creation overlooking the town. Inside, there is a collection of jewels, the Ducal Pantheon and a museum with splendid oil paintings by José de Ribera. Below stands the Baroque convent of La Encarnación, containing an assortment of religious art and tiles. There is also the Archaeological Museum housed in Torre del Agua. Continuing downwards, the Plaza Mayor opens out and long streets lead out, such as Sevilla and San Pedro, full of churches, convents and mansions.



ESTEPA



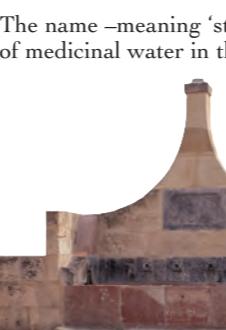
Approaching the eastern border of the province of Seville, the route of Washington Irving arrives in Estepa, perched on the slopes of a hill that foreshadows the sierras to come. It was *Atapa* to the Iberians who bravely resisted the Romans. In Arabic it was called *Istabba*, acquiring some relevance owing to its strategic location on a crossroads. It was reconquered by the Castilians in 1249 and played an important part in the war of Granada. There is a splendid view of the countryside from the convent of Santa Clara are worth mentioning. Further down, there are the Museum, the Baroque tower of La Victoria and some Baroque churches, such as El Carmen and Los Remedios. The aroma of spices used for making *polvorones* and *mantecado* (eaten nearly exclusively at Christmas) pervades the atmosphere; there is a small monographic museum on these sweetmeats.

LA RODA DE ANDALUCÍA



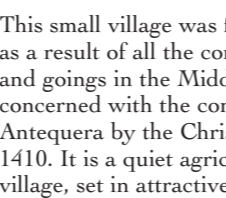
Found in the midst of an ocean of olive trees on the road from Seville to the province of Málaga. It was founded in 1546 in an area that had not been inhabited for centuries owing to its location in no-man's land on the Moorish-Castilian border. The church of Nuestra Señora de los Llanos is worth noting and so are the hermitages. It is best known for the delicious virgin olive oil it produces.

FUENTE DE PIEDRA



The name –meaning 'stone fountain'– comes from the fountain of medicinal water in the middle of the village. It was already known and appreciated in ancient times. This is a quiet small village near Laguna Salada, the largest lagoon in Andalusia, with nearly 1,400 hectares. Migrating birds congregate here, particularly flamingoes in large numbers, this being one of the few places where they nest.

HUMILLADERO



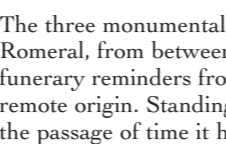
This small village was founded as a result of all the comings and goings in the Middle Ages concerned with the conquest of Antequera by the Christians in 1410. It is a quiet agricultural village, set in attractive countryside, mostly among olive trees, some pine woods, Sierra de Humilladero and La Ratosal lagoon to the north, also a refuge for migrating birds, it has been declared a natural reserve.

MOLLINA



We come to the municipal district of Mollina, where there are various archaeological sites dating from Neolithic times up to the end of the Middle Ages. However, Mollina did not really mature into a grown-up town until the 16th c. when it became well-known for its wine and olive oil. Nearby in Sierra de La Camorra, there are several caves with prehistoric paintings, such as that of Los Porqueros. Not far, in Santillán park there are remains of a Roman fort and temple.

ANTEQUERA



The three monumental dolmens of Menga, Viera and El Romeral, from between 2,000 and 2,500 BC, are colossal funerary reminders from Neolithic times, indicating this town's remote origin. Standing at the confluence of several roads, with the passage of time it has become one of the greater Andalusian

historical sites. There is a view of the cultivated plains from the walls. During Muslim times, it belonged to the *cora* (district) of Rayya and then in 1314 it passed on to the *cora* of Ilbira under the Nasrid kingdom of Granada. It was a permanent temptation for the kings of Castile and at last surrendered during the siege by Prince Ferdinand's forces in 1410. The inhabitants retreated to Archidona nearby, or to Granada, where they formed the district of La Antequeruela. The walls at one time appeared sturdy and strong; among the numerous churches, the ones that stand out are the Royal Collegiate church of Santa María la Mayor that has a magnificent Renaissance façade and the church of San Sebastián standing in a large square alongside the 18th c. Arch of El Nazareno and a 1545 fountain. The Municipal Museum, housed in the 18th c. palace of Nájera, contains a splendid collection of Baroque painting and pieces such as the Éphebe, a Roman bronze from the 1st c. A strange place called El Torcal stands in the hills 13 km (8 miles) from Antequera; it consists of a lunatic landscape of bizarre geological formations shaped by water and wind.

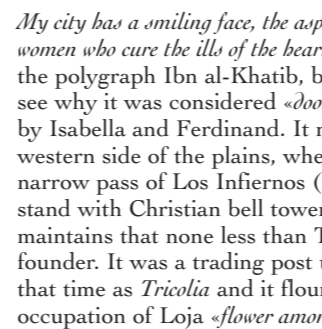


ARCHIDONA

Our route went around El Peñón de los Enamorados (lovers' rock) with a precipice on one side over our heads. That morning we went through Archidona, standing on the side of a hill where the ruins of a Moorish fortress are visible by a bill with three peaks.

This is Washington Irving's description of the town founded by the Turdetani. The Roman name was *Arca Domina* meaning Lady of the Heights, Arabized as *Arwadna*. Abd ar-Rahman I arrived here before proclaiming the independent Emirate of al-Andalus in Cordova and under the Caliphate, it became the capital town of the *cora* of Rayya, a name that still exists in a farming property nearby. The defences started being erected in the 9thc. and were rebuilt in the 15th c. on the side of Sierra de Gracia, from where beautiful sunsets may be seen. The hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe stands over the only extant mosque in the province of Málaga. The town extends from the medieval town –Villa Alta– on streets that run from the hills to the plains, with countless squares, such as Plaza Ochavada (eight-sided) with arcades, dating from the 18th c. Excursions are organized from here to surrounding countryside at La Hoz de Marín and to the Lagoons of Archidona, wetlands declared a natural reserve.

LOJA



My city has a smiling face, the aspect of a charmer and of beautiful women who cure the ills of the heart. These are the words written by the polygraph Ibn al-Khatib, born in Loja in 1313. It is easy to see why it was considered 'door and key to the kingdom of Granada' by Isabella and Ferdinand. It nestles between two sierras on the western side of the plains, where the Genil river forms the narrow pass of Los Infiernos (hell). Remains of the *alcázar* stand with Christian bell towers on both sides. Legend maintains that none less than Tubal, grandson of Noah, was the founder. It was a trading post under the Phoenicians, known at that time as *Tricolia* and it flourished under the Muslims. The occupation of Loja 'flower among thorns' by Ferdinand of Aragon presaged the end of the Nasrid kingdom. Most of its outstanding architecture was put up between the 16th and 18th centuries, including the churches of La Encarnación, San Gabriel and Santa Catalina. It is a pleasure to stroll through this town of many fountains.

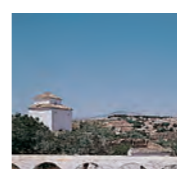


HUÉTOR-TÁJAR



This was an old farming property called *Quarriyat Tayara*, under a tall handsome tower that still stands. It was formed by the joining of two settlements at the end of the 15th c., the *morisco* population having stayed behind after the reconquest. The irrigation system put down by the Moors are in many ways intact, however, now the white mulberries and the silk of those times have given way to asparagus that can be eaten locally in an omelette, soup or sauce, after a look at the plantations by the Genil river.

MORALEDA DE ZAFAYONA



After about 8 km (5 miles) on the A-92 dual-carriageway, we reach this tiny village to have a short rest and to visit Cerro de la Mora, an old Ibero-Roman settlement, with a most interesting Visigoth necropolis nearby. The road is good, with the river Genil in sight, as well as Cerro del Pino with the Agicampe watchtower on top.

ALHAMA DE GRANADA



Hanging from an enormous rock or peak like an eagle's nest, wrote Théophile Gautier of Alhama, with houses perched over a very impressive ravine. It is famous for the spa, *al-bammán*, whence the name, but its origins are lost in time. From the Muslim period, there is the Torresolana watchtower and the Pósito, an old 15th c. synagogue. The features of al-Andalus are noticeable particularly in what is called the Moorish district. The fall of Alhama to the Castilians had enormous psychological effects in Granada. Queen Isabella ordered three churches built over as many mosques; one of them is the church of La Encarnación, a gothic building from the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries. Alhama's famous baths with medicinal waters, known in Roman times, are entered through a picturesque gorge made by the river. The arcade over the pool was built around the year 1100 with caliph arches and vaults with star-shaped openings for lighting. There are lovely gardens on both sides of the river, making the whole scene very attractive. The spa stands at about 850 m. asl.

MONTEFRÍO



The road turns to the north and starts climbing. We suddenly come upon the place chosen to set up his court by the Nasrid king Ismail III, crowned by the Albcerrajes. The village stands under a large rock that seems to be on the point of flattening the place to oblivion. It was reconquered by the Christian Monarchs in 1486 and they ordered the original church built over a mosque, between the walls of the fortress of al-Andalus, a good example of Gothic-Renaissance architecture and a National Monument where Diego de Siloé was later to build the town's church. Proof of habitation throughout the ages is Peña de los Gitanos, one of the largest archaeological sites in the province. On a series of terraces created in cultivated fields, there is the outline of a settlement lived in from Paleolithic times up to the Middle Ages. There are Argaric remains, dolmens, Roman, Visigoth and Muslim sepulchres and a historical treasure that has been sacked repeatedly. While here, if you have the chance, taste the game, anything with partridge or rabbit, as well as *ceceo* al mojeteo.

ÍLLORA



After crossing fields that, according to Ibn al-Khatib, were a mine of excellent wheat, *bouse* and *place of cattle*, the traveller goes upon the so-called *ojo derecho de Granada* (Granada's darling), on the slopes of Sierra de Parapanda. It was mentioned by Pliny and it was the Suebi, Visigoths and Muslims –particularly the Nasrids– who were responsible for the great fortress around which the village grew. The Christian addition is another elegant church by Diego de Siloé, La Encarnación –built between 1542 and 1573. The first governor was Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the Gran Capitán, the ruins of his mansion are visible, with the coat of arms on the façade.

FUENTE VAQUEROS



I had my first dream of remoteness in this village, wrote Federico García Lorca of the place where he was born in 1898. His family home is one of the most visited spots in the world. The village, that grew up around a fountain, used to be part of Soto de Roma, a royal game preserve that the Cortes of Cádiz presented to the first Duke of Wellington in perpetuity in recognition of his service during the War of Independence.

CHAUCHINA



The origin of this name is unknown. It might come from the Roman Sancius, from willow. It was probably one of the many farmsteads that were dotted about Baetica, with excellent wheat, olive oil and wine. In the kingdom of Granada, it became one of the many fortresses. The atmosphere is traditional, with avenues along the side of the river. Two of the typical dishes here are frogs' legs and fried cod.

SANTA FE



This is the last town on the A-92 dual carriageway before reaching Granada. Founded by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1491 as the barracks during the siege of the Nasrid capital, it has a moat, walls and parade-ground, all on a grid-like layout. The walls have disappeared, but the four doors are still standing –Granada, Loja, Seville and Jaén. The old centre of town is considered a Historical-Artistic Site, where we can see the Antigua Casa Real (old royal house), the parish church, Town Hall and granary. This can be the base for organizing excursions around the plains in this lovely countryside of the depression of Granada. The most popular feasts are on 12th October –La Hispanidad– and Merendica on 25th November. A famous sweet is made here, it is the *pijonero*, of *morisco* origin.

GRANADA

Granada is the Damascus of al-Andalus, pasture of the eyes, uplift for our souls. It has an impregnable alcazaba with high walls and splendid buildings. It is notable for the peculiarity of its river that flows through the houses, baths, market places, outside and inside mills and gardens, said al-Sa'undi in the 15th c. When al-Andalus was wounded to death after the Almohad's defeat at Navas de Tolosa, the Nasrid dynasty, founded by Ibn al-Ahmar, upheld the kingdom of Granada until the final downfall. This is the period of which there is more evidence than of any other in this magnificent city, which was to become the inspiration of romantic writers. It is the final stage of the Route of Washington Irving, the destination of all the Routes of al-Andalus, capital of the last Muslim kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula. In the palaces of the Alhambra, the heritage of Granada has the recollection of a unique civilization which is one of humanity's treasures.

