

english



HOLY WEEK IN ARAGÓN



▲ The Lord tied to the Column



▲ The Fraternity of San Joaquín



▲ Christ raised from the death



▲ Our Lady of Sorrows

ARAGÓN

GENERAL INFORMATION

ARAGON is one of the seventeen Autonomous Regions of Spain. It is located in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, equidistant of nearly everything and always close (only some seventy-five minutes from Madrid and Barcelona, thanks to the high-speed train). With 47,724 square kilometers, this old kingdom, which once was one of the oldest nations of Europe, has more than 1,200,000 inhabitants nowadays. On the whole, tenacious people, as kind as warm, with a sarcastic humor and noble intentions.

It will take your breath away, but Aragon is a land that breathes history. If you follow the thousand-year-old marks, you will realize that, in this community of contrasts, Christians, Jewish and Muslims have lived together. Get ready because your adventure starts.



DO you want to live a geographic space with intensity? Moreover, do you want to feel in the last nerve ending everything that surrounds you? Aragon is a provocation to the senses. If you dare to embark yourself on an unforgettable adventure full of life and feelings, the first thing you have to do is to locate yourself.

Aragon is one of the seventeen Autonomous Regions of Spain. It is located in the northeastern part of the Iberian Peninsula, in the middle of many things and always near. In its 47,724 square kilometers, 1,200,000 inhabitants live. On the whole, kind and friendly people, with deep and noble intentions.

HOLY WEEK

Athunderous roar breaks the silence that envelopes a sober and hard landscape in unison. Thousands of drums and bass drums come to life in the hands of several generations joined together by passion. It is the "Romper la Hora" (*Breaking the Time*) that is celebrated on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday, depending on the place. The ground shakes for the Savior's death. The sharp sound resounds in the hearts of those that look and those that play for tradition or devotion.

Bajo Aragon tinges with the blue, purple and black of the robes and *terceroles* (pleated hoods). The emotion pervades in the nine villages of the Drum and Drum Bass Route. All of them together but with their own charm at the same time. For their inhabitants, the most special one is the Holy Week of their own village, even though all of them have been declared Feasts of National Tourist Interest. You will have to travel all over them to make up your mind. It will not be easy as there are other tempting proposals, which are spread all over our geography, outside this route. Check it yourself. Aragon will fascinate you.

THRILLING ARAGÓN



ALBALATE DEL ARZOBISPO

YOU will find Albalate del Arzobispo sticking out on a hillside on the banks of the River Martín, with its cave paintings, its Roman neighborhood, and the ones that have an Islamic heritage. A black made glossy by sorrow blackens the drums, drum basses, and robes. Only the white scarf on the neck stands out.

The Palm Sunday opens the Holy Week, but the emotion unleashes during the midnight of Maundy Thursday due to the "Romper la Hora" (*Breaking the Time*). The murmur of the percussion accompanies the lovely Stations of the Cross during the following morning, which passes along the narrow steep and paved streets on the way to the Calvary. On Friday nightfall, the solemn procession of the Holy Burial impresses. Drums and bass drums continue angrily. Listen to them.



ALCAÑIZ

ALCAÑIZ appears in the heart of Bajo Aragón, the biggest and more occupied one of the route. Pervaded with history, with its collegiate church, town hall, guildhall, and castle, it decks out with light blue. You will not see bass drums or the "Romper la hora" (*Breaking the Time*), but you will be overwhelmed by a profound silence accompanied by drums that play sorrow during Maundy Thursday.

On Friday, all the inhabitants leave their houses tapping the drum and, from the square, they announce the Christ's death in two rows. After La Soledad (*the Loneliness*) procession, a measured noise that seems an earthquake will unleash during the whole night.

More drums on Saturday. The day of the "Sellado del Sepulcro" (*The Sepulcher Sealing*) procession, which is celebrated at four in the afternoon, the holy flat cakes come on stage. On Easter Sunday, you will see how the pigeons and the peace, a lot of peace, are amazingly released into the air.

ALCORISA

RAlcorisa is waiting for you surrounded by hills, which give it the name (*alcores*, in Spanish). With its olive, pine, and almond tress and cereal fields, it is covered with a purple mantle during these days.

You will be able to go back to the Middle Ages, taste the calm, and follow the "floats" during the Good Friday afternoon until its gorgeous Mountain Calvary. There, more than five hundred people from the village relive the "Drama de la Cruz" (*The Cross Drama*) with a meticulous staging. The feelings are already on the edge since "Romper la hora" (*Breaking the Time*) in the previous midnight.





ANDORRA

IN the right center of a coal-mining area, in the middle of traditions and modernity, Andorra is covered in black. You will for sure find a robe and feel the ticking, the sorrow, and the emotion. During the Maundy Thursday's midnight, the silence is broken by the immense burst that thousands of people armed with bloodstained bass drums and drums emit.

During Friday, at daybreak, long queues that do not stop sounding head for San Macario chapel in order to look for their "Cristo de los Tambores" (the Christ of the Drums). Beautiful and well-carried floats. Feel the Holy Burial procession.



CALANDA

THE echoes of the drums and bass drums of Calanda have sounded in nearly the entire world thanks to its illustrious neighborhood, the filmmaker Luis Buñuel. Friend of Lorca and Dalí, whenever he could, he came back to keep his meeting on Good Friday midday. Here, the "Romper" (*Breaking*) hour changes and there is who says that the wailing of the musical instruments is huskier.

In the afternoon, entire families pass along in El Pregón (*The Proclamation*) procession. It is spectacular as, when the bugles sound, everybody stops and, protected by silence, the towncrier proclaims Christ's death. You will never be able to forget that heartbreaking voice, full of sorrow.

HÍJAR

WALKING along the streets of Híjar, along its Jewish, Moorish, and Christian neighborhoods, is the best opportunity to be witness of how three cultures come together. You will be dazzled by far too many details, even if it be Holy Week and the black predominate, the black of the robes accentuated by white collars.

Since Maundy Thursday midnight, when everything is tinged with magic due to the solemn and ritual "Romper" (*Breaking*), the pitiful sounds, and the members of the brotherhoods' faces prevail until Saturday afternoon when the procession of the ascent of pictures to the Calvary finishes. Accompany them with your passion.





LA PUEBLA DE HÍJAR

IN this area of Bajo Martín, dotted with olive, almond and fruit trees, the man has dwelled since long ago, as show the remains that have been founded, which date from the Iron Age, the Iberian and Roman one. Some people say that the percussion has always sounded in Bajo Aragón. It is not known for sure but it seems so.

Dotted with fountains and monuments, La Puebla de Híjar puts on deep black mourning with robes and pleated hoods and a great roar breaks. It announces death and protest, deep feeling.



THE landscape of Samper de Calanda is worth being painted, with its fruit trees and farms so typical of Bajo Martín. Have a good look at the chapels dedicated to the Virgin that have been made in some fronts, walk along the streets and squares and go back to the Middle Ages.

During the Holy Week, grandparents, young persons, and children that can even be only some months old, all of them wearing mourning clothes. They dress in their houses by following a real ritual. The silence breaks when the bass drums, drums and the rattles sound, another Baroque and monotonous sound typical of this time. Together with the rattles, the little ones made them sound traditionally in order to announce the terrible roar that was to come. The picture that you have to keep is the one of "El Cristo de la Cama" (*The Christ of the Bed*), an articulated sculpture that was carved in the wood of an old cypress that was pulled down by the wind. He is now more alive than ever.

SAMPER DE CALANDA



URREA DE GAÉN

WITH a very old history that goes back to the Bronze Age, Urrea de Gaén is the smallest village of the Drum and Drum Bass Route. You will find streets with Moorish-Medieval taste soaked with a very intimate and familiar atmosphere. You will be able to feel like one more of them, lost among the black robes and white scarves on the neck. Slip in through the small alleys and passageways that lead to secluded small squares.

You will keep the echo of its calm "Romper la Hora" (*Breaking the Time*) forever, on Maundy Thursday at midnight, as well as the picture of La Oración en el Huerto (*The Prayer in the Garden*) procession. If you come, you will have to come back.

INTENSE WEEK

ARAGON, between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, is much more. From the Pyrenees to the mountain ranges of Teruel, traditions that join the public and participants in an only feeling spread. It does not matter where do they come from. Everywhere, will find the hope in those that carry the floats, as well as the impatience for taking down the drumsticks that are on high and start walking. You have to get a lot done during the week, as there is so much to see and hear.

The fasting days end and the ones that taste heavenly arrive. Try the homemade fried slice of bread soaked in milk and the rice pudding, ask about the large ring-shaped bun, "culecas" and "preñados", and sweeten yourself with the Easter eggs.





TERUEL

NOT only in Bajo Aragón. In the city of Teruel, the Mudejar art frames the ceremonies of an artistic Holy Week where the trumpets accompany the drums and bass drums. The palm leaves and olive branches that, afterwards, will be hanging on the balconies in order to move away storms and sorrows announce the end of the Lent. Do not miss the Holy Burial or the "Baile de la Virgen" (*the Virgin Dance*), but do not miss either the procession that asks for the pardon of a prisoner in the prison on Good Friday.

In Valderrobres, everything begins on Holy Wednesday when the Stations of the Cross go past. Until Saturday midnight, the lively bells fall silent outshined by low rattles. Purple pieces of material cover the pictures of the church as a gesture of mourning. On Friday midday, the murmur of its "Romper la Hora" (*Breaking the Time*) wakes up, which goes on until the Misa de la Pasión del Señor (*the Passion of the Lord Mass*), at five in the afternoon. The Adoration of the Cross, the Holy Burial, silence, more bells, and Easter Sunday. On Monday, rural walk. Teruel with passion.

HUESCA

IN the capital of Alto Aragón, the participation becomes art. Each brotherhood makes a great effort to get a careful production. The bright palms procession begins beautiful Stations of the Cross and processions, whose high point is on Good Friday in the Holy Burial with the tapping of drums and bugles. The pointed hoods can already be made out. In Jaca, the silence interspersed with the percussion and the trumpets spread the news of Christ's death. The floats, very well preserved, relate the history to those that want to feel it. You can still see the curious Roman guard. In Binéfar, you will vibrate with *El Encuentro* (*The Encounter*) and, in Graus, the *Beatas* (Blessed) procession is very famous, in which only the women took part long ago. In Barbastro, between history and modernness, to the sound of drums and bugler, the feelings of the processions follow one another. Sobriety and fervor that join the inhabitants of Barbastro and the visitors. As in other places, one has to delve into the Middle Ages in order to find the origins of the brotherhoods.

On Mandy Thursday, in most of the villages, the religious services are celebrated. In days gone by, people only worked until midday on that day and believed that, if the house were swept afterwards, many ants would come in during the rest of the year. A maundy of feet is also usually done to the children. On Good Friday, the married women used to wear mourning and the saints were covered with black pieces of material.

In Castejón de Monegros, they perform the Crucifixion, the Descent, and the Holy Burial with articulated figures of Christ and the Virgin. In Albalate de Cinca, they made the little children go through the Holy Sepulcher.

The fasting finished on Holy Saturday, the parish priest blessed the houses, and the sweets come on stage. During the night, in some villages of the Pyrenees, they still plant the "mayo" on the village's square; there remain serenades and celebrations, as well as some romantic ones that still hang flowers on the single women's windows.

On Easter, party for the young one in Alcolea or Albelda, dances, processions and meals in the country in order to welcome the spring among the entire Aragonese territory. Can we count you in?



ZARAGOZA

BATHED by the River Ebro, Feast of National Tourist Interest (the same as the ones of Teruel and Huesca); the Holy Week of Saragossa is spectacular. More than fifteen thousand people that belong to twenty-three brotherhoods wearing the robes, pointed hoods, and pleated hoods (*terceros*), with bass drums, drums, trumpets and rattles fill the streets with colors, the streets that bow to the passage of news of the Christ's death. To all this, one has to add the flowers and the sound of the *jotas* with religious content that cause more than one lump in the throat of those that hear them. Many people from Saragossa that live outside come back during these withdrawal days in order to share their feeling on the street.

The Holy Burial goes by during four hours. Forty-three beauty floats carved by famous sculptors completely relate the Passion. That day, all of them together, but, before, dozens of processions that pass, converge, tell, and fill, make the one that waits for them or find them fall in love. Follow the *Turno de Vela* (*Wakefulness shift*) in the church of San Cayetano and let yourself be carried by the charm that pervades in the Aragonese capital.

In the rest of the province, look for the trace of customs such as the Descent of Christ from the Cross, or the figure of the "*alabarderos*" helped by the "*angelicos*" that you will find in Borja. The most amazing guardian angel is the one of Épila. According to the custom, the major has to stay at home until the Resurrection, watching the key of the Tabernacle that is closed after the services. In Tarazona, ask about the old procession of the "*encasados*" and about the *Sermón de las Siete Palabras* (The Seven-Words Sermon). In addition, in Calatayud, delve into the ancient origins of the rich procession of the "Holy Burial" and let loose by the dramatizations that the inhabitants of Calatayud themselves play brilliantly. Another production that hundreds of inhabitants from Ateca prepare with hope. You cannot miss the procession with centuries of tradition and its beautiful sculptures. In addition, in Torrijo de la Cañada, follow the ascent to the Calvary, the Crucifixion, the Burial, and the "Cuna" nailing, on guard before it during the whole night. In Caspe, a piece of wood, which is nearly half a meter long, is preserved, that, as it is said, is a part of the Cross of Christ. Have you already made up your mind?



TOURIST OFFICES (OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND)

Aragón tourism office (OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND)

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► www.turismodearagon.com

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