

# THE PROVINCE

## Natural surroundings

The province offers a great diversity of landscapes. The river Ebro is the backbone of a territory of stark contrast: lush forests on the gentle slopes of the Pyrenean foothills contrast with vast, semi-desertic extensions where only sheer cones from occasional patches of green along the river banks.

Examples of unique climatic and landscape areas are the dazzling Natural Park of Debarsa del Horcajo, the charming World Biosphere Reserve La Bardena, the spectacular Laguna Calibonata wetlands

## Spas and the Piedra Monastery

(a haven for birds from all over Europe that come to rest and nest in them), the magnificent stupas in Loma de Beldete and the dramatic desert Horcajo Hours.

Just as extraordinary are the Pyrenean foothills and the slopes of the basin range, where the plain meets the mountain in a particular way. Equally impressive is the breathtaking scenery where the flow of a river sometimes shapes gales, ravines and ferns rest in a natural lake or a wide reservoir ideal for fishing and water sports.

## Spas and the Piedra Monastery

There are several locations with thermal waters in the province of Zaragoza. Notable mentions are Alhama de Aragón, Paracuellos de Jaca and Jerba, all in the region of Calatayud.

In this location of remarkable beauty the different resorts perfectly combine the warm and relaxed atmosphere of a 19th century spa with state-of-the-art facilities able to provide guests with a wide range of treatments with mineral waters.

## Gastronomy

The wide variety of climates and landscapes of the province, together with its cultural heritage as a melting pot of civilizations, have produced a diversity of culinary traditions.

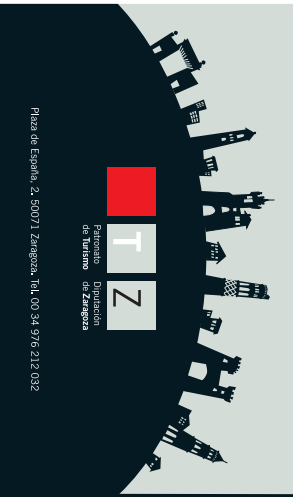
Gastronomy in Zaragoza is synonymous with fish and vegetables from its unrolled vegetable gardens, succulent lamb and game, international famed olive oil brands.

Full-flavored cheeses, tasty cured meats and a bakery tradition with a personality of its own. Everything is washed down with outstanding wine from the regions of Cantena, Boga and Calatayud.

These high-quality ingredients from the Mediterranean diet, healthy and varied, come into their own both in traditional cooking as well as in the dining creations.



SPAIN **ZARAGOZA** The Province  
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Due to its geographic location, the province of Zaragoza has always been a natural crossroads between continental Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. It is a meeting point between the Mediterranean, the Castilian plateau and the Northern coast of the Cantabrian Sea. Over time, Zaragoza has witnessed a unique fusion of different cultures and civilisations.

The province covers an area of 17,194 km<sup>2</sup> (6,686 square miles), with the majority of its cities and million inhabitants based in the capital, the city of Zaragoza. The city of Zaragoza is an important industrial and commercial location, but there are several other large cities in the province with an impressive historical heritage, such as Calatayud, Tarazona, Ejea de los Caballeros or Caspe.



## Medieval architecture set in stone



During the Middle Ages, the feudal lords in the North of Spain started re-conquering the territories previously taken by Muslim invaders in the 8th century. As Al-Andalus retreated, the Christian conquerors found themselves needing to cobble their new settlements. The Romanesque style, already well established in Europe's feudal society, spread through the country.

Within the province of Zaragoza we can find a multitude of examples of this architectural style. The most spectacular examples can be found in Daroca and the upper Croco Vilas region, where the stunning towns of Sos del Rey Católico and Uncastillo stand out proudly.

Another medieval architectural style present in the province of Zaragoza is the Christian Gothic style, born from the desire of the monarchs of Aragon and Castile to return to the austerity of primitive Christian worship. It would over time develop and become the Gothic style, an architectural style. Veruela, standing on the hills of the Horcajo Peña, is the oldest of Calatayud and Rueda, in the middle course of the river Ebro.



## Mudéjar



Moors who stayed in the Kingdom of Aragón after the Christian conquests, but kept their religion and customs, received the name of Mudéjar. Those skilled at building offered their services to the new ruling class, especially in the settlements along the river Ebro, in the settlements of the South and in the areas known as the 'Cerro de San Mateo'.

Some of the most interesting Mudéjar style houses have been built from brick, being adapted into Christian buildings and to the fashions of each period.



## Sefarad



In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Catholic Monarchs, decreed the expulsion of the Jews. The Spanish Jew, who returned to Spain, the Sephardi, had been established in the Iberian Peninsula for countless generations, by century-long legacy in the province as a rich and heterogeneous.

Zaragoza, the capital, was the centre around which Aragonese Judaism revolved. It was at times, the incontestable spiritual leader, whether they were under the authority of the Muslim taifa kingdoms or under Christian rule.

However, the Jewish legacy would also leave its imprint in other sites of the province. It can still be witnessed in different towns within the Croco Vilas region, where Jewish (Jewish) Quarters, synagogues and cemeteries have survived. Of no less significance are the vestiges left in Calatayud, Daroca and Caspe, or those present in the area of the mountainous heights, the town of Tarazona boasts a Centre for the Interpretation of Jewish Culture.



## Goya



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, one of the most influential painters in art history, was born in Fuendetodos, a small town near Zaragoza. He received his education as a painter and received his first five commissions in the capital and it was here, attracted by his freedom in the Baroque del Baroque that endeavored him to receive further work.

Miguel Beneditos, Calatayud and the Cer-tija de Alcañiz (Cartujana monastery) hold some works from his earlier work, whereas works from his later years can be admired in the Museum of Zaragoza and in the Museum Carrión Aznar. The latter also holds his complete series of

engravings. Finally, more of his work is displayed in his native town, where the preserved family house can be visited, as well as workshops and exhibition rooms.

A trip to Fuendetodos will be rounded up perfectly with a visit to nearby Muel, a town whose pottery tradition dates back to the end of the 15th century. The town holds some of Goya's sketches and also boasts the School Workshop of Pineda, the school created by the Honorable Council of Zaragoza to restore the pottery tradition, with its trademark blue patterns over white background, as well as to disseminate the traditional craftsmanship techniques.

