

HUELVA
LA LUZ
Andalucía

El Andévalo



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Legends that predate even the arrival of Rome tell of the mercies of a diocese that began as a minor, but ended up on the altars of the Imperial troops. Endovellico, Endovel, Andoval, the kindly god of the Lusitanians who gave his name to the region, continues to reserve his blessings for those who come to know his land, El Andévalo.

In these lands, once the limit of the state and a forgotten frontier, the third millennium has entered, managing two natural elements as old as the planet itself: water and wind. The wind, a clean west wind, and the water of the Sierra de Aracena y los Picos de Aroche, in its runoff traces small channels, which in the Andévalo will be the tributaries that feed the Guadiana. Dammed and dammed, the region has become one of the most important water reserves in Andalusia.

It is impossible to establish a route, but we can recommend where to start. From each of these villages, let yourself be guided by the men of the mine, the mushroom hunters, the pilgrims, the early hunters, the dancers, the men on horseback, the singers on a night on the trail.



...and to eat?

Andévalo, attached to the land and almost isolated for centuries, offers us a simple, natural and exquisite cuisine. Its culinary bases are rooted in what the land provides, a seasonal cuisine, with products from livestock and forestry harvesting, together with large and small game. To these variables are added the energy needs of the mine workers and, of course, the Catholic liturgical calendar. From the slaughter of the pigs in winter, the sausages, the cabbage stew, the roast pestorejo, the cachuela alosnera. After the first rains, the gurumelos, a local mycological speciality that appears in hundreds of different preparations. From honey, gañotes, hojuelas, gordillos or pestiños and there is no spring festival without "enzapatás" beans, which flavour kitchens and evenings with pennyroyal. The caldereta (lamb stew) and the cheese from the sheep, unique to Santa Bárbara de Casa. Calañas delights us at Easter with the sweet of the "esesia".



La Zarza respects the vigil with its cod omelettes. From El Almendro the turma, in omelette or with rice. Revoltijos in El Cerro de Andévalo and small game in El Granado, rabbit and partridge in its sauce and homemade desserts such as pestiños, rosas, or coscaranes. Migas and honey sweets in Paymogo. Poleás and grapefruit sweets in Puebla de Guzmán. San Bartolomé de la Torre bread, as simple as that, and a confectionery that is hard to match. Venison and wild boar in Sanlúcar de Guadiana, along with its curious "river stews", based on barbel or eel. Valverde del Camino surprises with its bean stew with gurumelos and Villanueva de las Cruces has Pan de Custodio and its unspeakable Torta de Chicharrones. For the initiated, in Villablanca, the cachola de cerdo. Villanueva de los Castillejos, Alosno and Puebla de Guzmán add to all this the traditional distillation of liqueurs and brandies. All this in a thousand and one varieties that are well worth discovering.



Alosno

The visit should begin with a Baroque building on a Mudejar plan, the Temple of Santa María de Gracia, which suffered the effects of the 1755 earthquake.

No less remarkable is the visit to the Ermita del Señor de la Columna (16th century), an example of Andalusian popular architecture, white and with simple and clean forms. If the spirit is cheerful, prepare your voice and endurance. It will be rare if, whatever the date of your visit, you do not come across some exponent of traditional music here. And remember, the fandango in the Alonso is cané, sung in chorus, but there is also a wide variety of brave and personal styles. For January the Luminarias de San Antonio Abad, a purifying fire rite for animals, and after Easter the Pascua de la Lechuga. May Crosses, the big and the small, and in June the Pilgrimage of San Antonio de Padua.



And the Corpus Christi and the Cultural Week of the Youth, in summer and the Jachas of the Immaculate Conception and the Rama. But the town takes its pulse in the early hours of the 23rd to 24th June, Alosno is transformed, the tambourine plays the Alborá, announcing the solemn procession of San Juan Bautista, escorted by the Cascabeleros for the four hours that the procession lasts.

Tharsis, a mining operation mentioned in the Bible for its contribution to the gilding of King Solomon's temple, is a minor local entity with its own distinctive characteristics. Rediscovered by Ernesto Deligny in the mid-19th century and exploited by The Tharsis Sulphur & Copper Company Limited, which gives Tharsis a British flavour.



El Almendro

Although the entire territory of the Guadiana lies on the route of the ancient Roman roads, it seems that the origins of the town lie in the ancient settlement of Osma, from where the population moved to its current location, the Agua del Almendro site, in 1519.

The 18th century mills bear witness to the industriousness of these people, with special mention of the Molino del Pié del Castillo (Castle Foot Mill). Renaissance on a Mudejar plan and much altered in the 18th century after the Lisbon earthquake, the Church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (16th-18th century) is undoubtedly the most notable building in the town centre, although the heart of these people is outside, in the area of Prado de Osma, behind a simple lime façade, under a belfry topped by a cross of ironwork. I am referring to the Hermitage of Piedras Albas, a candid building dating back to the 15th century. Every Easter Sunday, devotees from El Almendro and Villanueva de los Castillejos congregate at the feet of Our Lady of Piedras Albas to the sound of the ancestral shepherd's dance of "los Cirochos". Tradition has it that at the end of the 14th century the venerated image appeared to the shepherd Alonso Gómez under a layer of snow that hid ancient Roman ruins, and since then there has been no shortage of pilgrims and promises.



Cabezas Rubias

Enormous extensions of cereal covered its hills and heads of straw-blond colour, ripened for milling in the Molino de la Divisa "of white lime and solid presence", an example of the application of nautical technology, no longer for pushing the ships, but for milling the cereal.

The walk to the Church of Our Lady of Consolation, of Mudejar origin but rebuilt after the dreadful effects of the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 by José Álvarez. The building, with its solid appearance and academic symmetry, brings into play the dynamism and calm, peace that can be felt inside before the Virgen de los Dolores (Virgin of Sorrows). But it is undoubtedly the view from the Hermitage of San Sebastián that reveals to the traveller the grandeur of the simple, the exquisiteness of the simple. Now you are ready to look for the artisan of the palm, baskets and carpets, baskets in which the most precious mushrooms are collected, well stewed as starters to their magnificent preparations of game meat. Look for the opportunity to visit Cabezas Rubias for its fiestas of Consolación, or for the pilgrimage of San Sebastián at the end of January, a time when everything small grows, with the lens of joy and kindness.



Calañas

Gold, silver and bronze, this mining town took on special relevance in the years of the rediscovery of mining in Huelva, at the end of the 19th century. But its history has legendary roots that take us back to the mythical Tartessos.

Romans, Muslims and Christians have drilled into the Calañas subsoil, always under the watchful eye of "El Morante", a mountain with a magical tradition that dominates the region. The exterior buttresses reinforce the solid appearance of the Church of Santa María de Gracia (16th-18th century), which has a complicated artistic setting. It is home to the superb High Altarpiece, the work of Fernando Alguacil (1949) and, in particular, the polychrome carving of Nuestra Señora de Gracia, by Francisco Buiza (1949). An example of the most candid popular architecture is the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Coronada (XV, XVI), built on the remains of an ancient Roman necropolis. It is said that the dedication of Nuestra Señora de Coronada dates back to Visigothic times, but whether or not these investigations are confirmed, the whole of Calañas goes on pilgrimage on Easter Monday. The celebrations do not stop at the pilgrimage of the Virgen de la Coronada, the "pirulitos", for San Juan and San Pedro, the feast of the Auxiliadora, the evenings in Sotiel, La Zarza or El Perrunal and the Fiestas de Agosto provide a space and time for the people of Calañas to get together.



El Cerro de Andévalo

Legend places on this hill the disappeared temple dedicated to the Lusitanian-Roman deity Endovellico.

A stroll around the Plaza de España, the Town Hall, the Convent of the Sisters of the Cross and the Cultural Centre of the town, the old Hermitage of La Trinidad (16th century), is a must. But it is undoubtedly the Church of Santa María de Gracia (16th-18th century) that is its most notable building, badly affected by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. From the end of the 16th century, over remains from the 12th century and additions from the 17th century, the Hermitage of San Benito, illuminated by Marcos Jiménez in 1660, where the Cerreños venerate the image of San Benito Abad, patron saint since 1667, carved by José Espuni in 1953, a reproduction of the original which no longer exists. The festive life of the town revolves around its patron saint, and the locals celebrate the Vigil of San Benito on the Sunday closest to 21 March. On the first Sunday in May, seven women, dressed in the typical jamuguera costume, go on pilgrimage to the hermitage. Of the men, the most courageous are the "lanzadores", who dance the "poleo", a set of dances including folías, lanzas and fandangos, as a ritual tribute.



El Granado

Water and wind, reservoirs and wind farms make the most of the natural resources without detracting from the tradition and calm of this corner of Andorra.

It is possible that the opening of this new route will allow you to enjoy the neoclassical style of the Church of Santa Catalina (18th century), the candour of the Gothic-Mudejar forms of the Hermitage of the Holy Trinity (15th century) or the sobriety of the popular architecture of the Windmill (18th century). With the new International Bridge, El Granado has freed itself from a centuries-old isolation that has nevertheless served to maintain the purity of its traditions. Festivals, the Santa Cruz in May and the Santa Catalina festivities in November, bear witness to this.

But El Granado also has an industrial past, the old mining port of La Laja (19th century), the last navigable port on the Guadiana and the gateway for the pyrites from the mines of the western Andévalo, granted for exploitation to the Sociedad Minera del Guadiana, a subsidiary of the French Société Anonyme de Saint Gobain. A walk along the old railway line, transformed into a pedestrian walkway, which links the Guadiana with the Herrerías Mines, is highly recommended.



Paymogo

Ancient traditions tell us of the conquest of these places by the Knights Templar in the 13th century.

If we are talking about beauty and mystery, the Knights of the Temple chose the area well. A leisurely stroll along the Ribera del Chanza, along the secret smuggling routes that have now been replaced by the comfortable crossing of the new international bridge that links the lands on both sides of the border, is enough to prove it. Recently restored by Antonio López, it is a pleasure to visit the Castle Church of Santa María Magdalena (XVII-XIX), a temple framed by an artillery fortress built in the XVI-XVII, a period of conflict with neighbouring Portugal. With a baroque image, in transition to neoclassical, we recognise the authorship of Santiago de la Llosa, José Francisco Pérez and Agustín Fontela. Paymogo's festive calendar begins in March, with the Feria del Gurumelo (Gurumelo Fair), a delight for exquisite palates. In May, the Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) and without giving too much rest, on 22nd July, the festivities of its Patron Saint, Santa María Magdalena. Once the summer heat has passed, every 5th October the venerated image of the Virgen del Rosario is carried in procession, amidst the thunder of shotguns fired by the locals as a tribute.



Puebla de Guzmán

You will find much good in Puebla de Guzmán, but with the permission of the locals, its heart lies outside the town centre, in the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de la Peña (XV, XIX).

Puebla bursts with joy in April. Excitement to the beat of the bagpipers and the Procession of Nuestra Señora de la Peña, women dressed in their traditional and flirtatious gabacha costume, together with the lance-players, who, more than dancing, draw in the air the dance of the swords. In contrast to the resounding pilgrimage, Puebla still holds the Fiestas de la Virgen de la Caridad, on the second Sunday in August. The pre-Roman remains, found on the hill of La Longuera, confirm the existence of settlements inhabited in the first millennium BC.

Another important link in its history is the old castle of Alfayat, on the ruins of which stands the Parish Church of Santa Cruz, from the 16th century. It should not be missed and the fabulous carving of the Immaculate Conception by Alonso Cano (18th century) should not be missed. Notable, as far as civil architecture is concerned, is the Windmill (XIII-XX) which faithfully reproduces the model of the old Andean windmills mentioned by Julio Caro Baroja, with such unique names as Jaca Pinguá, Chinguichanga or La Aduana.



San Bartolomé de la Torre

The remains of an ancient Almohad fortification from the 13th century, the Tower, surname San Bartolomé.

Legend has it that it was used as a passage and resting place for the caravans that transported the gold that decorated the interior of the biblical Temple of Solomon from the mines of Tharsis. The origin of the tower is unclear, although some authors trace the oldest remains back to Phoenician times, with successive Roman and Almohad reuses. Of special interest is the Parish Church (XVIII), a simple single-nave building with a wooden coffered ceiling that shows a Baroque image in transition to the Neoclassical style, possibly the result of reconstruction after the earthquake of 1755, designed by Pedro de Silva. At the end of January the festivities of San Sebastián are held, and every 24th August the festivity of the patron saint of the town and titular of the church.

This traditional local festivity shines, especially with the "dance of the swords" in which the dancers accompany San Bartolomé during the processional route. And in June, on the last weekend, San Bartolomé gets together "just for the fun of it", to share, to chat and to have fun at the Romería de la Amistad (Friendship Pilgrimage).



San Silvestre de Guzmán

The first traces of doubling date back five thousand years according to studies at the Castelo site, although it has been registered as a town since 1595.

Built at the expense of the Marquis of Ayamonte, the most notable building is undoubtedly the Church of San Silvestre (XV-XVI-XVIII), Gothic with Baroque additions, with a single nave and coffered ceiling in the Mudejar style. As in other places in the Andévalo region, San Silvestre also boasts formidable examples of pre-industrial architecture in its windmills, which were essential for processing the area's wheat. The remains of the Roman road, which run parallel to the Guadiana, are not to be missed for a stroll, and will undoubtedly provide hiking enthusiasts with landscapes that are not very common in Andalusia. Imperial legionaries' road in the direction of Emerita Augusta, Mérida. Thousands of steps walked enjoying a Guadiana that is already looking for the sea. Late for their festival or very early, depending on how you look at it, every 31st December the sansilvestreros celebrate the festivities of their patron saint. The cycle of festivities is completed with the Pilgrimage of the Virgen del Rosario, in May, in the Alto de la Grulla area and the old Livestock Fair, at the end of July.



Sanlúcar de Guadiana

The Guzmanes, Dukes of Medina Sidonia, named this city after their Ducal Capital on the banks of the Guadalquivir, Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

The village originally developed around the castle, from where in times of peace it spread westwards, finding its natural place on the banks of the Guadiana and now seeking the embrace of the Church of Nuestra Señora de las Flores (16th century), blessed by the image of the Virgin of La Rábida, a formidable Baroque carving from the 17th century. The character of the Guadiana as a natural frontier and the need to watch over and defend the territories to the east of the river explain the existence of the Castle of San Marcos (13th century). As is customary throughout Andévalo, as soon as the first shoots of spring appear, the town dresses up in honour of its patron saint, Nuestra Señora de la Rábida.

The arches of the dance of the flowers mark the way down the gentle slope that descends to the Guadiana. In May, Sanlúcar and El Granado join hands in the Dehesa, in the unique pilgrimage of the Santa Cruz Sanlúcar de Guadiana is today a refuge for water sportsmen who seek the calm of its banks looking towards Portugal, from where they cheer on the participants in the canoeing up the Guadiana or the sailing up and down the river.



Santa Bárbara de Casa

A simple spot that appears among the pastureland and gradually lightens until the green of the hills is tinged with the white of the lime.

The ceramic and lithic remains found in the megalithic complex of Cabezo de los Vientos and the Necropolis of La Zarcita allow us to date the settlement between the end of the Neolithic and the Copper Age (2700 BC). Under the watchful eye of the remains of the "Cabezo de los Vientos" fortification, Santa Bárbara dates its town charter to 1504. The parish church of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad, from the 18th century, and the chapel of its patron saint, Santa Bárbara, are obligatory stops, but I am particularly interested in the mountains, hunting, forestry, Iberian pork and sheep, which give our palate unique cheeses in terms of quality and body, and bread, a simple luxury that has become an art in this village. The heartbeat of a small town is measured by the joy of its fiestas, of which there are many. San Sebastián on his feast day on 20 January, which tastes like a little and is confirmed by the pilgrimage after Easter held in the Chaparral area. In between the Carnivals with their parades. August begins with the fair, but the big day is undoubtedly the 4th of December, Santa Bárbara, patron saint shared by all the miners.



Valverde del Camino

At a crossroads that dates back to the time of the Roman roads, in the 14th century, the Venta Facanías, the origin of the town, was built. However, the Los Gabrieles Dolmen Ensemble delays the date of habitation of these places.

A notable building is the Church of Nuestra Señora del Reposo (XVIXVIII), Renaissance with Baroque contributions. Hermitages of Santa Ana (XVI) and La Trinidad (XVIII) remind us again of the importance of this crossroads, which although it had reached by itself the industrious character that it still maintains, related to furniture and shoemaking, was not left out of the great mining exploitations of the XIX century. The United Alkali Company Limited, a Victorian building dating from 1912 and restored in 1998, now houses the Ethnographic and Crafts Museum, remains from this period. Closer in time but no less remarkable is the Ermita del Santo, a neo-baroque Sevillian building built on the site of the old Ermita de San Sebastián (XVIII century). Famous are its carnivals, which they were able to maintain during the dictatorship, celebrating them in the countryside. At the end of June, the Velada de Santa Ana and in August, the Feria. But if you have to choose a date, I suggest the weekend closest to 12 September, the feast of the Virgen del Reposo, the patron saint who protected the town from the dreadful effects of the Lisbon earthquake.



Villablanca

The Dolmen de la Tenencia dates the origins of the first settlements in the area to the Chalcolithic period, although the Town Charter dates from 1531.

According to the municipal archives, the first record of the construction of the Church of the Martyr San Sebastián dates back to 1612, blessed in February 1618. A simple and beautiful Mudejar style from the 15th century, remodelled in the 17th century, adorns the Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Blanca. The hermitage is blessed by an anonymous Sevillian carving from the 16th century. On Easter Sunday, Villablanca is full of joy, here the intimate and peculiar "Fiestas de Bollopico". In July, the Fiestas del Mercado (Market Festivities), but it is in August when the town dresses up in strange colours and costumes from far away places with the International Dance Festival, in which groups of typical dancers from all over the world take part. According to tradition, ever since a shepherd from Lepe, in the 15th century, saw a white dove on an olive tree on which the Sacred Simulacrum of Nuestra Señora de la Blanca later appeared, in his memory the locals celebrate their Patron Saint with the dance of the sticks to the sound of the bagpipes and drums, in the last days of August.



Villanueva de los Castillejos

The oldest remains are Celtic, although the materials found on the hill of "Pié del Castillo" bear witness to the passage of imperial troops. Already in Roman itineraries it was a resting and provisioning place for the Roman legions on their way to Mérida.

Diego Antonio Díaz and Fernando Rosales worked on the Church of the Immaculate Conception (18th, 19th and 20th centuries) which, despite successive remodelling, retains a profound Baroque flavour and a transition to the Neoclassical style. It has a Latin cross plan with a single nave and venerates the polychrome wood carving of the Immaculate Conception, the work of León Ortega (1950) together with the 16th century Crucifixion and two Baroque carvings of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Francis of Assisi.

Villanueva de los Castillejos stops its activity on Easter Sunday, when, together with the neighbours of El Almendro, it goes on a pilgrimage to the meadow of Osma, to venerate Nuestra Señora de Piedras Albas. San Matías in February and the Velada in July complete its festive calendar.



Villanueva de las Cruces

The beginnings of Villanueva de las Cruces are to be found in a first settlement of Roman origin located at the "Cumbre del Charnecal", some 1,200 metres from the present town centre, which originated with the construction of a "venta" or inn at the crossroads at this point.

The locality is mentioned in the "Libro de montería" of Alfonso XI as "Villa Nueva", the old Roman "Villa Nova" houses this basilica parish church with a single nave, the Church of Santa María de la Cruz in neoclassical style. From the beginning of the 18th century is the Hermitage of San Sebastián, a magnificent viewpoint over the region. The "Fiestas Patronales en Honor a San Sebastián", which are held on the weekend closest to the 20th of January, with the most significant events being: the crowning of the Queen and Ladies together with the "Pregón" (proclamation).



It is worth mentioning a large bonfire called "La Candela" made of holm oak wood, in the Plaza La Candela, which remains lit for more than 15 days. On the second weekend in August, the "Danzaores" (dancers) dance in his honour to the sound of bagpipes and drums the dance of the "Garrotes" of pastoral origin. The patron saint was not to be outdone, on the banks of the Oraque, Santa María de la Cruz is celebrated in a pilgrimage on the first weekend of May with the transfer from the church to the place of Los Recueros, a round trip accompanied by the "simpecado".

Civil engineering has had to overcome the difficult orography of the area. Of the many examples, the Viaduct of the mining railway, a magnificent work dating from 1866, which connected the mines of Andorra with the Odiel River wharf in the city of Huelva, is worthy of note.

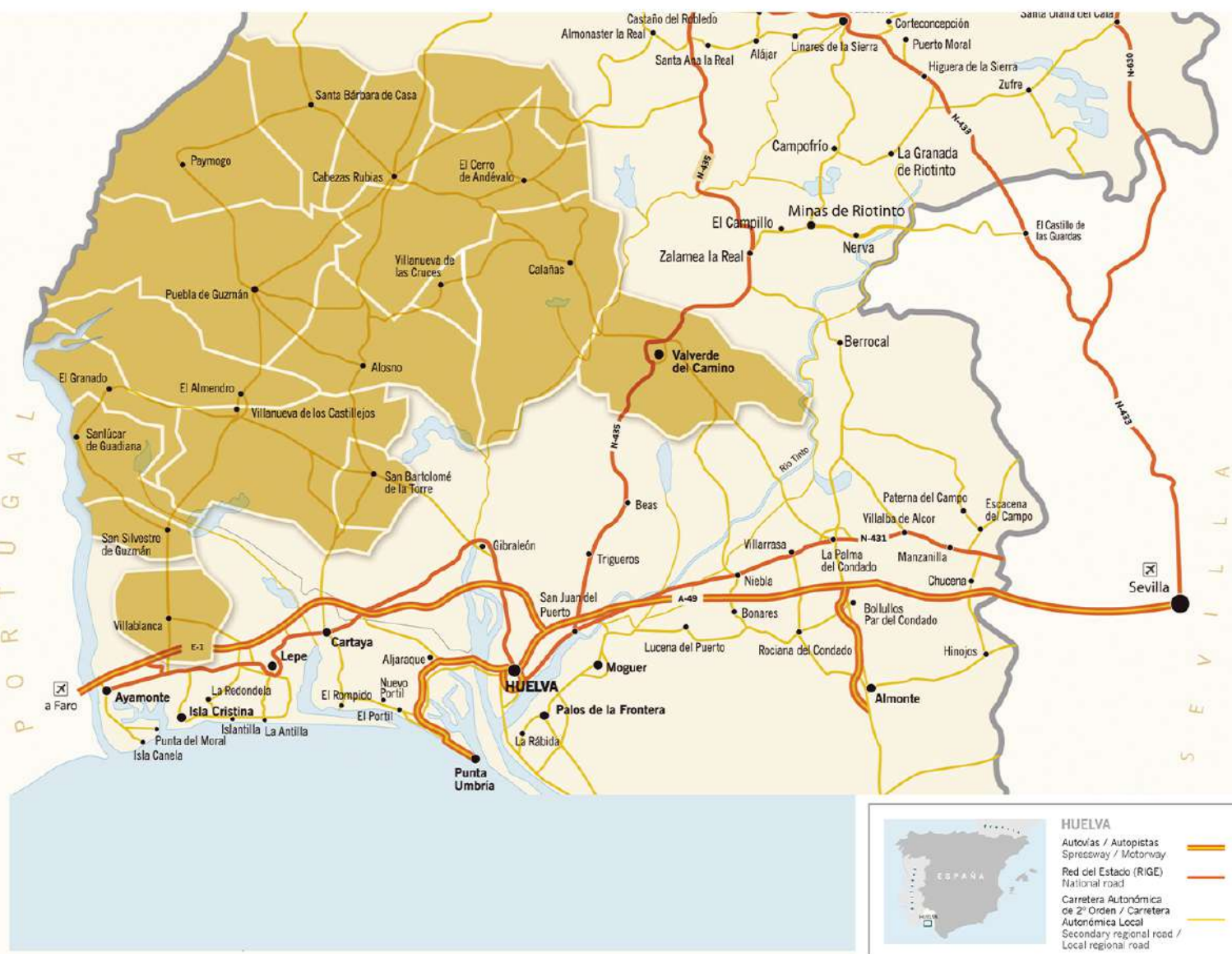


Tourist Offices

Information of Interest

Huelva Tourist Information Office
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Huelva Provincial Tourist Board
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