Ronda

Geography and history

Ronda is one of the most ancient cities in Spain. Throughout its history it has had different names, Ronda was the Celtic Arunda, the Roman Arxipolis and the Moorish In-Rand Onda. The river Guadalevin cuts the town in two and has cut its deep Tajo gorge, 120 metres deep and the town's identifying mark. On one side, new Ronda, wide and happy, with its historical bulding; on the other, ancient and intimate Ronda, full of monuments that are the living proof of its ancestral past. Both sides are joined by the Puente Nuevo or new bridge, built between 1752 and 1793, or the Puente Romano or old bridge, built in the seventeenth century.

Ronda is situated in the most north-eastern part of the province of Málaga, 54 kilometres from Marbella and 110 from Málaga airport in a basin enclosed by medium high mountains, giving the place a magic character, which together with its climate, rainfall, vegetation and soil, have been a determining factor throughout its rich and diverse history. The average temperature in Ronda is 15º C, although winters tend to be cold. The city has an average of 2,700 hours of sun a year.

Monuments and Museums

The archaeological site of Arxipolis is just 12 kilometres from Ronda, from Roman times, there is still a theatre with its seats carved out of the rock and almost completely intact along with the rest of the site. You can find moaiis from all the cultures that have passed through Ronda in every street. The Moors enriched Ronda with city walls, of which the gates of the city like the Arco del Cristo, the Puerta de las Nieves, the Puente de Arco del Sol (part of the ancient Aracusa) (29) and the Lavilín castle are still standing, according to King Al Mutasim the castle was “the best jewel of my Kingdom”. There are also Moorish bathes (23) situated by the river half buried by alluvium deposits. However, the three main halls have been conserved. The Christian population added the College church of Santa María de la Encarnación, built over an ancient mosque. We have to add many other monuments to the aforementioned ones, the Arco de la Reina (48), the Minaret tower of San Sebastián (49), the Casa del Gigante (30), the Casa del Jaleo, the ancient mansion of the 13th century, the Joaquín Peinado Museum (11), a contemporary of Picasso; the Santo Domingo convent (58), that offers courses as part of the Málaga University along with different exhibitions; the house of the Rey Moro (22); the Mondragón mansion house (6); the Saketeller mansion house (22); the Renaissance church of San Francisco (4) and the Padre de las Arenas inn (29), dating from the sixteenth century where Miguel de Cervantes stayed. A romantic bend with a museum dedicated to Highwayman that has a hall exclusively dedicated to the famous highwayman José María El Tempranillo. Ronda, cradle of bullfighting, with the Real Maestranza (33) de Ronda bullring, built in 1785, where Francisco Romero fought for the first time with a sword. The setting in the bicentennial Pedro Romero Fair, it took over and became the most important celebration in Ronda. The Goyesque style bullfight has its own personality that makes it different from the rest, it combines the unique spectacle of this bullfight with the setting in the bicentennial Plaza de la Real Maestranza de Caballería de Ronda bullring.

Festivals and traditions

The most important festival in Ronda has its origins in the San Francisco suburb. In 1882 the first Stock Market of the September fair was held there. At this time, the May fair was the most significant in Ronda but then the September fair began to increase in popularity and from 1914, when it was called the Pedro Romero Fair, it took over and became the most important celebration in Ronda. The Goyesque style bullfight has its own personality that makes it different from the rest, it combines the unique spectacle of this bullfight with the setting in the bicentennial Plaza de la Real Maestranza de Caballería de Ronda bullring.

Gastronomy and crafts

Out of the many typical dishes served in Ronda, those based on game, which is plentiful here, have a special place in the local gastronomy. The traditional cuisine includes pumpkin Ronda style, fried breadcrumbs with chorizo sausage, sat cakes, broad beans with tomato, garlic and ham, beans with black pudding, almond soup and artichoke soup, gazpacho from the mountains, omelette Ronda style and lamb casserole.

Some of the popular specialties are rabbit Ronda style, or salt, pork loin stuffed with pine nuts, lamb “cochifrito”, pork skew and pigs’ trotters. Local wines include the must from the mountains and all the new wines that are produced in the Sierra de Ronda. Desserts include sweets and cakes made in the convents and the yemas del Tajo made from egg yolks that visitors come especially to buy. Honey, cheeses, different mustreoms from the mountains and olive oil are other quality products to try in Ronda. Craft activities in the Sierra de Ronda cover a long tradition and a wide range of different skills, from wooden furniture, ceramics, wrought iron work, saddlery (including uñas for farm work), leather goods, cork articles, work in esparto grass and cane.

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