

# ECOTOURISM Andalusia

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## A fusion of experiences

Climbing a volcano, descending into a desert, being enraptured by endless *dehesas* and centuries-old forests, touching the sky with your hands, entering the kingdom of the lynx, contemplating the dance of the birds, sailing between two continents, travelling through eternal landscapes and letting yourself be seduced by the hospitality of its peoples, losing yourself in stone labyrinths or luminous marshes and, at last, finding yourself again. Here you will find everything you need to make your visit an unforgettable experience.

## A melting pot of landscapes

Andalusia is a myriad of unique landscapes, generous in nature, symbols of the identity of this land and its people.

Our areas have been recognised worldwide for their environmental and cultural values. This effort and commitment of all Andalusians makes us feel proud of one of the most important natural heritages in Europe. A collective effort to maintain this treasure that makes life possible, that makes the Andalusia we have and pursue possible.

This commitment to conservation has led our land to become the most protected area in Spain, exceeding the total area of some European Union countries, such as Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta and Luxembourg. We need you to preserve it.

## A Network for Sustainable Development

The Andalusian Network of Protected Natural Areas (RENPA) covers an area of almost 3 million hectares, 32.3% of the region, making it one of the largest and most diverse in Europe. A living and fragile territory where visitors can get to know it, interpret it, enjoy it and walk through it while appreciating and helping in a practical way to its conservation, without degrading the environment and having a positive impact on the local communities. We are talking about ecotourism. Are you in?

## Come and see...

## Dehesas of Sierra Morena

The northern strip of Andalusia is mostly hollowed out forest, transformed by humans since prehistoric times. A generous landscape, domesticated for centuries, where sustainable development is evident through traditional exploitation such as the extraction of cork, Iberian pork products, game, honey, aromatic herbs, firewood, chestnuts, mushrooms... and, of course, ecotourism.

This is a breeding area for the majestic Iberian imperial eagle and the solemn black vulture, an area of presence and potential expansion of the Iberian lynx, a paradise for small and medium-sized birds that in spring display their trills and exhibitions, *dehesas* where in autumn there are breathtaking concerts of bellowing and trumpeting cranes... the offer is endless.

Contemplate the sky from this privileged Starlight Reserve, stand in awe of the fabulous Sierra Norte Geopark, learn the ancestral secrets of the production of cured meats, cheeses and liqueurs, lose yourself in the largest Biosphere Reserve in Andalusia. In short, discover this unique habitat with the specialised vision of nature guides from the natural parks that make up this territory.

## Mediterranean woods and Spanish fir forests



## karst

When the mountain dissolves with water and time, an astonishing catalogue of unique geological formations emerges, such as the gypsum caves of Sorbas, the Bailón river ravine in the Sierras Subbéticas or the limestone bolts and columns

in the Torcal de Antequera. Landscapes of fantasy where nature's creativity overflowed all imaginable limits. And in the midst of them, as silent witnesses of those distant eras, there are hidden spectacular fossils that you can find with the help of guides specialised in interpreting geological heritage.

## Volcanic cliffs and beaches

The Mediterranean coastline still preserves some natural gems, such as the impressive cliffs of Maro-Cerro Gordo, which plunge over the coastline, giving rise to hidden coves with transparent seabeds. Here, holm oaks descend from the Sierras de Tejada, Almirajara and Alhama down to the coastline, and Iberian ibex comes to take advantage of the salt deposited on the rocks by the sea breeze.

Coasting eastwards you reach the Cabo de Gata-Níjar Geopark and Biosphere Reserve. For a whole month you could visit a beach every day and never repeat. This spectacular volcanic landscape contrasts with luminous salt flats full of flamingos, dreamlike *Posidonia oceanica* meadows, vestiges of gold mines and great natural settings that are already part of the history of cinema and world literature.

Diving, hiking, snorkelling, kayaking, geotourism, bird watching... open all year round. So as not to remain on the surface, enjoy the true identity of this unique place with the help of its ecotourism companies.

## Mountains and mature forests

The Sierra Nevada is home to the highest peaks of the Iberian Peninsula, with unique plant and insect species. The activity of its people has given rise over time to an intricate network of roads and irrigation channels that run from north to south and from east to west, like the arteries that irrigate a living organism.

Among the thickest forests in Andalusia, the second largest natural park in Europe, the Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas, can also be found. This one, together with the Sierra de Castril, is once again home to the majestic flight of the bearded vulture. This formidable forest mass is completed by the Sierra Mágina and Sierra de Baza, the crags of which are home to other large birds of prey such as the golden eagle and the Bonelli's eagle.

Visit these mountains in any season of the year, whether on foot, by bike or off-road vehicle, thanks to the authorised companies that offer you authentic ecotourism experiences to capture the deep essence of these lands.

## Inland, coastal and marsh wetlands

West Andalusia spills over into the marshes of Isla Cristina, Odiel, Barbate, Bahía de Cádiz, the lagoons of southern Córdoba and Cádiz, Padul, Fuente de Piedra... and, of course, Doñana. Liquid mirrors in which countless aquatic species such as spoonbills, white-headed ducks and ospreys come to look at themselves. An oasis of life in a thirsty land that every year burns with thousands of flamingos to rise from the ashes, like a phoenix.

From the astonishing Rompido spit in the province of Huelva to Tarifa, passing through Doñana, Bolonia and Barbate, there are long golden sandy beaches, rocky reefs, paradisiacal coves, moving dunes and flysch. It is a coastline as diverse as spectacular. Be amazed by the iconic Tómbolo de Trafalgar or the imposing cliffs of La Breña, the look-out post for Barbary pirates.

In the Strait of Gibraltar, enjoy whalewatching and the thousands of birds that cross it every year on their migratory routes between Europe and Africa, a continent that you can contemplate on the horizon just as they did from the Roman city of Baelo Claudia, the remains and views of which are not to be missed.

Want more excitement? Trails will help you on your way, observatories will make you invisible and, with a good nature guide, the experience will be unforgettable.

### Instructions for use

1 Select the **season of the year** of your visit.



2 Choose the **natural area** you want to visit and consider the ideal season for your visit: for autumn contrasts, presence of birds, temperature for bathing, blooming, etc.

3 Select the **type of activity** you want to perform:

- On your own or with companies under the Parque Natural de Andalucía Brand: [ventanadelvisitante](#)
- Through a local ecotourism company: [ecoturismoandaluz](#)

In any case, please contact the visitor centre, information point or ecotourism for help in organising your visit.

Follow us!



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# ECOTOURISM

# Andalusia



## Activities

**FLORA WATCHING**

- Edible and poisonous mushrooms
- Orchids
- Andalusian flora in botanical gardens
- Spanish fir forest
- Chestnut trees
- Almond blossom
- Cherry blossom
- Canutos, tertiary gallery forests
- Ancient yew trees

**FAUNA WATCHING**

- Deer bellow
- Iberian lynx
- Spanish imperial eagle
- Waterfowl
- Bird migration
- Whalewatching in the Strait of Gibraltar
- Osprey
- Flamingo mating
- Bearded vulture
- Black vulture
- The trumpeting of the cranes

**ECOTOURISM ON THE MOVE**

- Canoeing, rafting or boating
- Diving or snorkelling in crystal clear waters
- Andalusian Greenways
- High-mountain peaks
- El Caminito del Rey
- Snowshoes
- Off-road routes
- Horseback riding routes

**GEOTOURISM AND STARGAZING**

- Georoutes
- Mining landscapes
- Coastal cliffs
- The summer sky: stars and constellations
- Fossils
- Extinguished volcanoes
- Caving

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

- Traditional salt marshes
- Film settings
- Historical events engraved in the landscape
- Cork harvesting
- Careo ditches