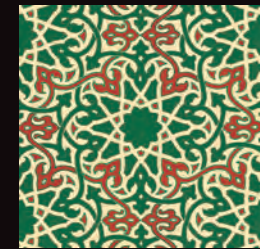
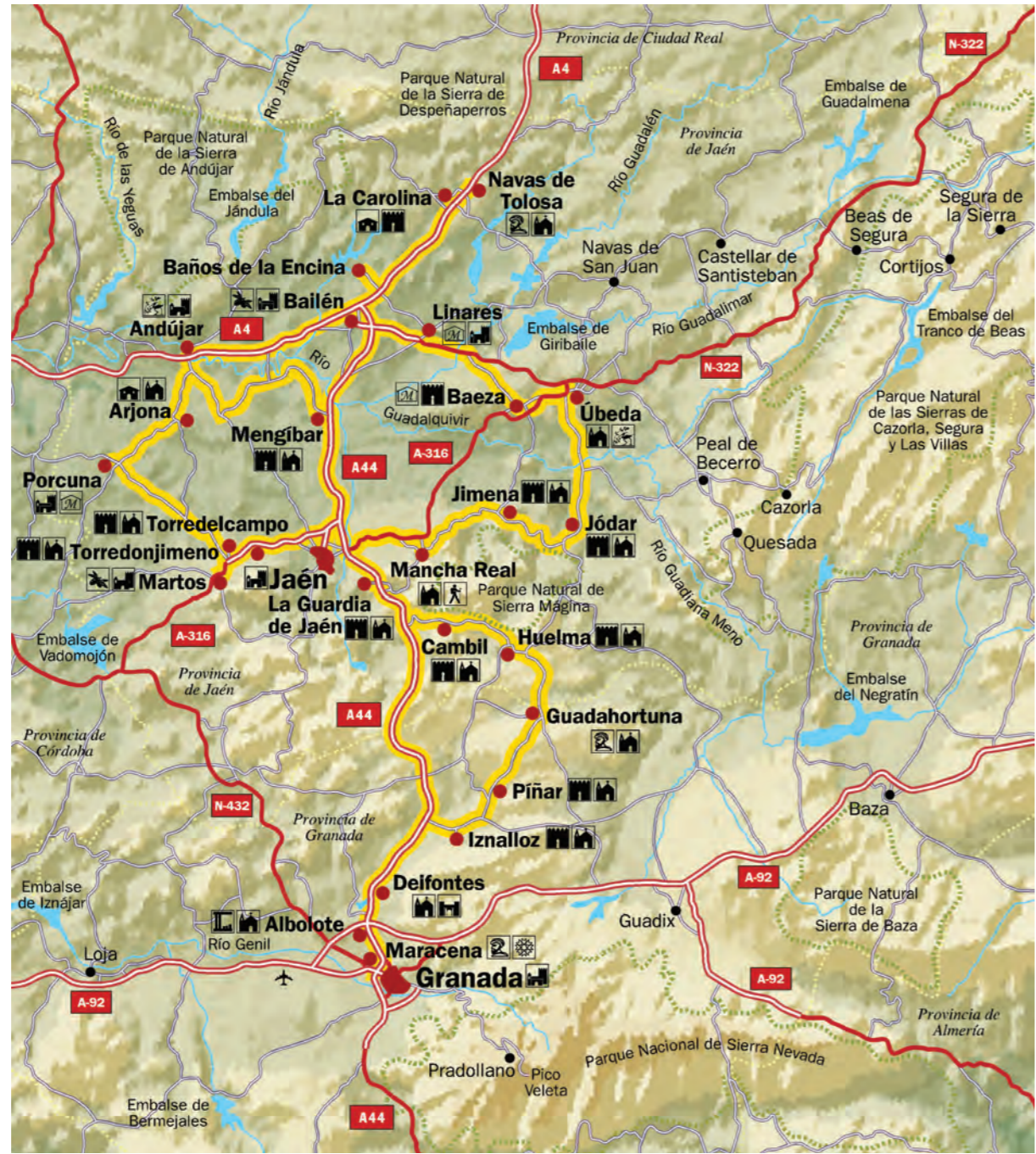


### Route of the Nasrids



This Route is dedicated to the Nasrids, the protagonists of the important final chapter in the Reconquest of Spain, a splendid epilogue on the rich history of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula.

The Route begins in the mountain passes of Sierra Morena, through which the Christians forced their way into al-Andalus, an event which was to be a determining factor in the birth of the Nasrid Kingdom. The first stage commences at the site of the decisive battle at Las Navas de Tolosa, near the pass of Despeñaperros, the crossroads between the flat meseta of La Mancha and the valley of the River Guadalquivir. The difficult situation created by this defeat led to the rise of a strong local leader, Alhamar, from the town of Arjona, who would later become the founder of the Nasrid dynasty. After a series of long, skilful manoeuvres he managed to set up his own state with the capital in Granada. These events left a permanent mark on the landscape and the villages of the Holy Kingdom of Jaén and all the area bordering the province of Granada. Visit first the fortified towns and villas on the slopes of Sierra Morena. Then enjoy the peace of the villages in the depths of the countryside of western Jaén. Later follow the trail along the eastern ridges of the High Guadalquivir, through Baeza and Úbeda, before doubling back around the contours of Sierra Mágina to enter the city of Jaén. From here, the last stage of our trip connects the head of the Guadalquivir Valley with the fertile Vega of Granada, journey's end.



- Nature
- Hiking
- Palace
- Archaeological site
- Andalusí castle
- Monuments
- Civilian building
- Legendary
- Church
- Olive Oil
- Museum
- Historical



### THE LEGACY OF ANCIENT TIMES

There have been human settlements in this area right from the remotest times of man's history, as is shown by the human remains found in the caves of La Carigüela and Las Ventanas in Piñar, and the cave paintings in the cave of La Graja in Jimena. The Iberian clans established settlements along almost all the route, and an interesting selection of remains of this culture can be seen at the Jaén Provincial Museum. The most important artefacts include the funeral chamber from La Guardia de Jaén, the sculptures of Porcuna and the archaeological site at Cerro Miguelico, in Torredelcampo. Attracted by the wealth of minerals and the fertile soils, the Carthaginians, and later the Romans also came to settle here, at the confluence of the Roman roads that joined the provinces of *Betica* and *Tarraconense*. The firm tread of the Roman legions can still be felt in many towns along the way, such as Baeza, Martos or Mengíbar.

### EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

The olive groves, "a shirt of a thousand stripes" clothing the Route of the Nasrids are a great source of wealth for rural Andalusia. The harvesting season in autumn and winter fills the fields with labourers, the "haughty olive-pickers" described in the verses of the poet, Miguel Hernández. Olives dressed with oregano and other herbs, crushed or filled with peppers or anchovies, were a delicacy available to even the poorest peasant, and today make a splendid aperitif that adorns every table in Jaén. This province however is internationally renowned for its exquisite extra virgin olive oil, the jewel in the crown of the Mediterranean diet. In the kitchen, in the best preserves or simply as a dressing, its fine flavour is highly prized in all the world's best restaurants.



### TRADITIONS

#### FOLKLORE

Flamenco appears to be the product of a melting-pot of Arabic, Jewish, Christian and Gypsy culture, and it is therefore hardly surprising that it should have set down such deep roots in this part of Andalusia. *Fandangos*, *coplas* and *jaetas* fill the air in such legendary places as Sacromonte in Granada, where flamenco guitar, singing and dance shows can be enjoyed in the magical atmosphere of the gypsy caves and taverns. Folk culture also retains vestiges of the two sides of the Reconquest. In Jaén, for example, *boleros* and *fandangos* are just as popular as the *jota*, a musical form more typically associated with Castille and Christian Spain. Local folklore combines both religion and paganism with pilgrimages (*romerías*) and spring festivals in which the streets are decked with floral crosses, both good examples of the way different cultures and periods of history have been blended together.

#### HANDICRAFTS

The great diversity of handicrafts and other traditional products manufactured in these towns and villages is a product of both their local environment and their medieval past. Hunting for example is very popular in the sierras of Jaén and Granada, and this means that saddlery, leather-making and taxidermy are typical crafts in this area. In Deifontes, Huelma or Cambil the plants that grow along the banks of the rivers are made into wicker chairs and other goods, and esparto grass has been used since the Middle Ages to make baskets for olive-picking, and the mats on which the olives were pressed. The textile industry in general has a long tradition, and home crafts such as crochet and lace, which in other places have almost died out, are still very important in certain towns such as Baeza. There are a host of ceramic and pottery workshops of which those in Andújar are particularly well-known, with attractive, unusual pieces decorated in blue on a white background. Metalwork is another ancient craft, with important centres in Úbeda, Baeza and Torredonjimeno, one of the few places in Spain where bronze bells are still made in a foundry that is now over two hundred years old.

#### FIESTAS

The lively, cheerful nature of most Andalusians combined with the particular course of their history has produced countless fiestas in which pagan and religious traditions have become inextricably entwined. Livestock fairs and festive pilgrimages (*romerías*) are very popular in the spring, when the countryside is full of colour and the sun is an almost constant companion. Of course if the odd shower should happen to fall, the pilgrims are quite happy to shelter beneath the trees until the rain stops and the fiesta begins again. On the feast days of San Antón and San Isidro many towns up stick to spend the day in the country. One of the most popular of these *romerías* is held every year in Andujar in honour of the Virgen de la Cabeza. In other the streets and squares of this town and of many others such as Mengíbar, Porcuna or even Granada are adorned with crosses and flowers. To commemorate the times of the Reconquest, some towns in Granada bring out their flags, banners and pennants in their Moors and Christians festivals. A good example is Iznalloz where at the end of August or the beginning of September, during the town's fiesta, a mock battle is played out in which the Christians try to recapture an image of the Virgin seized by the Moors. Other historic events such as the foundation of La Carolina or the victory at the Battle of Bailén, are also commemorated with fiestas, bull-fights and parades. Cultural events include the «Ciudad de Úbeda» music and dance festival, the «Pipirrana Flamenca» in Porcuna, and in a different sense, Holy Week, which combines tradition, art and religious expression and fills the streets of the towns and villages along the route with processions and other celebrations.



On the left, the castle of Baños de la Encina, declared a National Artistic Historical Monument in 1931, which has the form of a ship rising over the crest of the hill, its wall faces are interspersed with 14 mortar towers with restored battlements and a grand keep with a double horseshoe arch entrance.

On the right, a painting of the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, by Francisco de Paula van Halen, c.19.

### Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science

The Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science in the Macroscopio 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.



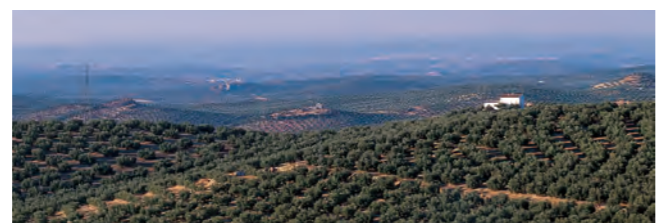
View of the Macroscopio. The Pavilion of al-Andalus and Science is inside. Science Park, Granada.

### ROUTE AND DISTANCES

The Route of the Nasrids snakes its way through the provinces of Jaén and Granada along 240 km (150 miles). Our journey begins in Las Navas de Tolosa and continues alongside N-IV until we reach Bailén. Here the route divides into two branches which later meet up in Jaén, and enable the visitor to discover Mengíbar, the area around Andújar and finally, to explore countless rural back roads in search of towns of greater renown: Linares, Baeza and Úbeda. For centuries this path was one of the main routes between the River Guadalquivir and Granada. From here four regional roads gradually descend over almost 100 km (62 miles) until they reach Granada, the Nasrid capital.

### LANDSCAPE

The landscape is one of great diversity. From Sierra Morena to Sierra Nevada, which boasts the highest peaks in the Iberian Peninsula and forms part of the Penibetic Cordillera, to the Vega farmland along the River Guadalquivir and its innumerable offshoots. Rocky landscapes rich in minerals (such as the lead deposits in Linares and La Carolina, the most important in Spain) alternate with fertile valleys, grasslands, olive groves and fields of cereals. There are also important natural areas such as the Sierra de Andújar, Despeñaperros or Sierra Mágina, habitat of a variety of species of flora and fauna typical of the Mediterranean forest. Wild boar, lynxes and deer are just a few of the creatures that dwell amidst the holm-oaks, Gall oaks and thickets of rosemary, lavender and cistus. Higher up in the mountaintops are Spanish ibex and birds of prey, such as golden eagles or vultures that nest in the crags. As we get closer to Granada there are beautiful caves with spectacular limestone formations that produce amazing shapes and figures that are even more impressive when the sunlight plays upon them.



### ARCHITECTURE

The culmination of Spanish Muslim art under the Nasrids was characterized by an exquisite Baroque-like style. Columns, ogival and lobed arches, inscriptions in elegant calligraphy, *mocarabe* stalactite ceilings, wood-carved ceilings, lattice-work and tiles are all typical features of its elaborate ornamentation. The most emblematic examples are to be found at the Alhambra in Granada. Built on a hill made of reddish earth, it was originally called al-Hamra, «the red castle». Its origins date back to the fortress or *alcázar* built by Alhamar, also known as Muhammad I, the founder of the Nasrid dynasty.

### CASTLES

The hostilities between Christians and Muslims in the kingdom of al-Andalus had a direct impact on the organization of the towns and cities sheltered by walled fortresses built next to rivers or on hill-tops. They normally had one or more walled enclosures some distance away from the castle, with various towers or watch-towers. The thick stone walls were topped with battlements from which all kinds of projectiles could be hurled or fired and from which boiling oil or fish were poured on the unfortunate enemies below. The keep (*torre del bomeneaje*), a tower placed on one



### Information Points

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<b>LA CAROLINA</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 1 Tel. 953 660 034	<b>BAEZA</b> Oficina de Turismo Junta de Andalucía Plaza del Pópulo s/n Tel. 953 779 992	<b>PIÑAR</b> Centro de Recepción de la Cueva de las Ventanas Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 7 Tel. 958 394 725
<b>BAÑOS DE LA ENCINA</b> Oficina Municipal de Turismo Callejón del Castillo, 1 Tel. 953 613 229	<b>ÚBEDA</b> Oficina de Turismo Junta de Andalucía Palacio Marqués de Contadero Baja del Marqués, 4 Tel. 953 779 204	<b>IZNALLOZ</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza de la Constitución, 7 Tel. 958 364 051
<b>BAILÉN</b> Centro de Interpretación Calle Pérez Galdós, 19 Tel. 953 678 394	<b>JÓDAR</b> Centro de visitantes del Castillo Calle Alhorr s/n Tel. 953 787 656	<b>DEIFONTES</b> Ayuntamiento Avda. de Andalucía, 12 Tel. 958 407 005
<b>MENGÍBAR</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza de la Constitución, 1 Tel. 953 370 025	<b>JIMENA</b> Punto de Información Turístico del Parque Natural de Sierra Mágina Audiencia, 5 Tel. 953 957 001	<b>MARACENA</b> Casa de la Cultura Calle Horno, 17 Tel. 958 421 395
<b>ARJONA</b> Oficina Municipal de Turismo Calle Cervantes 9 Tel. 953 52 33 25	<b>MANCHA REAL</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza de la Constitución, 1 Tel. 953 350 157	<b>GRANADA</b> Oficina de Turismo de la Junta de Andalucía Plaza Nueva, Santa Ana, 4 Tel. 958 575 002
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<b>TORREDONJIMENO</b> Casa Municipal de Cultura Francisco Delicado Avda. de Europa, 27 Tel. 953 700 139 Tel. 953 704 005	<b>LA GUARDIA DE JAÉN</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza de San Pedro s/n Tel. 953 327 100	<b>Oficina de Información Turística del Patronato Provincial</b> Plaza Mariana Pineda, 10 Tel. 958 247 128
<b>TORREDELCAMPO</b> Centro Cultural de la Villa Quinto Centenario s/n Tel. 953 568 649	<b>CAMBIL</b> Ayuntamiento Plaza de la Constitución, 1 Tel. 953 300 427 Tel. 953 961 599	<b>Oficina de Información Turística Municipal</b> Plaza del Carmen s/n Tel. 902 405 045
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