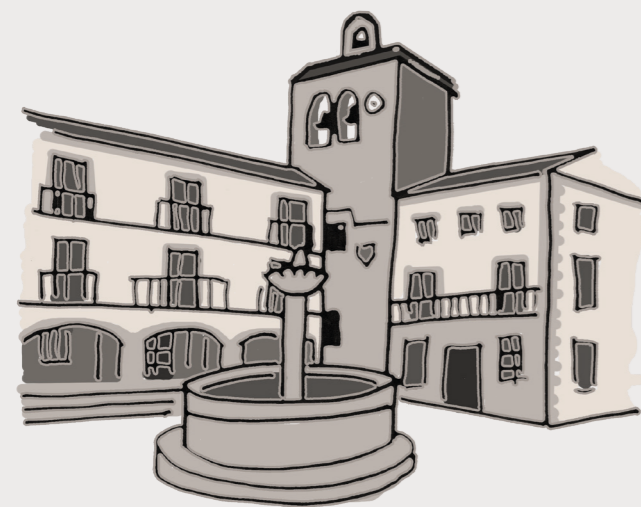


## Sierra de Gata Cultural Park

In the northwest of Extremadura, in the province of Cáceres and bordering on Portugal and the region of Castilla y León, is the Sierra de Gata Cultural Park. It is precisely this border location, at the far west of Spain and at the westernmost reaches of Europe, that makes the Park unique and gives it a touch of magic.



There are six valleys containing twenty municipalities and two districts, each of which boasts traditional architecture that has retained its charm and that tells the story of how people lived and how they used their dwellings over time.

As you walk through time, you come across Neolithic remains, with Roman roads, silent castles, medieval churches, reborn heraldry, large palaces, solitary huts, picturesque wood, stone and adobe houses, and towns with a contemporary flair. **A cultural melting pot with colours... thousands of colours.**

Listen as water trickles down stone-lined hills, birds sing in the new day, livestock walks serenely by, ripe fruit falls to the ground, fallen leaves rustle and new plants are born. **Here, silence has a sound.**

From the break of dawn until the endless sunset, the sun sweeps over the land, captivating in its slow-motion arc. That's when time comes to a standstill. Just then, a local appears to show you magical hideaways, legendary towns, dreamy vistas and paths filled with adventure. Here we cross over from forgotten memories and into life, where we find our destiny and cross the forest of our desires.

### Sierra de Gata Cultural Park... it will captivate you

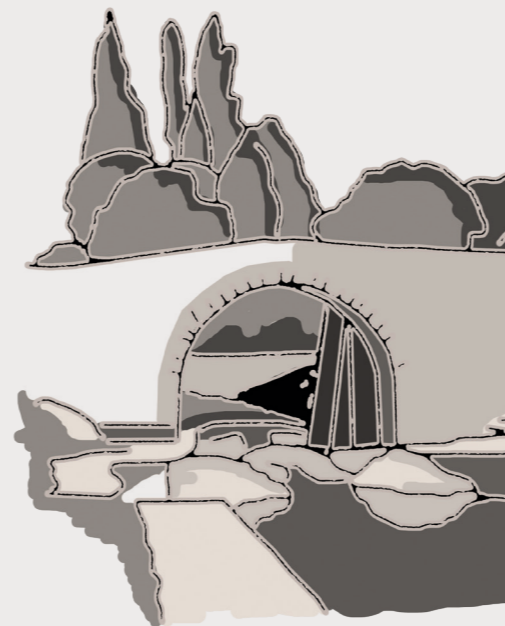


Early settlers could not resist the natural beauty of this setting, which explains the burial stones dating from the late Neolithic that were found after land was cleared in Hernán Pérez. Throughout the Park there are several dolmens and other megalithic structures.

Well before the Romans arrived, the Vettons settled in areas overlooking the rivers, building forts and farming huts surrounded by nature. The round, stone dwellings that dot the Sierra de Gata today are a legacy of those ancient structures.

One of the main Roman roads in Extremadura, the Vía de la Dalmacia, which began in the Tagus River and linked Caurium (Coria) with Mirobriga (Ciudad Rodrigo), would have crossed Sierra de Gata, hence the Roman roads, bridges and gold deposits we run into here.

Jutting out from the hilltops are the magnificent forts that in the Middle Ages defended this borderland. They now offer unbeatable locations for taking in the breathtaking vistas of the Sierra de Gata.



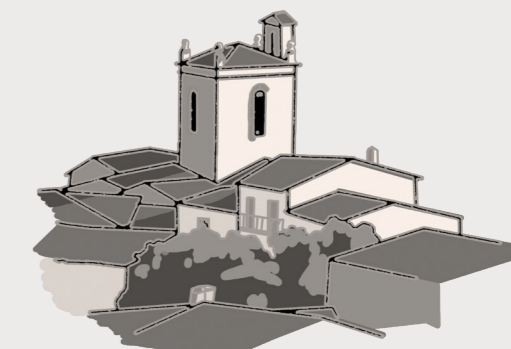
After five centuries of Muslim occupation, Alphonse XI began to take back this land in the mid-13th century, with many of the reconquered lands donated to the Order of Alcántara.



Beautiful examples of civilian rule in the sierra are provided by the crests that adorn the transoms on the Torre de Don Miguel, in Villamiel, and the front of the Chorro de Gata fountain. Later would be built many of the great churches and convents in the area, some of which were designed by the architect Pedro de Ybarra (15th c.), a master builder in the Order of Alcántara.

The villages are host to palatial, blazoned houses built using local slate or granite stones. Family homes were erected by teams of labourers using traditional techniques and local materials. Masonry, wood and adobe framework, mud walls and reinforcing bars comprise the various types of architecture seen in the Sierra, and give rise to the picturesque towns with that mountain feel.

The expansion in the 20th century is reflected in the towns and in the new settlements in the area.



### TOURIST INFORMATION

If you want to visit Sierra de Gata and would like additional information, we would be happy to help you.

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#ParqueCulturalSierradeGata Parque Cultural Sierra de Gata PCultural\_SGata

parquecultural@sierradegata.es





## LOS PAJARES

In a region where water flows freely, its towns build canals, fountains, wells and bridges. Agriculture dominates the suburbs with irrigation systems passed down through time. The livestock tradition takes shelter in pens, huts, stables, corrals, enclosures and haystacks. One case in particular is the Los Pajares neighbourhood of Santibáñez el Alto, declared a Cultural Asset due to its ethnological value.



## “A FALA”, A LIVING LANGUAGE

“Os tres lugares”, as they are known in Sierra Gata, refers to an ancient language with three dialects that has survived to this day thanks to families that hand it down from generation to generation. The language of the Valle de Xátima, **A Fala**, an intangible heritage declared a Cultural Asset, is born of an ancient language with three dialects: *lagarteiru*, spoken in Eljas (*As Ellas*); *mañegu*, spoken in San Martín (*Sa Martín de Trevellu*); and *valverdeiru*, spoken in Valverde (*Valverdi du Fresno*).



## TOWNS TO SEE

Five municipalities have been declared a Cultural Asset, categorised as Historical Landmarks: the history of Gata, the stateliness of Hoyos, the authenticity of Robledillo de Gata, the splendour of San Martín de Trevejo and the medieval structure of the town of Trevejo, which is within the district of Villamiel. The 20th century architecture and layout of Vegaviana are also worth seeing.



## LOS BOLILLOS

Bobbin lace is one of the most traditional crafts, particularly in Acebo. This medieval lacing technique involves winding a fine or thick thread around a wooden piece, which is the bobbin. The lacemaker braids the designs using pins that are set into the cushion.



## THE TREE FESTIVAL

Oak, chestnut and olive tree forests are essential to the Sierra's landscape. The respect for trees and nature traditionally espoused by the residents of the region is evident in the tree festival of Villanueva de la Sierra. The first festival of its kind in the world, it has been held every year since 1805 and is an Intangible Cultural Asset.

Wild olive, chestnut, cedar and magnolia trees are uniquely representative of the Sierra's varied forests.

## CUISINE



The ancestral farming and agricultural tradition yields the best artisanal goat cheeses, extra virgin olive oil from Cáceres manzanilla olive trees (under the Gata-Hurdes PDO), honey produced by migratory bees from heather, thyme, oak and holm oak flowers, and oranges and lemons from the mountains.



The wine-making tradition is rooted in these towns. In San Martín, nicknamed “of the Wines”, you can find over forty-five boigas where locals make wines for their own consumption. Unique wines from these valleys, like those of Descargamaría, are mentioned by Cervantes in *El licenciado Vidriera*:

“And the guest, having sampled many different wines [...], without forgetting those from Ribadavia and Descargamaría. Finally, the guest named more wines than Baco himself could have had in his cellar.”

The cuisine is highly unique and combines the proximity of the Portuguese border, through the use of desalted cod, and local products, berries, seasonal

products, mushrooms, hunting fishing and deep-rooted rural dishes. Typical dishes include tomato soup, fried potato soup, the *sopetón*, orange salad with olives, pennyroyal gazpacho, potato and kale *esparragau*, migas extremeñas, mushrooms (*boletus edulis*, *amanita caesarea* and *chantarela*), bean stew, potatoes with rice and cod, rice with hare, stuffed rabbit, goat or lamb stew and the typical *chanfaina*. Desserts include almond soup, *fritters*, *floretas*, *cannoli*, *perrunillas*, fluffy doughnuts and Dios Padre rolls.

This is an area where trends in cuisine don't go unnoticed. Here, Wagyu cattle are raised and spirulina algae is grown.



## MTB CYCLOTOURISM

Riding a bike lets you get to some beautiful spots in this unusual land. A total of ten routes for riders of all skills are available to cross valleys or climb hills. You'll be able to take it easy on numerous slow roads.



## NATURAL POOLS

All the towns and villages along the mountains use the water from the rivers to create natural pools, with wide-open leisure areas and restaurants, where you can cool off in the summer, at one with nature.



In Villasbuenas de Gata, next to the Rivera de Gata reservoir, is the renowned and traditional Baño de la Cochina, a water and mud spring with medicinal properties.

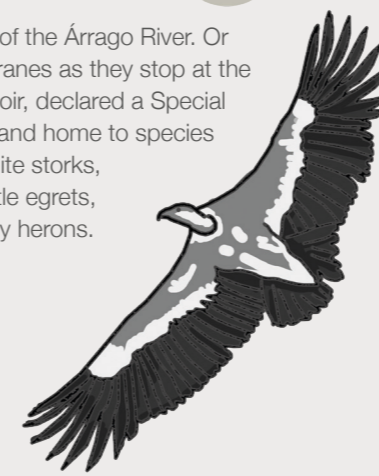
## BIRDING



Forest tracks, paths and roads lead you to some great areas for birdwatching. Climbing a mountain takes you to the Chorro de Los Ángeles overlook, a tall waterfall known as El Chorrillo from where you can see a feeding point for large scavengers like the griffon vulture. Nearby, in the shadow of the Gomara Mountain, the sky is full of impressive black vultures.

Due to the great diversity of the Sierra de Gata Cultural Park, you might encounter hedge sparrows, sedge wrens and robins in the Mirador de la Lagartera, which is

near the source of the Árrago River. Or you might see cranes as they stop at the Borbollón reservoir, declared a Special Protection Area and home to species of waterfowl, white storks, cormorants, cattle egrets, seagulls and grey herons.



## HIKING

On foot, you can go on posted trails to lookout points from which to take in breathtaking landscapes. There are paths accessible all year round that will guide you to picturesque places of historical, ethnographic or environmental interest.

GR 10, a seven-stage-long trail, several smaller trails (PR) and numerous routes in every town in the region will take you to places of extraordinary beauty that make the Sierra de Gata a paradise for hikers.

## ECOTOURISM



Forests, mountains, rivers, geology, flora and fauna all help us to enjoy nature. The interpretation of pastures for livestock like fighting bulls, cattle, Iberian pigs, sheep and goat; the traditional slaughter festivities and the processing of food products; milking and the making of dairy products; and the gathering of garden and agricultural products.

Panoramic routes • School trips • Mushroom picking routes • Horseback riding • Slaughter festivities • Farm visits • Orchards • Adventure parks • Cheesemaking • Visits to wine makers and oil mills • Oil routes • International Rural and Environmental Film Festival

## ACTIVE TOURISM



The Sierra de Gata Cultural Park offers great incentives to those looking for adventures and experiences with something extra.

Offroad excursions with birding or cultural routes • Archery • Kayaking • Horseback riding • Surfing between sierras • Climbing • Abseiling • Slack line • ATV rides • Zip lining • Inflatable boats • Fishing and hunting • Golf



## FAMILY TOURISM

A place for young and old alike to enjoy fascinating, educational activities.

Oil tourism • Birding routes on foot • Cheesemaking • Between haystacks • The Crane Patrol • Treasure hunting • Liquid Gold • Horseback riding • Farm visits • Orienteering • Visits to wineries • Visits to oil presses • Adventure parks • Kids camps • Nights under the stars • Fruit picking



It will captivate you

