



Universal Mountains Route

The region of the *Sierra de Albarracín* is a territory of recondite landscapes and architectures with a strong presence. These mountains hide **impressive landscapes** arising from a difficult orography, which are articulated around a varied set of ravines, canyons, rocks, valleys and extensive forests of conifers, junipers and holm oaks. This beautiful natural space was the cradle of primitive **prehistoric communities**, which expressed their lifestyles in a graphic way in important samples of **rock art**, the remains of which are grouped in the collection of *Rock Art Coverings of Levantine style of the Mediterranean Arc*, and have been declared **World Heritage, forming the Cultural Park of Albarracín**. Also in its municipalities we can discover the traces that the **Roman Empire** left behind on its way through the region. A quiet and pleasant tour to enjoy the peace that nature offers.





Directions and points of interest

Congratulations, you are going to enjoy the slow driving route "**Universal Mountains Route**". Follow the directions that we give you below and don't miss any of the details of these really marvellous places. **Let's go!**

DEPARTURE

This tour begins in Peracense, a municipality within the Jiloca Region, in northwest Teruel province, 52km from Teruel and 150km from Zaragoza. It is signposted on motorways and other national and regional roads (direction Villafranca del Campo).

Peracense

Peracense is the southernmost town in the **Jiloca region**. The town is located in the foothills of the Iberian mountain region, at more than one thousand metres of altitude, in the upper basin of the River Jiloca. Its history is written in stone. Reliable documentation revolves around the history of its imposing **castle dating back to the Late Middle Ages**.

Dated in 1740, the **church of San Pedro** presents a basilica floor with three naves in as many sections. The transept is covered with a dome over pendentives. Built in masonry and ashlar masonry, the exterior has a single volume with a hipped roof. The tower, located at the foot, is of two bodies and is decorated with Ionic pilasters.

The **Town Hall** is a two-story building built in masonry. On the ground floor you can see the old market, consisting of two arches of reduced masonry.

Don't Miss Out! Peracense Castle

Point 1

Leave Peracense by Calle Iglesia heading southwest and follow the road for 5.6km to get to Ródenas. You pass the magnificent Peracense Castle on your way.

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Ródenas

The town is located to the south of the **Sierra Menera** in a beautiful natural environment. Its name comes from rodeno, a sandstone with iron oxide that gives it a characteristic red colour. **Ródenas is the reddest of the red villages.** Its name, its houses, the rocks that surround the town, its soil...

In the town, the constructions of this reddish stone are the protagonists in a perfect symbiosis between the stone and the surroundings on which they are perched. In its streets there are also some beautiful mansions decorated with sumptuous grilles.

Among the monuments that are worth highlighting are the church of *Santa Catalina*, *the cistern*, *the chapels of early Gothic style*, *the chapel of La Virgen de los Poyales*, *the medieval laundry rooms of El Navajo*... in addition there are **prehistoric engravings** extended across the whole hillside. From **Cerro de San Ginés** you can enjoy an extensive panoramic view of the surrounding villages.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 2

Leave Ródenas by Calle Eras Arriba (TE-V-9022) going south and drive the 10.1km to Pozondón.

Pozondón

Pozondón is a town located in the foothills of the beautiful landscapes of the **Sierra de Albarracín** whose municipal area is included in the *Parque Cultural de Albarracín*.

In its town the red roofs of the houses stand out, with walls of good masonry and whitewashed façades in a good number of them. The primitive urban nucleus huddles around the church and the town hall. The city hall is built in stone of rodeno with a market of two arches and grilles in the openings, because the tradition of wrought ironwork remains alive. The temple is dedicated to *Santa Catalina* and its crenelated bell tower is located at the foot of the building. The archaeological remains that can be found in the surroundings are of great interest, being the oldest of the Neolithic period. From the Iberian period there is a village in the *Puntal del Tío Garrillas*, which preserves remains of walls and cave paintings.

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Services: Accommodation

Point 3

Leave Pozondón by Calle Fuente (A1511) and travel 13.1km west, turning off at the TE904 for Bronchales.

Bronchales

Located at an altitude of **1,569 m**, **Bronchales** is one of the highest municipalities in Spain and is surrounded by one of the densest and best preserved pine forests of the Peninsula. The waters of its **more than 60 natural springs**, scattered across the most beautiful places of the *Montes Universales*, are of exceptional quality and have extraordinary properties. All this makes Bronchales stand out as a resort and it ranks very highly in high mountain tourism.

Located at the top of the town, the *chapel of Santa Bárbara* is a 14th century building that offers privileged views of both the town and its pine forests, as well as the plains of Pozondón and Ródenas. The *church dedicated to La Asunción* is a masonry construction from the 16th century with a nave of three sections covered with a starry ribbed vault.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation, Camping

Point 4

Leave Bronchales by the TE904 going north. Drive 1.4km until you reach the intersection with the A1511, turn left and continue until you reach Orihuela del Tremedal. This section is 9.2km.

Orihuela del Tremedal

Orihuela del Tremedal is located in the centre of the amazing and wild natural landscapes of the *Sierra de Albarracín* and *Montes Universales*. In its municipal area is where the maximum height of the **Sierra del Tremedal** stands: the "*Caimodorro*" mountain with an altitude of 1,936 m. Among the attractions of the municipality are several natural ones. The town is located on the route of the *Camino del Cid* and is crossed by a number of trails that bring us closer to its beautiful surroundings and show us its immense natural heritage in all its splendour.

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The town is declared a **Historic Site** and as for the monuments, the monumental church of San Millán is a highlight, one of the most beautiful and best preserved examples of Baroque style in the province. The city hall is of Renaissance style and has a façade in good masonry work. Another example of the stately past of Orihuela is found in large mansions with beautiful wrought ironwork. On an imposing hill to the south of the town, the *chapel of the Virgin del Tremedal* is erected.

When leaving **Orihuela del Tremedal**, the A-1512 road leads to the **Port of Orihuela** (1,650 m). After about 4 kilometres, the Majada las Vacas Fountain is left, where we find a good sample of the amazing “stone rivers” of this area, and half a kilometre later we arrive at a straight road 4 kilometres long.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation, Petrol Station, Camping

Point 5

Leave Orihuela del Tremedal by the Albarracín road (A1511) going south and turn left into the A1512. Continue for 5.2km and turn right at the TE-V-9032 which takes you to Griegos.

Griegos

Framed in the *Sierra de Albarracín*, the town of **Griegos** is nestled at the foot of the *Muela de San Juan*, a mountain that provides water to four important rivers of the Peninsula: *Tajo, Cabriel, Júcar and Turia*. The entire territory of Griegos is populated by large areas of Scots pine as well as juniper and savin juniper vegetation that colonise the extensive moorlands. Its municipal area borders the **Alto Tajo Natural Park**, which has an extensive system of canyons and river gorges that is considered one of the most important in Europe.

Griegos preserves two monumental buildings of interest: the *church of San Pedro*, which was most likely built in the 16th century and almost completely reformed in the following century, and the *chapel of San Roque*, which began to be built in 1624 and has subsequently been the object of numerous reforms. At 1,800 metres, at the top of the *Muela de San Juan*, there are **cross-country ski trails**. Besides being an excellent viewpoint over the surrounding area, it is an opportunity to explore routes and snowy footpaths.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 6

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Leave Griegos by the TE-V-9032 and turn left at the road to Villar del Cobo running alongside the Búcar then the Griegos rivers. This journey is 5.9km.

Villar del Cobo

Villar del Cobo is located on a small river widening between stretches of different gorges or canyons. The River Guadalaviar emerges on the southwestern slope of the Muela de San Juan and channels its valley through a gorge that joins that of the River Griegos in the same town. There are other places where the relief is combined with the attractiveness of wild forests and the presence of fountains, such as the Coveta Fountain in the vicinity of the Casas de Bucar.

Along with this exceptional natural heritage, we must highlight the existence of some archaeological sites of particular interest, such as the Iberian settlements located in La Calzada or in Morrón Redondo. It also has the Church of Santos Justo y Pastor, built at the end of the 16th century. In its streets there are remarkable examples of popular architecture, as well as noble mansions such as the Casa de los Fernández del Villar, with interesting grilles and an open gallery under the eaves decorated with geometric paintings. In the chapel of the Virgen del Rosario there are two sections, the first covered with a wooden roof and the other with a half-barrel vault.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 7

Leave Villar del Cobo by the south, continuing the road you came in on, and turn right to take the road to Frías de Albarracín, entering the immensity of this sierra. The distance is 13.7km.

Frías de Albarracín

Immersed in the *Serranía de Albarracín*, the town of **Frías** is located at the foot of an isolated hill surrounded by beautiful landscapes of leafy pine forests and vast meadows.

The town has some interesting buildings of interest, such as the *chapel of San Roque*, some houses scattered around the town and, standing above the town, the church of La Asunción, one of the most monumental works of neoclassical style in the province. More than **sixty sources of excellent water flow** through the town. The most famous are the *Buey* and the *Berro*, the origin of the river of the same name. It is also worth visiting a huge chasm located a couple of kilometres towards the **source of the Tajo**. And the cave of *La Peña de la Moratilla* has samples of cave paintings in the Levantine style. In *Universal Mountains Route*



the spot of the *Fuente de la Corraliza*, there is a unique pine tree. Two pine trees are found joined together by a branch that makes a capital H shape.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 8

Take the A1704 west for 10.7km to reach the source of the Tajo River (Nacimiento del Río Tajo).

Source of the River Tajo

The **River Tajo**, the **longest in the Iberian Peninsula**, emerges in the place known as ***Fuente García***, with an altitude of almost 1,600 m in the *Sierra de Albarracín* (within the municipality of Frías de Albarracín).

Very close to where the river actually emerges from, at a lower level, the **monument to the source of the Tajo** has been installed. The monument aims to pay homage to the three provinces in which it is forged and which establish the channel itself: *Teruel*, *Cuenca* and *Guadalajara*. *Teruel* is represented with its symbolic "torico" or "little bull", while the star and the chalice represent *Cuenca* and the knight to *Guadalajara*. Completing the sculptural group is the *Padre Tajo*, an allegory of the river that is given the shape of a great titan. There is a picnic area in the surrounding area. A few kilometres away, very close to **Frías de Albarracín**, it is worth visiting the "*Sima de Frías*", which astonishes us with its enormous size of 80 m in diameter and almost 60 m in depth.

Point 9

Return to Frías de Albarracín and continue northeast until you reach Calomarde; a distance of 17.5km in total.

Calomarde

Calomarde is located next to the river of the *Fuente del Berro* or *River Blanco*, in a basin that has great breadth, where crops and pastures are located. The *Sierra de Albarracín* hides landscapes and beautiful spots that, without doubt, are its main tourist attraction.

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From **Calomarde** you can take two beautiful excursions, among others. At 3 km from the town (between Calomarde and Royuela) is the *Cascada Batida or Cascada del Molino Viejo*. It is one of the most famous waterfalls in the entire province and is astonishing for its beauty and its great cascade. You can see it from the viewpoint next to the road, although it is advisable to go down to it to get the best views by following the signposted path. The *route of the Barranco de la Hoz*, which links the towns of *Calomarde* and *Frías de Albarracín*, runs through the **canyon of the River Blanco**, a tributary of the *Guadalaviar*. The large rocks that form this canyon have their maximum expression in the so-called *Moricacho*, a large rock with an opening in the hillside. All of this allows you to enjoy fantastic days hiking and out in nature in the *Sierra de Albarracín*.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 10

Continue on the A1704 for 8km going northeast until you reach Royuela.

Royuela

In the middle of *Sierra de Albarracín*, **Royuela** stretches over a hill that rises over a plain of red fields that gave the town its name. The pine forests, which are abundant in the mountains, are replaced here by juniper trees of international importance (since the substrate favours the presence of these juniper trees).

The importance of its **natural heritage** is reflected in its two Sites of Community Importance (SCI): that of the *Sabinares de Saldón y Valdecuenca* and that of *Los Cuadrejones-Dehesa del Saladar*. In the spot of *"Las Fuentecillas"* there is a monumental juniper tree 12 m high and a perimeter of 4.19 m. In the town, the church of San Bartolomé was built in the 16th century in a Renaissance Gothic style and consists of three naves with a ribbed vault. The city hall, built in 1659, has later been largely reformed.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation

Point 11

Leave Royuela going north on the A1703 before turning right at the junction with the A1512. This takes you to Albarracín; a total distance of 10.6km.

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Albarracín

Located in the heart of the mountain range of the same name, the town of **Albarracín** is a jewel and a monument in itself. This beautiful town was already considered by Azorín when he visited it, as “**one of the most beautiful cities in Spain**”. This spectacular and impressive *Historical Site* is perched on a rocky hill surrounded by a fantastic medieval wall which, in a perfect condition, climbs the rock in an unforgettable natural environment.

However, the charm of **Albarracín** is, above all, found in the layout of its narrow streets with many mansions and palaces, with staircases and passageways, as well as in our discovery of its entire hamlet with irregular partitions in a red colour with wooden trusses and overhangs appearing to touch one another. Each corner, each house, is the object of admiration for its doors and callers, its tiny windows or its carved wooden balconies decorated with elaborate ironwork. Among its beautiful network of streets and buildings is the *Plaza Mayor* (where the town hall is located), the *Episcopal Palace*, the *cathedral*, the *churches of Santiago and Santa Maria*, or *museums such as the Diocesan*, the delightful *toy museum* or the “*Martín Almagro*” *city museum*.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation, Petrol Station, Camping

Don't Miss Out! Cultural Park of Albarracín

Point 12

Leave Albarracín by Calle Llano del Arrabal and continue 7.3km down the road to Pinares de Ródeno.

Pinares del Ródeno

Located in the municipalities of *Albarracín, Bezas and Gea de Albarracín*, the first thing that gets our attention in the splendid **Protected Landscape of the Pine Forests of Rodeno** is the whimsical formation of escarpments and natural towers of reddish sandstone that appear painted in different shades with the light of the day. It is one of the most spectacular things to view in the province of **Teruel**. However, at the same time we can discover the inseparable companion of these geological formations: the *Pinus pinaster*. This extensive pine forest, of 6,829 ha, sits on the brightly coloured sandstones, sometimes growing in the most unlikely of places. However, on the western strip the relief transforms. The limestone takes the place of the sandstone and the flat and elevated areas with slight declines to the main ravine, take centre stage.

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End of route

When travelling on the road south from Albarracín, turn left at the crossroads that leads you north to Gea de Albarracín. The distance is 13.5km. This route ends here and it will leave you very close to Teruel (24km), a stop on the Aragon Kings route.

Gea de Albarracín

Gea de Albarracín emerges next to the *River Guadalaviar*, at the foot of the *Sierra Carbonera*. The hamlet is structured in an elongated form around the *Calle Mayor* where the main buildings of the town are located, such as the *church of San Bernardo*, the gateways, the *chapel of San Roque*, the *Convento del Carmen* and several monumental buildings such as the *town hall* or the *Casa Grande*. The houses extend from the foot of the slope to the *River Guadalaviar*, where a simple bridge (by means of which visitors access the **Camino del Cid**) links with the *San Antonio district*.

The Islamic influence can be seen in the configuration of some of its streets, where excellent examples of popular mountain architecture are preserved, with rammed earth structures reinforced with timbers and the typical ironwork. An old aqueduct runs through the municipal district, most of which has been excavated in the rock: the *Roman aqueduct of Albarracín-Gea-Cella*. Dating back to the 1st century AD, it is probably the largest Roman engineering work currently preserved in **Aragón**, and one of the most important hydraulic works in the **Iberian Peninsula**.

Services: Restaurant, Accommodation