

The Route of the Alpujarras



The Route of the Alpujarras is the historical path that connects Almería with Granada, passing through the rugged and stunning region of La Alpujarra, one of the most diverse and captivating routes of El legado andalusí.

Starting from the fascinating beaches of Almería bathed by the Mediterranean, it takes the traveller on a journey through striking landscapes full of contrasts: the Tabernas desert, the highest peaks of the Iberian Peninsula, and mountainside farmhouses with terraces of agricultural bounty, all lead to the lush Genil River valley, on the edge of Granada. This landscape is adorned with verdant orchards brimming with fruit and vegetables, interspersed with chestnuts, oaks, and holm oaks that are mostly part of the Sierra Nevada National Park, which occupies a large area of the provinces of Granada and Almería. The region's unique ethnological and historical peculiarities are a result of its historical isolation. The Alpujarra, the last *Morisco* (Moorish) stronghold in Spain, is home to numerous remains of medieval fortifications, including watchtowers, castles, forts, and turrets. Additionally, the area boasts a valuable archaeological heritage from the Muslim period.

The legacy of al-Andalus can still be appreciated in many fields, particularly in the curious and distinctive architecture of the region. The thick stone walls, supported by oak or chestnut trunks, and the use of slates and tiles for the roofs are characteristic of this style. Additionally, the typical *terraos* and *tinacos* of La Alpujarra add to the unique architectural charm of the area. The steep slopes of the region are transformed into fields of crops through expert irrigation by the waters of Sierra Nevada. The area's gastronomy thrives on the simplest ingredients, and the *tabonas* (bakeries), farmhouse kitchens, and recipes have remained relatively unchanged over time. The traditions of the Alpujarras are a product of the mixture of cultures that have passed through the region throughout history, with the culture of al-Andalus leaving the greatest mark.

The Routes of El legado andalusí

During the period of Muslim Spain, the Iberian Peninsula experienced one of the most privileged moments in history, giving birth to a brilliant civilization in which Andalusia became the cultural hub of Europe and a bridge between East and West.

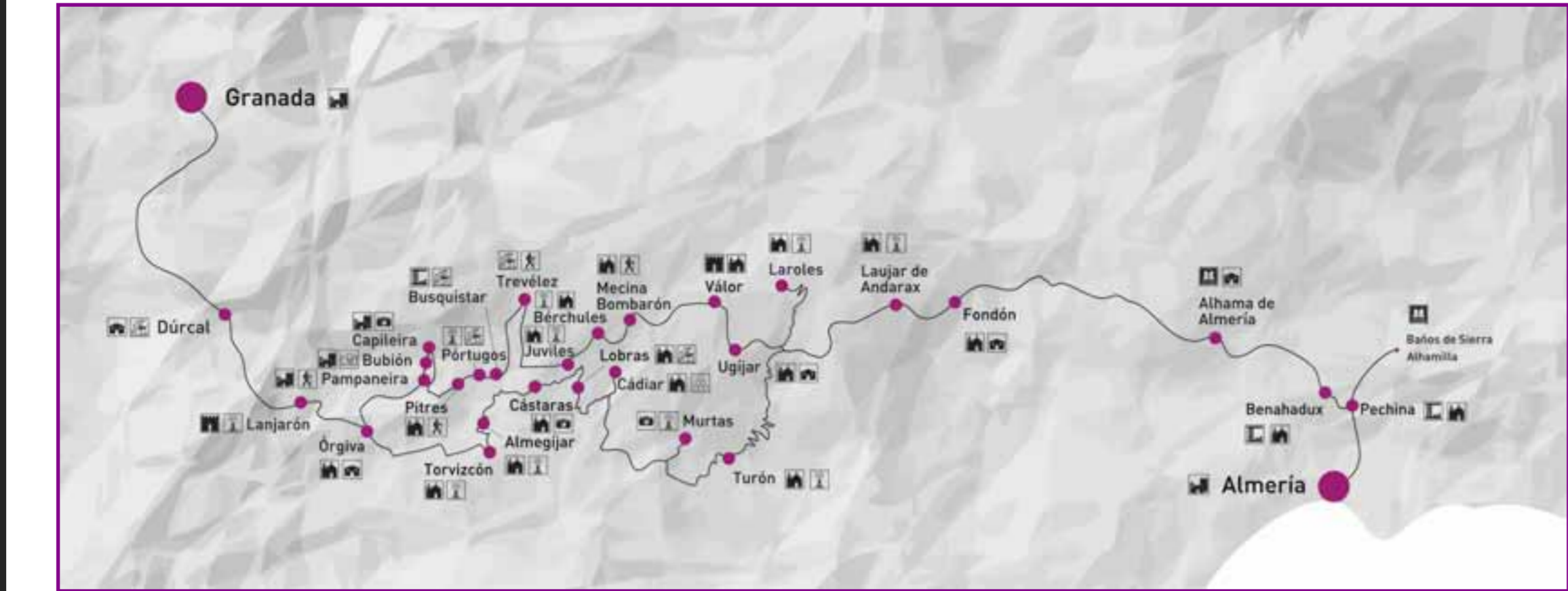
The Routes of El legado andalusí trace the paths once used to connect the Kingdom of Granada with the rest of al-Andalus. These routes offer travellers the opportunity to admire breathtaking landscapes, travel peacefully, taste gastronomic delights, and let their imaginations run wild, bringing the past to life in the present.

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ROUTE AND DISTANCES

Almería ■ Pechina ■ Benahadux ■ Alhama de Almería ■ Fondón ■ Laujar de Andarax ■ Turón ■ Murtas ■ Cádiar ■ Lobras ■ Cástaras ■ Almegijar ■ Torvizcón ■ Órgiva ■ Laroles ■ Ugijar ■ Válor ■ Mecina Bombarón ■ Bérchules ■ Juviles ■ Trevélez ■ Busquistar ■ Pórtugos ■ Pítres ■ Capileira ■ Bubiñon ■ Pampaneira ■ Lanjarón ■ Dúrcal ■ Granada.

The Route of the Alpujarras begins its route of more than 400 km. in Almería and runs in its beginning by the N-340a to Benahadux to take the A-348, axis that goes inside and crosses the Alpujarra. At the crossing of the river Alcolea the traveler must decide whether to continue towards the A-337, a road that leads to the high Alpujarra and the most renowned villages, Trevélez, Capileira, Pampaneira... or take the local AL-6400 that begins the route through the most unknown part of the Route through the Sierra de la Contraviesa, to leave the province of Almería and continue along the local GR-6202 to reach Turón, Murtas, Cádiar... to Órgiva where both branches of the Route meet. The road continues again by the local A-348 to leave La Alpujarra and continue through the Valle de Lecrín by the A-44, occasionally taking the detour to visit Dúrcal, and continue until you reach the final destination, Granada.

LANDSCAPE

This Route takes the visitor through a journey of strong contrasts -from the dark volcanic mountains to the white beaches, passing through the barren, eroded Tabernas Desert and ascending to the Gádor and Contraviesa mountain ranges as a prelude to the Sierra Nevada Natural Park. Here, the visitor will experience the striking contrast between the dry high peaks and the lush green terraces filled with fruit trees, chestnut trees and unique endemic species nourished by the waters of perpetual snows.



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FOLKLORE

The Alpujarra region takes great pride in a rich folklore that has been passed down from one generation to another, mainly through oral tradition. It collects the contributions from all the cultures that have left their mark on this land over the years. It is expressed through popular *coplas*, *coplillas*, sayings, riddles, lullabies, and *canciones de ánimas* (song of souls) or Christmas carols. They are often associated with celebrations, patron saint feasts, and agricultural works, and accompanied by the sounds of string instruments like the violin, lute, bandurria, and guitar and folk dances like *robao* or *mudanza*.

Trovo
The *trovo*, the most remarkable living cultural expression in the Alpujarra, is a direct inheritance from the ancient troubadour poetry of the 11th to 13th centuries. *Troveros*

(trovo singers) engage in discussions with the rhythm of *fanango* singing, improvising five-verse stanzas known as *quintillas*, accompanied by guitar, lute, and violin. Its best-preserved area in the Alpujarra is centred around the region of La Contraviesa.

Festival of Traditional Music of La Alpujarra
The Festival of Traditional Music of La Alpujarra has been celebrated in the month of August since 1982, playing a vital role in preserving and sharing the rich folklore of the region. Each year, a different village in Granada or Almería hosts the festival, featuring troubadours, dance groups, and traditional musicians who showcase the diverse aspects of Alpujarra's cultural heritage. It serves as a gathering place for locals and contributes to the local economy through craft fairs and a wide range of gastronomic and tourist offer.

ARCHITECTURE

The Alpujarra villages generally show a characteristic cascading layout on the mountainous slopes of Sierra Nevada and La Contraviesa. They adapt to the rugged terrain, predominantly facing the South or East to maximize sunlight exposure. In the Alpujarra villages, houses shape narrow, cobbled streets with connecting huts. The urban structure preserves a strong Morisco heritage that has endured virtually unchanged in many places to this day. Without any preconceived construction scheme, the construction of houses gives rise to narrow, cobbled streets, adorned with connecting sheds between the houses.

They are simple constructions, built with local materials, featuring thick lime-whitewashed stone walls that support two or three storeys, small windows with wooden lintels, flat *launa* -slate clay for waterproofing- roofs, and chestnut or oak beams, which either serve as terraces or as passageways between houses, forming the characteristic *tinacos*. Typical features include *terraos* (roof terraces) used for drying clothes and socializing, and chimneys topped with slate hats.

Other characteristic elements are washing places, fountains and troughs, which are typical meeting points and watering places for animals and population. The religious architecture is predominantly Mudejar style, characterized by single-nave buildings adorned with intricate rich wooden frames. Additionally, there are hermitages with simple plans and vaulted roofs reminiscent of old Muslim *rabitás*.

On the left, two examples of the landscape diversity of La Alpujarra. On the right, the characteristic *terraos*.



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GASTRONOMY

This Route offers subtle culinary delights. In addition to savouring the delectable seafood dishes of Almería, it can also be appreciated the dominant influence of mountain cuisine, that masterfully handles raw ingredients, ensuring their optimal preservation for as long as possible while making use of the region's own products. This is why the region's culinary gems are those derived of wheat and pork, complemented by vegetables, game, and fruits.

Among the standout dishes are *migas*, crafted from flour or bread, water, oil, garlic, and peppers, served with bacon, *chorizo* (spicy sausage), or dried fish. Locals savour this dish at any time of day. Another culinary masterpiece is the *plato alpujarreño*, based on fried potatoes prepared *a lo pobre* ("in humble style"), accompanied by eggs and pork products. Among these culinary elaborations, one stands out: air-cured ham, produced predominantly in the town of Trevélez. This ham pairs exquisitely with the exceptional wines of La Contraviesa, as well as cheeses and cured meats prepared in the traditional manner.

Other local gastronomic delights include *gachas* (porridge), partridge with rice, and *talvinas*, a wheat flour porridge served with bread and fried almonds. The confectionery delights inherit the *morisco* tradition, with a base of almonds and sugar. Typical local dishes include chestnut stew, *pan de bigo* (dried fig bread), *soplillos* (meringue and almond sweets), and *buñuelos* (fritters).

FESTIVALS

The Alpujarras Route meets a full calendar of festivals all year round. From the Virgen del Mar fair in Almería to the Corpus Christi celebration in Granada, the route is adorned with a multitude of festivities. Each village hosts patronal feasts dedicated to their respective patron saints, organized by the "mayordomos" (butlers). San Marcos pilgrimages with the traditional *bornazos* (bread with boiled eggs inside), and the pet blessings during San Antón are traditions celebrated in many villages.

The Moors and Christians festivals have a deep tradition in this region, such as the one celebrated in Válor, where symbolic confrontations between Christians and Moors take place. Other significant festivities include the procession of Cristo de la Expiración in Órgiva, San Juan celebrations like the *Noche del Agua* (Night of Water) in Lanjarón, grape harvest festivals like the Wine Festival in Cádiar, the *Mauraca de Castañas* (chestnut tasting) in Pampaneira, the *Entierro de la Zorra* (Burial of the Fox), and Christmas celebrations.

HANDICRAFTS

The traditions of the Alpujarras are the result from the mixture of diverse cultures that have shaped this region over time, with al-Andalus leaving an indelible mark on its historical and cultural heritage. These influences are evident in the basketry and pottery crafts, the *jarapas* and *mota* carpets, embroidery and assorted weavings. Remarkably, some Morisco looms still produce handwoven textiles, while wood-fired ovens and pottery wheels from the Islamic period continue to be used.



Above, Benecid Museum. Below, Jarapas from La Alpujarra.



The Routes of El legado andalusí

Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

Route of las Alpujarras

From Almería to Granada



Information Points

ALMERÍA Ayuntamiento. Oficina de Turismo de la Junta de Andalucía Parque Nicolás Salmerón, esquina C/ Martínez Campos. Tlf. 950 175 220	CÁSTARAS Ayuntamiento. Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 1. Tlf. 958 855 533	PÓRTUGOS Ayuntamiento. Calle Sierra Nevada s/n. Tlf. 958 766 001
Oficina Municipal de Turismo de Almería. Plaza de la Constitución, s/n. Tlf. 950 210 538/950 270 848	ALMEGIJAR Ayuntamiento. Plaza de la Constitución, 1. Tlf. 958 764 031	PÍTRÉS Ayuntamiento de La Taha. Plaza del Ayuntamiento, 1. Tlf. 958 766 061
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LOBRAS Ayuntamiento. Plaza de la Iglesia, s/n. Tlf. 958 768 107	TREVÉLEZ Ayuntamiento. Calle Cárcel, 2 Tlf. 958 858 501	Oficina de Información Turística del Patronato Provincial. Calle Cárcel Baja 3. Tel. 958 247 128
	BUSQUISTAR Ayuntamiento. Calle Mezquita, 1. Tlf. 958 766 031	Oficina Municipal de Información Turística. Ayuntamiento de Granada. Plaza del Carmen s/n. Tel. 958 248 280

