

Spain

Teruel



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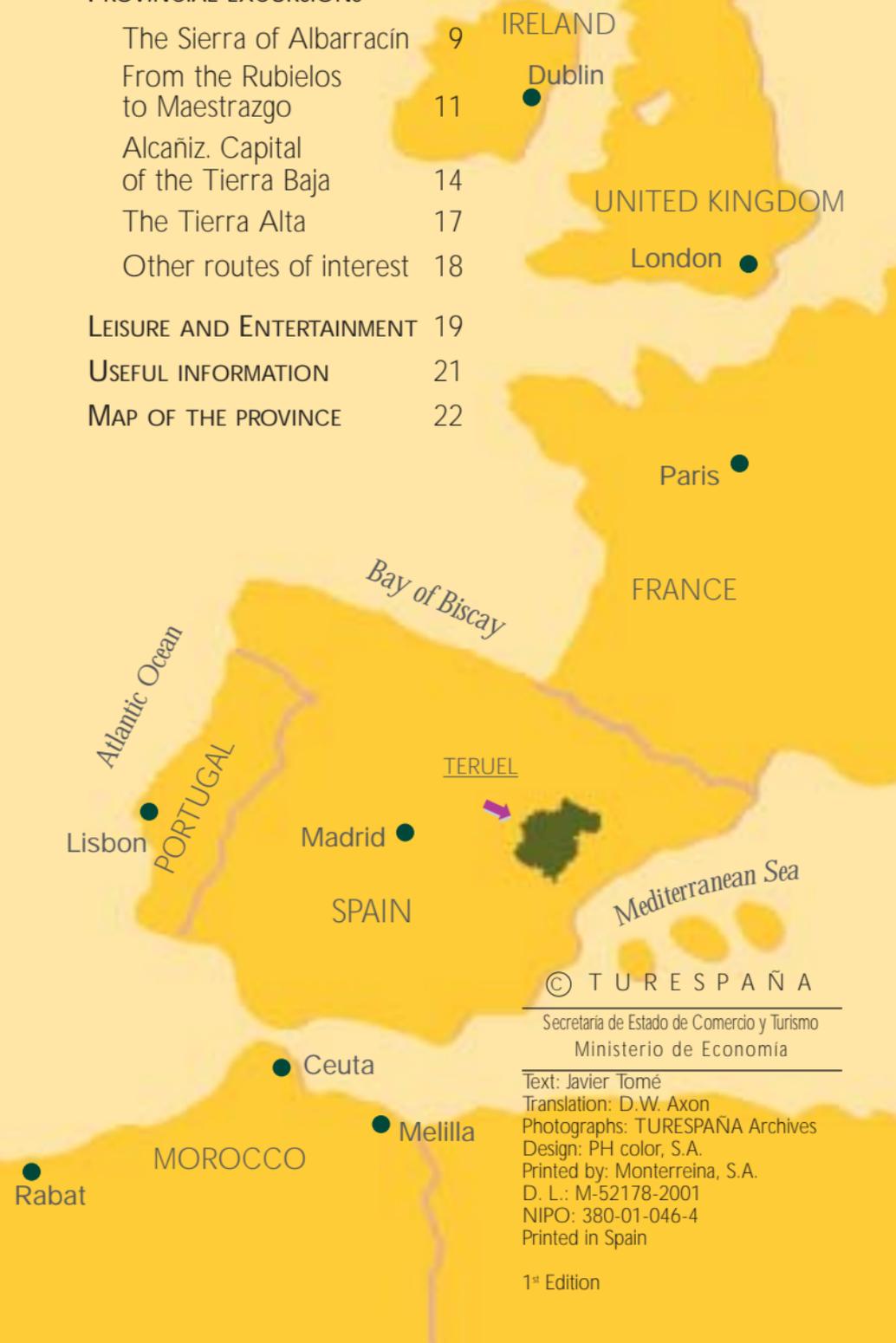
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INTRODUCTION

Part of the Autonomous Region of Aragon, the province of Teruel has 136,840 inhabitants who populate an area of 14,785 square kilometres. It presents a mountainous aspect and is divided into two well-defined areas: the Tierra Baja which extends over the valley of the River Ebro and the Tierra Alta which comprises the mountainous regions around Albarracín, Gúdar and Javalambre.

The province has a large network of rivers that contribute to a typical continental climate with

rigorously cold winters and hot dry summers. The topography is richly varied and strongly demarcated, often by forests of green pines which are a signature element of this dramatic landscape. The alchemy of history has placed Teruel at the world epicentre of Mudéjar art. Notwithstanding her faithfulness to other historical developments throughout the intervening centuries, Teruel is able to embrace these true oriental treasures together with pre-historic rock

Alcalá de la Selva





paintings in a backdrop scattered with ancient churches, castles and monasteries.

The capital, 302 km from Madrid, with a population of 29,320 reflects the pride and wealth of its cultural history. Its inhabitants enjoy beautiful, modern buildings and at the same time, splendid Mudéjar towers, the latter classified as a World Heritage site by UNESCO on account of their architectural uniqueness. The city breathes legends and ancient tales and is an authentic treasury of art and antiquity.

Probably the best way to reach Teruel is by road.

Nonetheless, there are regular train services from Valencia and Zaragoza (timetables available from RENFE).

The nearest airports are at Valencia, Zaragoza and Barcelona from where regularly scheduled bus services can be obtained. The city is connected via a modern road network to all its surrounding capitals and transport details are available at all local bus stations and in addition, timetables are usually published in the local and provincial press.

Tower of El Salvador

Brief history

The origins of Teruel are to be found in the Iberian settlements revealed through the many archaeological excavations which abound in this region. There is abundant evidence that the territory was occupied by the legions of Imperial Rome, later to be displaced by the Visigoths and these latter by the sword of Islam.

The city we see today was developed from the time of the re-conquest as a defensive bastion against the Moorish army of the Almohades who were then occupying the kingdom of Valencia.

Alfonso II decided to fortify the town, repopulate it and name it capital of the territory that divided the Moors from the Christians. Consolidating its importance through its role as a farming capital, Teruel continues to reflect the unique imprints of the different

cultures that have left their mark in its constant historical and cultural evolution.

The social upheavals that ravaged Spain during the decline of her influence in Europe found their echo in Teruel. Through here passed the occupying armies of Napoleon and in the early twentieth century this rugged landscape was witness to the Spanish Civil War. History has tested the tenacious character of the Aragonese and it is not for nothing that local mythology has it that the toponym of Teruel derives from that noble but untameable animal, *el Toro Bravo*, the wild bull of Spain, symbol of all that is Spanish.

*Iberian ruins at San Antonio.
Calaceite*



INTERESTING WALKS THROUGH THE CITY

As some visiting hours vary according to season it is suggested that opening times are confirmed with local tourist offices.

THE MUDÉJAR TOWERS

We begin the tour of the capital in the **Plaza del Torico** (1) or Plaza de Carlos Castel according to the official street guide. It is a small arcaded square dotted with modernistic buildings that artfully combine stone and wrought iron. This central axis features a small bronze statue of a bull (*toro*), whence comes the popular name of the square, atop a fountain with four spouts. In 1858 this monument replaced an earlier version which dated from the sixteenth century.

Close by we find the **Tower of El Salvador** (2), a perfect example of the Mudéjar art of Aragón. The church was originally built in the thirteenth century and later

rebuilt in the seventeenth after it collapsed in 1677. The reredos, dating from the original structure, features an outstanding sculpture of Christ known as "*Cristo de las Tres Manos*". The tower, adorned by ceramic tiles in the Mudéjar tradition, is similar in style to the minarets of the Almohades.

In the Paseo de Ovalo, above the banks of the River Turia, we find the statue that represents the **Vaquilla del Ángel** (3), sculpted by José Gonzalvo. A little further on is the **Escalinata** (4), a flight of steps that climb the hill from the railway station to the city centre. Designed by José Toran in 1920 it is decorated with ceramic tile and Neomudejar ornament. The principal panel features an embossed relief by Aniceto Marinas that introduces us to the famous legend of the Lovers of Teruel, about whom we shall hear later. After visiting the **Carmelite Convent** (5), with its impressive reredos and the **Convent of Las Claras** (6) a little further on we find the Gothic **Convent of San Francisco** (7), commenced in 1392.

Of special interest is the Plaza de Pérez Prado, popularly known as the Plaza del Seminario for the **Casa de Cultura**, the main Public Library, and the **Seminario Conciliar** (8), whose form echoes the elegance of earlier fortress-



Plaza del Torico

palaces. Opposite is the **Tower of San Martín** (9), an authentic jewel in the crown of Teruel's architectural heritage. Situated next to the legendary gate of the Andaquilla, it is square in plan and its detailed ornamentation includes tiled decoration of its arcades and window openings. The city's most admired tower, it dates from 1315, whilst the church itself was added during reconstruction which took place around the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The **Ayuntamiento** (City Hall) (10), is located in a Neoclassical building of the mid-nineteenth century. Next to it is the **Cathedral** (11), which started life as the humble parish church of Santa María de Mediavilla, listed in the Fuero of Teruel of 1177. This ancient building has undergone several improvements ending finally with a plan of three aisles under a flat ceiling which emphasises the effect of the vaulted and fluted dome. The Mudéjar tower and lantern, commenced in 1257 is outstanding in its conception, and so too is the reredos completed by Gabriel Yoli in 1536. However, the most impressive sight in this cathedral is the coffered ceiling ornamented in pure Mudéjar style with geometrical and figurative designs depicting

medieval scenes, amongst which the "Mudéjar Star" outshines all others. This craftsmanship, considered one of the most important documents of medieval Spain, is best observed from the upper gallery reached via a separate stairway.



Cathedral



Tower of San Salvador

Calle del Salvador

☎ 978 60 20 61

Opening times: 11.00 - 14.00 hrs
and 17.00 - 20.00 hrs
(every day of the week)

Cathedral

Plaza de la Catedral

☎ 978 60 22 75

Opening times: 11.00 - 14.00 hrs
and 16.00 - 20.00 hrs
(every day of the week)

THE LOVERS OF TERUEL

Standing next to the cathedral we find the **Episcopal Palace** (12), built sometime between the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This typical Aragonese building houses the **Diocesan Museum**, which includes in its art collection an exceptional work dating from the fifteenth century, "Los auspicios de la Virgen". (The divine revelation to the Virgin Mary). Immediately following is the **Casa de la Comunidad** (13), ancient seat of government since its construction towards the end of the sixteenth century. It is a charming building with Renaissance columns and an exceptionally attractive portico, considered among the best in the region, providing entrance to the **Provincial Museum**. The museum houses a collection of archaeological findings and a wide range of ceramic artefacts demonstrating the historical link with ceramics that brought Teruel prominence and which continues to this day in the form of exhibitions of contemporary ceramic art. The **Portal de la Traición** (Gate of Treason) (14), owes its name to an infamous and untrue legend about the taking of the city by Pedro I of Castille. Close by is the **Acueducto**





Church of the Merced

de los Arcos (15), and is the best example of renaissance civil engineering that have come down to us from the Spain of the sixteenth century. Designed and built by the master architect, Pierres Vedel between 1537 and 1558, it served a double function in providing a water supply whilst at the same time acting as a bridge for travellers to enter the city.

The **Lombardy Tower** (16), defensively armed with canons is one of the last remaining towers that topped the walled enclosure surrounding the medieval city.

Opposite we find the **Provincial Archives** (17), located in the ancient schoolhouse of Arrabal. From here we can see the Neomudéjar tower of the **Church of the Merced** (18), erected towards the end of the sixteenth century or the start of the seventeenth. Inside we will find a

reredos in Plateresque (Baroque), a very popular style of the period. The military **Tower of Ambeles** (19), is the most interesting of the local military architecture having a plan in the form of a star. Passing through the old Jewish quarter we arrive at the **Church of San Pedro** (20), a building that was already in existence during the twelfth century. Note the magnificent apse, the tower that is modelled on a cathedral bell-tower and the reredos dedicated to the Saints' Cosme and Damian executed by Gabriel Yoli whose work we have already observed in the Cathedral.

In one of the side chapels we find the celebrated **Mausoleum of the Lovers** which cover the mortal remains of Diego de Marcilla and Isabel de Segura.

According to legend, Diego being poor, Isabel's father prohibited their union until the youth found fame and fortune. A time limit of five years was set and in those passing years not a word was heard of the plucky lad. Finally, the maiden's father gave her hand in marriage to an older man and the wedding was celebrated exactly one day after the time limit expired. Into this happy throng

Mausoleum of the Lovers of Teruel





Old Viaduct

suddenly there appeared Diego, returned and triumphant. Refused a last kiss, the dashed hopes and expectations that he had held in his bosom for five long years was too much for the poor boy and his heart broken, he collapsed and died on the spot. His body was prepared for the grave but before they could lower him a young woman dressed in mourning bent over the young man's body, kissed his lips and fell dead over the corpse. It was Isabel, overcome with grief. That which was denied in life was granted in death and here they lie, side by side, hand in hand, in an exquisite sculpture executed in marbled alabaster by Juan de Ávalos.

The administrative centre of the city is located in the **Plaza de San Juan** (21) whose arcades confer on it the aspect of being the Plaza Mayor. On one side of the square we find a Neomudéjar mansion that currently houses the Casino and the emblematic theatre of Tenor Marín. We conclude our tour at the **Old Viaduct** (22), one of the largest civil engineering projects undertaken in Spain, Designed by Fernando Hué in 1929, it became the centre from

which Teruel was able to expand in the shape of Spain's other well known symbol, the decorous fan.

Diocesan Museum: *Plaza del Venerable Frances de Aranda, 3*

☎ 978 61 99 50

Opening times: Monday - Saturday from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs

Provincial Museum: *Plaza de Fray Anselmo Polanco, 3*

☎ 978 60 01 50

Opening times: Tuesday - Friday from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs and 16.00 - 19.00 hrs

Saturday/Sunday from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs. Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays.

Mausoleo de los Amantes

Calle Matías Abad (next to Tower of San Pedro)

Opening times: Monday - Saturday from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs and 17.00 - 19.30 hrs. Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10.30 -14.00 hrs and 17.00 - 19.30 hrs

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

On the road leading to Valencia we find the **Parque de los Fueros**, a pleasant public park with an open-air auditorium, children's play area and wide, leafy tree-lined walks. Close by is the district of Los Planos where it is possible to visit **Dinopolis**, a museum dedicated to the fascinating world of Dinosaurs featuring reproductions of fossil skeletons, other fossil exhibits and 3-D film presentations.

(Information and reservations:

☎ 902 44 80 00).

PROVINCIAL EXCURSIONS



THE SIERRA OF ALBARRACÍN (150 km)

This excursion takes us on a journey that combines pre-history, scenery and culture and begins by taking the A-1513 out of Teruel towards **Bezas** where we make our first stop. Here we encounter a forestry road that takes us northwest to the *Navazo en Albarracín*, a collection of caves which include the *Losilla* whose walls testify through rock paintings mans' earliest attempts to share his experience of the world around him.

Recognised as a national monument since 1961, our next stop, **Albarracín**, enchants the visitor at first sight due to its traditional architecture having been so jealously preserved. Walking through steep winding alleyways of Moorish descent we arrive at the Plaza Mayor, the main square, crowned by the city

hall from where from one side we can enjoy a breathtaking view of the River Guadalaviar. The Cathedral of San Salvador built next to the old Episcopal Palace was constructed in the sixteenth century with a notable contribution by the architect, Pierres Vedel. The Diocesan Museum houses a valuable collection of Flemish tapestries. Leaving Albarracín we take the TE-V-911 through countryside filled



Albarracín



*River Fuente del Berro.
Calomarde*

with interest and discovery starting with **Calomarde** which has a fascinating church featuring tomb stones from a roman sepulchre. Arriving at **Frías de Albarracín** we encounter an enthralling landscape of fountains, streams, waterfalls and fantastic rock formations that appear to have been sculpted on a whim. And here, at a spot known as *Fuente García*, rises the spring that is considered the fountainhead of the River Tajo. The cradle of the largest river of the Iberian Peninsula deserves recognition and we can enjoy the recreation area and view the monument that have been established to pay homage to this place. Continuing on our way we find situated on a hillside overlooking a small river, the town of **Guadalaviar**. The seventeenth century parish church has a notable equestrian portrait of the patron saint, Santiago or Saint James as we know him. Retracing our steps northwards we follow the TE-V-9032 with its magnificent views over the valleys of the Tajo and Guadalaviar before we enter

*Church of San Millán.
Orihuela del Tremedal*

into a veritable labyrinth of pine forests, picnic spots and camping areas. Stopping for a rest in **Griegos** allows us the opportunity to visit the sixteenth-century church of San Pedro.

The mountain village of **Orihuela del Tremedal** situated on a rocky slope is our next stop to visit the church of San Millán, considered as one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture to be found in Teruel. Also worth noting is the Renaissance Town Hall dating from the sixteenth century. Going south, the A-1511 takes us close to **Bronchales**, a town whose economy is based on the timber present in the vast pine forests that cover this region. These forests shelter the deer that are protected within the National Montes Universales Hunting Reserve. Soon will appear the silhouette of **Pozondón**, a small town that features the remains of its once proud castle, several hermitages and the church of Santa Catalina. Detouring left onto the TE-V-9022 within 10 km we arrive at **Ródenas**, its parish church notable for the richness of its



architecture which include coffered ceilings carved in a reddish coloured stone and a Gothic triptych dedicated to St. John, the Evangelist. Taking the road again in the direction of Villafranca del Campo we turn off at the sign to **Peracense**. The detour is well worthwhile as here we encounter one of the finest examples of a completely restored medieval castle and considered, from a military point of view, as one of the most formidable of its type. Returning once more to the road to Villafranca we connect with the main road south until we reach the sign to **Santa Eulalia**. At the entrance to the town is the hermitage of the Virgen del Molino with a carved statue of the Virgin in pure Gothic style. In the town itself is the church of the Inmaculada, another work by the master architect, Pierres Vedel. The main road takes us again south to **Cella**, the final point on our tour. Cella is interesting in that it has the largest artesian well in Europe, embellished by a fountain designed by the Italian designer Ferrari in 1729.

Cathedral of Albarracín

☎ 978 71 00 84

Opening times: 10.30 - 14.00 hrs
and 16.00 - 18.00 hrs
(everyday of the week)

Diocesan Museum of Albarracín

☎ 978 71 00 93

Opening times: 10.30 - 14.00 hrs
and 16.00 - 18.00 hrs
(In summer until 20.00 hrs)

FROM THE RUBIELOS TO MAESTRAZGO

(200 km)

Take the N-234 south from Teruel and turn onto the A-232 at Puebla de Valverde to reach **Mora de Rubielos**, capital of the region of Gúdar. In the centre of the town we find the ex-collegiate church of Santa María constructed in a fourteenth century Gothic-Levantine style and above the town, the castle, one of the best preserved in



*Collegiate church of Santa María.
Mora de Rubielos*

all of Aragon. Continuing our journey on the A-232 we arrive at **Rubielos de Mora**, an architectural and civic jewel which presents many fine examples of traditional construction methods and in addition, much wrought-iron grille work which in the hands of a craftsman, invariably adds distinction to what it protects. Such care has gone into restoring the town to its former glory by the local



Linares de Mora

community that in 1983 their effort was recognised with the award, "Europa Nostra". The ex-collegiate church of Santa María la Mayor houses an outstanding reredos depicting the life of the Virgin executed by an artist known only as the Maestro de Rubielos. Turning north onto the A-1701 we enter a route marked by hermitages and small villages that conserve the simplicity of the past.

In **Nogueruelas** we should note the sixteenth-century Town Hall with its three storeys and covered balconies in wrought iron and the church of the Asunción whose construction goes back even further to the fourteenth century. Ancient too are the identifying signs of **Linares de Mora** whose whitewashed walls echoed the sound of sentries calling to each other from a once powerful and protecting medieval castle that now is but a memory of its former glory. Nonetheless, the Baroque church of the Inmaculada, from the eighteenth century is worth visiting for its Rococo frescos and an enamelled Flemish triptych above the altar.

Mosqueruela is our next stop and one of the most spectacular, presenting itself as an open-air museum of antiquity. Of its former defences there remains the gate of San Roque and other signs of its turbulent past. Its noble lineage is evidenced by the palaces and



mansion houses that increase in number as we enter the main thoroughfare. Intersected by alleys and lanes and overshadowed by hanging eaves we can only marvel at the wealth of this bygone age. The church of the Asunción still preserves its Gothic facade from the original and today is topped by an airy tower some 30 metres high.

Continuing northeast over the pass we meet the CV-173 which will take us for 3 km to **La Iglesuela del Cid**, a walled town that sits loftily above the ravine below.

Outstanding is the Town Hall which served as a convent and castle to the Knights Templar and next to it the church of the Purificación, characterised by its famous tower called Los Nublos. On the edge of the town, interesting Roman and Iberian inscriptions can be seen carved on the walls of the hermitage of the Virgen del Cid and no visit would be complete which did not include taking refreshment in the Casa Matutano, fabulously restored by the

Government of Aragón and now converted into a Hospedería. The A-227 now takes us through the region of Maestrazgo on a scenic mountain route to **Cantavieja**. Situated on one of the steepest escarpments of the sierra, it possesses one of the most complete collections of Aragonese-Gothic monuments in existence today. This harmony of style finds its highest expression in the Town Hall which we find in the main square surrounded by arcades and wrought-iron balconies, its facade proudly bearing the municipal coat of arms. In addition, the cathedral proportioned church of the Asunción is crowned with an unusual double pyramidal tower. And as a final flourish, in the church of San Miguel we can admire the tomb of one of those famous Knights Templar that are synonymous with medieval history. Taking the A-226 we move on to **Mirambel**, recipient of the "Europa Nostra" award in 1982

*Town Square.
Cantavieja*



for the quality of the restoration work completed in the historic centre of the town. Built against its historic walls are noble palaces and houses of impeccable construction accompanied by other fine works such as the Town Hall and the church of Santa Margarita whose tower is built under the shadow of those same defensive walls. Retracing our steps on the A-226 we pass through Cantavieja once more until we eventually reach the A-228, go south until the turn-off to **Gúdar**. It is said that Gúdar represents one of the best regional examples of the sympathetic co-existence between the works of man and the ecological value of the environment. Leaving Gúdar the way we came in our last call is to **Alcalá de la Selva**, a town that still bears the look of its Moorish past and presents within the church of San Simón and San Judas excellent examples of religious art dating from the end of the sixteenth century. The artistic heritage of this ancient and historic settlement is rounded off by the Sanctuary of the Virgen de la Vega and the Hermitage of Loreto.

Ethnological Museum: Mora de Rubielos. ☎ 978 80 62 50
*Opening times: Saturday/Sunday from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs and 16.00 - 18.00 hrs
 July/August/September open every day from 10.00 - 14.00 hrs and 16.00 - 19.30 hrs*

ALCAÑIZ, CAPITAL OF THE TIERRA BAJA

(120 km)

Girded by the River Guadalope, **Alcañiz** is one of the principal centres of the kingdom of Aragón. Its fascinating artistic-historical heritage begins in the Plaza de España where we find a handsome collection of medieval buildings and masterpieces of Renaissance



City Hall and Trading Hall. Alcañiz

architecture such as the old Trading Hall (Lonja) and the City Hall. Adjacent is the ex-collegiate church of Santa María la Mayor, commenced in 1736, a large building that shows signs of Baroque and Mudéjar influences. The city's military past is well represented by the Castle of Los Calatravos atop the small hill of Pui Pinos, today converted into a Parador offering luxury guest accommodation. Its fourteenth century Gothic tower, the Torre



del Homenaje, merits entering just to see its murals dating from the same period.

3 km west from the city centre is the Estanca Dam, an ideal place to enjoy water sports but our route takes us south on the A-232 and taking the secondary road to Valdealgorfa, for those interested in prehistory, the **caves of Val del Charco del Agua Amarga** offer exceptional examples of rock art. We continue until the N-240 then turn east towards **Calaceite**. Here we find an eclectic composition that will appeal to all aesthetic tastes such as that represented by the Baroque church of the Asunción with its monumental facade, the hermitage of San Cristóbal or the archaeological site of San Antonio, of Iberian origin where artefacts dating to 500 B.C. have been recovered. Taking the A-143 south we arrive at **Cretas**, noted for its

interesting civic architecture. The Gothic-Renaissance church of the Asunción also merits special mention as do the rock paintings to be found on the cliff face at Calapatá. Going south once more until we reach the A-231 we turn towards **Valderrobres** where we cross the medieval bridge of San Roque, stopping to admire its series of ogee arches that pay tribute to the mathematical skills of its Gothic builder. The town's streets wind sinuously towards the two centres



Calaceite church



Valderrobres castle

of ancient power, the castle (without doubt one of the most impressive and artistic of the province's castles) and the church of Santa María la Mayor. The church is a fine example of Teruel Gothic and the Rose Window is one of the most beautiful in the province. The tower is connected to the castle by a corridor constructed during the period of Archbishop García Fernández de Heredia.

South of Valderrobres is the A-2412 to the medieval town of **Beceite** and Parrizal, one of the last refuges of the Spanish Wild Goat, characterised by a landscape of lofty peaks, steep ravines and cascading waterfalls. Retracing our steps once more we pick up the A-231 until the turn off to **La Fresnada**. It retains a certain flavour of the past in its Jewish quarter and possesses probably the most elegant Town Hall in the province. Returning to the A-231 we go north to **Valjunquera** where the mid-eighteenth century parish church of San Miguel is worthy of our attention.

From here we cross country dotted by small hills and almond and olive groves passing through Castelseras until we meet up with N-211, turning south to **Calanda**, birthplace of the cinema director Luis Buñuel. Calanda, in a similar fashion to other towns and cities of the Tierra Baja of Aragon, celebrates the Passion of Christ during Holy Week (Easter), by beating tambours and drums of all sizes in a cacophony of sound. The N-211 takes us south again to **Alcorisa**, remarkable for the church of Santa María la Mayor with its stylised tower showing evidence of its Mudéjar past. It also has a large number of archaeologically important sites investigating its pre-Roman history. We conclude our tour halfway between Lower Aragon and the Maestrazgo, in **Molinos**, a small town that plays host to limestone caves at *Grutas de Cristal*, full of stalactites and stalagmites in their well-known capricious and fascinating columns, shapes and forms.

Grutas de Cristal de Molinos

☎ **978 84 90 85**

Opening times: Winter.

Monday to Friday from 12.00 - 16.00 hrs

Saturdays/Sundays and Bank Holidays from 11.00 - 13.00 hrs and 16.00 - 17.00 hrs

Rest of year: From 11.00 - 13.00 hrs and 16.00 - 19.00 hrs (every day of the week)

THE TIERRA ALTA

(50 km)



Our journey begins in Monreal del Campo and although relatively short its content is highly varied combining cultural interest with scenery of exceptional beauty. Located at the junction of the N-234 and the N-211, the heritage of **Monreal del Campo** is primarily in its civic buildings which include the house of Pedro Latorre and the ancestral home of Doña Concha and the overall effect of these palatial homes is to create an unforgettable impression of past splendour. This city, renowned as the capital for production of *Azafrán* (affron), has a special museum dedicated to this costly and most desirable condiment. Worth seeing too is the church of the Natividad with its fine collection of religious art. The most notable building in **Caminreal** is the church of the Asunción with its three aisles and highly decorated with Baroque detail. The archaeological remains of the Roman occupation, found just outside the town at La Cardad, are one of the most interesting of this era in

the province. The N-234 takes us to **Calamocha**, regional capital and an important administrative centre. The town has evidence of settlement going back to pre-history but its golden age was during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. To this period belong the mansion houses and the church of Santa María la Mayor with its superb entrance and impressive reredos. Nonetheless, the highpoint of this little town is the Roman bridge, over two thousand years old and still spanning the River Jiloca with a single arch of 6 metres in length and roadway 3 metres wide.



Roman bridge over the River Jiloca

Leaving the N-234 we make a brief stop in **Tornos** to visit the Baroque church of the Salvador with its statues of the Virgen del Rosario and the eponymous Salvador, both dating from the sixteenth century. In the hermitage of the Virgen de Olmos is a similar statue but unfortunately, is only a copy of the thirteenth century original which went missing in 1987.

From here we move on to the **Laguna de Gallocanta**, evocative of all that is natural and untamed, 1400 hectares of open wetlands contributed equally by the provinces of Teruel and Zaragoza and one of the most important wilderness areas in the Peninsula. During the summer months this microcosm of nature, declared a Wildlife Sanctuary since 1995, plays host to countless flocks of Cranes that migrate each year from northern Europe in their tens of thousands. The habitat protects over 200 species of fauna and 800 different botanical families and seen together they offer an unforgettable aesthetic and moving experience.

Rounding the lagoon takes us to **Bello** with its attractive Gothic-Renaissance church. Retracing our steps somewhat, in **Torralba de los Sisonos** we are able to contemplate the Flemish art in the reredos of the local church. Not to be missed is the church in **Villalba de los Morales** built in the seventeenth century but which

guards in its interior religious art from a much earlier age. We finish our journey at the hermitage of the Virgen de las Cuevas in **Caminreal**, built between 1714 -1722 and distinguished for its statue of the Virgin and its reredos which reflects the work of many different craftsmen. Relaxing for a while we eventually leave Caminreal returning to the N-234.

Azafrán Museum of Monreal del Campo

☎ **978 86 32 36**

Opening times: Tuesday to Saturday from 11.00 - 14.00 hrs and 17.00 - 20.00 hrs

Sundays and Bank Holidays from 11.00 - 14.00 hrs

OTHER ROUTES OF INTEREST

Take the N-420 north from Teruel for 40 km until the sign appears showing the A-228 to **Galve**. It has a very interesting theme park with a museum exhibiting fossils and reconstructions of life-size dinosaur skeletons and it is also possible to visit the excavation sites where many of the fossilised specimens were found.

Palaeontology Park, Galve

☎ **978 77 60 47**

LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Gastronomy and handicrafts

The brilliant repertoire of Terulean gastronomy finds its highest expression in pork dishes followed closely by roast lamb (*Ternasco*). Around these two fundamental ingredients is created a cuisine that, combined with the excellent olive oil of Bajo Aragón, brims with authenticity and charisma. In addition, the climate favours the curing of a succulent and tasty ham, awarded the distinction of a label of origin, *Jamón de Teruel*, the consumption and enjoyment of which is an obligatory rite for all those that pass through these lands.

We must also highly recommend the local sausage, *Longaniza*, and *Perdiz escabechada*, Quails served in a piquant sauce, which are consumed with relish in Alcañiz and Jiloca. Other traditional dishes include *Migas*, a recipe based on breadcrumbs fried in garlic and olive oil but usually with the addition of the chef's personal invention, a dish that bears all the luxury of its simplicity. Desserts begin with a cheese plate to satisfy even the most demanding connoisseur, *Samper de Calanda*, *La Codoñera*, *Celadas*, *Alcañiz* and

outstanding even among these, *Tronchon*. Sweets follow with the slightly profane but nonetheless heavenly, *Tetas de Santa Agueda* in Alcañiz or *Suspiros de Amantes* (Lover's Sighs) in the capital. And to clean the palate who could ask for more than a crisp, late Calanda peach from the Bajo Aragón.

Documentary evidence shows that pottery and ceramic ware have been a part of Teruel's tradition from the thirteenth century, usually but not surprisingly showing strong



Teruel pottery

Islamic influences. Today this tradition continues, producing classical designs decorated in motives of green and metallic tones derived from the use of manganese in the glaze. Wrought iron is still forged in Albarracín and Rubielos de Mora and cloth woven on traditional looms may be found in La Iglesuela del Cid. In Maestrazgo one can find hand-crafted leather work and ceramics and in Mora de Rubielos, basket weave in a variety of modern and traditional designs. Craft trades allow the discerning buyer to take home a souvenir that is not only

worthy of display for its own sake but will act as a memento of this very special part of Spain.

Fiestas

Like much of the rest of Spain, the *Toro Bravo*, the wild bull is at the centre of many of the fiestas in the province, Teruel celebrating its patron saint with the ceremony of the *Vaquilla del Ángel*, held every July. Similar festivals take place in a multitude of towns and villages throughout the summer.

In February the capital re-enacts the most famous of its legends, "The Lovers of Teruel" with the presentation of the wedding of Isabel de Segura. So popular is the event that a large majority of the population, more than fifteen thousand people, dress up in medieval costume to add solemnity and gaiety to the occasion. Holy Week (Easter) in Bajo Aragón is characterised by the most spectacular moment of all, "*romper la hora*", when the ritual of the uninterrupted beating of thousands of drums and tambours commences. The drums are beaten for two days, not only during the religious processions but even more so in the intervals between them. One can also follow the "Ruta del Tambor", formed by Albalate del Arzobispo, Alcorisa, Alcañiz, Andorra, Híjar, La Puebla de Híjar, Calanda, Samper de Calanda and Urrea de Gaén. Also of great interest are the processions and liturgical acts that are celebrated in



Holy Week

Teruel, Cuella, Villarquemado and other places in the province. In the capital, families leave the city to picnic in the countryside on *Tortilla de patatas*, Spanish omelette, *Rosca* or the *Longaniceta de Pascuas*, sausages prepared especially for Easter. This fiesta has the curious name of the *Sermón de las Tortillas* whose origins go back to the fifteenth century. As the sun sets on the first day of May, the young men of Albarracín go around the city singing the famous "Mayos" exalting the arrival of Spring, ancient symbol of renewal and rebirth. Another very old ceremony is the confrontation between Christians and Moors acted out in the *Embajada de moros y cristianos*, celebrated yearly in Alcalá de la Selva on the 8th of September. And at all of these festivals you will see couples dancing the *Jota*, a traditional dance that symbolises at one stroke the pride and joy of the people of Aragón.

Sports

Outdoor activities are well represented in the province as its topography is ideally suited to a wide range of pursuits. Its mountain slopes are perfect for skiing and two ski resorts are situated close to the capital at Valdelinares and Javalambre, both supported by an excellent infrastructure of hotels and other services.

(White telephone **978 60 81 81**)
Hikers and Ramblers have well marked routes such as the GR-8 that goes from Puertos de Beceite to the Sierra of Maestrazgo or from Gúdar to Javalambre as well as other minor routes of equal interest. The mountains lend themselves to mountain bikes or horseback riding and riders and mountaineers of all grades will find themselves suitably challenged by the many crags and peaks of the Sierras of Albarracín, Mataraña, Maestrazgo, Gúdar or Javalambre.

Hunters are able to enjoy the National Hunting Reserves at Puertos de Beceite and Montes Universales and fishermen have attractive options among the numerous trout fishing areas that are a feature of many of the province's rivers. And for those who enjoy strong emotional excitement there is the auto-racing track at Alcañiz where significant national competitions are held every year.

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www.dpteruel.es

El Maestrazgo
www.maestrazgo.arrakis.es

Centre for Tourism Initiatives in Teruel
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