



ROUTE OF WASHINGTON IRVING *from Seville to Granada*



Route of Washington Irving

This Route is one of the vital links of al-Andalus through Málaga, Seville and Granada, it joins two outstanding cities, two essential cities in the Hispano-Muslim civilization. This itinerary reviews the road followed in 1829 by this romantic American writer who was fascinated by the exotic and exuberant Moorish remains in Andalusia. This was a historical road that in the Middle Ages served as an important trade route between the Nasrid kingdom of Granada and Christian territory. All this area may be considered border country, covering the lowland plains of the Guadalquivir valley and the fertile plains surrounded by mountains near Granada (vega).

The way includes large towns and villages perched on hills, below *alcazabas* and castles, places with an extraordinary heritage in the midst of widely differing attractive landscapes through the province of Seville, the north of the province of Málaga through Antequera and Granada. The customs and traditions still existing in these villages, where agriculture is the principal occupation, provide an extra inducement for a fascinating journey.

The legendary feature of this route is further emphasized in this area by the fact that in the 19th century it was famous for contraband and highwaymen, such as the well-known *Siete Niños de Écija* (seven children from Écija) and José María *El Tempranillo*.

Draw the route of Washington Irving on the map, indicating the different cities and villages he found on his way.



Monuments and cultural heritage

From Seville to Granada, this itinerary recreates the journey made in 1829 by the American writer Washington Irving, who was fascinated by the Hispanic-Arab exoticism and richness he found in Andalusia. Following in the footsteps of this romantic author, you'll discover palaces, churches, fortresses and vernacular architecture, all influenced by Muslim culture. Some exceptional buildings, such as the Alhambra and the Alcázar in Seville have been designated World Heritage Sites by the UNESCO. This route is part of a series of itineraries exploring the heritage of Al-Andalus. Some examples could be the Giralda, Alhambra, Alcázar, ...

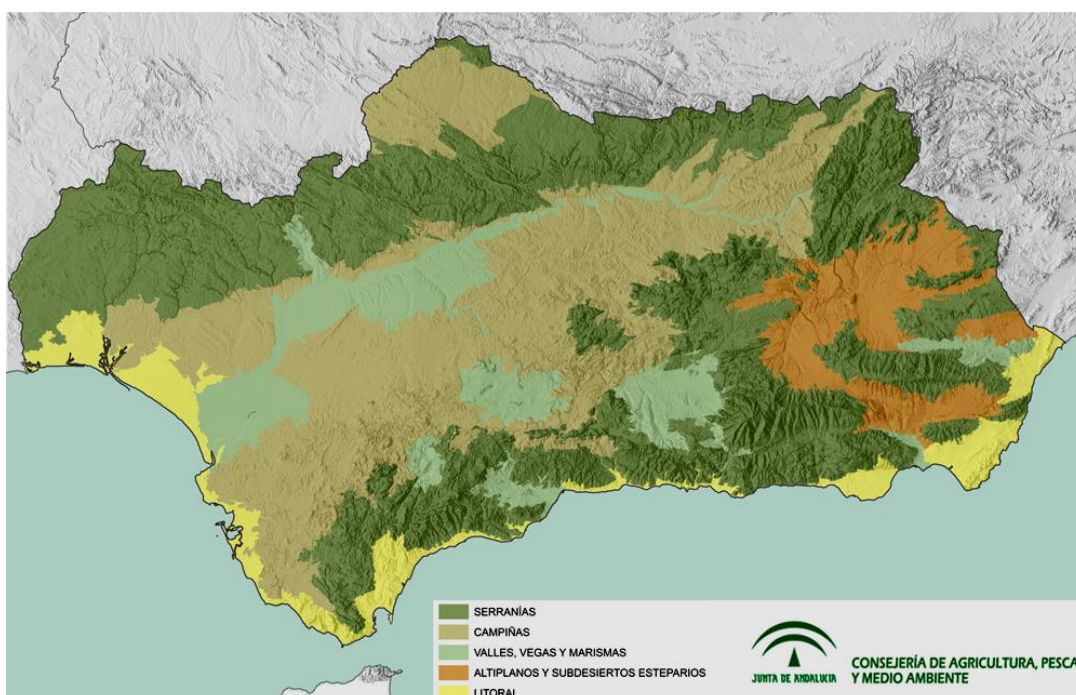
Here is a list of cities and villages where Irving spent some days, what monuments do you think he could see at these locations?

SEVILLA	
GRANADA	
ALHAMA DE GR.	
ANTEQUERA	
ÉCIJA	
LOJA	
OSUNA	

Landscapes

The road travels along gently rolling plains of the province of Seville until Estepa is reached, where we come to rougher outlines. On the way every now and then we come upon lagoons, among which, *Fuente de Piedra* is particularly interesting. Around Antequera there are some extraordinary limestone formations known as *El Torcal de Antequera*. The hills of the sierra become higher and wilder at the side of the cultivated valley leading to Granada.

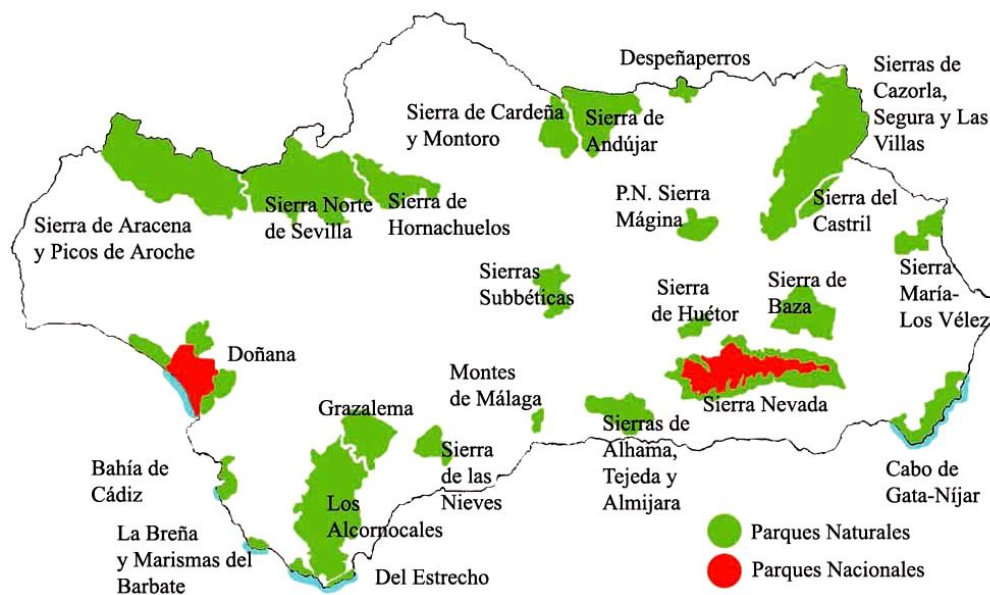
Look the following map; how does the Andalusian landscape change from Seville to Granada if we follow the route of W. Irving?



Itinerary and distances

The route proceeds between Seville and Granada, separated by about 250 km. (155 miles), largely on the A-92 dual-carriageway. From Seville it reaches first of all Alcalá de Guadaíra, then Carmona, Marchena, Écija and returns to the A-92 once again. After passing Osuna, Estepa, La Roda de Andalucía, Fuente de Piedra, Humilladero and Molina, the road gets to the plains of Antequera. Then the way crosses Archidona, Loja and Huétor-Tájar. From Moraleda de Zafayona, it leaves the main road in order to visit Alhama de Granada to the south. North of the A-92, the road takes us to Montefrío and Íllora, returning by Fuente Vaqueros and Chahina to the main route, ending in Santa Fe and Granada.

Look at the map and name the *National or Natural Parks* which are close to the route of W. Irving.



Horsemanship

An old saying maintains that the reason why horses in the countryside of Seville are so fleet of foot is because the mares are made pregnant by the wind; this is an example of equine lore surrounding the tremendous popularity of the local breed along the route. The image of these swift animals is associated, furthermore, with travellers and with the legendary bandits that frequently featured as part of the landscape.

Why do you think the horse was an important animal in the routes between cities and villages?

