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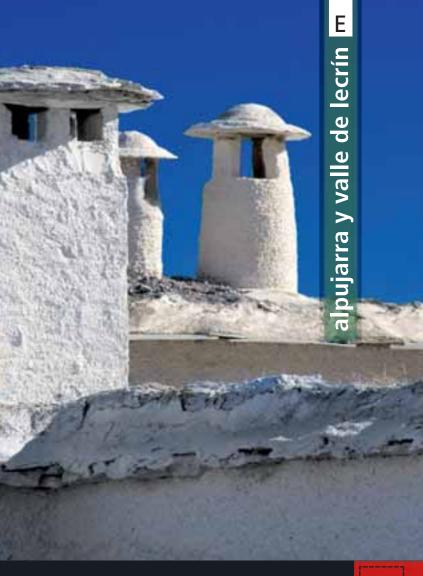








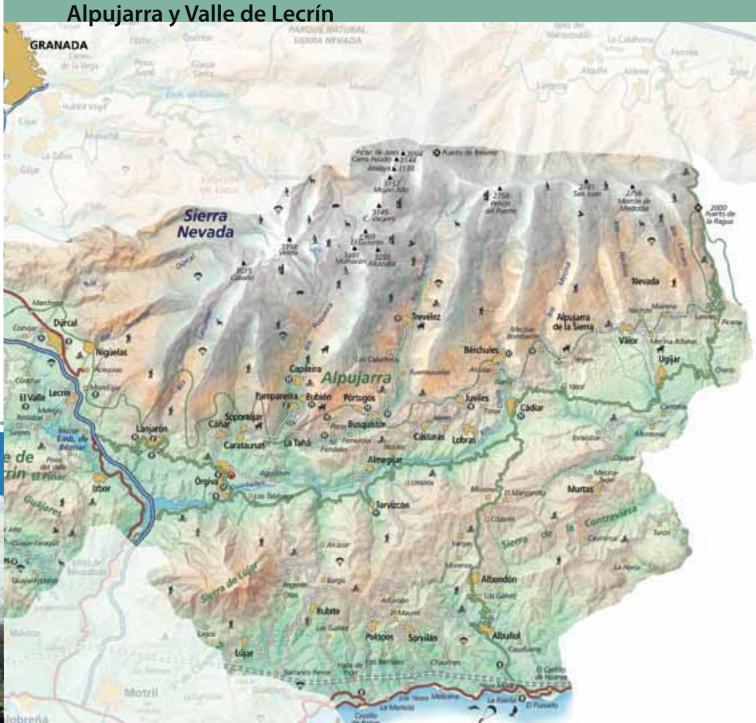




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Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley



Between the Sierra Nevada

n Southern Spain, facing the ■ Mediterranean and looking out towards Africa, is one of the most romantic, tranquil areas in Europe: the Alpujarra and Lecrin Valley.

It was the Moors' last stronghold in the Iberian Peninsula, and thanks to the isolation of its location for

Guadalfeo valley, at the base of the Poqueira ravine, and the snow.

2 · Alpujarra chimneys.

Lecrín Valley - Melegís.

Rural scene in Bubión.

Albondón in the Contraviesa.

many centuries, we find it largely unspoiled even today. Here, customs and ways of life that elsewhere have been forgotten remain strong, reminding us that there can be a better way to live.

The climate of the Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley is created by the protection afforded by the high peaks of the Sierra Nevada, open to the warm breezes of the Mediterranean. Since the area's

villages are dotted on the mountains slopes at different heights, their climates also vary greatly.





and the Mediterranean

The landscape also changes depending on the altitude. At sea level, tropical plantations flourish, with fertile farmland in the valleys. On higher land, crops are grown on terraces and large areas are forested, while towards the peaks — up to 3,400 metres above sea level — only the bare rock remains.

Access to the area is by road, either via the motorway linking **Granada** with the coast or via **the Raqua pass**. Other local roads from the coast cross the Contraviesa to reach the Alpujarra.

This small corner of the former Kingdom of Granada maintains its Islamic stamp intact — a piece of the East in the West. Its Berber architecture with cube-shaped whitewashed houses rests on the steep hillsides, among terraces and landscapes that stretch to the horizon. In this rural environment of warm, welcoming people a wide range of services are in place for visitors to enjoy a large number of different activities.

The Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley welcome you to this privileged natural

enclave, so beloved of such illustrious visitors as Gerald Brenan.











Collowing the expulsion

Granada, this area was

the home for thousands of

inhabitants of Al-Andalus.

until 1568, when Fernando

de Córdoba, known as Abén

of King Boabdil from

The Moors' last

Boabdil, the last king of Granada Crops grown on terraces

Defensive tower in Albuñuelas

Órgiva, Nasrid tower Expulsion of the Moors

Illustration of houses in the Alpujarra

7 Lanjarón's Moorish castle

Humeya, led the rebellion of the post-conquest Moors which resulted in the final expulsion of all Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, marking the end of one act in the district's history and marking the beginning of another, where the influence of Islam would remain strong.

Yet the history of the Alpujarra and **Lecrin Valley** did not begin there, since its settlements date back to prehistoric times. The Phoenicians and Romans also settled here,

albeit temporarily. The area would not be settled permanently until the arrival of the Moors, who found here their paradise on earth, adapting it to their lifestyle in a perfect symbiosis with nature.

The area prospered with fruit orchards and the development of the silk industry, continuing that way until modern times.

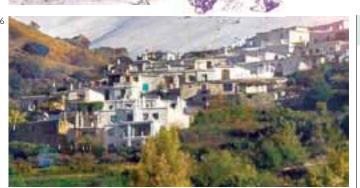
Spanish home

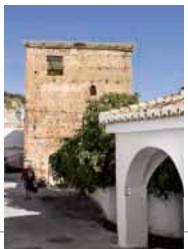
Despite repopulation by Christians, the district changed little: the terracefarming system remained in full use, the water channels continued to irrigate the orchards and the new

> inhabitants lived in the same cube-shaped

split-level houses. Everything remained the same, and luckily it still does.

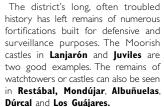












Such constructions can be seen dotted over practically the entire area. In some cases they are now ruins, such as those in Capileira, Válor, Murtas and Yegen, while in others they have remained virtually intact, such as the Nasrid tower in **Órgiva**.

A natural

he **province of Granada** is one of the few parts of the world where you can see in a limited space all the different types of vegetation that grow according to the altitude.

Between sea level on the Costa Tropical to the peak of Mulhacén in the Sierra Nevada the difference in altitude is 3,482 metres — over a distance of only 40 kilometres as the crow flies.

As a result, the native Sierra Nevada species the "star of the snow" grows relatively close to prickly pears and tropical crops such as the cherimova.

In the mountains, the Sierra **Nevada National Park** is where most of the native plant species are concentrated, as well as large wild animals such mountain



- Pine forests in winter
- 3 Prickly pears
- Alpujarra and the Sierra Nevada
- 5 Access to the mountains from Nigüelas
- 6 Bird of prey over the Alpujarra
- 7 Wildlife in the Nature Park







The Alpujarra and Lecrin **Valley** live in perfect harmony with nature, fully respecting the natural flora and fauna. Although much of the territory now lies within the limits of a protected Nature Park, local people have always made wise use of the local natural resources without harming them.









paradise

goats, while the Spanish imperial eagle and other birds of prey soar overhead.

At lower altitudes we find wooded areas with tree species ranging from pines to cork and holm oaks. Chestnuts, oaks and dyer's oaks alternate with terraced farmland on the hillsides. Closer to the valleys we see olives, carob trees and prickly pears, also







The most highly valued

Sierra Nevada had run directly into the rivers, meaning that any settlements had to be established on their banks in order for crops to be grown.

The Moors captured the water from the mountains and built channels to lead it towards their farms, domesticating and terracing the land for their crops.

Water is a permanent fixture throughout the **Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley**, and many examples of the Moors' feats of hydraulic engineering can still be seen: watermills, cisterns, ponds and channels are everywhere, as are springs and fountains from which the cool water burbles to this day.

Many villages still have public washing facilities fed by natural springs, in everyday use until only a few decades ago.

Some of these springs have special medicinal mineral qualities, including those used by the spa facilities in **Lanjarón**. In recent years the demand for mineral water has led to the building of a large bottling plant in the town.

The permanent isolation of the









asset for a special way of life

inhabitants of the **Alpujarra** and **Lecrín Valley** over the course of history has made them simple people who live in close contact with nature and enjoy life at a slower pace.

This special, stress-free way of viewing life, and the scale of the landscapes that can be seen from the vast amphitheatre of the **Sierra Nevada's** southern slopes, has attracted many artists to the area. Just like the first Moors who arrived in the 8th century, the newcomers feel that they have found their paradise and come to stay.

This was the magnet that attracted such 19th-century Romantic travellers as **Richard Ford**, **Washington Irving** and **Pedro Antonio de Alarcón** — the simple pleasure of watching the sun set that fascinated **Gerald Brenan** and led him to spend 14 years in the village of **Yegen**.



Such are the inspirational qualities of this area that it was chosen as the site for the first **Buddhist community** in the Iberian Peninsula: O'Sel Ling ("Place of Clear Light" in Tibetan).

- Public washing facilities in Albuñuelas.
- Snow-melt water.
- Spring in Rubite.
- 4 Street with water channel in Campania.
- Guadalfeo reservoir.
- 6 Rural scene in Pitres.
- 7 Buddhist centre.
- 8 Museum of Alpujarra Houses in Bubión







Architecture adapted

he nearly eight centuries of Islam in the **Alpujarra and Lecrín Va- Iley** left a permanent mark on the urban development of the area.

As with the white mountain villages of North Africa built on hillsides and at the bottom of valleys, the first Moorish settlers built their tahás on the slopes of the **Sierra Nevada**. These villages and scattered farmsteads were the seed that led to the creation of larger settlements. Villages that have developed from these tahás include **Alpujarra de la Sierra**, **Nevada**, **La Tahá**, **Los Guájares**, **Lecrín** and **El Valle**.

The urban design of the Alpujarra, inherited from the Moors, has maintained the structure of narrow, winding streets with cube-shaped houses stacked one on top of the other. Sometimes the streets widen out somewhat to create a small square, housing shops, bars, the town hall or the church.

The narrow streets, full of hidden corners, constantly change their level and direction and sometimes pass beneath the houses under a kind of bridge structure known as a tinao, with bare alfagías visible between the eaves. These tinaos are usually







to the environment

whitewashed together with the walls of the houses, combining with brightly coloured flowerpots and the area's special light to create images of great plasticity, explaining to a great extent their attraction for artists. Another characteristic feature of these buildings is their conical chimneys, topped with a hat-like cover.

The mountain villages, which are always south-facing, are integrated naturally into the environment as if they were part of the landscape. The construction of the houses also reflects their surroundings, as materials obtained locally are used to build them: stone and adobe for the walls, earthenware and manganese clay for the ceilings, and chestnut for the beams.

The traditional house is structured on two levels, with the lower level

for animals and the terrao (granary) and the upper level as the dwelling-space, with a dining-room/kitchen with a large fireplace and the staircase down to the lower level. Light comes from a single window or balcony. The bedrooms are off this main room, sometimes separated only by a simple curtain of traditional local cloth.



- | : Street in Bubión
- 2 🗜 Alpujarra chimney
- 3 Tinao en Pampaneira
- 4 Adapting to the land in Trevélez
- 5 Stable below.
- 6 Dining-room/kitchen.
- 7 Typical Alpujarra architecture in
- Busquístar





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The taste of the Alpujarra

he cuisine of the **Alpujarra** and **Lecrín Valley** reflects the same influences as the area's agriculture and urban development, with a mixture of both Moorish and Christian influences.

Pigs, which were brought in by the Christians, are represented in the area with **hams from Trevélez**, often served with dishes — particularly confectionery — of Moorish origin.

Other pork products popular in the area include tasty cold cuts, while other typical local dishes include migas, gachas pimentonas or gachas de ajo quemado, choto al ajillo (kid goat in garlic sauce), conejo picante (spicy rabbit), and plato alpujarreño, which are all delight for the palate.

In general, it's a simple, natural type of cooking that makes good use of local products such as fruit and vegetables.

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Mention must also be made of the **wines of the Contraviesa** and the delicious Moorish-influenced confectionery products, including soplillos de almendra, cuajados and roscones de hojarasca.







Craftsmanship handed down



Being handmade, individually and by a specific artisan, gives added value to craft products

In the **Alpujarra** and **Lecrin Valley**, this art, handed down through the generations, can be found in a wide range of local products, including brightly coloured blankets and rugs woven on the Alpujarra's looms.

Other artisans make gold and silverware, ceramics, leather goods, wood-carvings, esparto-grass basketry, embroidery, etc., which is distributed throughout the region.



In recent years those seeking an alternative lifestyle have joined the local artisans to make jewellery accessories.

The Alpujarra Crafts Association has registered the brand "Artesanía Alpujarra" to identify products made in the district and assure their quality and level of craftsmanship.



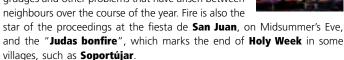
- Grapes from the Contraviesa
- 2 Assorted pork products
- 3 Typical Alpujarra dish
- Game
- 5 · Alpujarra cheese
- Loom
- New artisans in the Alpujarra
- Basket-work and esparto-grass
- 9 Rugs



that date back to time immemorial. Most of them have a religious theme, although others are based around fire and fireworks.

Fireworks, ripraps and bonfires are featured in such

Fireworks, ripraps and bonfires are featured in such popular celebrations as the "burial of the vixen", a traditional fiesta that symbolises the settling of old grudges and other problems that have arisen between neighbours over the course of the year. Fire is also the



In **Béznar** the traditional "**Holy Musketeers**" parade through the streets firing blunderbusses like those used by the Christians who took over the area from the Moors after they were expelled in 1572.

Also worth seeing are the celebrations of battles between **Moors and Christians**, such as those at **Válor**, the birthplace of Abén Humeya. The sound of gunpowder echoes through the valleys as the skirmishes between the two sides are re-created. Another interesting celebration is the harvest festival in **Cádiar**, when the year's new wine from the **Contraviesa** flows ceaselessly from a public fountain.

Religious celebrations are to be found all







celebrates



Holy Week in Órgiva

Flamenco in Pitres

Image of the Virgin Mary in Ugíjar

Fireworks

Poster for Holy Week in Lanjarón

Béznar musketeers

Moors and Christians celebrations in Válor

over the region, the most important of which is undoubtedly Holy Week, when religious brotherhoods file through the narrow streets of towns including Lanjarón and Órgiva. Besides these spring festivals, several towns and villages also have annual pilgrimages, including the Virgen de las Nieves in Trevélez and Capileira, when pilgrims climb up to the summit of Mulhacén, and the Virgen de la Cabeza, also in Capileira. Other tributes to the Virgin Mary have a colourful fair as their backdrop, such as the one in **Ugijar** dedicated to the patron saint of the Alpujarra, Our Lady of the Martyrdom.

The **Contraviesa** is the home of the **trovo**, an improvised dialectical dual in rhyme accompanied by music. The witty calls and responses are much enjoyed by visitors to **Cádiar**, **Murtas** and other villages.

Every year, over the second weekend in August, the Alpujarra Traditional Music Festival is held in a different town. The festival was set up in 1982 to save the traditional songs and instruments of the Alpujarra from being





he scale of the landscapes of the **Alpujarra** and **Lecrín Valley** invariably has a relaxing effect on those who come to enjoy them, but that doesn't mean that all activity stops.

The **long-distance GR-7 route**, which crosses through Spain from Catalonia to Gibraltar, enters the province of Granada via **the Ragua pass** and ends in **Lanjarón**. Walking this trail is an unforgettable experience

enjoyed only by a select few.

Our senses are bombarded by a multitude of stimuli as we cross leafy streams burbling with ice-melt waters, passing through welcoming mountain villages and watching awesome sunsets. An extensive network of accommodation options is available for walkers.

The lower Alpujarra bypass

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- Cycling through the Contraviesa
- 2 River Guadalfeo at Órgiva
- 3 Wildlife in the National Park
- 4 The GR-7 road as it passes through Pitres
- 5 : Cli
- Alpujarra in winter
- 7 Mountain-biking
- Sierra Nevada trails







nature

(GR-142) begins in the Alpujarra section of the district, following first the river Mecina and then the Guadalfeo to Órgiva and Lanjarón. Countless paths and trails cross these long-distance routes, climbing to the peaks of the Sierra Nevada and Sierra de la Contraviesa. The Lecrín Valley and Los Guájares also offer a host of options for walkers.

This network of footpaths is also used by **mountain-bikers** exploring the area, not only to enjoy the area's beautiful landscapes but, with a little luck, also to catch sight of some of the wildlife that lives in the **Sierra Nevada National Park**.

The upper Alpujarra is an ideal starting point for **climbers** and **mountaineers**. Over 20 peaks in the **Sierra Nevada** are at an altitude of over 3,000 metres. Climbing these peaks is a challenge worth taking on, if only to have the privilege of contemplating views that others cannot see. On a clear day, the Mediterranean and even Africa await those who love heights.









nature

ctivities in the area are not limited to **walking** and **cycling**. Many others can be enjoyed by visitors, either on their own account or by using the services of one of several local adventure companies.

Horse-riding is an ecological alternative and a very pleasant way to enjoy the **Sierra Nevada** in all its natural splendour.

You can also book guided visits in 4x4 vehicles along

specially designed environment-friendly routes.

The grandeur of the place is particular attraction for high flyers. **Hang-gliding** or **paragliding** offers views that otherwise are only for the birds. From



The **rivers of the Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley** are also ideal for other sports, such as angling and **canoeing**. The cold streams of the higher mountain areas are perfect for **fishing**, while below, rivers such as the Guadalfeo and Albuñuelas are suitable for **canoeing** and **white-water rafting**.

To cater for the high great demand for adventure tourism a number of firms in this sector have set up, organising activities of every



kind, from archery and **mountain-trekking** to **light-aircraft flights** over the mountain tops.

And after a day's hard leisure, what better way to relax than a visit to the **spa at the Lanjarón**?

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the air the Alpujarra and Lecrín Valley take on a new look, bringing home the small distances that separate the 3,000-metre peaks from the nearby tropical beaches.





- I Guided 4 x 4 route
- 2 Hang-gliding in the Alpujarra.
- 3 Mobile home in the
- Controllino
- 4 Views of the African coastline from the Sierra Nevada.
- 5 River Albuñuelas
- 6 White-water rafting.
- 7 Horse-riding.

The Lecrin

Valley

hen Boabdil crossed "Moor's Sigh" pass for the last time, he left begin his beloved Granada to find a large valley filled with crops and orchards. A paradise where farmland was peppered with small villages. The dethroned king had reached the Lecrin Valley. Over 500 years later, this verdant valley still maintains much of its Moorish essence, with its old mills, water channels, ruined towers and castles and the design of many of its villages.

This valley, which smells of orange and lemon flowers in the



Mondújar castle

2 Casa Zayas in Nigüelas

20

Salares, terraced orange groves

4 View of Restabal

3

5

Dúrcal, church

6 Lecrín, La Talará

Béznar reservoir



spring, shelters a host of villages.

Dúrcal was known as *Ouasb* by the Moors, in allusion to the sugarcane crops for which the area was renowned at the time. During the Christian era it was the starting point for many Muslim families on their exodus to Africa. The town's 16thcentury Mudejar church is its most representative monument.



are also exceptional.

Nearby Nigüelas is the highest-lying village in the valley. At an altitude of 931 metres it lies at the foot of the Zahor peak, a prelude to others leading up to the 3,300-metre Caballo peak. Several footpaths begin here, leading to such places as Lanjarón and the Cahorros bridge.

Worth a visit are the Casa Zayas (17th century), the Traditional Farming Museum and the church of San Juan Bautista, first built in the 16th century and later reconstructed.

Not far away is the village that gives its name to the valley, Lecrin, a municipality whose borders also include Talará and Mondújar (the district's other capital), Béznar, Acequias, Chite and Murtas. This

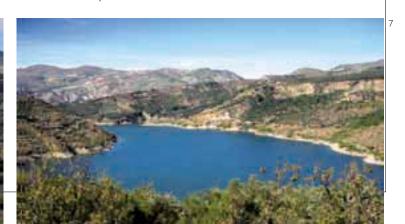
> area was occupied by the Romans, although it was the Moors who would give it its era of true splendour.

> Together the villages make up a beautiful landscape among vegetable plots and fruit trees, with

Acequias above and Béznar below, next to the reservoir. As we enter the valley, leaving **Béznar reservoir** to the south, we come across the villages of Melegís, Restábal and Saleres. Melegís is the source of the spa waters of El Baño, known for their medicinal properties for many centuries. As we continue, Restábal lies at the tail of the reservoir, fed by the rivers Torrente and Albuñuelas. From the







bridge you can see one of the best views of the village, while from the

village the views of the orchards and the villages of Melegís and Saleres

From the Lecrin Valley

Albuñuelas, tower and washing facilities

Cherimoya crops

Izbor and the Tablete ravine

Street in Guajar Faragüit

Panoramic view of Los Guájares

Church in Guajar Fondón

Pomegranate crops

Spring in Guajar Alto

Castle in Guajar Faragüit

he road that follows the course of the river takes us to the village that shares its name. Albuñuelas is a pretty cluster of white houses in a valley that narrows after a few hundred metres into a gorge.

Retracing our steps south, Pinos del Valle provides fine views of the reservoir and valley from above. With its clearly differentiated upper and lower quarters, Pinos del Valle is one of the area's most typical mountain villages.

A road that runs around the Chinchirina peak leads into the mountains, leaving the Tablate ravine to the east with the small village of Izbor below. Next to the motorway, this old farmstead is an attractive sight, with its whitewashed houses and Purísima Concepción church.

The road leads to another leafy valley, **Los Guájares**. With a subtropical climate in the lower reaches, the lush vegetation includes cherimova and banana plantations mixed with citrus trees and vegetable plots.

The Moorish legacy is very evident here too, with terraced fields and the use of irrigation channels. Moors lived here continuously from their arrival









to Los Guájares

until they were eventually expelled by the Marquis of Mondéjar.

Guájar Faragüit is the largest of the three villages and where the district council headquarters are located. It lies between Guájar Fondón below and Guájar Alto



above, and its name means "hidden garden". The labyrinthine streets run steeply down to the small church square. The beauty of the oldest part of the village makes its the best preserved in the valley. Near the heart of the village, on top of a hill, is El Castillejo, a well-preserved 13th-century Almohad fortification.







Opposite is Guájar Fondón, on the right bank of the river Toba. The church is an interesting example of the first wave of Mudejar churches. It was reformed in the late 18th century but respecting the original Mudejar style, with a richly decorated roof.

In the bottom of the valley a gorge leads up to **Guájar Alto**, which suddenly appears before us, clinging onto the mountain. This is the smallest of the three villages and the one that best reflects the meaning of their name. "Guájar" comes from the Arabic word wa-run', meaning "difficult access".





In the heart

of the Alpujarra

n off-ramp on the new motorway to the coast leads to the Alpujarra. A few metres on, a sign indicates an old Nasrid bridge.

We are now entering a land of majestic landscapes and deep gorges and winding watercourses. Soon we reach **Lanjarón**, a guiet town that houses most of the hotels in the Alpujarra. Its spa and the quality of its waters have been a magnet for visitors since the 19th century. The beauty of this long, one-street town is well captured

by the poet who remembers arriving there: Halt and rest! Let go of your pen and pick up your paintbrush!.

This spa town consists of a long main street lined with shops selling traditional ceramics and cane and basket-work. In the oldest part is the Hondi-

llo guarter, with its traditional Alpujarra architecture. Facing the town, the old Nasrid castle juts from a small crag.

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- Rug crafts in Pampaneira.
- Laniarón, panoramic view.
- Lanjarón spa.
- Río Chico in Cáñar.
- Tinao in Pampaneira.
- Bubión church
- Capileira.



After the Órgiva junction the road climbs, and a fork indicates the road to Cáñar, a small mountain village where the river Chico is broken by delightful waterfalls. Nearby, the white silhouette of **Soportújar** clings to the mountainside.

Soon we reach the heart of the mountains and one of the **Alpujarra's** most attractive landscapes: the **Poqueira ravine**. The first of the three villages here is Pampaneira, which conserves the local tradition of flat-roofed whitewashed houses with crowned chimneys and the typical tinaos. Many tourists visit here, and the village has lots of traditional restaurants and craft shops to choose from.

The small village of Bubión seems to be hanging onto the side of the ravine. Its narrow Moorish streets cascade down to form charming corners with tinaos. The main square is below, housing the church, town hall and Museum of Alpujarra Houses. At the foot of the road

is the Bubión Tourist Village.

Penetrating the ravine, the stretched silhouette of **Capileira** provides a picture-postcard view of the imposing mass of the Sierra Nevada and the clear silhouette of the Veleta peak. This is the starting point for many trails into the Sierra Nevada Nature Park and even the National Park itself.







he road that runs across the **upper Alpujarra** leaves the Poqueira ravine to reach the picturesque village of **Pitres**, the capital of the municipality of **La Tahá**, with its striking examples of Alpujarra architecture. The church in the main square was built on the site of a former mosque.

The arcade squares of **Pórtugos** lie ahead. The iron-rich waters of the Fuente Agria spring are just outside the village, in a beautiful landscape. A gorgeous waterfall tinted red by the iron in the water has dug into the rock over the centuries to create a circular depression filled with old trees, popularly known as El Chorreón.

Following the road, we turn north to enter a deep wooded ravine with the mass of Mulhacén looming beyond.

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The white houses of **Trevélez** appear between the trees, once again adapting urban design to the steeply sloping hillside.

The village we are now entering is the highest-lying in all Spain. Its whitewashed streets welcome visitors and invite us to stay for a while.









Trevélez has many attractions to cater for those visiting the **Alpujarra**, with lots of restaurants, crafts and souvenir shops, particularly in the large square crossed by the road.

The Alpujarra's **traditional mountain cuisine** is well represented here by the well-known Trevélez ham and the delicious trout from its river.

After Trevélez, the road continues into the deepest, most hidden part of the Alpujarra.



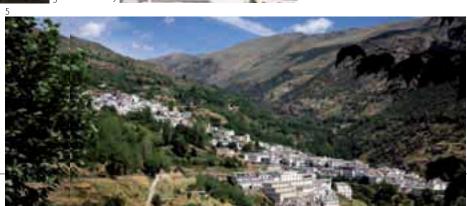




- I : Fuente Agria in Pórtugos
- View of PórtugosTinao in Pitres
- 4 Pitres church
- Panoramic view of Trevélez
- River Trevélez
- River Trevélez with its mountain backdrop
- 8 Alpujarra ham







Gerald Brenan

s the road continues eastwards, we can see a series of views of the **lower Alpujarra** and the **Sierra de la Contraviesa** on the other side of the valley.

Soon we reach **Juviles**, a small village surrounded by chestnut trees. The remains of the Fuerte (fort) are nearby, an old castle where the remains of medieval water cisterns are conserved. The fort was once important because of its strategic position and defensive role to protect the village in times of conflict.

Bérchules is the next village on this route. Its typical Alpujarra architecture

is combined with a striking new tradition: New Year's Eve is now celebrated in August here. A few years ago there was a power cut in the village on 31 December and the village celebrations had to be cancelled, so the locals postponed them until

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country

Alpujarra by Abén Abó, who was born in our next stop, **Mecina Bombarón**. This Moorish-style village — the seat of the municipality of **Alpujarra de la Sierra** — lies in the deep ravine of the river Mecina. Interesting sights here include the Casa de Aben Abó or Casa Grande, San Miguel church and the Roman bridge that linked Granada with Almería.

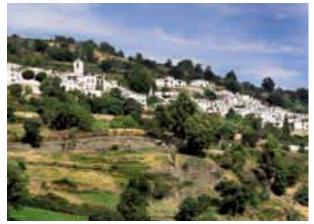
The village of **Yegen** was the home of the writer Gerald Brenan during the 14 years he spent living in the **Alpujarra**, and his house has been preserved. The steep streets, tinaos and rooftops look onto others, in a staggered, terraced effect. Near the village is the Peñón del Fuerte, a ruined Moorish castle.





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the following summer. The initiative was such a success that it has been repeated every year since.

After the Moorish revolt led by Aben Humeya, he was succeeded as king of the



- I : Juviles.
- 2 Mecina Bombarón.
- 3 . Chimneys in Bérchules.
- 4 Yegen, with the lower
- Alpujarra in the background.
- 5 Roman bridge in Mecina.
- 6 View of Bérchules.
- 7 Valor

The road continues deep into the heart of the Alpujarra, soon reaching the village of **Válor**, the birth-place of Fernando de Córdoba y Válor, better known as Aben Humeya, who led the Alpujarra rebellion in 1568. The violent battles between the inhabitants of the Alpujarra and the Christians are re-created during the village's annual Moors and Christians celebrations.

Near to the town, and belonging to the same municipality, are two lovely little villages that are well worth a visit: **Nechite**, whose name

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means "joy", and **Mecina Alfahar**, with one of the district's largest medieval castles nearby.

From the observation point of the **Mairena** hermitage you can enjoy splendid views of the whole Ugíjar valley, the Cerrajón de Murtas and the Sierra de Gádor, in the

province of Almería. Sights here include the Santo Cristo de la Luz parish church, a striking example of the survival of Mudejar religious art. Mairena, like **Júbar** and **Picena**, belongs to the municipality of **Nevada**, whose seat is in **Laroles**, a picturesque village surrounded by chestnut trees. The 15th-century Virgen del Rosario parish church has a slender tower crowned by an unusual Byzantine-style dome.

To the north the road climbs into the mountains, reaching 2,000 m at the Ragua pass, linking the Alpujarra with the Marquesado de Zenete.



The views of the woodland from here are marvellous, and this area is very popular among cross-country skiers in winter.

- I : Mecina Alfahar
- 2 Mudejar church in Mairena
- 3 Laroles
- 4 Ragua pass
- 5 Mecina Alfahar church
- 6 Wildlife at La Ragua
- pass
- 7 La Ragua pass



Following

rgiva lies in the lush valley of the river Guadalfeo and its tributary the river Chico. Considered as the capital of the **Alpujarra**, Órgiva was the district's traditional market town.

Although it began as the ancient Greek colony of Exoche, the town reached its period of most splendour under the Moors. In 1492 Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of Castile assigned it to Boabdil for his retirement. During the later Moorish revolt, the tower of the Count of Sástago's mansion was the scene of one of the most famous Christian victories, as the

hordes of Abén Farag held the governor Gaspar de Sarabia and 160 other men, women and children under siege here for 17 days.

Among Órgiva's many sights are the Count of Sástago's mansion, the church

of Nuestra Señora

de la Expectación,

the San Sebastián

hermitage, the Cer-

vantes Centre and, a

few kilometres away

on the road to the

coast, the ruins of the

11th-century castle.



the river Guadalfeo

Opposite, a path climbs up the Sierra de Lújar mountains to the Mining Interpretation Centre, not only worth a visit in itself, but also with some spectacular views and landscapes en route.

The road that heads eastwards leaves **Los Tablones** to the left, a hamlet near Órgiva. Impressive views of the Guadalfeo valley loom around every curve, with ever-changing perspectives of the upper Alpujarra.

Torvizcón, nestling in a deep ravine, takes its name from the local

abundance of spurge flax (torvizco), which traditionally ward off the evil eve.

Sights here include the parish church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario and the Esparto-grass Museum.

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The town of Órgiva Guadalfeo valley with Los Tablones in the foreground and Órgiva behind.

San Sebastián hermitage. Cervantes Centre.

River Guadalfeo. Tinao in Órgiva.

Housing development in Torvizcón.





Following

s we continue following the course of the river Guadalfeo a turn-off takes us on a secondary road to **Almegijar**, another typical Alpujarra village. The church, built in 1651, houses a gorgeous altar piece with an image of Cristo de la Salud. This

quiet village is surrounded by orchards, almond trees and olive groves. Nearby is the picturesque village of **Notáez**, with its many Roman and Moorish remains.

Another secondary road leads to **Cástaras** and **Nieles**, as we



- 2 Notáez.
- 3 Tinao in Cádiar
- Cádiar, with Mecina Bombarón behind
- 5 🍨 Lobras
- Typical Alpujarra chimneys.
- 7 Ugíjar, church.
- 8 Narila church.



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the river Guadalfeo

climb up into the **upper Alpujarra** district. The first village has fine views of the abandoned Conjuro mines and the Trevélez ravine.

Back on the A-348, we carry on to **Lobras** and **Timar**, our next stop. The parish church of San Agustín stands out among the traditional Alpujarra whitewashed houses in Lobras, while in nearby Timar time seems to have stood still in the guiet village.

The A-348 continues to **Cádiar**. Before we arrive, we can see the picturesque landscape around the village, with its fertile plain and the Sierra Nevada behind, dotted with villages such as Mecina Bombarón. Cádiar is worth a stop to stroll through tie streets and enjoy its attractions. The permanent residence of the chief judge of the Alpujarra during the Moorish period, this prosperous town was dubbed "the belly button of Granada's Alpujarra" by Gerald Brenan. Sights of interest here include the Santa Ana parish church, San Blas hermitage and the architectural remains in the Castillejo Quarter. The municipality also includes the nearby hamlets of **Narila** and **Yátor**.

The route ends in **Ugíjar**, a busy market town since ancient times, with fine, sun-drenched houses lining its streets. A sanctuary is dedicated to the Virgin of the Martyrdom, the patron saint of the Alpujarra.











Through

the Contraviesa

few kilometres to the south of Augíjar a turn-off takes us into the Sierra de la Contraviesa, a land of fine wines and such long-standing traditions as the trovos. Two troveros, accompanied by string instruments, take turns to improvise songs on the spot, picking up from where the other left off.

We are also entering a fertile area that turns white early in the year when the almond trees blossom. You can climb up a watchtower that seems to have been put there for the sole purpose of providing wonderful views of the Alpujarra to the north and the grandeur of the **Mediterranean** to the south.

Almond trees in flower

2 Vineyards in the Contraviesa

3 View of Murtas

4 3 Albondón, San Luis church

5 2 Wine Museum in Albondón

6 Albondón, with the Mediterranean in the background.

7 Albuñol, San Patricio church.



The road zigzags southwards, now with the blue **Mediterranean** as the backdrop. After a long stretch **Albondón** appears, perched on a steep hillside, looking down on the **Costa Tropical** far below.

This is an area of wines and wineries, where you can admire the small

winery next to San Luis church, and the wine museum as you arrive in the village.

A steep slope takes us down towards the





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After passing through Las Canteras and Los Montoros. we reach Jorairátar, where the gorge of La Cruz offers views of the Sierra Nevada. It is worth stopping here to visit the local farming museum.

After passing through Cojáyar, with its Juliana castle, and Mecina Tedel, the road

continues to **Murtas**, at an altitude of 1,114 metres. Surrounded by farmsteads with vineyards and almond groves, the neoclassical San Miguel church is one of the most impressive in the Contraviesa district. Delicious Moorish-style Alpujarra style sweets, such as soplillos and cuajados, are made here.





coast and the town of Albuñol. Half a mountain village, half a marine one, this pretty whitewashed town gazes out towards the waters of the Straits of Gibraltar, serving a dual purpose in the summer by solving the dilemma between heading for the mountains or the beach.

The early-17th-century San Patricio church is in the town centre. In the nearby town of La Rábita, on the coast, there is a well-preserved 11th-century castle. On a hilltop near Albuñol is the "Bat Cave", a significant Neolithic site.

Through

the Contraviesa

The route now turns west along a picturesque twisting road that rises and falls, running along the coast among terraced fields and almond groves. Ravines, crags and dry river beds alternate until we reach **Sorvilán** — another typical whitewashed **Contraviesa** village clinging to the hillside. The bell-tower of the 17th-century San Cayetano parish church presides over the village.

There is a thick cork-oak forest nearby, near **Alfornón**, the municipality's main annex until only a few years ago. Other annexes, **Los Yesos** and **Melicena**, on the coast, are small, quiet holiday resorts for beach lovers.

We continue our journey as far

as a crossroads, where we turn back towards **Rubite**. The 17th-century church of Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada houses a 16th-century image







Sorvilán, San Cayetano church

La Rábita castle.

3 Sorvilár

4 Olias.

5 Polopos, church

Moorish water cistern near Rubite.

Pastures in the Contraviesa

The village of Rubite.



Near the town there is an old Moorish cistern next to a leisure area. An observation point here offers spectacular views of the **Contraviesa** with Calahonda in the background standing out from the Mediterranean. A vineyard lies opposite the cistern, with the imposing mass of the **Sierra de Lújar** behind. Below, to the right, we can see our next stop: **Olías**.

To reach Olias we have to go back to the crossroads and head westwards,



with the tiny **Fregenite** nestling on the slopes of a striking ravine on the left. A steep, narrow road takes us to Olías, lying below amid a beautiful rural landscape.

The road heads back towards the **Alpujarra**, passing through almond groves and beautiful pastures where flocks of sheep graze.





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EL TINAO

Carretera s/n ☎ 958851212

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Fernán Núñez, 2 **☎** 958776257 / 607523767 cortijodelpino@eresmas.com www.elcortijodelpinolecrin.com

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PURE MOUNTAINS Cortijo Marcula s/n

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BUBIÓN

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BUSQUÍSTAR

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EL CASTAÑAR NAZARÍ

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CORTIJO MELÓN

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Pago del Ejido Cortijo Melón **☎** 958760353 www.aldearural.com/cortijo-

FUENTE DEL CASTAÑO

Camino Forestal Alpujarra, Km 6 **☎** 679428794 - 958760358

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PLAZA DE LOBRAS

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Amargura 3 y 6 ☎ 958760352. Fax: 958760089

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NIGÜELAS

ALOUERÍA DE LOS LENTOS

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ÓRGIVA

CASA JAZMÍN

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CASAS RURALES EL BANCAL

Barrio Bayacas, C/ El Bancal **☎** 958785579 / 657395910 www.elbancal.com

CORTIJO EL CURA

La Vegueta

☎ 658769714. Fax: 658769714 www.spanishfinca.net

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CORTIJO LA LONGUERA I

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ROCÍO

Ctra. Tablate-Albuñol ☎ 958785714 www.casaruralrocio.com

PINOS DEL VALLE

MOLINOS

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CASA AIRE DE LECRÍN

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SORVILÁN

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C/ Diezmo nº 2 **☎** 958830608 / 655175556 Fax: 958830608 info@alsurdegranada.com www.alsurdegranada.com

MOUNTAIN REFUGES

CAPILEIRA

REFUGIO DEL POOUEIRA

☎ 958343349 / 958064111 refugiopoqueira@hotmail.com www.fedamon.com

HOSTELS

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ALBERGUE PUERTO DE LA RAGUA

Estación Recreativa Puerto de La Ragua 2 958345528

CAMP SITES

LAROLES

ALPUJARRA CM2

Ctra. Puerto de La Ragua, km. I ☎ 958760231. Fax: 958760231 correo@laragua.net www.laragua.net

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TEIDE 11

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Carretera s/n 2 958 763329 www.trastienda.redsat.net

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MESÓN FRASCO RAMÓN II

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Ctra de Ugijar, km 34 🕿 958850462

LA PARÁ DE LA SUERTE †

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EL ASADOR †

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958763330

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Carretera, n°24 **a** 958763294

RUTA DE LAS NIEVES i

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Puente de Durcal, s/n **☎** 958780731

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ALONSO i

carretera s/n = 958753025

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LOS 5 FAROLES †

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REAL DE LAROLES ††

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46

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VENTA LA PALOMA I

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PAMPANEIRA

ALFONSO †

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CASA DIEGO †

Plaza de la libertad ☎ 958763015

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Avenida de La Alpujarra, II **5** 958763322 / 671420833 www.casa-julio.com

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Estación s/n **a** 958763244

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TORVIZCÓN

CORTIIO GARÍN 11

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CASA JULIO i

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GONZALEZ †

Plaza Francisco Abellán s/n 958 858533

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Real. s/n 2 958858530

MESÓN JOAQUIN I

Puente, s/n 2 958858560

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MESÓN RURAL LAS ERAS IT

Rambla de las Animas, 4 958 855886

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PEPE AGUADO †

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CASA LA LADERA T

Paraje Cuesta Viñas s/n 958064066

EL PUENTE i

Puente Yesos, s/n, bajo **2** 958851841

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LANJARÓN

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