

Pyrenean oak



# "AMONG OAK TREES AND OLIVE GROVES" SIERRA DE GATA

+ info



Tamborilero (drummer)



## INTRODUCTION

To the north-west of the province is the Sierra de Gata, lending its name to the beautiful border region that we will visit on this occasion. Here, among oak trees and olive groves, we will try some exceptional oil, get to know towns where a vernacular dialect is "spoken", we will visit ancient fortresses, walk through lush forests studded with wild mushrooms... and discover the only river from Extremadura that runs upwards.

## NOTES

Moraleja Tourism office  
927 147 088

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

The Trevejo castle was built on a Muslim fortress conquered in the 12th-century by Alfonso VII of Leon, who ceded it to the Order of the Temple, later it fell into the hands of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, after which it passed on to the Order of Santiago and finally to the Order of Alcántara; A highly "ordered" castle!



Late-Romanesque door, Hoyos church



Trevejo

This tour starts at **Moraleja**, where the tourism office is located in Casa Toril at the Bullring, a place where the towns bull-fighting events are still celebrated. Here we can obtain information about this region. Later we proceed first to **Perales del Puerto** and then to **Hoyos**; its three spots, Nuestra Señora del Buen Varón church and especially its architecture and medieval urban layout will provide us a very interesting trip to the foothills of the Sierra de Gata.



The rugged terrain and sheer size of the region provide for two tours to see: One towards the eastern sector up to **Robledillo de Gata**; and another towards the west up to **Valverde del Fresno**. We start by visiting the latter along the EX-205 up to the **Villamiel** crossing, where we can see the curious inscriptions made by the stonemasons on its church walls, then we climb up to **Trejejo**, an ensemble of astounding architecture with a robust castle.

### A Fala

This is the name given to a language declared as Heritage of Cultural Interest in the category of Intangible Heritage, which is still in use with the presence of local varieties in three towns of Sierra de Gata that we will visit in our tour: "o mañegu" in San Martín de Trejejo; "o lagarteiru" in Eljas, and "o valverdeñu" in Valverde del Fresno. It belongs to the Portuguese-Galician subgroup which following the Romanisation of the peninsula and has survived till date in these mountains.

Next is **San Martín de Trejejo**, a place where water is part of its landscape happily flowing through its streets. Here we will be able to see its palatial houses, arcaded square and San Miguel convent which is currently a Tourist Guest House. Late we go to **Eljas** to visit the remains of its castle destroyed in the 17th-century during the wars with Portugal and was the seat of the commandery of the Order of Alcántara. Finally we visit **Valverde del Fresno** and go up to the port of **Navasfrías** which is the provincial border.



San Martín de Trejejo



Eljas castle

### Gastronomy

Throughout the highlands we can find traditional dishes such as las *calderetas* de cordero or cabrito (lamb or kid stew), *chanfaina* (stew made of liver, blood sausage and pork offal), "us *fornazus*" (pies) and game stews made with partridges, rabbits or wild boar. It is must to try the excellent olive oil with Designation of Origin Gata-Hurdes and equally excellent are the goat cheeses, honey and traditional *Pitarra* wines made in the *boigas* (wine cellars). And of course wild mushrooms can be found throughout the region during the season.

Among oak trees and olive groves: Sierra de Gata

## EL SOTO

The chestnut grove of El Soto, located to the north of the village of San Martín de Trejejo, is one of the most beautiful places in the Sierra de Gata region where we can find holly trees, mountain elms, whitebeams and oaks. We can visit it by taking the old cobbled path that parts from the village itself (SL-CC 208 Trail).



Amanitas cesarea in El Soto

## NOTES

### ADISGATA Association

927 514 110 / 418

[www.sierradegata.org](http://www.sierradegata.org)

S. Martín de Trejejo tourism offi.

927 144 226

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

Oil with Designation of Origin Gata-Hurdes is made from the Manzanilla Cacerena variety of olives, which is the main crop of the area. This variety has properties valued a lot for consumption as both table olives as well as oil, which is slightly sweet, intensely fruity and with a great balance of spice and sour.





## NOTES

**Gata Tourism Office**

927 672 054

**Gata rural tourism**

[www.turisgata.com](http://www.turisgata.com)

## MAIN SIGHTS...

The Comarca Sierra de Gata interpretation centre in Torre de Don Miguel, is an ideal place to easily find out about the main attractions of the area. It

opens on Fridays, Saturdays and public holidays, but visits can be arranged on other days by calling 690 082 487.



Centro de Interpretación de la comarca Sierra de Gata

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

In the village of Gata, on the very same road, you can find a large cedar tree declared as *Árbol Singular* (Unique Tree), which according to tradition was planted in 1808, when it was already 15 years old, by Fray Juan de Gloria, a Franciscan priest from the Hoyos convent.



Cedro de Gata

The other tour starts at **Acebo**, a beautiful village known for its oranges and lace-making craft with interesting popular architecture and the Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles church deserves a visit. Next we move to **Gata**, Heritage of Cultural Interest classified as a Historical Site, and at the tourism office we can obtain information about the place and the tall **Torre de la Almenara** (watch tower).

## To the Water!

Similar to other regions of northern Cáceres, Sierra de Gata impresses with its sustained water ways. Rivers like Erjas, Árrago, Tralgas and Malavao (the only one belonging to the Duero River basin) and the Gata or Acebo riverbanks irrigate the fields from the heights of Sierra de Gata up to Vega Morala, and offer an opportunity to enjoy a bath during the summer season at the various natural pools of its villages.



Natural pools of el Jevero (Acebo)



Santibáñez el Alto

Next we proceed to **Torre de Don Miguel**, a place with narrow streets and distinctive walkways that gives it a scenic look. From here we go up to visit **Santibáñez el Alto** and its castle, both perched on a steep hill and on the foot of its southern slope we can find **Barrio de los Pajares** or de la Calzada, a set of agricultural constructions declared as Heritage of Cultural Interest classified as Place of Ethnological Interest. We reach this place by taking the Borbollón dam road.

## Borbollón

The Borbollón dam at Santibáñez de Alto was built in 1954 on the banks of the Árrago river. It has a camping site, sailing club and a 9-hole golf course and it also makes a good destination for sport fishing. But perhaps most importantly it is known for being a Special Bird Protection Area (Z.E.P.A.) harbouring a large community of wintering aquatic birds, cranes and greylag goose that use the Parra Chica island for roosting.



Finally we go up **Valle del Árrago** passing by Cadalso, where there is still the so-called Casas del Rey (Kings House), which according to tradition Alfonso XI stayed there with his mistress Leonor de Guzmán. Next we visit **Descargamaría** before reaching **Robledillo de Gata**, another Historical Site. At the tourism office we can receive information. As a grand finale we climb up to **Puerto Viejo**, the provincial border with Salamanca to see the headwaters of the **Malavao** river.



Robledillo de Gata



Valley del Árrago going up to Puerto Viejo

## Trails

There are numerous walking routes to be undertaken in Sierra de Gata, although the main reference is the GR 10 (in turn integrated into the European E 7 trail) which crosses it from east to west in its totality. There are as well routes that will take us to remote places such as the Cervigona waterfall in Acebo or that of El Chorrito (PR-CC 186) in Descargamaría.

## NOTES

**Mancomunidad S. de Gata**  
[www.sierradegata.es](http://www.sierradegata.es)  
**S. de Gata bookings office**  
 902 106 896  
**Robledillo tourism office**  
 927 671 011

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

"Zahurdones" or "chajurdones", are the most representative constructions of Sierra de Gata; huts of shepherds and farmers probably of Celtic origin, built with dry stone with corbel arch and circular floor plan.



Zahurdón

## Seasonality

## Autumn

- ▶ **San Martiño:** 11th November in San Martín de Trevejo. Patron saint festivities and Pitarras.
- ▶ **San Andrés:** Held in the end of November in Perales del Puerto. Patron saint festivities.
- ▶ **Magosto:** First Saturday of November in Elijas. Twinning festival with the Portuguese village Os Foios. Folklore and chestnuts.
- ▶ **Wild mushrooms:** The whole Sierra de Gata region is a true mycological paradise.

## Winter

- ▶ **San Blas:** 3rd February in Cilleros, Moraleja and Robledillo. In Valverde and Eljas horses run through the streets.
- ▶ **Día del Árbol:** Shrove Tuesday in Villanueva de la Sierra. Ecology since 1805.
- ▶ **Carnival:** Held in many localities but especially traditional in Gata.
- ▶ **San Sebastián:** 20th January in Acebo and Hernán Pérez.

## Spring

- ▶ **El Capazo:** First Saturday after Easter in Torre de Don Miguel. The boys place capacetos (basket covers) in flames on a felled oak.
- ▶ **Easter:** Celebrated in all the municipalities, especially in Robledillo de Gata.
- ▶ **Los Santitos:** Held in mid-June in Torrecilla de Los Ángeles and in Santibáñez el Alto.
- ▶ **San Antonio:** 13th June in Cadalso; the day before La Velá.

## Summer

- ▶ **San Buenaventura:** 14th August; Festivities and bull-fighting in Moraleja.
- ▶ **El Pino Marro:** In August in Descargamaría. The traditional felling, dragging and installing of a large pine tree.
- ▶ **La Enramá:** Held on the night of S. Juan in Hernán Pérez, temporary "couples" of boys and girls.
- ▶ **Natural pools:** Present in almost all the villages.