

HUELVA
LA LUZ
Andalucía

Astrotourism



Astrotourism in the Province of Huelva

The province of Huelva, located in the southwest of Andalusia and bordering Portugal, is one of the areas of Spain with the best quality skies for Astronomical observation. This area has the highest percentage of clear, dark skies in Andalusia, especially the regions of Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche, the Andévalo and the Doñana coast.

Due to its low light pollution, the whole of the northern part of the province is part of the Sierra Morena Starlight Reserve; an international certification recognized by UNESCO which guarantees the quality of the night sky and its sustainability for astronomical observation activities.

The province of Huelva has been connected with astronomy throughout history from the very first societies that inhabited this area. Megalithic cultures looked to the stars and used astronomical patterns for the construction of dolmens and cromlech, as well as creating the first representations of the sky in petroglyphs (cave paintings).



Huelva is also a land of illustrious seafarers, masters of navigation by the stars so necessary for transatlantic crossings. More recently, the Río Tinto has been one of the sites chosen for studies by NASA; its similarity to the environment of the red planet helping to design future explorations on the planet Mars.

Over the last few years, a series of infrastructures have been created to promote astronomy and provide adequate spaces for visitors to view the night sky. The Energy Efficiency and Night Sky Protection Program is a joint initiative of the "Diputación de Huelva" and local councils to reduce light pollution, giving advice and providing funds to replace old style public lighting for modern LED low-impact lighting.

Astro-tourism activities have become increasingly important in the province of Huelva in recent years. These activities, mainly concentrated during the summer months and in rural areas, provide an important ecotourism resource and help to break the seasonal nature of tourism in the region.

Huelva is home to a group of specialized companies, astronomical associations and facilities dedicated to the observation of the night sky, as well as countless places to simply enjoy the night sky.



The Astronomy Route of Santa Ana la Real

A circular trail of 2.5km approx., especially designed to introduce the visitor to astronomy and give a basic understanding into the observation of the night sky. Along the route, there are three interpretive panels with texts and explanatory images about concepts of the universe accompanied by QR codes which allow the download of additional information in an audio guide. At the highest point of the route, there is a granite table marked with the four points of the compass especially for telescope observation.

More information: <http://www.santaanalareal.es/>

How to get there? From the center of Santa Ana la Real, turn down Martín Vázquez street and onto a concrete road where you can see the sign marking the beginning of the route.

Coordinates: **Latitude** 37.861741°N **Longitude** -6.723148°W



Astronomical Table of la Sierra de Santa Bárbara, (Higuera de la Sierra)

Higuera de la Sierra is located in the foothills of the Santa Bárbara mountain range. At its summit, next to an unfinished hermitage, is an astronomical observation point where we can study the main constellations with the help of the explanatory table and reclining benches. From this point the view to the south stretches right down to the city of Seville.

How to get there? The observation point, located at a height of 842 meters, is part of a 2.8km long circular route starting from the town of Higuera de la Sierra.

The accesses to the path are:
A) Calleja del Infierno; B) The Umbria Road.

Coordinates: Latitude $37.845423^{\circ}\text{N}$ Longitude $-6.445492^{\circ}\text{W}$



Astronomical lookout point of Linares

Linares de la Sierra, nestled in a deep valley facing south, has a gazebo situated at the highest point of the village for the observation of stars. This point gives excellent views of the ecliptic or zodiac path and consists of a paved area with a perimeter fence ideal for activities with small groups of up to 20 people.

How to get there? To access the observatory go through the Botanical Garden located on Avenida de Andalucía. The garden has a metal gate leading to a small slope up to the observatory.

Coordinates: Latitude $37.881633^{\circ}\text{N}$ Longitude $-6.621657^{\circ}\text{W}$



Astronomical lookout point of the Ermita de San Bartolome (Alajar)

A few kilometers to the south of the village of Alájar, the hermitage of San Bartolome lies on a rise with views stretching in all directions. Here, there is a platform for astronomical observation with space for three telescopes, and electricity points. The observation site has easy access for vehicles and privileged views of the entire sky, a sky free of light pollution.

How to get there? Leave the town of Alájar towards Santa Ana la Real on the HU-8105, and take the first left after the village of El Collado. Continue along a paved lane for about 7 kilometers to the Chapel.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.830917°N Longitude -6.643453°W



Astronomical Observatory, Mines de la Sultana – Ermita San Roque (Cala)

Only two kilometers from Cala, next to the Las Encinas Recreation Area, we find the Hermitage of San Roque and the nearby ruins of the Mine de la Sultana. The recreational area is equipped with parking, tables, benches and a playground. This site is one of the darkest places in the north of the province and was a key factor when considering the inclusion of the Sierra Morena as a Starlight Reserve.

How to get there? Road A434 Kilometer 6.5

Coordinates: Latitude 37.830917°N Longitude -6.643453°W



The Astronomical Observatory of Almonte

Within the municipality of Almonte is the astronomical observatory managed by the Juan Pérez Mercader Association. It is the only one in the province and has a deep sky astrophotography telescope. The objective of this equipment and the association is the scientific dissemination of astronomy, by showing its facilities and organizing informative activities throughout the year. Located in the International Center of Ecological and Environmental Studies (CIECEMA), it is possible to visit by appointment through the Astronomical Association Juan Pérez Mercader.

More information: www.astronomiajuanperezmercader.com

How to get there: Calle Rosa Regás, 21730 Almonte, Huelva

Coordinates: Latitude 37.266429°N Longitude -6.516715°W



Astronomy Interpretation Center (Villanueva de los Castillejos)

The center for astronomical interpretation in Villanueva de los Castillejos, in the middle of The Dehesilla landscape, forms part of the Project of Sustainable Tourism of the Lower Guadiana. The aim of the center is to introduce the visitor to fundamental aspects of astronomy, raise awareness about light pollution and give notions of astrophotography through attractive and innovative museography. The surroundings of the center, on high ground surrounded by countryside, are ideal for observation with telescopes. To arrange a visit, contact the town hall of Villanueva de los Castillejos.

Contact: 959 25 56 68.

More Information:

www.turismobajoguadiana.es/centro/c-i-de-la-astronomia

How to get there? Leave the town of Villanueva de Los Castillejos towards San Bartolomé de la Torre on the A-490. Just before Km 13 take the lane on the right for 1.3 kilometers to the center.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.47631°N Longitude -7.23417°W



Places of Interest

Dolmen del Soto (Trigueros)

The Dolmen del Soto, formed by a long corridor and a single V-shaped chamber, is one of the largest and best-preserved megalithic structures in the province. In this type of tomb, the door always faces east, towards the rising sun, and the burial chamber to the west, towards sunset. Twice a year, during the spring and autumn equinoxes, the first rays of sunlight run down the corridor and are reflected inside the chamber, becoming a precise solar calendar. This event attracts many tourists during these periods. The visits to the archaeological complex are subject to schedule and are managed through the town hall in Trigueros.

How to get there? At the junction of the N-435 road inside the town of Trigueros, take the Calle Sevilla. Follow this onto a lane for 9 kilometers until we reach the archaeological complex. The route is signposted from Trigueros.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.352137°N Longitude -6.751480°W



The Dolmens of El Pozuelo (Zalamea la Real)

The area of Zalamea la Real is the site of the most numerous dolmen complex in the province. It has a total of 49 dolmens divided into two sectors: El Villar and El Pozuelo. Next to the village of Pozuelo we can find eleven tombs declared a Site of Cultural Interest which are part of a themed circular walk of low difficulty and about 12 kilometers in length.

It is worth mentioning the diversity of types of dolmens in the set, located on promontories arranged in groups of two or three in the form of watchtowers in the landscape. The diversity of the dolmens and their different states of restoration, together with clear skies for astronomical observation make this a space of special beauty.

How to get there? To get to the village of Pozuelo where the route begins, take the turning at Kilometer 179 of the N-435 road and continue along the HU-5103 until we reach the village.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.604457°N Longitude -6.662273°W



Cerro de San Cristóbal (Almonaster la Real)

This is one of the highest peaks of the province and in times of the Arab reign in this area San Cristobal hill was established as a lookout point for the village of Almonaster la Real. At its summit, we can find two ideal points for astronomical observation, a viewpoint to the south and another to the north. During the day there are magnificent panoramic views from which to see the famous rural mosque of the village and far beyond.

How to get there? From Almonaster la Real take the HU-8105 road and turn left a few meters out of town onto a paved road to go up a steep slope until we reach the viewpoints in a couple of kilometers.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.885141°N Longitude - 6.777690°W



Hermitage of la Virgen de la Peña (Puebla de Guzmán)

In the region of the Andévalo, where the Cerro del Aguila rises to almost 400m high, is the Hermitage of the Virgen de la Peña. This place marks the highest vantage point from which we can enjoy the best panoramic views of the area. At its summit, next to the chapel, there is a large esplanade easy to access by car and observe a night sky of excellent clarity and vast horizons.

How to get there? Road access is from kilometer 61 of the A-4726 which connects Puebla de Guzmán with Tharsis, where there is a junction and a lane leading to the chapel.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.601351°N Longitude - 7.201814°W



San Marcos Castle (Sanlúcar de Guadiana)

The natural border with Portugal formed by the Guadiana river, is dotted with a network of forts on the highest points of its banks. San Marcos Castle, in the town of Sanlúcar de Guadiana, rises up to create a privileged place from which to see the rich landscapes of both countries, the river at their feet giving the scene an extra special charm. There is a clear view all around the fortress from which to enjoy the dark sky of this area.

How to get there? To access from Sanlúcar de Guadiana, take the HU-4402 road that joins the town with El Granado. Turn left at kilometer 37 and take the lane that goes up to the parking at the castle.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.475709°N Longitude - 7.463130°W



Viewpoint of la Peña de Arias Montano (Alájar)

This is one of the most important natural and cultural enclaves of the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche. A natural balcony facing south overlooking the valley of Alájar. Here, people gather to pay homage to the Virgin 'Reina de los Angeles'. It was also the residence of an illustrious humanist of the XVI century, Benito Arias Montano, advisor to King Felipe II. These panoramic views offer clear views of a good part of the southern sky.

How to get there? From Alájar we take the HU-8121 road towards Fuenteheridos and after two kilometers we find the access to the area and its parking.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.877122°N Longitude - 6.668244°W



Muelle de las Carabelas (La Rabida)

This place commemorates the discovery of America with replicas of the three ships in which Christopher Columbus sailed to the new world. Navigation would not have been possible without detailed knowledge of the stars and their application for nighttime orientation. The "Muelle de las Carabelas" offers a special night dedicated to The Stars of Columbus within its summer program, an event where history and astronomy are combined in a theatrical way.

How to get there: It is located near the Monastery of La Rábida on the banks of the Rio Tinto.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.211369°N Longitude - 6.927996°W



Asperillo Cliff (Doñana)

In Doñana Natural Park, between the coastal towns of Mazagón and Matalascañas, the Natural Monument of the Asperillo Cliff extends along the coast. With around 28 kilometers of virgin beach it is one of the few cliffs formed by fossil sand deposits and the highest in Europe of these characteristics. The low light pollution means this is one of the few coastal places from which to enjoy quality star gazing.

How to get there: There are different ways to access both the highest parts of the cliff and the Playa de Castilla. Accesses along the A-494 road such as the Parador de Mazagón, Playa del Rompeculos, Cuesta Maneli or La Laguna del Jaral Trail, all give access to a variety of suitable places for astronomical observation.

Coordinates: Latitude $37.108473^{\circ}\text{N}$ Longitude - 6.754636°W



Protected Landscape of the River Tinto "Martian Landscape"

The Tinto River is unique in the world due to the color of its waters, its acidity and the strange forms of life that inhabit its interior. It forms a landscape of special beauty and contrasts, where the red of its waters crosses industrial mining areas, green valleys of leafy Mediterranean forest, flour mills and iron bridges of the old railway. For all these reasons, it has recently been named a Protected Landscape by the Junta de Andalucía. As a point of interest, for many years the scientific research carried out here by NASA has shed light on how life could be in extreme conditions similar to those on Mars.

The following municipalities are part of this protected natural area in Huelva: Berrocal, El Campillo, Minas de Riotinto, Nerva, Niebla, La Palma del Condado, Paterna del Campo, Valverde del Camino, Villarrasa, Zalamea La Real

How to get there? For each section of the river there is a good location. One of the most beautiful sections, amongst others, is where the HU-5104 road crosses of the Tinto River.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.592974°N Longitude - 6.551271°W



Crómlech Pasada del Abad (Rosal de la Frontera)

Near Rosal de la Frontera there is a megalithic structure formed by six large standing stones arranged in a circular shape. The first archaeological excavations talked of a corridor dolmen, but recent investigations suggest that it must have been a solar calendar in the form of a cromlech. Evidence of this can be seen in one of the large stones of the set carved with the seven main stars of the constellation Ursa Major. The place is located on a plain next to the banks of the river Chanza, an excellent site for astronomical observation.

How to get there: The archaeological site is next to the N-433 road at kilometer 145 and has parking.

Coordinates: Latitude 37.977445°N Longitude -7.143422°W



COMPANIES AND FOUNDATIONS

BABEL NATURE

An ecotourism company based in Aracena, operating throughout the region and offering activities where tourism, scientific knowledge, culture, nature and gastronomy are combined. They offer workshops in initiation to astronomy, observation of the night sky with a deep sky astronomical telescope, night-time guided walks and indoor educational workshops.

www.babelnature.com

FUNDACIÓN RIOTINTO

An industrial heritage tourism foundation located in the town of Riotinto which manages the mining railway. During the summer it offers, amongst other activities, a unique astrotourism activity called 'The Moon Train'; a steam-train ride to see the full moon rise on the banks of the Río Tinto.

www.parqueminero.deriotinto.es

PLATALEA

A company based in the city of Huelva, specializing in environmental education and heritage. It is a pioneering astro-tourism company offering theatrical activities such as "The Stars of Columbus", night-time interpretations of the sky for all ages, and school educational workshops for which it has a portable digital planetarium.

www.platalea.com

TOUR ESTELAR

A company based in Sanlúcar de Guadiana which has accommodation with Starlight Certification. It develops outreach activities with guides specialized in astronomy and telescopes for the observation of the deep sky.

www.losmolinosrurales.com/tourestelar.html

ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATIONS

ASOCIACIÓN ASTRONÓMICA JUAN PÉREZ MERCADER

A non-profit association based in Almonte, whose objective is to encourage science and astronomy within the local population and serve as a meeting place for fans of night sky observation.

Its center has an observatory equipped with an astronomical telescope for outreach activities. On their website they give information on the activities programmed throughout the year.

www.astronomiajuanperezmercader.com

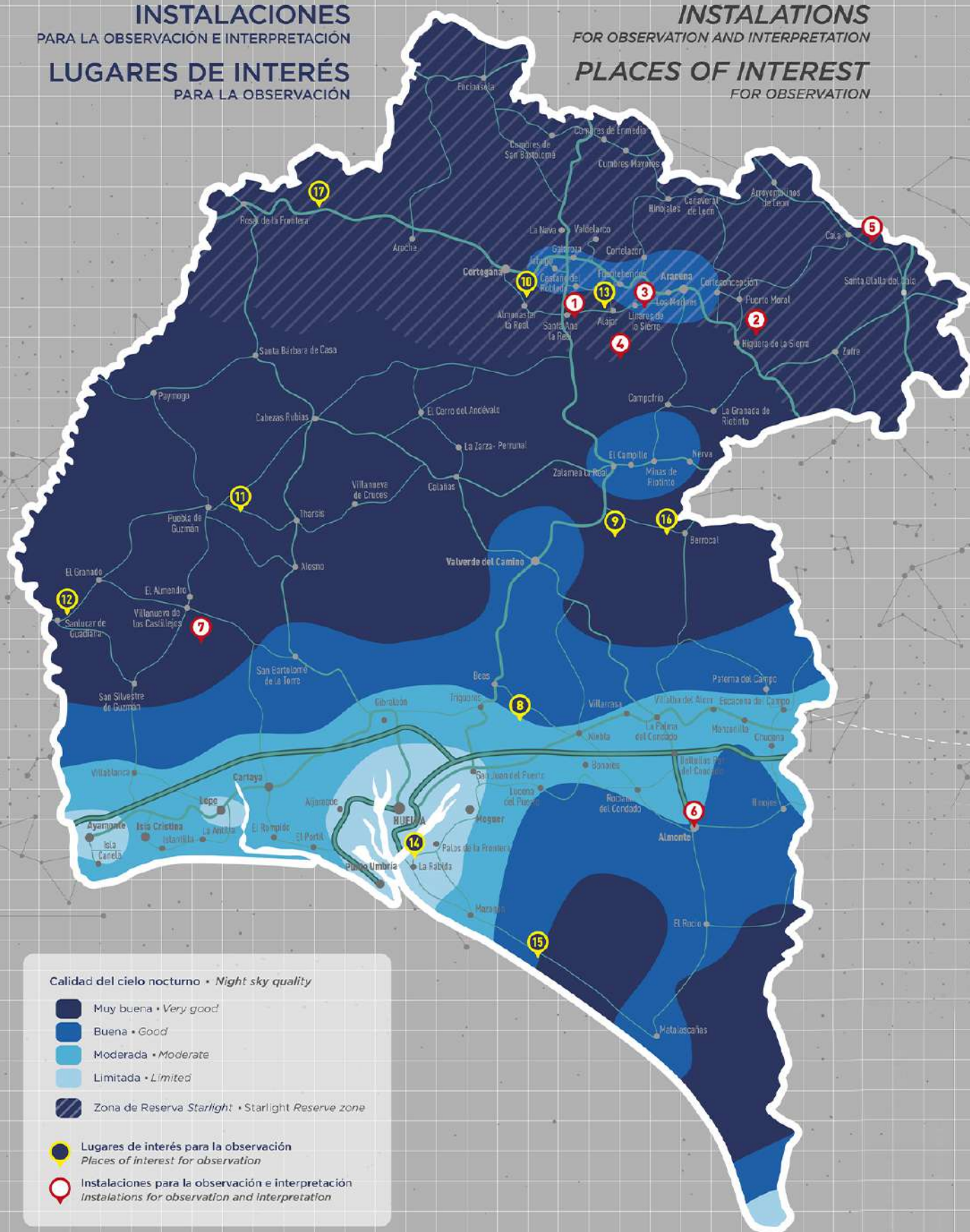
ASOCIACIÓN ASTRONÓMICA CYGNUS VALVERDE

An Astronomical Association founded by astronomy enthusiasts from the town of Valverde del Camino. This association offers activities of astronomical interest in different parts of the province such as astrophotography exhibitions, talks and stargazing meetings, among other activities.

<http://cygnusvalverde.blogspot.com>

**INSTALACIONES
PARA LA OBSERVACIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN
LUGARES DE INTERÉS
PARA LA OBSERVACIÓN**

**INSTALLATIONS
FOR OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION
PLACES OF INTEREST
FOR OBSERVATION**



Huelva *eleva* tus sentidos.



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Fernando El Católico, 14 2ª Planta. 21003 Huelva. Tel: 959 257 467



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