

Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

# International Tagus



→ **NATURALLY  
SPEAKING**

*Routes, water,  
birdwatching  
and lots of nature*

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→ **TRAVEL BLOG,  
WITH... PILAR ARMERO**

*Life shines at...  
International Tagus*

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→ **WAYS OF LIVING, WITH...  
J. R. ALONSO DE LA TORRE**

*The reflection of the Tagus*

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*It's happening!*

+10 **BONUS**  
**TOP-NOTCH  
EXPERIENCES**

**UNEXPECTED BEAUTY**

**THE NATURAL PARK**

**JEWISH GOTHIC QUARTER**

**DOLMENS AND A ROMAN BRIDGE**

**+26 APPROVED ROUTES**



DIPUTACIÓN DE CÁCERES  
ÁREA DE RETO DEMOGRÁFICO,  
DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE, JUVENTUD Y TURISMO

# **INTERNATIONAL TAGUS CROSS-BORDER BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

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*"The villages of the biosphere reserve are reflected in the river, their appeal is rediscovered, and they understand that beauty brings wealth".*

International Tagus  
Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

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*"The uniqueness of the small villages and hamlets of the border area, the freshness of the countryside in the summer evenings, and the water flowing to the Tagus, the mirror where this region is reflected and rediscovered as something beautiful, different, and attractive".*



## International Tagus Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

# Instruction Manual


The number of megalithic sites at the International Tagus is overwhelming: about 150 registered dolmens and the great Cabezo Menhir, or standing stone. And the Portuguese part is no less spectacular. Additionally, there are twelve shelters with rock paintings.

The reserve has three magnificent historical ensemble sites: Alcántara, Brozas, and Valencia de Alcántara. What's more, you must travel the scenic road between Cedillo and the Tajo Dam (EX-375), where the Barco del Tajo tourist boat is located.

We are in the extreme southwest of the Province of Cáceres, at that sharp peak where Portuguese land is touched upon, a peak which forms the border with said neighbouring country. But to talk about the border here is almost meaningless, as the reserve affects, as its name indicates, both countries – including fourteen municipalities in Cáceres and twelve Portuguese parishes of the Centro and Alentejo regions. The border is home to the International Tagus Natural Park, a cross-border park in two countries which forms one great brotherhood on either side of the river and presents some of the best preserved patches of Mediterranean forest in Europe, with endangered species such as the Iberian Imperial Eagle.

The Spanish part is, like the Portuguese, marked by its cross-border identity: a "rayana" region, as they say around here. It is also marked by centuries of management by the Order of Alcántara, whose name persists in many of the towns that make up the area. Also persisting is the Order's legacy in the form of a rich cultural and architectural heritage. The other characteristic that unites the territory is the impressive megalithic ensemble that it is home to, from the south in Valencia de Alcántara –whose Jewish Gothic Quarter, by the way, is another of its jewels– to the north in Alcántara, with some of the most spectacular dolmens that can be seen.

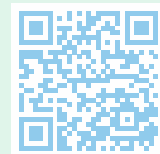
And, of course, in Alcántara there is the other great icon of the reserve: the magnificent and eternal Roman bridge which has made it possible for people and cattle to move over the Tagus for two millennia – and in fact it continues to do the same. And the fact of the matter is that few places hide as many treasures as the International Tagus – and in this case, those treasures are double on either side of the border; let's take a look.

We will use this symbol to identify activities for children in the guide → 

## HOW TO GET THERE



The region is located in the west of the Province and its road network allows you to travel around comfortably by car or motorcycle.



→ **MAGAZINE MOTOVIAJEROS**  
*International Tagus is a paradise for motorcycling.*





## Elpaisviajero.com

**Star tourism.** The reserve falls within the ten priority observation areas in terms of the clearest night skies in Extremadura.

## Diario Hoy.es

### The International Tagus is part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

The International Tagus Natural Park, shared between Spain and Portugal, has become part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

## Interesting blogs

### → EL RINCÓN DE SELE

[The International Tagus: the last cross-border refuge](#)

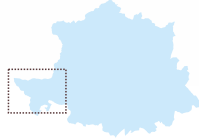
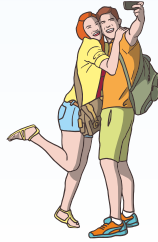
### → VIAJAR CON NIÑOS

[On the banks of the Tagus: A journey back in time along the border between Portugal and Extremadura](#)

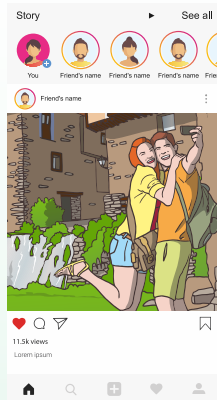
### → LOS VIAJES DE ALI

[Ideas for a getaway to Cáceres: the International Tagus Natural Park](#)

## Are you really here? Situation Map



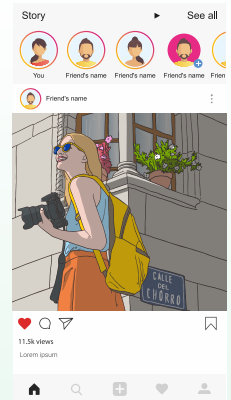
### Province of Cáceres



## Not without my stories

Use our hashtags and share information about us on your social networks. Here are some of the most popular ones for you to use whenever you wish:

#ColeccionaMomentos  
#RinconesxDescubrir  
#TajolInternacional



The nearest airport is in Badajoz, 94 km away. Other recommended airports are Lisbon (250 km), Seville (300 km), and Madrid (350 km).



The train from Cáceres to Valencia de Alcántara takes 1 hour and 30 minutes.



# BLOGTRIP: WAYS OF LIVING

#ReservaBiosfera #CarreterasSecundarias #TajoInternacional  
#PuentedeAlcántara #Experiencias #BarcodeITajo #Viajerosdeverdad

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## INTRODUCTION

*An international  
reserpe bound  
together by  
the Tagus*

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*A stroll through  
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## UNIQUENESS

*The coolness  
of the countryside  
in the evenings*

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Does the hustle and bustle of life throw you off and leave you not knowing what to do any more? Are you fed up with the treadmill of life? Well, get out of your routine; if you want to come, we've got a vacant spot for you. José Ramón Alonso de la Torre doesn't know if he's right, but he knows that he's here... and his journal highlights the best on the essence of the region and its people, its trades and its future, modernity and history, tradition, flavours, and knowledge. These are... ways of living.

*If not  
now,  
when?*



Roman Bridge  
(Alcántara)



"The villages of the biosphere reserve are reflected in the river, their appeal is rediscovered, and they understand that beauty brings wealth".



# THE REFLECTION OF THE TAGUS

Ways of  
living

By J.R. Alonso  
de la Torre

Writer and Columnist

Our intrepid reporter and tireless traveller gives us the essential clues to getting to know the region.

 @JRAdeIatorre



The mirror where this region is reflected and rediscovered as something beautiful

A section of the Tagus that has been converted into a reserve

Zarza la Mayor and its Royal Silk Factory

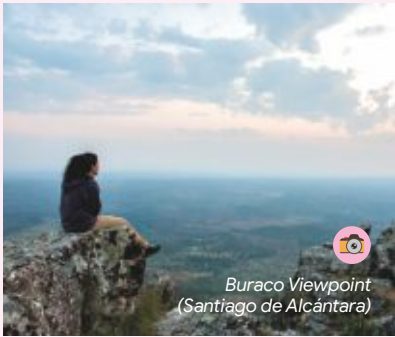
Around the reserve: Membri6, Cedillo, Herrera, Salorino, and Herrerueta



Cabezo Menhir  
(Alcántara)



El Casón Interpretation Centre  
(Cedillo)



Buraco Viewpoint  
(Santiago de Alcántara)



“A fundamental village of the Tagus Biosphere Reserve is Alcántara; that is, Al Qantarat -- the Bridge”.

If the Guadiana is a river that brings wealth with it in the form of irrigated farmland, the Tagus has always seemed a humbler river, less accommodating because its wealth is intangible – its wealth is beauty. Since 2000 in Portugal and 2006 in Spain, the international stretch of the Tagus, turned into a natural park, now provides added value in addition to beauty: tourism. To the north, the park and the biosphere reserve begin at Zarza la Mayor, located on the shortest path between Madrid and Lisbon. The Royal Company of Commerce and Factories of Extremadura, known as the Royal Silk Factory, was built there in 1746, and its building is preserved today. Further south, on the cross-border road from Piedras Albas to Segura, there a Roman bridge over the Erges River that was reputed to be the quietest border crossing of the Peninsula. That is where Manu Leguineche and other journalists entered Portugal (almost clandestinely) on April 25, 1974. Leguineche recalls in his writings that the “guardiñas” (“guards”) had not even realized that the Carnation Revolution had broken out in Lisbon.

A fundamental village of the Tagus Biosphere Reserve is Alcántara; that is, “Al Qantarat” – “the bridge”. Its reservoir, which was the second largest in Europe when it was inaugurated, made it a symbol of modernity. But before



Brozas: living history of transhumance

Alcántara: a bridge and a historical cookbook

Social and cultural life in a capital town: Valencia de Alcántara



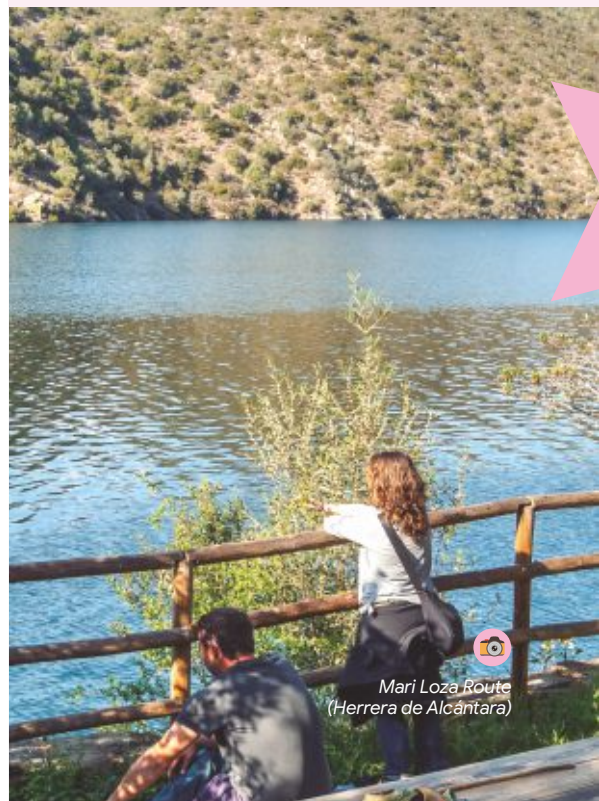


the reservoir there was the Roman bridge, one of the classic icons of Spanish architecture. Alcántara is a cultured town where there were already two private bookstores in the 16th century and where libraries arrived a quarter of a century before they arrived at the other villages of Extremadura. More than half of its residents are members of that public library today, which has 30,000 titles.

Alcántara's most famous book is its cookbook, which Napoleon's troops took: "The French say that their sauces and current cuisine are based on Alcántara's cookbook. Martín Ferrand claimed that béchamel sauce and croquettes come from Alcántara. Just like consommé, wild game cuisine, and vegetable broths", explains Juani Santano, librarian of Alcántara.

Brozas, a stately town, is a living history of transhumance. The shepherds of Castile and of León set out for the pastures of Brozas, Mata de Alcántara, and Villa del Rey on September 29, the day of St. Michael: flocks of more than a thousand sheep with their leading shepherd at the front, their supporting shepherds, and apprentice shepherds. They all said goodbye to their families, whom they would not see again until eight months later. Many married here and settled in this region.

"The uniqueness of the small villages and hamlets of the border area, the freshness of the countryside in the summer evenings, and the water flowing to the Tagus, the mirror where this region is reflected and rediscovered as something beautiful, different, and attractive".



Mari Loza Route  
(Herrera de Alcántara)



Tierra Caída ("Fallen Earth") Dolmen  
(Cedillo)

Down the Tagus River, we cross Membrijo, with the remains of its gold mines; we move towards Salorino, a historical land of muleteers, beekeepers, candle makers, tanners, millers, and the home of the champion of Extremaduran regionalism, Doctor Antonio Elviro; we visit Herrerueta, boasting a windmill, a parish church, and the colonial charm of the Casa de la Marquesa ("Marchioness House") in the town square.

Going back towards the Tagus, we find Carbajo: famous for its cheeses and its 18th century El Salvador ("The Saviour") Church. Further on, Santiago de Alcántara, of ancient origin and featuring a beautiful and typical main square. And, next to the river we find Herrera de Alcántara, where we linger because this is one of the most beautiful villages of Extremadura and a place where an archaic version of the Portuguese language still remains intact: ferrereño.

Cedillo is the westernmost town in Extremadura. Its inhabitants speak with a melodious accent in which the rhythm and the intonation is like that of a song. The clock on the Cedillo tower can be heard in two countries and three regions: Extremadura, Alentejo, and Beira. A docking and departure point for cruise ships, Cedillo is a leading tourist spot in the International Tagus Natural Park.

Our trip ends in Valencia de Alcántara, which resembles a big city in terms of its cultural and social life and its commerce. And, beyond the urban centres, we find the uniqueness of the small villages and hamlets of the border area, the freshness of the countryside in the summer evenings, and the water flowing to the Tagus, the mirror where this region is reflected and rediscovered as something beautiful, different, and attractive.

A new colour in the chromatic spectrum to illustrate our Cultural Interest Assets:

# STONE BLUE

#DolmenMellizo #Barriogoticojudío #PuenteAlcántara  
#TajolInternacional #MenhirCabezo #FuenteConceja

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## AGE-OLD TIME

**Megalithism at  
International  
Tagus**

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## THE ROMAN BRIDGE

**The everlasting  
bridge of  
Alcántara**

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## HISTORICAL SITES

**Brozas, Valencia  
de Alcántara y  
Alcántara**

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## LA CONCEJA

**Zarza la  
Mayor's ancient  
fountain**

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An illustration of a dolmen, a prehistoric megalithic structure. It features two large, flat, rectangular stones stacked on top of each other, supported by several vertical pillars. The stones are shaded in various tones of grey and brown, suggesting texture and depth. The background is a light blue sky and a green landscape with rolling hills and a small tree. The text is overlaid on the central part of the dolmen.

In this original proposal, illustrator Agustín Gallardo introduces us to some of the most relevant heritage elements of the International Tagus Biosphere Reserve.

“Stone Blue” can be found in castles, dolmens, churches, and bridges – always with peculiar characters who guide us through the region's history and architecture. Don't blink an eye during this unique perspective that shows us an International Tagus that is full of curiosities and colour.



El Mellizo (“The Twin”) Dolmen  
(Valencia de Alcántara)

*If not  
now,  
when?*



# TIEMPO

# INMEMORIAL

By Agustín Gallardo



Illustrator and  
Content Writer



Roman Bridge  
(Alcántara)



Tina Jónsdóttir

*What a nice day!  
Spring has come  
early and the  
bridge stands out  
majestically  
against the green  
and blue  
backdrop, with  
the old Sancti  
Spiritus Convent  
of Alcántara  
dominating the  
hill. Tina has come  
to visit it; she  
didn't expect it  
like this at all.*



1  
 Along the old border that is the Tagus, it seems as if time has stopped and, with it, stone has also stopped – an element which endures and impresses.

In the Neolithic and Chalcolithic, between four and five thousand years ago, the megalithic phenomenon developed – literally the "phenomenon of large stones" which, when they appear in isolation, are considered menhirs (or standing stones) and, if they appear in groups, they create the well-known monuments that are dolmens. The land of the International Tagus Biosphere Reserve on either side of the border was not alien to megalithism. In fact, it houses one of the most important European ensembles of this period. Just the municipality of Valencia de Alcántara has forty-one catalogued dolmens, and it is estimated that at least fourteen have disappeared. They are, in addition, the ones that are in the best state of conservation thanks to the fact that the majority are made of granite, a stone which is more durable than the slate present in the other municipalities with dolmens Herrera de Alcántara, Cedillo, Alcántara (you can also visit the imposing Cabezo Menhir here), and Santiago de Alcántara, where there is also a

Megalithic Culture Interpretation Centre. As a curious fact, during the excavations at the Lagunita III dolmen of this latter municipality, a container with fermented barley was found, which seems to indicate that the people there made and consumed beer. Whether they drank drafts or not, the truth is that the dolmens are a visit that never fails. Just imagining how these people moved the stones and for what purpose they did so continues to fascinate adults and children alike.

## → The Alcántara Bridge

"The Bridge of Alcántara" is the title of the famous and highly recommended novel by Frank Baer that recreates the vicissitudes of the Iberian Peninsula during the 11th century, with our everlasting bridge as the scene of the book's ending. And the fact of the matter is that the Alcántara Bridge is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular monuments of all those left by Roman civilization: six arches, the largest with a 28.8 metre span, supported on five huge pillars that rise majestically to circumvent the Tagus river, facilitating the passage of one of the main routes of the time in the peninsula, the road from Corduba (Córdoba) to Portus Cale (Porto). In the centre of its structure stands a great triumphal arch with an inscription in



which it can be read that the bridge was erected in honour of the emperor of Hispanic origin Trajan, dating it between 103 and 104 AD. On the temple, also Roman, at one of the entrances to the bridge, you can read another inscription that, after referring again to Caesar and the Romuleo gods, says "... perhaps curious travellers, whose desire is to discover new things, wonder who made it and with what intention. The bridge, destined to last forever in the centuries of our world, was made by Lacer, famous for his divine art... ". Cayo Julio Lacer, the bridge's author, did not exaggerate; the bridge has lasted and it is one of the most impressive places that travellers can visit.

## → Historical sites

Brozas was, from the 13th century, the seat of the largest Commandery of the Order of Alcántara; thus, its urban layout

is clearly medieval, as the streets are branch out radially from the centre where the Santa María la Mayor de la Asunción ("St. Mary Major of the Assumption") Parish Church is located. Next thereto is the La Encomienda Palace or Castle, a monumental building in the town. Likewise, scattered around the urban core there is another parish church, as well as several hermitages, convents, the old Santiago Hospital, and imposing stately houses like the one that belonged to the Bravo Family, the Argüello Family, the Flores Family, the Counts of Canilleros, etc. Some of the homes, like the one that belonged to the Tejada Family and that of the Gutiérrez Flores family, had corner balconies, an interesting and traditional element of the 16th century architecture of Cáceres.

As for Valencia de Alcántara, its connection with the Order is so evident that it bears the Order as part of its name. Among its many heritage attractions is the monumental Rocamador Church, and



### Andy Lucas

Things aren't always  
what they seem

*Andy likes music, of course, but he doesn't sing well. He prefers photography, and has gladly answered our questionnaire.*

### A Picture

The Alcántara Bridge, of course. There is nothing like it in the whole world.

### A "Must"

Dolmens and more dolmens... impressive. Oh, and the Cabezo Menhir.

### A Recommendation

A route through the three historical ensemble sites. That'll take you through the entire reserve!

### An Unexpected Find

Valencia de Alcántara was a discovery: the Jewish Quarter, the castle, the Rocamador Church....

## Two for the prices of one

Andy is a pragmatic guy and if he can get two for one, he doesn't think twice. Thus, International Tagus was the perfect destination for him: two countries, two natural parks, and a large biosphere reserve that unites them. And to top it all off: as much heritage as one could want.



Corner Balcony  
(Brozas)



## Neves Melo

*She lives in Lisbon and is a community manager. On her holidays, she is travelling around the border of the International Tagus: in Zarza la Mayor she went to the Erges Valley and just loved the Peñafiel Castle. Now she is taking a selfie at the Conceja Fountain. Her likes are going to blow up.*



Conceja Fountain  
(Zarza la Mayor)



annexed thereto is the fortress castle with its imposing keep, from where visitors can get magnificent views of the town. But the most peculiar thing about this historical complex is its Jewish Gothic Quarter –related to that of the nearby Portuguese city of Castelo de Vide, where many of its inhabitants settled after their expulsion–, a total of 19 long and narrow streets with a typically medieval irregular layout; streets whose houses still maintain 266 exterior doorways with ogive and lintel style archways. This is all topped off by the restored synagogue. A real surprise for anyone visiting this place that is as rich in history as it is unknown.

Alcántara has remarkable stately architecture, with numerous stately houses and palaces with façades and coats of arms like those of the Barcos, Bernardo de Aldanas, Bootellos, Arias de Quintanadueñas, Pereros, Barrantes Maldonados, etc. As for religious structures, the most impressive is the San Benito ("St. Benedict") Convent, from the 16th century, one of the most representative ensembles of the Extremaduran Renaissance, whose well-known Charles V gallery forms the backdrop for the Alcántara Classical Theatre Festival. Also amazing is the Archpriest's Church of Nuestra Señora de Almocóvar ("Our Lady of Almocóvar"), from the 13th century, built atop the old mosque of the town, with three façades of the original Romanesque temple being preserved. The San Pedro de Alcántara ("St. Peter of

Alcántara") Church, erected in honour of the Patron Saint of Extremadura, and the Sancti Spiritus and San Bartolomé ("St. Bartholomew") Convents, currently a Hospedería de Extremadura Hotel, complete the ensemble.

## → La Conceja fountain

This magnificent fountain is a unique example of popular functional architecture. Its name refers to the community congregation, or council, formed by the inhabitants of Zarza la Mayor – then simply known as La Zarza. It is actually a water well that is built of granite stones and it has an approximate depth of seven meters, probably being built during the first quarter of the 14th century. Above it there is a large parapet, also made of granite and rectangular in shape. The fronts of this parapet feature pointed and rounded arches, since the fountain was covered with large sheets of the same material, which disappeared as time passed. Due to its monumentality, it must have been constructed atop the main aquifer of the municipality. Although it was partially rebuilt in the middle of the 17th century by specialised builders from Portugal, the truth is that the fountain and its surroundings have undergone a significant degradation process that, fortunately, has been reversed and, today, they represent the most significant image of the town.



# BLOGTRIP: LIFE SHINES

#ReservaBiosfera #TajoInternacional #Lifestyle #Astroturismo  
#Birding #BodaRegia #BarcodeTajo #FestivalAlcántara

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*Pilar points out three basic experiences in the area*  
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Get ready to eat like there's no tomorrow with the border-zone cuisine. No worries, because there are plenty of activities to get yourself back into shape: from kayaking to riding horses along the Tagus; likewise, going on the smuggling route and doing some agritourism with the whole family. You will not leave the land of cork empty handed – a place where you will find even paddle tennis rackets made of said material.



Pilar describes the reserve to us in terms of its lifestyle. The best corners, gastronomy, TOP events.... Take note!

@  @piarmero



# LIFE SHINES AT...

## International Tagus Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

By Pilar Armero

*Journalist and Blogger*



“The reserve has the magic of the border and you will be able to discover it however you want. By going on the smuggling routes, enjoying the bellowing of the deer, seeing the stars with the help of experts, or taking a ride on the Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat”.



*Barco del Tajo (Tourist boat)*

*On foot over the smuggling routes*

*The Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat, a river route around Cedillo, Herrera, and Santiago de Alcántara*



*Barco del Tajo (Tourist boat)*



## SHIP'S APPRENTICES: TO THE RIVER!

The International Tagus Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve has the magic of the border and you will be able to discover it however you want. By land, through smuggling routes that some companies finish off with workshops on how to prepare the best coffee, which was the most coveted merchandise on this side of the border. There are also horseback rides along the Tagus, and if you prefer to fly, you can see the sunrise from a hot air balloon.

For those who feel like a fish in the water, a good plan is to go diving at charming beaches such as the Cantera de Alcántara Beach, or to set sail on the Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat with stops at Cedillo, Herrera, Santiago de Alcántara, and Alcántara in order to see birds and, if you are lucky, even deer. Children will love feeling like ship's apprentices. And, with the agritourism proposals in rural accommodation options they can also feel like farmers – learning to milk a cow or to make cheese as a family. Remember, in this area the people are masters at making delicacies such as those from Carbajo and Valencia de Alcántara.

Seeing stars alongside experts and enjoying the bellowing of the deer in early autumn are both also part of that catalogue of unforgettable experiences in the biosphere reserve.

## YUM, YUM... I'LL EAT IT ALL

The gastronomy here has a unique Portuguese influence, featuring superb examples of pastries with their "fatias" or "torrijas" (a dessert like French toast) and the "tibelá", a crème caramel that is prepared in Cedillo, one of the municipalities with

*Portuguese influence  
on gastronomy*

*The Reserve's festivals:  
Enfariná, Magusto....*

*The big events: The Royal Wedding  
and The Classical Theatre Festival*





La Enfariná Festival  
(Cedillo)

most Portuguese influence as it is on the border with Castelo Branco, Castelo de Vide, and Nisa. There is also "tiborna", bread soaked in oil with sugar, cinnamon, and lemon – typical of Valencia de Alcántara, and "mormentera de Alcántara", a difficult-to-prepare Arabic crescent-shaped sweet that has a festival in Alcántara in June. Also in Alcántara, in October, there is the "caracolá" festival with a tasting event featuring snails with tomato, cumin, and chilli peppers.

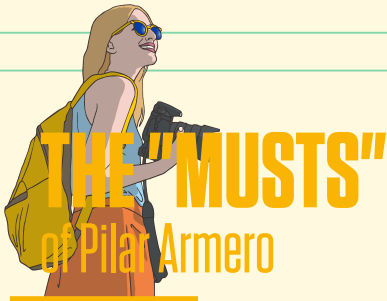
This border-area cuisine cannot go without cod, which is excellent in Portugal, although the unique touch lies in river species such as boiled or grilled crabs, sometimes served with tomato sauce, as well as tench "escabeche" or carp in a broth from Santiago de Alcántara. For carnivores, there is game meat in its most diverse forms and the traditional "bobos con buche" of Salorino. Likewise, chorizo sausage, bacon, and black pudding are typical of the San Antón

festivities, as well as "mojo de matanza", a pork and liver stew with potatoes.

## FESTIVALS FROM WHITE TO BLACK / GRIME OR FLOUR

The International Tagus Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve is a party, and not just of flavours but also of traditions like "La Mascarrá" of Herrera de Alcántara, held on Shrove Tuesday, when faces are blackened with a substance extracted from cork stoppers and the traditional "ji, ji" is played. Opposite that, in Cedillo on Shrove Tuesday, people end up white in the flour battles of "La Enfariná".

Easter Sunday is the intense and noisy "Domingo de Tiros" ("Sunday of Shots") in Zarza la Mayor, a celebration in which blanks are fired. In Brozas there is the festival of San Antón ("St. Anthony") and the "Toro de San Marcos" ("Bull of St. Mark") celebration is being recovered, an



The "Magusto" of Carbajo is a veteran Celtic and folk music festival held in November and which features music and dance workshops, talks, routes, exhibitions, a handicrafts market, a "garbanzada" (a special chickpea meal), and much more.



In August, the Alcántara Classical Theatre Festival is held with nightly performances at the San Benito ("St. Benedict") Convent. It's an event that fills the town with a great atmosphere.



By land, sea and air: on foot along the Smuggling Route, a ride on the Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat, or a journey in a hot air balloon to see the sunrise in the reserve.

ancestral festival in which the locals perform dramatizations accompanied by a bull that they adorn with flower necklaces and which symbolises the wild bull that, years ago, participated in the festivals – a bull which would become tame through divine inspiration during the festivities.

Another event with animals as its protagonists is "La Pelá del Potro" of Mata de Alcántara on Good Friday, in which the horses are made beautiful by dolling up their manes and tails.

An event considered to be of Tourist Interest in Extremadura is the Royal Wedding that brings Valencia de Alcántara back to the 15th century every August, remembering the wedding between the Infanta Isabel, daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, and Manuel I of Portugal. Likewise, another Festival of Tourist Interest is the Pilgrimage of San Isidro ("St. Isidore"), with its beautiful floats, typical costumes, and popular songs every 15 May.

This is also a cork area. Starting in May, the extractor crews prepare to extract the cork from the cork oaks of the International Tagus. There are currently companies that organize experiences related with this activity.



"Domingo de Tiros"  
("Sunday of Shots")  
(Zarza la Mayor)

# 10 INSTAGRAMMABLE INTER

Dear, have you brought the tourist guide?

...¡Oops!



Because I'm worth it

## EVENTS AND MUSEUMS TO ENJOY THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Pay attention here; these are the top ten events and museums in the International Tagus Biosphere Reserve – the best way to get to know the region's traditions, its products, its customs, and –above all– its people. Fun is totally guaranteed.



01

Classical Theatre Festival

→ Alcántara

149k likes

A basic of summer and one of the great #classic theatre festivals in Extremadura. Are you going to miss it?

02

Biosphere Reserve Month

→ Reserve villages

47k likes

A month of activities full of gastronomy, hiking, culture, and leisure. You've got plans for November.

06

Reception Centre Tajo Internacional

→ Alcántara

127 likes

Discover what the flora and fauna of this fantastic natural park hides in one single building. 🥰🥰

07

Boda Regia Festival

→ Valencia de Alcántara (july)

45k likes

Historical re-enactment of the marriage in 1497 between Isabel, the daughter of the #Catholic Monarchs and Manuel I.

# NATIONAL TAGUS MOMENTS

Events y museums Top

 Gastronomic Days 

03



→ Valencia de Alcántara (october)

   24k likes 


Border-zone cuisine and products are the stars at the International Tagus Gastronomic and Agri-Food Days.

 Peripheries Film Festival 



04



→ Marvao - Valencia de Alc.

   365k likes 





The border-zone festival based on human rights, the environment, art, and culture. Open-air cinema in August.

 Transhumance Days 

05



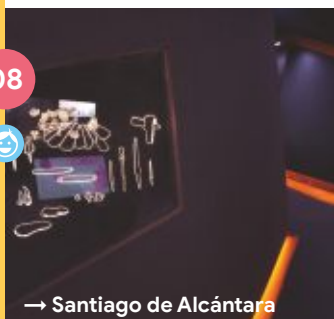
→ Brozas (noviembre)

   1,2k likes 

As this is a reserve that has been united to #transhumant herding since the dawn of time.

 Interpretation Centre Cultura Dolménica 

08



→ Santiago de Alcántara

   98k likes 

A unique and modern space to discover the area's megalithism. Objects, informational panels, etc.

 El Magusto Festival Celta-Folk 

09



→ Carbajo (November)

   895 likes 

A Celtic and #folk music festival held in a unique natural environment. Concerts, crafts, exhibitions, gastronomy, etc.

 Interpretation Centre Taejo Internacional 

10



→ Cedillo

   91k likes 

International Tagus Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve reception and information centre.





# NATURALLY SPEAKING

**Welcome to the western frontier**  
Reserva de la Biosfera Transfronteriza  
del Tajo-Tejo Internacional

#TajoInternacional #Dólmenes #Senderismo #ReservaBiosfera  
#Birding #RíoTajo #IrisLusitánica #ColeccionaMomentos

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## HIKING

**26 approved trails through the International Tagus**  
Page 28

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## MTB AND WATER

**Routes, sport fishing and a quarry with water**  
Page 30

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## BIRDWATCHING, CHECK!

**Large birds of prey, steppe birds, and the black stork**  
Page 32

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## OTHER EXPERIENCES

**The yellow mountain lily, botanical route, and galloping**  
Page 33



A person's hands are visible on the left, holding a large, black telephoto camera lens. The lens is the central focus, with its various rings and textures clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue, suggesting a sky or a large body of water. The overall mood is serene and focused.

Here there are cowboys, but not too many; the Merino sheep and Iberian pork products are more popular. Here, outsiders do not go around armed with pistols but rather with binoculars and cameras. Even so, you've come to the western frontier. The International Tagus Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve is made up of 428,000 hectares distributed on one side and the other of this river that, rather than separating Spain and Portugal, connects their natural spaces, cultures, and ways of life. Bem vindo: welcome to one of the jewels of Extremadura.

*If not  
now,  
when?*



## THE RESERVE THROUGH ROUTES

# 26

APPROVED  
TRAILS

# 09

LOCAL TRAILS  
(SL)

# 13

SHORT  
DISTANCE  
TRAILS (PR)

INFO+TRACKS



# ROUTES GALORE

This region has a  
unique incentive:  
148 dolmens  
to enjoy

Twenty-six approved trails run through the part of the reserve in Cáceres, and there are thirty three if we add those of Portugal. These routes will take you through a diverse landscape of Mediterranean forest, riverbanks, reservoirs, and plains with grains and extensive livestock. But, in





Camino Natural del Tajo GR 113  
Tagus Nature Trail  
(Cedillo)

addition, this region has a unique incentive: 148 dolmens spread over its territory, one of the most interesting megalithic complexes in Europe. To get to know them, you can start with PR-CC 88, or the Cross-Border Route, in Valencia de Alcántara – 24 kilometres. It will take you to the "Los Mellizos" ("The Twins") Dolmen, one of the best preserved in the region, and to the Data I and II Dolmens. Take note, as we are going to give you more recommendations – and remember that this offer is rounded off with the routes on the Portuguese side.

## Trails Special

# THE 4 MOST POPULAR ROUTES

### 01 BAJO EL PUENTE (2,5 km)

A small route starts from the Roman Bridge of Alcántara, crossing under one of its openings and going up to the town through orchards. It is a short and charming circular walk.

### 02 VIEWS OVER THE 'TAJO' TAGUS (7,8 km)

The Negrals Viewpoint Route, in Herrera de Alcántara, will show you all the beauty of this region with its extraordinary views over the Tagus.

### 03 VIEWPOINT OVER THE SEVER (10,2 km)

"La Miñola" is a route that starts from Cedillo and leads to a viewpoint on the Sever River, another of the great rivers.

### 04 BORDER-ZONE FLAIR ON THE ERGES (8,2 km)

The last of the great rivers of the region is the Erges River. The "Montón de Trigo" route is a pleasant walk to the river.



DIP YOUR OARS IN

# GET WET! YOU'RE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS

TOP ACTIVITIES

## THE RIVER OF LIFE

Experiencing the reserve from the river is one of the most interesting activities you can do. There are boats that give rides along the Tagus and which are accompanied by explanations about the environment and have the incentive of allowing for birds to be seen like the black stork, Egyptian vulture, and griffon vulture. Choose the stop that is best for you (Cedillo, Herrera, Santiago, or the Alcántara Reservoir) and enjoy the experience.

In addition, you can take canoe rides. Several companies in the area offer you this possibility.

## WATER IN THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON

### 01 GET YOUR FISHING ROD READY

One of the attractions of the reserve is sport fishing. The Cedillo and Alcántara Reservoirs offer the opportunity to fish both on the shore and by boat.

### 02 COOL OFF

In Alcántara, an old quarry forms a bathing area featuring spring water. There are restricted areas because black storks and Egyptian vultures nest there.

### 03 WATER ACTIVITIES

Kayaking and paddle surfing are other activities to test your water resistance.

## DISCOVER THE RESERVE ON TWO WHEELS

Four stages of the Tagus Nature Trail (GR 113) cross the reserve. You can do the whole thing or parts. The first part, number 40, runs between Alcántara and Membrío and measures a distance of 31 km amongst plains with grains. Stage 41 continues to Santiago de Alcántara over 21 km of cork and holm oaks. Section 42 continues to Herrera de Alcántara over 17 km and it is easy for you to come across deer. The last part of GR 113 runs up to the Cedillo Dam and measures 15 km long, reaching the Portuguese border.

# MTB PARADISE



*Get to know some of these paths with David Cachón through his The Cáceres Bike Adventure reports*

## ESSENTIAL MTB TOURISM



### SL-CC 106 CAÑADA REAL DE GATA

The Gata Herding Track is another route that can be done by bike that takes advantage of this transhumant herding track full of wonderful landscape.

**Path:** Estorninos-Zarza la Mayor

**Length:** 18.6 km



### MADRID-INTERNATIONAL TAGUS-LISBON RACE

One of the longest MTB races in the world, measuring 770 km. It crosses the region from the Alcántara Bridge to Cedillo, where it crosses into Portugal.

**Path:** Madrid-Lisbon

**Length:** 770 km



### PR-CC 95 LA GEREGOSA FOUNTAIN

A gentle journey to this mineral/medicinal fountain. On the way, you can observe large birds of prey.

**Start of route:** Santiago de Alcántara.

**Length:** 14,6 km



# STOP LOOKING, THE BIRDS ARE HERE

## ON YOUR MARK, GET SET... SHOOT!

Grab your camera and get ready to take your best nature photos.

The ornithological wealth of this area is as great as the zone's extension. Several local companies can guide you, and some offer hides for lovers of nature photography.

Prepare the camera because the Sierra de San Pedro has one of the most important populations of black vultures and imperial eagles in the Peninsula. At the riverside, for example the Erges River Valley, you will find Egyptian vultures, black storks, and Bonelli's eagle nesting. Cranes are on the plains of Alcántara and Brozas; and also steppe species like the little bustard, great bustard, pin-tailed sandgrouses, and black-bellied sandgrouse.

## FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE TIPS



### 01 ON YOUR OWN

At [Birdingextremadura.com](http://Birdingextremadura.com), you will find the details of an ornithological route through the reserve that is ideal to do by car in one day.



## Download the APP

**Birding in Extremadura**, a complete application to discover the birds at the International Tagus.



## 02 OBSERVATION TOWER

The Las Viñas Viewpoint, in Santiago de Alcántara (access via PR-CC 96), has extraordinary views of the Tagus.

## 03 FROM PORTUGAL

The Vulture Route from the Portuguese municipality of Salvaterra do Extremo, is an excellent place to see birds on the Erges River, as well as the Peñafiel Castle of Zarza la Mayor.

## 04 AMONG OAKS AND CORK OAKS

PR-CC 97, Molino de la Negra, measuring 15.6 km, leads hikers through cork oaks and oaks to a magnificent gallery forest around the La Miera Stream and the Sever River.

## OTHER ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

### THE PUERTO ROQUE AND EL BURACO ROCK PAINTINGS

In Valencia de Alcántara and Santiago de Alcántara, you will find magnificent examples of rock paintings. Both visits are interpreted and have panoramic views of the surroundings.

### THE "STAR ROUTE"

Called the "Star Route" in Portuguese, this is one of St. James's Ways uniting Cáceres and Braga. And, of course, it passes through the reserve with important stops in Brozas, Piedras Albas and its Peña Buraca Rock (Cultural Interest Assets), as well as Villa del Rey.

### GEOLOGY IN THE RESERVE

The Armorican Quartzite route joins the Villuercas-Ibores-Jara Geopark and the Portuguese Naturtejo, passing through Monfragüe and the International Tagus. A very complete geological route.



Las Viñas Observation Tower  
(Santiago de Alcántara)



Pedro! Let's go to the 'Tajo Internacional'

Cool! Let me sell this box and we'll get going.



The list of all lists

# THE BEST OF THE BEST: BY CATEGORY

We're going to show you seven themed categories in a display of technique and synthesis. In just a single glance, you'll be able to see "the best of the best" of each section: activities for children, weekend plans, gastronomy, hiking trails, cycling tourism, and our birds zone. Yeahh!

We clearly click on **ACCEPT**.

🔍 I LOVE LISTS



## READY-MADE PLANS FOR A WEEKEND

If you come, you'll have things easy. Synchronise your calendar and note down the ideas we've prepared for you after days of intense debate. We've got it packed.



**FRIDAY** · Villa de Alcántara

**Afternoon - A Roman bridge and a villa.** That's right, your chance to see possibly the best preserved Roman bridge and a villa declared a historical ensemble site. Shall we start?



**SATURDAY** · Tagus experiences

**Morning -Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat.** Ship's apprentice, it's time to board. Educational, entertaining, fun... these are some comments on the internet.

**Afternoon - Megalithism** in Santiago de Alcántara Visit its modern interpretation centre, go up to the Buraco Cave, or build a dolmen.



**SUNDAY** · Final plans

**Morning -Marí Loza Route** in Herrera de Alcántara. One of the most interesting routes of the International Tagus.

**Afternoon -Jewish Gothic Quarter** of Valencia de Alcántara; there is a self-guided and interpreted route. It's a sure hit.



# DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR AND EAT IN FOUR SIMPLE STEPS

Local products and three typical dishes. That's right, to be able to make this information easy to digest for you, we've simplified the culinary offerings of the region.



## EL BUCHE (SAUSAGE)

Sausage made with meat, ear, bacon, rib, garlic, and paprika. All accompanied with sprouts and rice. Amen!



## SWEETS AND DESSERTS

The Portuguese influence shines through: local pastries and desserts like serradura, tiselá, roscas, bañás, bollos de pascua, fritos de boda, and mormentera.



## GAME MEAT DISHES

The abounding large and small game allows for the preparation of dishes such as rice with hare, venison stew, and wild boar stew.



## STAR PRODUCTS

Anything that has to do with Iberian pork (ham and sausages), but also goat cheeses and extra virgin olive oil, of course.

# WHEN YOU LET THE KIDS DECIDE

Six activities that we know will leave a good mark on your little ones' childhood. Whether walking, by bike, or at night.



## Explorer mode

Discover the dehesa. Several companies offer routes and guided tours of this unique ecosystem.



## Barco del Tajo Tourist Boat

Surprising, fun, educational, and for the whole family. An adventurous ship, a river, and two countries.



## Sharpen your sight

Enjoy the most emblematic birds of the International Tagus and note them down in your field notebook.



## Natural pool

Take note: a quarry converted into a natural pool (Alcántara). And remember, the black stork nests here.



## The bellowing of the deer

A four-wheeling experience for the whole family. Feel the roar of the deer in the dehesa.



## Super activities

Spend a day on an organic farm, build a dolmen, go on a zip line, go stargazing, and ride horses.

# BIRDWATCHERS OF THE WORLD: PARADISE IS HERE

You'll be able to check a lot of birds off your list at the International Tagus. You'll find the elusive black stork, the smug Egyptian vulture, as well as warblers, wheatears, and redstarts.



## **ORNITHOLOGICAL WEALTH**

We'll give you three examples. In the Erges River Valley you will find the griffon vulture and Egyptian vulture; in the riverbanks you'll find the black stork; and in the plains you'll find the great bustards and little bustards.



## **CRANES IN THE DEHESA**

The dehesas of Brozas and Alcántara host an important population of these magnificent birds during their wintering months.



## **THE KINGDOM OF BIRDS OF PREY**

The Sierra de San Pedro has one of the most important populations of black vultures and imperial eagles in the Peninsula. Visit them your way!



## **NEGRALES VIEWPOINT**

A true paradise on the banks of the Tagus: golden eagles, short-toed snake eagles, ospreys, booted eagles; black storks, kites, goshawks....

# CAMPING AND CARAVANNING ARE COOL. CASE STUDY:

Camping and caravanning are on the rise. Here are 6 keys to have a blast when travelling with your house. Do it yourself!



## **Campgrounds**

The Valencia de Alcántara camping facilities have everything you need to set up your base camp.



## **Caravan area**

Alcántara and Valencia de Alcántara have areas for caravans. They are open all year round.



## **BBQ Special**

Barbecues are a classic, but be careful with limitations on making a fire in the summer season.



## **Wastewater**

If you are looking for a place to dump wastewater, look no further than Alcántara and Valencia de Alcántara.



## **Helpful Tips**

The viewpoints of the reserve are ideal for caravans and campers: enjoy the views to the max!



## **Where to Park**

Like any other vehicle, you can park where parking is permitted.

# CYCLING TOURISM AND MTB COLLECTION PRESENT

Aluminium rims, carbon fibre frame, graphene sprockets.... Materials matter, but don't forget to stop and eat and drink. You're in 'Tajo Internacional'



## CAMINO NATURAL DEL TAJO

GR-113 crosses the reserve (85 km) from Alcántara to Cedillo. If you want excitement, do not hesitate... this is your route.



## LA GEREGOSA FOUNTAIN

A 14-km route that is not difficult to do. Especially for bikers who like to watch and whistle.



## CAÑADA REAL DE GATA

An old transhumant livestock herding track. 18 km between Zarza la Mayor and Estorninos through dehesas and granite spheroids.



## ALCÁNTARA BRIDGE

20 km of pure adrenaline. You will pass by a quarry that is a natural pool, a menhir, and a very Roman bridge.

# TRAILS AND ROUTES TO BREAK YOUR BOOTS IN

36/37

What should you take in your backpack? A map, sandwich, a change of clothes, water, and a 'bota' wineskin bag. Don't worry about the trails, we'll make sure they're there. Ok, we'll summarize four of them.



## FUENTE DE SAN JUAN (SL-CC 132)

A 4.8-km circular route in Carbajo that goes up to the Bejaranos Viewpoint; one of the most impressive views of the reserve.



## PANTANO DE LA JABALINA (PR-CC 92)

This route enters the Sierra de San Pedro through some of the best preserved dehesas in the reserve. A circular route measuring 16.6 km in Membrió.



## TORRICO DE SAN PEDRO (PR-CC 93)

15.6 km in Salorino towards the heart of the Sierra de San Pedro: the Torrico, its highest peak. Black vultures and imperial eagles.



## MOLINO DE LA NEGRA (PR-CC 97)

In Valencia de Alcántara. 16 km with dolmens, the San Benito ("St. Benedict") wine presses, oaks, cork oaks, and a mill along the Sever River.

So, where did you say that you got that great photo?

In the International Tagus, Lolo. But please, keep my secret.



## 'Make My Day' Special EXPERIENCES THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

The Biosphere Reserve cannot be summarised with just ten experiences; if you come, you'll see what we're talking about. The time has come to put what we have learned into practice – we've chosen them for you sure that you'll have a blast.

*It's time to travel!*

Q **TAJO INTERNACIONAL**



01

A "must"

### 'TAJO INTERNACIONAL' NATURAL PARK

In addition to being a biosphere reserve, it is the first international park in Europe. 25,088 hectares of Mediterranean forest and a border-zone culture that will surprise you.

02

A walk

### ROMAN BRIDGE AND VILLA OF ALCÁNTARA

The first is the best preserved Roman bridge that exists at present and the second is a Cultural Interest Assets. In the books it's unparalleled, but in life it's even better.

03

A weekend

### EL MAGUSTO FOLK FESTIVAL

One of the festivals with the most personality on the folk scene. There is life beyond reggaeton; in addition, it's free, outdoors, and in Carbajo.

04

A visit

### JEWISH GOTHIC QUARTER OF VALENCIA DE ALCÁNTARA

This is the largest Jewish quarter in the region and it has also been declared a historical ensemble site. It has a self-guided route and informational panels so you don't miss any details. Are you in?

05

A discovery

### ROYAL WEDDING

That's right: in Valencia de Alcántara the wedding between Infanta Isabel, daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, and Manuel I, King of Portugal, took place. A theatrical performance and loads of activities. Let's go! 🤗



06

An experience

## BARCO DEL TAJO TOURIST BOAT

Take your pleasure seriously and get on this ship of international waters. There are two routes available and a lot of things to observe: the Mediterranean forest and the black stork, for example. 😊

HI! I'M ANA! 😊



38/39

The office of...

## ANA MARÍA RUIZ, TOURIST GUIDE

With the great *"There are no longer tomatoes that taste like tomatoes"* in mind, we are bringing you the office of Ana to shed light on this and other questions.

### A SUPERFOOD

I consider them really super. I'm talking about Iberian pork: ham, loin, chorizo, black pudding...

### AN "ALL-IN-ONE" EXPERIENCE

If you combine the dolmens of Valencia de Alcántara and its Jewish Gothic Quarter, you make the day.

### ZERO STRESS

Personally, seeing stars de-stresses me. And here in the reserve you will not stop counting them.

### AN ACTIVITY

Let me give you two for the price of one: the Smuggling Route between Cedillo and Montalvão and the bellowing of the deer. A 'must'.

### FOR THE FAMILY

A horseback ride can't be beat. But here's another fun activity: building a dolmen (Santiago de Alcántara).

07

A celebration

## RESERVE MONTH

The reserve has a lot to do with people's happiness, that's why for a month (November) activities are scheduled to pay tribute to it: gastronomy, hiking, workshops.... Divine!

08

An event

## ALCÁNTARA CLASSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

Every summer Alcántara hosts its famous festival in the San Benito ("St. Benedict") Convent. The environment where it is held, the contents, and the related activities make it a classic of theatre.

09

An exhibition space

## DOLMEN CULTURE INTERPRETATION CENTRE

An exhibition centre in the shape of a megalithic dolmen that explains the wealth of dolmens at the International Tagus. Even more than essential.

10

A menu

## SIT AROUND THE TABLE!

Take note, I'm not going to say it again: game meat and Iberian pork, river fish soup, and partridge in Alcantara style. 😊





Sometimes you have to get out to find what you're looking for

## INFORMATION OF INTEREST

Discover the extraordinary effects of travelling to the Tajo Internacional Biosphere Reserve. Information, downloads, and helpful tips. And remember, true balance is in movement. That's it.

TAJO INTERNACIONAL



### COMMANDMENTS OF THE RESPONSIBLE TOURIST

—  
Prepare your trip well

—  
Look for lodging with sustainable practices

—  
Be picky when making reservations

—  
Say goodbye to prejudices

—  
Support the local economy

—  
Choose transport wisely

—  
Minimise waste

—  
Be a responsible photographer

—  
Respect the flora and fauna

—  
Mingle with the locals

**ALCÁNTARA TOURISM OFFICE**  
Tel. 927 390 863

**BROZAS TOURISM OFFICE**  
Tel. 927 395 003

**VALENCIA DE ALCÁNTARA TOURISM OFFICE**  
Tel. 927 582 184

**'TAJO INTERNACIONAL' NATURAL PARK RECEPTION AND INFORMATION CENTRE**  
Alcántara  
Tel. 927 390 132

**EL PÉNDERE NATURE INTERPRETATION CENTRE**  
Santiago de Alcántara  
Tel. 927 592 311

**VALENCIA DE ALCÁNTARA INTERPRETATION CENTRE**  
Tel. 927 580 090

**DOLMEN CULTURE INTERPRETATION CENTRE**  
Santiago de Alcántara  
Tel. 927 592 311

**TAJEJO INTERNACIONAL INFORMATION CENTRE**  
Cedillo  
Tel. 927 590 197

ParqueNaturalTajoInternacional Tajejointsnacional

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

No matter what options you choose, don't forget to put some of these things in your suitcase or backpack:

**01** BIOSPHERE RESERVE TOURIST GUIDE

**02** TOILETRIES, BASIC FIRST, SWIMSUIT AND A FEW CHANGES OF CLOTHES

**03** BOOKS FOR READING

**04** ADD POINTS OF INTEREST TO GOOGLE MAPS

**05** CÁCERES PROVINCE ROUTE GUIDE

**06** CAMERA OR MOBILE PHONE WITH ENOUGH MEMORY

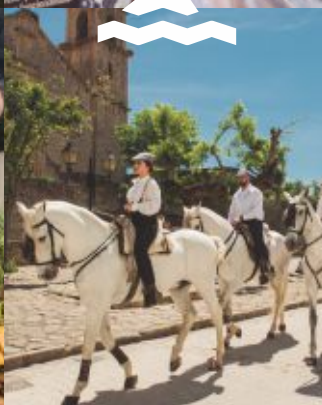
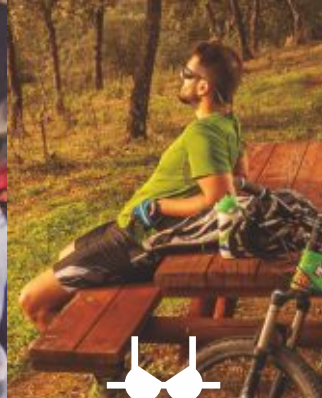


Download or view the car route through the Tajo Internac. Biosphere Reserve



Space included in the Cáceres Province Network of Interpretation Centres





International Tagus  
Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve  
**Meetingpoint**



# Province of Cáceres

Home Great Plans Blogtrip

I want to go!

*It's happening!*



Organización  
de las Naciones  
Unidas para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura  
Programa sobre el Hombre  
y la Biosfera



Tajo-Tagus Internacional  
Reserva de la Biosfera  
2016

International Tagus  
Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve

## Meeting point

Q IF NOT NOW, WHEN?



DIPUTACIÓN DE CÁCERES  
ÁREA DE RETO DEMOGRÁFICO,  
DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE, JUVENTUD Y TURISMO

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