

## The Route of the Caliphate



It runs between the two most important towns of Hispano-Muslim history, Córdoba and Granada, including the frontier area of Jaén. Two great towns and two great centuries. Córdoba's consequence was world-wide and Granada's was one of refinement and drama. These are the two extremes on either side of the immense cultural, political and social heritage of al-Andalus, a civilization with unique and unrepeatable features. Between both, there is a land of legends, garrisons, watchtowers and castles, of remarkable towns, people and customs. Two large geographical depressions are connected in the Route of the Caliphate –Guadalquivir and Granada– linked by the valleys across the southern sierras. There are two mountain ranges, Sierra Morena in the province of Córdoba and Sierra Nevada in the province of Granada. During the reigns of the Umayyad caliphs, the territory that lies along this route was included in three provinces or *coras*: Córdoba, Cabra and Ilbira. All three were part of the splendor of the Caliphate in Córdoba, which was the most brilliant center of learning in the western world at that time. Here was the scenery of the adventures and episodes sung in medieval Spanish romances.

The Route of the Caliphate runs between Córdoba and Granada along the roads N-432 and N-331, approximately 180 km (112 miles). On the way, it crosses the Guadalquivir valley, the sierras and the fertile plains of Granada



## The legacy of al-Andalus

The Iberian Peninsula went through one of the most privileged periods in its history during the Muslim era, which resulted in a brilliant civilization. During this time, Andalusia became the cultural centre of Europe and the link between East and West.

The Routes of "El legado andalusí" go through those paths which connected the kingdom of Granada with the rest of al-Andalus in the past. Along this itinerary travellers have the possibility of enjoying wonderful landscapes on a quiet journey, tasting exquisite dishes and giving free rein to their imagination by turning past events into a present experience.

Corral del Carbón, Granada, Spain.  
Headquarters of El legado andalusí Andalusian Public Foundation.



## LANDSCAPE

This route includes several most remarkable landscapes, such as Sierras Subbéticas Cordobesas Natural Park with the main rocky outcrops in this area: La Tiñosa, Pico Bermejo, Lobatejo and El Picacho peaks. Further along the way there are Sierra de Moclín and Sierra Elvira and the Natural Park of Sierra de Huétor, that appear to act as the advance guard to the northern slopes of Sierra Nevada.



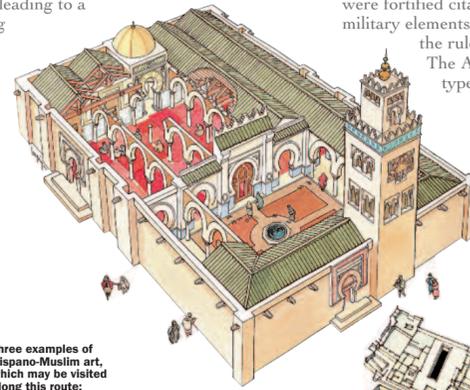
## ARCHITECTURE

### FROM THE MOSQUE TO THE ALHAMBRA

The mosque was the core of daily life in Hispano-Muslim cities. Prayer, teaching, administration of justice and social relations all went on inside or around the mosque. There were three distinct elements: tower, courtyard and hall of prayer. The *muezzin* called the faithful to prayer from the tower or minaret. Ritual ablutions were carried out in the courtyard or *shan*. The hall of prayer, or *livan*, was an open rectangular space, leading to a wall, *al-qibla*, facing Mecca. In the middle of that wall was the

*mibrab* –an empty niche that indicated the direction of prayers. The principal mosque or *aljama* was situated in the centre of the town and of its trading quarter, the *medina*. Not far, were the *madrasa* or college of Mohammedan studies and the *alcaicería* –a series of lanes with shops that offered the most valuable wares. The mosque in Córdoba is the foremost example of Andalusí mosques. Apart from these religious and civilian buildings, there were the *alcázaras* (fortresses) and *alcázaros*. They were fortified citadels which, apart from providing the military elements, also contained the palatial quarters of the rulers.

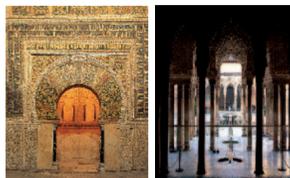
The Alhambra is an exceptional example of this type of fortified citadel.



Reproduction of a mosque, like many of those found along this route from Andalusí times.



Three examples of Hispano-Muslim art, which may be visited along this route: Madinat al-Zahra above, the Mosque in Córdoba and the Alhambra in Granada.



Detail of the area of the Royal Palace in the Alhambra of Granada.

## GASTRONOMY



### OLIVE OIL

The olive tree and olive oil –symbols of peace, prosperity and knowledge– are substantial elements of the people who live on the shores of the

Mediterranean, birthplace of civilizations that marked long periods of history. There are signs of this precious green-gold liquid squeezed from olives all along this route. It is a vital activity in the area, where the abundant production comes under the designation of origin of oil from Baena and Priego and provides the opportunity for tasting some of the best varieties in the world.



### FOOD

There are marinades, different salad dressings, stews made with ancient recipes, all along the way. Local

cooking has tried not to forget its cultural heritage and quite a few of the recipes have been rediscovered in old Moorish and Hebrew manuscripts. Among the favourite dishes, we have *salmorejo* (a slightly different and creamier version of *gazpacho*), artichokes *a la montillana*, oxtail or *flamenquines*. For dessert, one should try *pastel cordobés* or *asupiros de Almanzor* (sighs of Almanzor of Córdoba).



### WINE

The area of Montilla-Moriles in the province of Córdoba produces some excellent wines: *finos*,

*oloroso*, *amontillado* and *dulces*, made from Pedro Ximénez grapes, which are widespread throughout the area. They are delicious with various kinds of sausages, as well as with deserts. There are also a few smaller wine-producing

## HANDICRAFTS



The province of Córdoba can still boast the highest number of artisans in an age when both workshops and trades are fast disappearing. The quality of cordovan work (leather) and pottery was

already praised in times of Charlemagne and one is able to find fine examples today. Jewellers are particularly flourishing nowadays in Córdoba, with goldsmiths and silversmiths, as well as setters and engravers who produce some very attractive pieces. Various villages along the way also have pottery, wood-work and wrought-iron workshops that are well worth visiting.

## TRADITIONAL FEASTS

There is a full calendar of feasts along the Route of the Caliphate throughout the year. *Cruces de Mayo* are famous in Córdoba, and so is Corpus Christi in Granada; and then each village or hamlet has its own feast, such as the original celebration of *Crioto del Paño* in Moclín, the pilgrimages of Nuestra Señora de la Sierra in Cabra and that of Nuestra Señora de Araceli in Lucena, without forgetting the processions of *caliblanos* and *colinegros* during the Holy Week in Baena, as seen in the illustration.



Cultural Route of the Council of Europe  
From Córdoba to Granada  
**Route of the Caliphate**

## Information Points

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## CÓRDOBA



On the banks of the Guadalquivir, this is a lively town, the provincial capital city that provides the usual infrastructure and utilities, as well as overseeing agricultural production – particularly olive groves and vineyards. History shows that it was the centre of learning and knowledge. It was already of some importance under the Romans; it was where the philosopher Seneca and the poet Lucan were born and it was the capital of *Hispania Ulterior*. It became the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, where the people of three different cultural traditions –Muslims, Jews and Mozarabes– lived peacefully together and contributed to the recovery of the classical culture of ancient Greece and retrieved it for Europe through its scholars, such as Averroes and Maimonides. Under Abd al-Rahman III, Córdoba became the centre of civilization, a bridge between east and west. Such a dazzling past has left its mark in wonderful buildings. The Mosque, one of the most remarkable works of art of all times, Heritage of Humanity, represents the essence of a city that receives visitors with open arms. Not far, are the remarkable ruins of the palatine town Madinat al-Zahra.

## FERNÁN NÚÑEZ

This medieval town dates from the latter half of the 14th c. It owes its name to one of the beneficiaries of the distribution of land following the Christian conquest. It became quite well-known in the 17th c. as a result of the enlightened minds of the local lords. The ducal palace, begun in 1785, is worthy of note; it still has some remains of the medieval fortress that was the origin of the town. The parish church of Santa Marina de Aguas Santas is a magnificent example of baroque architecture, built around a 14th c. tower. The local festivities revolve around 18th July and the Feria Real (royal fair) is held in August.



## MONTEMAYOR



This is a fortress town with a view over low cultivated countryside. It may well have existed in the year 2000 BC, though the actual settlement dates from 1540, built around a medieval castle. The church of La Asunción is a blend of Gothic and Mudejar, plus later reforms. There are several hermitages in the neighbourhood, as well as the remains of the castle of Dos Hermanas, originally Moorish.

## MONTILLA

The village and castle of Montilla was awarded as a suzerainty in 1257 by Alfonso X. In 1508 Ferdinand the Catholic ordered that it should be torn down and part of the remains were used to begin building the church of Santiago. The church of La



Encarnación, begun in 1681, is considered a historical monument of national interest, and so is the Convent of Santa Clara by the architect Hernán Ruiz, finished at the beginning of the 18th c. It houses a valuable collection of works of art. There is also the house of *El Inca* Garcilaso de la Vega, the house of San

Juan de Ávila and the palace of the dukes of Medinaceli. Montilla is famed above all for its wines that carry their own designation of origin and some of its *bodega*s (wine cellars) may be visited. The grape gathering festivities are held at the end of August - beginning of September, during which the grapes are pressed in the old way. The wines include *fino* (similar to sherry), *amontillado* (dark golden colour and strong aroma) and *oloroso* (matured white wine that can become quite strong).

## AGUILAR DE LA FRONTERA

This town was a municipality already under the Romans. During the Moorish occupation, it became known due to the Muwallad (Spaniard who adopted the Muslim religion) rebellion of Omar ibn Hafsun in the 9th c. Right on the road from Málaga to Córdoba, it became an important fortress town and remained so until the end of the Middle Ages. Of its Andalusi past, there are bits of walls and towers on the hill over the village, known as Peñón del Moro. The village square of San José is one of the few polygonal squares in Spain.



## LUCENA



The first mention of this town goes back to the 9th c. to the effect that it was inhabited by Jews. Held by the Almoravids, it was economically prosperous and culturally advanced. The parish church of San Mateo, a National Monument, is possibly the original mosque that, in turn, might have been built over a synagogue. The reformed castle stands in the Plaza Nueva and is famous for having served as a prison for Boabdil, last monarch of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, captured at the battle of Lucena.

## CABRA

This is an area where the largest number of archaeological sites have been found in the province of Córdoba, with remains that go as far back as the Paleolithic Age. The castle of the Counts of Cabra was first a Roman fortress and afterwards, Moorish. The parish church, which has forty-four red marble columns, was built over the old mosque. The source of the Cabra river is not far away.



## CARCABUEY



Settled in the limits of the Subbetic mountain ranges, this town from Córdoba has been marked by the passage of numerous civilizations due to its condition of frontier town. *Karkabul*, the ancient Arab designation that means mountain pass, is towered by the parish

church of La Asunción and by a medieval castle. It offers the visitor many alternatives for enjoyment, such as its gastronomy and festivities.

## PRIEGO DE CÓRDOBA

Throughout history, this town has always been important strategically. The historian Ibn al-Khatib stated that in 745 the Egyptian soldiers who had entered the Peninsula settled in *Bago* and built fortresses among the high surrounding hills. *Bagub*, the Arabic name for Priego, probably grew out of one of these fortresses. In the year 889 it became the centre of operations for Ibn Mastana, one of the leaders of the Muwallad revolt, who proclaimed himself lord of Priego and Luque. The town was finally conquered by Alfonso XI and it was not until 1502 when real progress began and a great many buildings were put up. From its Andalusi past there are, among others, the castle



that was later reformed by the Christians, the Barrio de la Villa (La Villa quarter), the original centre of Priego with Moorish and medieval features, the Alfár building (potter's workshop) where pottery is made and several watchtowers in the vicinity. Other monuments are the late Gothic church of La Asunción, dating from the 16th c., restored later in the 18th c. to a baroque model; as well as the churches of La Aurora and San Francisco. Fuente del Rey is a characteristic feature of the town and a National Monument. There are some pleasant excursions near Priego, the road to Las Lagunillas for example, at the foot of Sierra Horconera, leading to La Tiñosa, the highest spot in the province (1,570 m. asl), to El Cerezo and to the Pico Bermejo gullies. A typical dish in Priego is *ajo blanco* and meatballs made with fresh anchovies.

## ESPEJO



The outline of its castle on top of a hill can be seen from some way off, overlooking the valley of the Guadajoz river. There are quite a few Iberian and Roman remains in the area. The thick powerful walls were put up by the Caliphs of Córdoba. The parish church of San Bartolomé is

quite interesting, and so is the large house of the Dukes of Osuna. It is possible to find excellent and traditional confectionery in some of the bakeries, such as *mostachones* or *cuajados*.

## CASTRO DEL RÍO

Its history goes hand in hand with the castle, which is a common feature of "frontier" villages (the frontier between Muslim and Christian territories). The origins are suspected to be pre-Roman; there are a few remains of the old wall that used to surround the highest part of the Barrio de la Villa. The front of La Asunción church is plateresque, eroded by the passing of time. The local Fair of Santiago is held between 25th and 27th July and it also includes the pilgrimage of Nuestra Señora de La Salud and the Cattle Fair.

## BAENA

This town seems to be a compendium of Andalusian history since pre-Roman times. The place-name *Bayyana* comes from the Hispano-Roman owner of the villa, someone called *Baius*. On arrival of the Muslims in the 8th c. this was an active military, administrative and agricultural centre. The old part called Almedina, still has an Oriental air. The castle was begun in the 9th c. and enlarged during the Caliphate and the Christian conquest. Subsequently it became the summer palace for the lords of Baena who in the 16th c. were great patrons and, therefore, responsible for the town's most outstanding buildings. The church of Santa María la Mayor is flamboyant Gothic and there are references to it in the 12th c. when it was a mosque before being turned into a Christian church in the 14th c. Nowadays, it is a delightful building with three splendid façades and some lovely chapels. It was reformed after the earthquake of 1681. Another remarkable building is the church of the convent of the Dominican nuns dating from the 16th c. that contains marble statues, carved frameworks and paintings such as one by Zurbarán, another by Sánchez Coello and two by Bassano. El Coso square is a pleasing composition and a good example of the old part of the town, that is also the centre of a large area of olive groves that produce an excellent type of virgin oil under its designation of origin; a visit to the installations of Núñez de Prado Olive Oil and its traditional press is quite interesting. Holy Week is a popular feast, with its processions of *judíos caliblanco*s and *judíos colnegros* (white and black-tailed Jews). The former also participate in the pilgrimage of La Virgen Blanca de la Alegría at the end of June.



## ZUHEROS

This is a Moorish town at the foot of a rocky range, from where it has its name *Subayra*, which means rock in Arabic. The 9th c. castle is perched on top of one of these enormous rocks. Not far



is La Cueva de los Murciélagos (cave of bats) with cave paintings and an outstanding vantage point over this extraordinary landscape.

## LUQUE



Right in the middle of the Sierras Subbéticas Natural Environment, the inevitable castle stands out, built by Mohammed I in the 9th c., and rebuilt by the Nasrids in the 13th c. The parish church started out Gothic and ended up being Renaissance. A popular dish in this area is stewed kid.

## ALCAUDETE



This town is in the countryside of the province of Jaén, surrounded by olive trees, orchards and vineyards. It was a Visigoth settlement when Tarik took it in the year 715 and the Muslims settled around a Roman tower. Centuries later, the principal church of Santa María was built not far away, and it is an interesting catalogue of superimposed styles. There are many excursions to be enjoyed in the area, such as the neo-Gothic cemetery, the hermitages nearby, Parador del Conde, park of La Fuensanta and the rivers San Juan and Víboras.

## CASTILLO DE LOCUBÍN



From *Hion* at *Uqbin*, there are still some visible remains of Las Águilas castle at a place known as La Villeta, consisting of a group of white houses from where there is a wide view over the countryside. From here there are excursions to Encinahermosa, that has some Ibero-Roman remains; a horse or a bicycle ride will lead you to Ventas del Carrizal among orchards, poplars and farm houses, to Sierra de la Martina and to the source of the San Juan river.

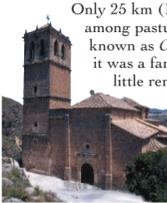
## ALCALÁ LA REAL

This is a village with an essentially Andalusi history. The first part of its name, as of many other towns, comes from the Arabic *Qalat*, which means fortified settlement. It was a frontier town, key to the valley of the Guadalquivir and to the fertile plains of Granada and its coat of arms has a key right in the middle. It was known to the Iberians and Romans and the Moors lived there for more than six hundred years, during which it grew around the fortress. A high point in Alcalá's Andalusi past was reached in the 12th c.; it changed hands frequently before finally falling into Christian hands. It was from here that the Catholic Monarchs –Ferdinand and Isabella– rode out in order to receive the keys upon the surrender of Granada. Alcalá was the principal fortress on the frontier, connected to the castles of Alcaudete and Locubín, as well as to a series of watchtowers, most of which are still visible. La Mota fortress has two distinct spaces, the *alcazaba* or citadel and the abbey church. The former consists of three



towers –Campana, Mocha and Del Homenaje (keep)–, around the courtyard and is the old military quarters of the Muslim town. Large rocks form part of the walls and there are altogether seven doors, leading downwards to the village. The abbey church Santa María la Mayor on one of the castle's esplanades, is a mixture of renaissance and plateresque. Remains of the first gothic church have been discovered in the nave, as well as tombs and crypts and two Roman wells. What used to be the mosque is nowadays the church of Santo Domingo de Silos, begun in 1341, subsequently reformed by Maximilian of Austria. The Archaeological Museum, settled in the historical town, is housed in the Palacio Abacial (abbatial palace). The feast of the patron saint, Santo Domingo, is celebrated on 20th December in memory of Alfonso XI's conquest of Arrabal Viejo. On 15th August, feast of the Assumption, there is a procession with 12,000 lighted torches.

## COLOMERA



Only 25 km (15.5 miles) from Granada, located among pastures, this old Roman settlement was known as *Columbarium*. In the times of the Moors, it was a farmstead known as *Qulanbayra*, and only little remains of the old fortress. It was taken by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1486. The church of La Encarnación was built at the beginning of the 16th c. and is a goodly mixture of Gothic, renaissance and mudejar. Nearby are a Roman bridge and a necropolis.

## MOCLÍN

This used to be an important location in the defensive system along one of the branches followed by the Route of the Caliphate. During the 14th and 15th centuries its history consisted of a series of conquests, reconquests, exchanges and truces. The castle, from Nasrid times, has two clearly distinct areas. The first is in a better state of repair than the others and now consists of an access tower. The second area is the citadel. In the lower part of the first area we find the Church of Cristo de El Paño, founded by the Catholic Kings and the renaissance *Casa del Pósito* (granary). There are various pleasant excursions to be made in the vicinity to outlying watchtowers within the defense system, such as Torre de la Porqueriza, some 3 km (1.8 miles) away, Torre de Mingoandrós on the hill of the same name and Torre de la Solana. Main road 432 through Tiena, upwards towards Moclin, offers a wide view of Sierra Nevada, La Almirara, Harana and the fertile plains of Granada. There are also prehistoric remains near *Cueva del Malalmuerzo*, *Corcuela* and *Tízar*.



## PINOS PUENTE



Its origins are related to the Ibero-Roman town of *Illuro*, nearby. It has always been mentioned as the provider of farm produce to Granada. It is known for being the place to which Columbus returned when he was recalled by Queen Isabella when he was already on his way to offer his services in France. The bridge at Pinos is a Visigoth construction dating from the 7th c. –one of the few still extant. There are several good bicycle rides in the area.

## GÜEVÉJAR



Mention of this locality goes back to the 8th c. BC and in Arabic it was known as *Wabawar*, described as a farmstead by Ibn al-Khatib. The settlement was abandoned after the Morisco (baptized Moor) rebellion against Philip II. The surrounding land produces olive oil, good wine and home-made pork sausages. Traditional dishes include *gachas picantes*, *cboto en ajillo*, *cordero a la caldereta* and *migas con melón*.

## COGOLLOS VEGA

Another farmstead in the area of the plains of Granada. There are some Moorish baths in the southern part of the hamlet, which has splendid views, being located in Sierra de Huétor, where trekking, climbing and hang-gliding are possible.



## ALFACAR



This was the place chosen by the Zirid kings for their leisure. It lies in the mountainous depression to the North of Granada, 915 m. asl. In the 10th c. it was mentioned as "the potter's hamlet" or "the clay hamlet". In the 14th and 15th centuries it is mentioned by Ibn Battuta and Ibn al-Khatib. There are many flour mills and numerous bakeries still exist. Its fame is due to the bread

baked there, to the quality of the water and to its attractive location.

## VÍZNAR



This hamlet was originally created when the engineering works were carried out for taking water from Fuente de Aynadamar along a ditch to the Albayzín quarter in Granada, under the Nasrid dynasty. The ditch is still extant, having undergone some slight changes. The Palace and the Church of El Cuzco, dating from 18th c. stand out.

## GRANADA

Its privileged location between the Mediterranean coast and the upper Guadalquivir river, between the East coast and southern Andalusia, crossroads of historical paths, its unique landscape, the contrast between the peaks of Sierra Nevada and the subtropical environment of the coastal regions, have joined the successive civilizations in order to shape the modern city of Granada.

It is the end of the Route of the Caliphate and the common destiny to all the routes of El legado andalusí. Being the capital of the last of the Muslim kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, the patrimony of Granada encloses the memory of eight-centuries of Hispano-Muslim civilization inside the Alhambra palaces, a civilization that is unique for its distinctive features and constitutes one of the most valued treasures of mankind. Granada captivates the visitor through the enchantment irradiated by the palace fortress of La Alhambra, quarters with an indelible andalusí stamp such as the Albayzín, a wonderful framework of walls, *carmenes* (andalusí courtyards), palaces and ancient mosques, along with a fabulous and amazing repertory of monuments of all kind, such as the Cathedral, the Royal Chapel, the Madrasa, Corral del Carbón, Cartuja ...

