



Málaga • Cádiz

Spain

Costa del Sol

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Spain

Costa del Sol



Introduction	1
Málaga, capital of the Costa del Sol	6
The Coastal route	14
La Axarquía route	22
The route of the “Pueblos Blancos”	27
The route from Guadalhorce to Antequera	34
Leisure and events	38
Useful Information	48



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I ntroduction

The Costa del Sol or “Sun Coast”, one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the world due to its natural beauty and infrastructure, extends along the entire coast of the province of Málaga and the Mediterranean coast of Cádiz.

The section along the Mediterranean coast from Nerja to Sotogrande blends the beauty of its beaches with the rustic mountain countryside that protects the coast and provides it with a truly exceptional climate. Three hundred and twenty-five days of sunshine a year and an average water temperature of eighteen degrees Centigrade (64°F) attract visitors all year round to the sun and shores.

From densely populated tourist areas to small secluded coves, the entire coastline is a marvel of clean, transparent waters and coveted blue flags, modern facilities and services, a wide variety of cultural and leisure activities, with a price range for every traveller.



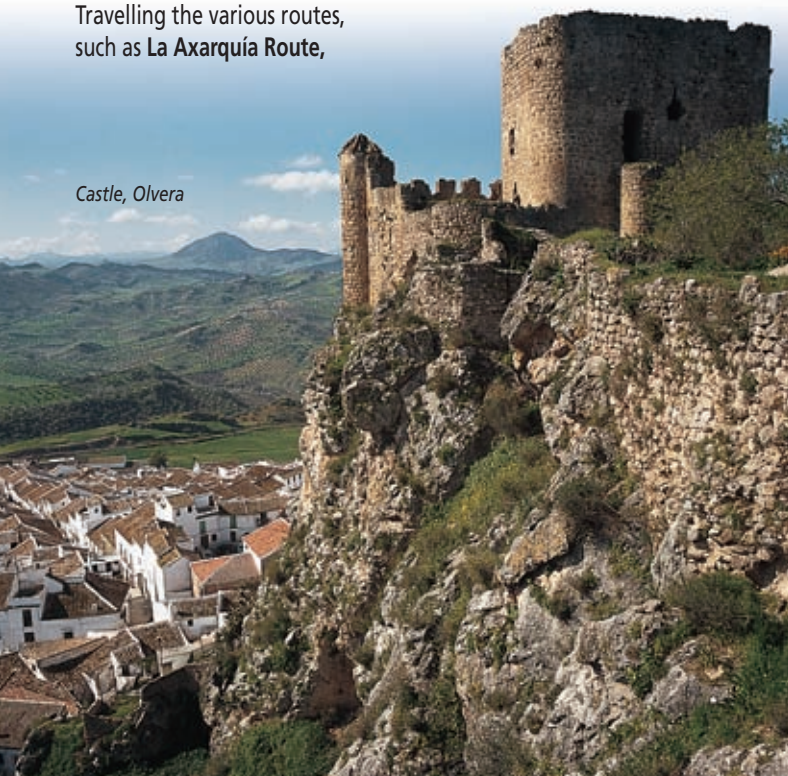
Protecting the coast, like privileged watchmen standing guard over the Mediterranean sea, we find the mountains of Sierra Bermeja, Serranía de Ronda, Sierra de las Nieves, Sierra Blanca, Sierra de Alpujarra, Sierra de Mijas, Montes de Málaga, Sierra de Tejeda, and Sierra de Almiraj, offering rural tourism, hiking or simply the opportunity to become captivated by the peaceful life of Andalusian towns and the charming popular architecture.

The Costa del Sol is bordered by Costa Tropical or Granadan coast to the east, and Costa de la Luz to the west, the point where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean. Travelling the various routes, such as **La Axarquía Route**,

Route of the Pueblos Blancos (White Villages), Route of Islamic Málaga, Route of La Pasa, Route of Sun and Wine, and visiting places as fascinating as Antequera or Mijas, inland travel lovers will also find the Costa del Sol an authentic paradise where they can enjoy nature's attractions and follow the vestiges of its former cultures which received the early influence of other ancient civilizations, such as the Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians.

The Roman Empire, throughout history, developed a vigorous trade along the coast and encouraged the sale of its products to other provinces, but

Castle, Olvera



Lucena Beach, Mijas



it would be the Moorish culture, born of Islamic domination, that would provide a lasting imprint on its customs, way of life, popular architecture, surviving even today in numerous ordinary characteristics, as well as in the cuisine, and in the sensitivity towards both music and literature.

Sports enjoy a special distinction. Numerous beaches and various marinas, among them the celebrated pleasure boat harbor of Puerto Banus, provide the Costa del Sol with an exceptional

Roman theater, Málaga



infrastructure for all activities related to the sea. Tennis and golf also deserve special mention. Tennis for the quantity and quality of the facilities available, and golf, with over forty well-equipped golf courses within a radius of about a hundred kilometers, is in itself one of the biggest international attractions, as evidenced by the Ryder Cup '97 Championship that was held at Valderrama golf course in Sotogrande, Cádiz.

Regional cooking, shopping, entertainment, and special events are also important attractions on the Costa del Sol. Along with the specialities of the area, among which products from the sea play an outstanding role, one finds a wide variety of restaurants and cuisines, from the famed international establishments to the popular beachside lean-tos or "chiringuitos", where you can sample freshly caught fish. Department stores, specialized shops and sophisticated boutiques open their doors along the

entire coast, offering the latest trends in apparel, gifts and handicrafts, while a world of dazzling lights and colors invades every corner when night approaches.

Nighttime on the Costa del Sol offers countless possibilities for entertainment, from dancing to drinks in a fashionable discotheque, typical flamenco music and dance, shows and attractions in theme parks or clubs, gambling at casinos, or simply sitting at an outdoor café by the seaside enjoying the Mediterranean breeze with the outline of the African coast in the distance.

The Costa del Sol, for the sheer magnitude of its resort complex, the variety of attractions, and the superb climate, is a unique destination where every visitor is able to choose among the myriad of options available with the certainty that reality will far surpass even the best expectations.

La Duquesa Marina, Manilva



Málaga, capital of the Costa del Sol

Vicente Aleixandre, the distinguished Nobel prize-winning poet, described Málaga as the "City of paradise. You seem to reign under the heavens, over the waters, between the air"; a city in which different peoples and cultures have left an imprint of their rich historical and cultural heritage.

Málaga, fenced in by mountains and fractured by the mouth of the Guadalmedina river, looks upon the Mediterranean with its maritime vocation and medley of villages. The Phoenicians arrived by sea and founded the settlement of Malaka. From its port they ferried their products (fish, silk, figs, wines, raisins, almonds, etc.) throughout the Roman Empire, receiving from Rome Lex Flavia malacitana ensuring their privileges.

Under Arab domination it became one of the most important cities of the area, with a population of fifteen thousand at the end of the 10th century. Capital of the Moorish Hammudí kingdom, it was a flourishing city when

the famous traveller Ibn Batuta said in the 14th century that "it combined the advantages of both the inland and the seaside".










The recapturing of Granada by Ferdinand, the Catholic Monarch, and the subsequent revolts leading to the expulsion of the Moors, seriously affected its development in the 16th and 17th centuries. Prosperous trade with America and improved communications turned it into one of the main commercial centers in Spain during the next century. The confrontation between the absolutists and liberals led in the second half of the 19th century to industrialization and an economic boom at the hand of the textile, and iron and steel industries. The decline of these industries at the end of the 19th century brought it to a lull from which it bounced back with more vigor than ever thanks to tourism starting in the 50's, consecrating it as capital of the sun and one of the most popular tourist destinations in Spain.



ANTEQUERA 58 km

Monuments and places of interest

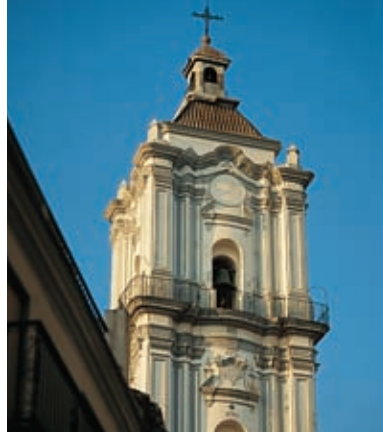
- 1 Alcazaba
- 2 Gibralfaro castle
- 3 Roman Theater
- 4 Old Customhouse
- 5 Cathedral
- 6 Church of El Sagrario
- 7 Church of Santiago
- 8 Church of San Juan
- 9 Church of Los Mártires
- 10 Church of Cristo de la Salud
- 11 Shrine of La Victoria
- 12 Casa de Mena
- 13 Villalcázar Palace
- 14 Palace of the Counts of Buenavista
- 15 Pablo Picasso House

-  Tourist Information
-  Post Office
-  Hospital
-  Parador (State-run Hotel)
-  Parking
-  Police
-  Railway Station
-  High Speed Train (AVE)
-  Bus Station



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In the old quarter of the city center, the complex consisting of the stronghold of the **Alcazaba** (1) and **Gibralfaro castle** (2) is undoubtedly the best preserved Arab monument. The castle, founded by Phoenicians and reconstructed as a defense of the city by the Moorish king Badis, rises on the highest hill and is connected to the Alcazaba fortress by a walled road.

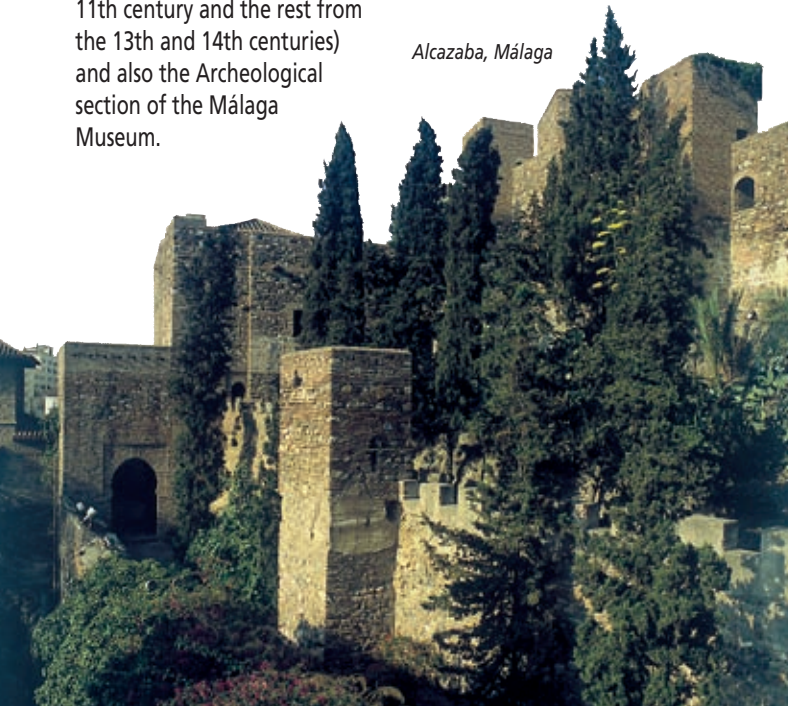


Church of San Juan, Málaga

The Alcazaba, as palace-fortress of the rulers, was also connected to the city by ramparts. We enter the interior perimeter by Cristo tower to visit the Arms courtyard and tower. Through the gate of Puerta de los Cuartos de Granada, we arrive at the upper area where we encounter the keep, the Palace (part of which dates back to the 11th century and the rest from the 13th and 14th centuries) and also the Archeological section of the Málaga Museum.

Strolling along the nearby street called Calle Alcazabilla and its side streets among cypresses and fragrant purple bougainvilleas, we find the **Roman Theater** (3) and very close to it the building of the old **Customhouse** (4) and the **Cathedral** (5), built by order of the Catholic Monarchs over an ancient mosque.

Alcazaba, Málaga



Its construction lasted throughout three centuries and followed the original design of Diego de Siloé. Of interest in the interior are the choir stalls, carved principally by Pedro de Mena in the 17th century.

The **Church of El Sagrario** (6), with its Gothic-Isabelline doorway and altarpiece, as well as other churches scattered throughout the city, such as the **Church of Santiago** (7), **San Juan** (8), **Los Mártires** (9), **Cristo de la Salud** (10), and the **Shrine of La Victoria** (11) are other points of interest, as well as civil buildings, such as **Casa de Mena** (12) and **Villalcázar palace** (13).



Church of Sagrado Corazón, Málaga

The **palace of the counts of Buenavista** (14) and **Pablo Picasso House** (15), located in the Plaza de la Merced,

Cathedral, Málaga





A quiet street



Town Hall



Consulate House

El Cenachero



Plaza Cánovas del Castillo



complete our tour through the center of the city. Perhaps the most appealing part of Málaga resides in its typical streets and squares. A stroll through the gardens reminds us of the ancient Arab culture while the park, next to the port, is a large open-air museum with exotic specimens from all over the world. A charming music area can also be found. A walk down the Pasaje de Chinitas, in the heart of the city, is a typical sample of the enjoyable atmosphere.

Málaga harbor





Aqueduct, Maro



Mijas



The Coastal route

The Coastal Route from Nerja to Tarifa along the Costa del Sol offers the traveller one hundred and eighty kilometers of coastline with all the attractions typical of the sea, as well as the added allure of the countryside and the neighboring nature parks.

If as our starting point we take the eastern most point at the border between the provinces of Granada and Málaga, we will find at kilometer 297 of the N-340 coastal highway the **Maro-Cerro Gordo** nature park, an impressive headland with its tower and huge cliffs covered with mastic trees above which flocks of sea gulls fly.

Nearby is **Nerja** with its attractive old village, its beaches between cliffs, the Balcony of Europe, a lookout high over the sea, and the famous cave also known as the Prehistoric Cathedral with almost two kilometers of floodlit caverns open to the public, boasting enormous vaults, haunting figures and Paleolithic cave paintings.

Continuing along the same road, we reach **Torre del Mar** (21 Km.), travelling through the coastal areas of the towns of La Axarquía, such as **Torrox** and **Algarrobo**, where ruins of a Roman settlement may be visited at the mouth of the Torrox river and a wide variety of wines of the region from dry to sweet can be sampled. Torre del Mar has experienced recent prosperity from tourist development and little is left to remind us of the fortified city where it once served as lookout for **Vélez Málaga**. Not too far away, we encounter the interesting Phoenician settlement of Toscanos and the Garden necropolis, at the mouth of the Vélez river.

Skirting along the coast, we come to **Rincón de la Victoria**, about 18 kilometers away. It is a typical tourist town close to the capital, with a lovely beach and warm water.

Málaga, at the mouth of the Guadalmedina and Guadalhorce rivers, lies in a depression and maintains a maritime vocation from ancient times, with its port, its Paseo Marítimo devoted to the immortal artist Picasso, and its well-known beaches called playas del Palo.

From Málaga, capital of the Costa del Sol, our journey brings us to a stretch of coastline which

Málaga



Benalmádena



La Carihuela Beach, Torremolinos

has experienced the greatest tourist growth in Spain during the last thirty years.

Twelve kilometers from the capital, **Torremolinos** is the leading force behind tourism in the area. Repopulated after its reconquest by the Catholic Monarchs in 1489, the origin of the tourist industry may be found with the English Castle, which in the 1920's took

in veterans from World War I. The castle keep and the fishermen's district of **La Carihuela**, with restaurants specializing in "pescaíto frito" (mixed fried fish), are the main attractions.

As Torremolinos burgeoned in the 60's, overcrowding caused the boom of other nearby spots along the coast, such as **Benalmádena**, six kilometers away, which has also experienced surprising growth on the coast, as well as Arroyo de la Miel, a little inland. The marina, hub of nightlife, **Torrequebrada** casino, which takes its name from the nearby watchtower, and Tívoli amusement park, patterned after the one in Copenhagen,

offer a wide variety of sports and leisure activities, as well as entertainment.

Fuengirola is another example of a bustling town devoted to tourism of sun and sand. Of interest are the historical vestiges, such as Sohayl castle, the "termas" or hot springs, and Villa Romana, an interesting museum of painting on adjoining walls of buildings, and the mandatory trip to **Mijas**, a truly picturesque mountain village.



Marina, Fuengirola

Marbella, some 50 kilometers from the capital, is undeniably the main international tourist attraction on the Costa del Sol. At the foot of Sierra Blanca and situated on a beautiful bay, the town has overcome a

lull in its development and offers high quality facilities. The colorful old quarter, the attention given to its streets and beaches, the surprising variety and distinction of the housing developments have spawned the name of the golden triangle for the financial power generated here. Very well-known is **Puerto Banús**, frequented by magnates from all over the world, as well as the beaches of **San Pedro de Alcántara**, today annexed by Marbella.

A short distance inland, we find **Istán**, spring of the Costa del Sol and **Ojén**, an ecological paradise. **Estepona**, the Phoenician *Astapa*, was the center of important naval and land battles during the Middle Ages. Protected from winds by Sierra Bermeja, it has a typically Mediterranean village center, a notable marina, and a well-known nudist beach, Costa Natura, in Arroyo Vaquero.

Before arriving at Manilva, sentinel of the coast, past sprawling housing developments and enchanting beaches, we turn off at **Casares** at kilometer 146 of the N-340. Fourteen kilometers further along, we

Puerto Banús, Marbella





Marina, Sotogrande

reach the mountain village where Blas Infante, father of Andalusianism, was born.

Here we also find ruins of an old fortress. Founded by order of Julius Caesar, it

has been declared a historic-artistic complex which includes the Church of La Encarnación, tower of la Sal, and an archeological area.

Manilva, 94 kilometers from Málaga, rounds off this portion of the coastal route before continuing on to **Sotogrande**. Perched on a hill presiding over seven kilometers of beaches, it boasts a castle and Sabinillas beaches, around which a recreational complex including housing developments, golf courses, and a marina has been built.

Casares



San Roque's old quarter has been declared a Historic Artistic Monument. Several kilometers to the west is the town of **La Línea de la Concepción**. Bordering on Gibraltar, La Línea is a city of museums with two extensive beaches. Poniente beach faces Algeciras bay while Levante beach opens on to the Mediterranean. The bay's capital is **Algeciras**, one of the busiest ports in Europe. There is regular ferry service running between Algeciras and North Africa.

Standing in the Plaza Alta is the 18th century Church of Nuestra Señora de la Palma. Sailing and scuba diving competitions are held here at El Rinconcillo beach. The Costa del Sol ends in **Tarifa**, where clean Atlantic waters bathe windswept beaches and rocky cliffs.

San Felipe street, San Roque





La Axarquía route

"Good water and healthy air, good land for producing silk and many raisins and fermented juice", this was La Axarquía for the 17th century writer, Henríquez de Jorquera. A land east of Málaga, extending from the division formed by the mountain ranges of Sierra Alhama, Tejeda and Almijara in the province of Granada.

Following the path of the great 14th century traveller Ibn Batuta, we penetrate into the

region of **La Axarquía**. Its history recalls the essence of the Moorish legacy, as it was here in this region that the kingdom of Granada won its last battle from the Christians before being recaptured by the Catholic Monarchs.

Leaving the Malagan beaches of El Palo and Pedregalejo behind us, we arrive at **Rincón de la Victoria**, a tourist spot frequented by Malagans. Coastal fishing for sardines, anchovies and other small fish, usually eaten right on the beach, has become quite popular. From here and after visiting the cave paintings at Higerón cave, we turn off onto a local road to **Macharaviaya**, birthplace of the Gálvez family, conquistadors and generous patrons.

We return to the coast to get to **Torre del Mar**, a very popular tourist enclave and from here, a few kilometers inland, we reach **Vélez Málaga**, capital of La Axarquía where the Roman Mainoba once settled.

From here, we observe how the region rests on a gigantic amphitheater of more than one thousand square kilometers, a great arena of mountainous land that slopes towards the sea.

Cómpeta



Perched on Veas hill, Vélez Málaga castle-fortress gives its name to the city whose old quarter is considered an historic-artistic complex, presided over by Santa María la Mayor, a parish church constructed in the Gothic-Mudejar style on the site of an ancient mosque.



Nerja cave

Other noteworthy religious architecture includes the Convents of San Francisco, Las Claras and Las Carmelitas, and the Churches of San Juan Bautista, San José de la Soledad, and its famous street chapels. The most notable civil architecture includes the Casa de Cervantes and Hospital of San Marcos in the historic city center which also deserves to be discovered and admired in its

own right. Vélez Málaga is the point of departure for a route which will take us on a journey through various enchanting little villages. To the west, we will pass through Benamocarra and Benamargosa before we come to **Comares** situated on the crest of a mountain which preserves a typical Moorish appearance with steep narrow streets; **Viñuela** with archeological finds dating from Neolithic to Roman times; and **Alcaucín** with castle and baths. In the surroundings, we have **Cútar**, **El Borge** and **Almáchar** with their wine-presses and subtropical fruits.

To the east, through the rolling countryside and between Andalusian farms, the dazzling sight of small villages with their Arab architecture await where the imprints of a Moorish past can be discovered, for example, in the minarets of **Árchez** and **Salares** or the traces of different religions in the circular cemetery of **Sayalonga**, the hermitage of San Sebastián in **Algarrobo**, and Holy Week in **Riogordo**.

Villages where nature carves the most impressive scenery include **Cómpeta** with its graceful tower and multi-colored hamlet, and **Canillas**, among the valleys of

the Vélez and Rubite rivers. **Torrox**, on the coast, was the birthplace of Caudillo Almanzor and center of the silk industry in Nasrid times, and **Nerja**, at the eastern border of the Costa del Sol, with its lovely town center, its beaches, and famous Dolomitic cave.

Inland from Nerja, a short distance to the north is the village of **Frigiliana**. Its

prehistoric necropolis of Cerrillo de las Sombras and the abrupt terrain, site of one of the last battles between Moors and Christians, preserves one of the purest Arab structures of La Axarquía.

Frigiliana





The route of the "Pueblos Blancos" (white villages)

Situated in the provinces of Málaga and Cádiz, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and in a mountainous area where the Bético, Ronda and Cádiz mountain ranges converge, the "Pueblos Blancos" make up one of the most beautiful routes for admiring popular Andalusian architecture.

Geographical locations on the tops of mountains, on slopes, or in ravines allow the landscapes to dominate, appearing on the horizon like white spots against a backdrop of oak trees, Spanish firs, or pine groves.

Steep narrow streets, passageways leading to courtyards and dwellings,



Espera (Cádiz)

Ronda ravine



propped-up facades, and tile roofs over dazzling white-washed walls, form a unique assembly often clustering around a castle for protection in the Medieval struggle between Arabs and Christians. A number of itineraries may be followed. A good starting point is **Ronda**, the charismatic city of Celtic origin, perched more than seven hundred meters overlooking an imposing ravine that divides it in two. Several of the gateways to the city are preserved in good condition including the Almocábar (13th century), Puerta de los Molinos giving access to the Arab medina (town), and Puerta de Carlos V. The San Francisco district preserves all the Moorish design and in the lower part of the city,



Ronda

we find the Arab baths, the structure almost intact (13th-14th century).

An impressive historic enclave boasts more than 70 houses including the palace of Salvatierra, Casa del Gigante, Casa de Mondragón and Casa del Rey Moro. The religious monuments of interest include the Church of Santa María la Mayor, convent of Santo Domingo, and minaret of San Sebastián. The Plaza de Toros (Bullring), which dates back to the days of Philip II, makes this a mandatory stop. Twelve kilometers away, we encounter the Roman city of Acinipo, also called Ronda la Vieja, which dates from the second century.



Palace of the Marquis of Salvatierra, Ronda



Bullring, Ronda

From Ronda, the southern route takes us to **Montejaque** and nearby Hunidero cave, where the waters of the Gadaures river disappear and reappear nine kilometers farther down in the Cave of the Cat in the township of **Benaoján**, with its watchtower, Church of the

Rosario, and Pileta caves, with their Paleolithic cave paintings.

Crossing the Guadiaro river, we approach **Jimena de Libar** which has an ancient Roman-Arab castle. We proceed by Atajate; **Benadalid** with the oldest castle in the region; **Algatocín** with Roman ruins, and **Cortes de la Frontera** boasting a magnificent square, the Church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, Casa de los Valdenebro, and the Town Hall.

The northern and western route situates us in **Setenil de las Bodegas**, where popular architecture melts into the

Algatocín



surroundings with its houses hewn in the walls of the ravine. The castle-fortress from Moorish times and Gothic Church of La Encarnación are the most representative monuments. From here, passing through **Alcalá del Valle** and **Alhaquime**, we come to **Olvera**. The village emerges like a great white pyramid crowned by an Arab castle from the 12th century. The Church of San José is also visible. Nearby, we find the rock of Zaframagón, an important ecological reserve.

Going towards the west, we encounter **Algodonales**, surrounded by olive trees and orchards, contrasting with the white-washed houses. We will take the route of **Zahara de la Sierra**, founded



Zahara de la Sierra

by the Arabs in the 8th century and presently declared a National Monument. The typical uneven streets of Zahara, the 12th century Moorish castle, and Baroque Church of Santa María de Mesa can be enjoyed on a walking tour. A splendid view of Grazalema Nature Park can be admired from the castle. On the road towards **Grazalema**, a path to the right leads to "Garganta Verde", a gorge with an impressive cave known as Ermita de la Garganta. After ascending Puerto de las Palomas (1,357 meters), we arrive at Grazalema, embraced by the Pinar and Endrinal mountain ranges. A place of ancient Roman and Arab settlements, its artistic heritage is centered around the Churches of La Encarnación and La Aurora (17th century). We proceed afterwards to **Villaluenga del Rosario**, the highest town in the region, to reach **Ubrique**, perched on the almost vertical



Olvera



Grazalema

slopes of the Algarrobal hill, and famous for its leather goods. It has an important religious heritage as shown in the 16th century Church of San Antonio, convent of los Capuchinos, Church of Nuestra Señora de la O, and Church of San Pedro, presently a library. To the east of El Bosque, we find **Benamahoma** with its grove of native Spanish firs,

growing in very isolated areas. **El Bosque**, white and luminous, is a lovely village with ideal spots for trout fishing.

Villamartín, the next stop on our route, has interesting examples of civil architecture, including the Palace of los Ríos, Casa de los Topete, as well as religious buildings, such as the 16th century Church of Las Virtudes, and Churches of San Francisco and Las Angustias.

Before reaching **Bornos**, we can visit the Roman ruins of Carissa Aurelia and Bornos reservoir. Its monuments include the Castle-Palace of Los Ribera, Casa de Ordóñez, and the religious architectural assemblage made up of the 16th century Church of Santo Domingo,

Bornos

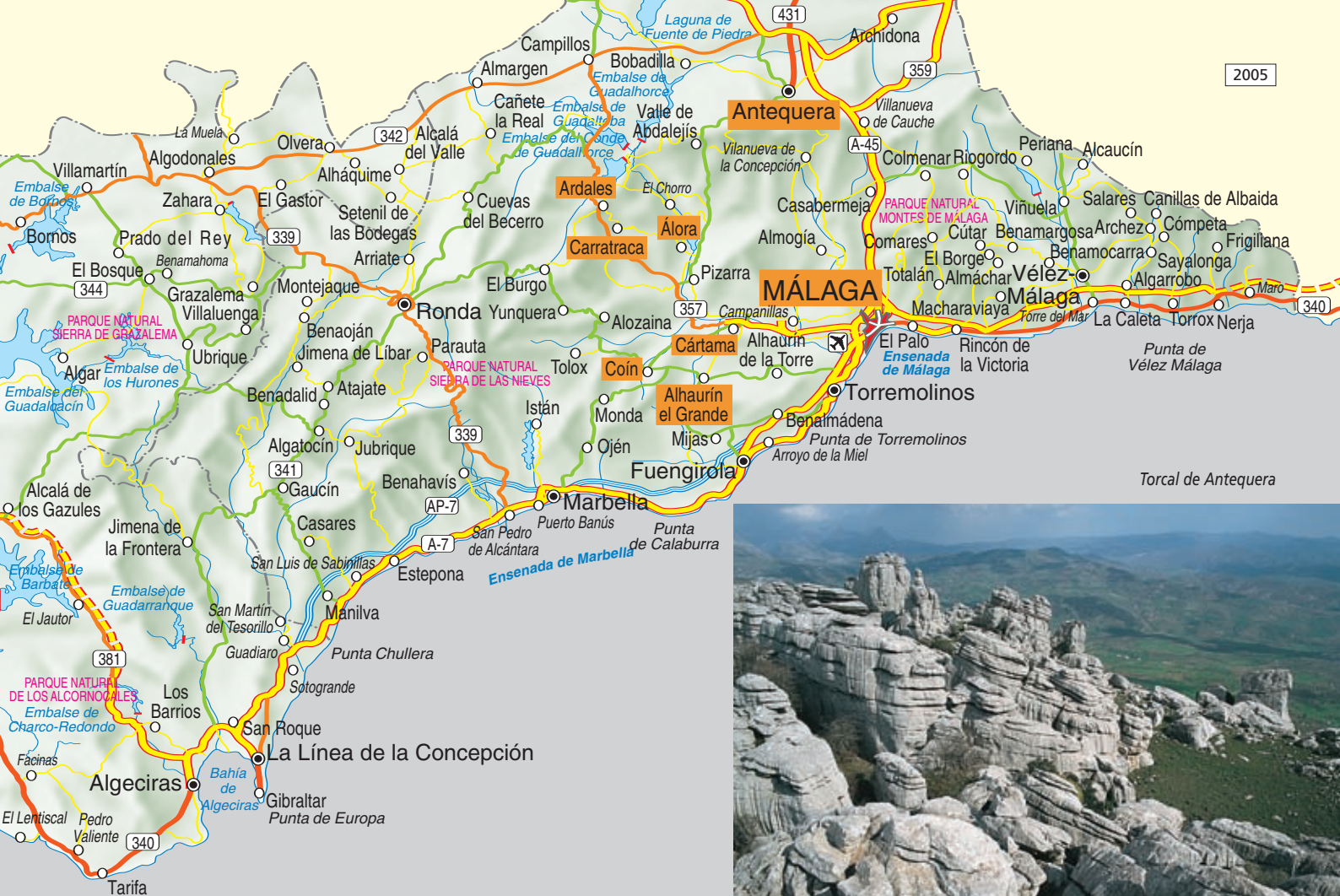


Arcos de la Frontera

La Sagra school, hermitage of El Calvario, and convent of Corpus Christi.

Leaving to our right the route leading to **Espera**, another attractive mountain town, we arrive in **Arcos de la Frontera**, the end of our route and archetype of the "Pueblos Blancos". Site of Roman, Visigoth and Arab settlements, the town of Arcos has one of the most spectacular old quarters in Spain.

There are many monuments to visit, including the 15th century Gothic-Mudejar Church of Santa María, the Castle of the Dukes, former residence of Moorish kings, Casa de Belén, Convents of San Francisco, San Agustín, and La Encarnación, and other religious monuments, such as the Churches of San Pedro, La Caridad, San Juan de Dios, and La Misericordia.



Torcal de Antequera



The route from Guadalhorce to Antequera

Following the course of the Guadalhorce river, the route from Antequera to

Málaga winds through places of unique and spectacular beauty.

Taking Málaga as our reference point, we go in the direction of the villages of La Hoya by the orange-blossom route starting in **Alhaurín el Grande** which can

be reached by way of the coast or via Cártama. Alhaurín, Roman *Lauro Nova*, shows the imprints of ancient civilizations that included Iberians, Tyrians,



Antequera

Phoenicians and Romans. Situated on the northern slope of Sierra de Mijas and spilling into the valley of Guadalhorce, its most notable monuments are the Town Hall, Church of Nuestra Señora de La Encarnación, and Palace of Montellano. The most important festivals are held during Holy Week when the brotherhoods of "verdes" and "moraos" rival in their processions.

Coín, a short distance to the west, known for its lovely castle, also boasts beautiful churches and fountains, a strong pottery tradition, and the legend of the apparition on its soil of the Virgin of Fuensanta in the 15th century.

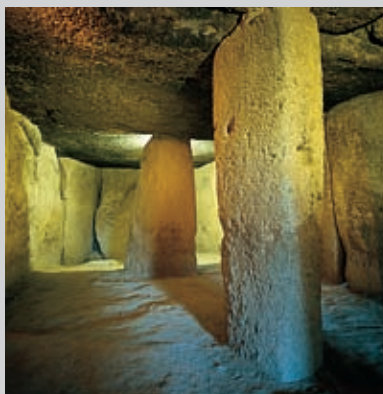
Continuing the route, we can return to Cártama in order to reach **Álora** (34 km.) by a road lined with lemon trees.

The village is set among rolling hills, and the town center is a succession of steep slopes leading to an Arab castle where the fertile valley of the Guadalhorce can be viewed in all its splendor. From here, we can make two interesting side trips and follow the road to **Carratraca**, with its 19th century spa, and see **Ardales**, on the banks of the Turón river, with its Medieval castle.

The second trip will take us to the ruins of Bobastro (a Mozarab church excavated in rock) and "garganta del Chorro", a gorge with a magnificent landscape and caves with ancient paintings.

We will return to Álora to get to **Antequera** (34 km.). Antequera is the heart of the Andalusian land, on the route from Seville to Granada and on the road

La Menga Cave, Antequera



Ardales

from Málaga to Córdoba. All the civilizations have converged here since prehistoric times, thus producing one of the richest monumental groupings in Andalucía. City of white churches and Gongorists (Gerardo Diego), which was the Madina Antakira almost impregnable under Arab domination, invites us to visit the Granada gate, arch of the Giants, and the castle with the keep.

The Christian heritage is patent in the Royal Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor, Churches of San Sebastián, Santo Domingo, San José, San Pedro, La Encarnación,

and El Carmen, among others, and the Municipal Museum which boasts collections of painting, sculpture, and gold and silverworks.

Thirteen kilometers to the south, Torcal de Antequera, with more than a thousand hectares, is one of the most spectacular spots in Andalusia. Time and water have eroded unusual forms in the rocks of this Nature Park formed by a karstic mass of amazing beauty.

Leisure and events

Lodging

The Costa del Sol has a wide variety of hotels, tourist inns, apartments, camping sites, tourist villas, and rural houses allowing visitors to find comfortable accommodations in the desired price range. During high season, which includes the months of July, August and September, it is necessary to make reservations well in advance.



The coastal region, from Nerja to Sotogrande, abounds with hotels, apartments, residential villas, and camping sites, while inland, rural tourist facilities are common, including charming little hotels. Information may be found at tourist information points.



Cuisine

For many centuries Andalusia has been a land of different cultures, center of maritime trade, and port to the Indies. Its land of great contrasts and changes in landscape and climate gives rise to a cuisine as wide in variety as it is rich in flavors.

From the deluxe restaurants of Marbella to the "chiringuitos" on the beach, or the mountain cooking of La Axarquía and the "Pueblos Blancos", the cuisine along the Costa del Sol keeps the influence of former cultures alive; the Phoenician style of salting, Roman appreciation for oils and garlic, and Arab cuisine which helped agriculture and garden products flourish.

The strong contrast between the coast and inland is also evident in the cuisine. Coastal Málaga looks to the sea and revels in the freshly caught fish and seafood, cooked with unique and special skill, such as the "pescaito frito" (mixed fried fish), grilled or marinated fish, anchovies, red mullet, squid, and sardines. Rice dishes also occupy a privileged place in Mediterranean cuisine with endless varieties combined with fish and seafood.

Cold vegetable soups or "gazpachos" acquire their own identity in this region, especially in the region of La Axarquía. The splendid garden produce of Vélez Málaga makes for delicious dishes, such as "ajoblanco" (chilled white garlic-almond soup), "ajobacalao" (with salted cod), "sopa Maimones" (Arab soup of garlic, bread and olive oil, sometimes with ham), "ropa vieja", and pastry such as "tortas de aceite" (pastry biscuits made with oil), and "mostachones" (S-shaped biscuits, often with nuts). The "porra antequerana" is a very thick type of "gazpacho".



Hunting and fishing also influence the cuisine of the mountain regions. Trout from El Bosque, rabbit stew, pork sausages, celery salads and green cabbage are some of the specialties of the "Pueblos Blancos".

We also find, especially in the inland areas, a rich traditional cuisine abounding in stews and thick vegetable soups, pork products, and pastoral recipes, with its simple country cooking, which gives us products such as goat cheese from Estepona, liver pastoral-style, or "gachas" (gruel).

To all of this must be added the influence of both Arab and Jewish cultures in the wide variety of subtle and splendid treats that can transport one to the world of "A Thousand and One Nights". Crumbly little cakes called "mantecados" and



"polvorones" of Antequera, "alfajores" (almond-and-honey candy), "batatillas" in honey, as well as almond soup from Ronda are some of the sweetest examples we can enjoy throughout the region.

This appealing cuisine is not only present at the dinner table at home or in a restaurant, but also at the hour of the "tapeo", a pleasant Spanish custom of bar-hopping or "grazing", enjoying life to the fullest in the



company of friends while delighting in good conversation and a variety of succulent tidbits, where the essence of Andalusia shines. Accompanied by a glass of sherry, this delightful custom brings out the vast culinary repertoire of this southern land.

Fruits also deserve special mention. From time immemorial, they have been associated with the Costa del Sol. Grapes, raisins, pomegranates, and figs from these coasts once travelled throughout the entire Roman Empire and lately, subtropical

fruits, such as avocados, cherimoyas or custard apples are also grown in the eastern part of the Costa del Sol.

Wine is the perfect accompaniment for such a rich assortment of dishes. The wines of the region are the famous sweet wines of Málaga. "Moscatel", "pajarete", "campanilla", and "pedrito" are some of the varieties, but visitors can also sample some of the other wines from neighboring Cádiz, without which bar-hopping would not be complete.

"Fino" (dry, light, pale yellow sherry), "manzanilla" (dry delicate sherry), and "oloroso" (dark golden full-bodied sherry) or "amontillado" (amber medium-dry sherry), more colorful and sweet, are



indispensable culinary accompaniments in these Andalusian lands.

Gastronomy is inseparable from the joy of life. And because of this, festivals and celebrations devoted to food and drink abound, such as the Festival of the Ajoblanco in **Almachar** in August; Harvest Festival in **Antequera** also in August; "Pescaito" Day in **Torremolinos**; "Migas" and Wine Festival in **Torrox** in December, the maritime Virgen del Carmen Festival in **Fuengirola** in July and Raisin Festival in the region of **La Axarquía** held in September.

Festivals and folklore

It is not unusual to run into some type of colorful "Fiesta" or exciting "Feria" on the Costa del Sol. Many are related to religious observances and include processions. Holy Week is the first grand celebration which holds a special significance in Málaga, Ronda and Riogordo with its traditional display of the passion of Christ by the townspeople. Brotherhoods, religious images,

bearers of stages in the Passion of Christ, religious songs, a spectacle born of the religious fervor of the people. "The blessing of Christ" during the early morning of Good Friday maintains a special significance in **Arcos de la Frontera**.



Holy Week

The Cruces de Mayo, a springtime celebration, still preserves the tradition of adorning the squares and corners of the town with flowers. **Casabermeja**, **Coín** and **Torrox** celebrate this traditional festival today.

Romerías (pilgrimages or visits to nearby shrines), a deep-seated Andalusian tradition, have their expression in those celebrated in **Estepona** and **Nerja** in the middle of May.

The maritime tradition gives rise to the festivities such as San Bernabé in **Marbella** in June, the Fiestas Mayores in **Estepona** or the Virgen del Carmen on the entire coast in July which is joined to the "Day of the Fish Fry" in **Torremolinos** in June. **Benalmádena** also celebrates another important day on the Spanish calendar which is Corpus Christi.

Associated with the rites of the harvest, we have the festivals of **Antequera** and **Almachar** in August with their "Fiesta de la Recolectión" and "Fiesta del Ajoblanco", "La Asunción" in **Cómpeta** and the September celebrations of San Miguel in **Vélez Málaga** and **Torremolinos**. The Festival of the Raisin in **Alcaucín** and **El Borge** in September, has a special significance in the lands of La Axarquía. Along another line, we need to highlight the Summer Festival of Music and Dance in **Nerja** in August, and the Day of the Tourist in **Torremolinos**, at the beginning of September.

For their originality and connection with the Mediterranean, the Festival of Moors and Christians in **Benalauría** at the beginning of August must be mentioned. Closing the series are the festivals of the Rosario in

Fuengirola at the beginning of October, "Fiesta de la Virgen de los Rondeles" in **Casarabonela** in December, as well as "Fiesta de las Migas y los Vinos" in **Torrox**, and Festival of "verdiales" in **Málaga** held on Innocents' Day, is the culmination of the celebrations.

The verdiales and malagueñas have a special significance in the folklore of the region. The "verdiales" are ancient fandangos which today maintain all their vitality and color, born in the Partido de Verdiales of the Montes de Málaga. They are accompanied by primitive two-string violins, guitars, cymbals, tambourines, and kitchen utensils, such as mortars or bottles. The sound of castanets marks the rhythm of singers' voices.

Los Verdiales



Culture and art

All cultural manifestations have their place, as well as a brilliant setting on the Costa del Sol. Music is an important part of all fairs which often feature live performances by well-known singers; the Flamenco Festival of **Mijas** in July, and in August, Festival Flamenco de lo Rancio in **Ronda**, the Flamenco Festival in **Ojén** and the "Feria" of **Málaga**. Málaga displays a handsome array of color and the townspeople's participation during its "Ferias" where the typical folklore must be highlighted. Throughout the year, a series of concerts which includes "Bands of Music" (spring), "Andalusian artists" (August), "Young Music" (fall) and "Young Artists" (December) have an active musical program for all tastes. **Nerja's** International Festival of Music and Dance has as a backdrop the famous prehistoric cave during the month of July, and each year hosts special events with distinguished international stars. **Ronda** hosts "fiestas" in honor of Pedro Romero with a singular Goyesque bullfight.

Films have always had a special significance on the Costa del Sol. Movies are filmed here, distinguished directors and actors reside here, and special

events are celebrated here also, such as the Festival of Speleological Cinema in **Fuengirola**, the International Comedy Film Festival in **Torremolinos** held during January; the Amateur Films Contest in **Marbella** in July; Week of Scientific Films in **Ronda** during the month of October, and the recently inaugurated International Film Festival at **Puerto Banús**.

Theater and dance also enjoy special prominence in the already mentioned International Festival of Music and Dance in **Nerja**, and in Andalusian Theater Week, held in August in **Ronda**. Torremolinos also schedules International Ballroom Dance Contests. Cultural institutions, such as the Picasso Foundation and the Cultural Center of the Generation of '27 in **Málaga**, hold other important cultural events in connection with painting and literature.

Different forms of art can be admired in the various museums on the Costa del Sol. Highlighting a few in Málaga, we have the Picasso Archeological Museum, Provincial Gallery of Fine Arts, Cathedral Museum, Arte Sacro Museum, Popular Arts Museum, the Aquarium, and Holy Week Museum.



Arqueological Museum, Antequera

Antequera also has an Archeological Museum, a Municipal Museum, Picasso Gallery, and Bullfighting Museum.

In Ronda, we find the interesting Bullfighting Museum located at the Bullring and an Archeological Museum.

Benalmádena has a Municipal Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, and in Marbella we find the Museum of Spanish Engraving, and in Nerja, a new Archeological Museum.

Sports

The Costa del Sol is a paradise for sports. Its privileged climate and excellent facilities not only attract the amateurs but also numerous professionals with the possibility of practicing their favorite sport or training for a championship.

Water sports occupy a prominent place along the entire coastline. More than a dozen yacht clubs are scattered along the coast, from Nerja to Tarifa, as well as many marinas.



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Tennis has become one of the most important sports on the Costa del Sol. Hosting international championships has helped the area acquire fame and prestige among tennis players around the world.





Shopping and leisure

The Costa del Sol is an immense paradise for shopping and investments. Many of the world's leading firms, jewelers and antique dealers have shops on the coast. The demanding traveller can find a wide variety of products of excellent quality.

A popular custom, the local flea market or "mercadillo", is a fun way to acquire a variety of articles at affordable prices. Some of them are mentioned below along with the days of the week they are held: antiques in Puerto Banús (Saturdays), handicrafts in

Estepona (Sundays), and the largest ones where a wide variety of articles can be found include Arroyo de la Miel (Fridays), Estepona (Wednesdays), Fuengirola (Tuesdays and Saturdays), Málaga (Sundays and Wednesdays), Marbella (Mondays), Mijas (Saturdays), Nerja (Tuesdays) and Torremolinos (Thursdays).

With respect to native products, ceramics and pottery continue to maintain the Moorish traditions of these Andalusian crafts. We find interesting examples in the towns of Coin and Mijas, as well as along the route of the "Pueblos Blancos".

The skillful crafting of leather has gained well-earned fame in the town of Ubrique, and the northern part of the province of Málaga is noted for esparto grass products.

In Vélez Málaga, we find examples of the delicate handiwork on religious vestments in silk, as well as embroidery and metal objects. Mijas is also famous for its embroidery and numerous other handicrafts, and in Ronda we find handsome wrought iron work. The blankets from Grazalema continue to preserve the texture and designs from centuries ago which have adorned saddles and riders in the mountains of Málaga.

Visitors can find a wide variety of activities to choose from on the Costa del Sol to fill their leisure time. From practicing a favorite sport to attending Fairs and Festivals, excursions and hiking in Nature Parks, such as the Montes de Málaga, Sierra de las Nieves, Sierra de Grazalema or Alcornocales, or a visit to admire the scenery at the gorge of Gaitanes (El Chorro), los Reales de Sierra Bermeja, and Sierra Crestellina in Estepona, Torcal de Antequera, or the cliffs of Marocerro Gordo; the possibilities are endless.

The mouth of the Guadalhorce river and lagoons of El Bosque, Capillos, La Ratosa, Fuentepiedra and Archidona are also interesting sites to visit in the region.

Theme parks

- Acuarium in Puerto Banús,
- Amusement Park Tívoli World in Arroyo de la Miel,
- Aquapark in Torremolinos,
- Aquatic Park in Mijas,
- Aquavelis in Torre del Mar,
- Botanical and Ornithological Park "El Retiro" in Churriana,
- Crocodiles Park in Cártama,
- Sea Life in Benalmádena,
- Selwo Nature Park in Estepona
- Zoo in Fuengirola.

Other interesting options are horseracing at Hipódromo Costa del Sol in Mijas and visits to Casino Torrequebrada in Benalmádena and Casino Nueva Andalucía in Marbella.



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CÁDIZ 72 km JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA 48 km

