

A trip through Andalusia with the Porsche 718 T

## **Bullfighting arenas, dams and hams**

Our journey starts and ends in the heart of Seville: the capital of Andalusia, world-famous for its flamenco scene. The city has 700,000 inhabitants, and breathtaking landmarks including the Moorish palace the Royal Alcázar of Seville, the largest bullfighting arena in Spain (Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza), and Santa Maria de la Sede cathedral with its Giralda – a square bell tower that was once a minaret. All of these sights can be visited on a three-kilometre walk from our hotel.

In the morning we set off in our Porsche 718 T, taking a 205-kilometre journey into the foothills of the Sierra Morena, past the little town of Constantina (complete with “castillo”, an Arab castle), beside the Cascadas del Huéznar waterfalls and through the village of San Nicolás del Puerto. Alanís (which also has a castillo) forms the northernmost point of the region. We stop for a siesta at Cazalla de la Sierra, a fine town in the centre of the Parque Natural de la Sierra Norte natural park, with its ancient cork oak trees.

### **Isolated mines on the afternoon leg**

We drive a 285-kilometre stretch in the afternoon that takes us through Badajoz, the southern province of the Extremadura region. It's a lonely place with a hugely varied landscape, where Mediterranean forests, pastures and reservoirs are set against mountain landscapes and fertile valleys. The Alcazaba de Reina fort soon comes into view at the roadside; this leg in the foothills of the Sierra de San Miguel also passes through the Llerena (historic centre) and Fregenal de la Sierra (Templar castle).

The Andalusian province of Huelva, which shares a border with Portugal, is where we come across the town of Jabugo (Tiro Pichón hunting lodge) and the partially flooded copper mines at Minas de Riotinto. The La Dehesa biosphere reserve is characterised by lush forests and pastures, while Campofrío is known for being the location of the fourth-oldest bullfighting arena in the world. Aracena, our destination for today, is home to impressive stalactite caves, a historic town centre, and a ham museum (Museo del Jamón) – it is just a ten-minute walk from the hotel, but closes at 7.30 pm.

### **Unspoiled nature on the morning of Day 2**

We chart a 165-kilometre route through the province of Huelva, giving the Porsche 718 T a welcome opportunity to stretch its wheels, so to speak. This time, we wind through sparse forests in the opposite direction, passing Minas de Riotinto before we make our way back to Aracena. We continue on through natural parks and past Zalamea la Real, a village that is home to 3,000 people and a small bullfighting arena. We finish our morning route with a siesta in Valverde del Camino, where 12,000 inhabitants live between the Rio Tinto and Odiel rivers.

### **The last 182 kilometres back to Seville**

As we leave San Bartolomé de la Torre, the landscape changes: the land becomes more densely populated as we head south, and farming dominates the region. The southernmost point of this final leg – just 30 kilometres or so from the coast – grazes Huelva, the province capital, where the Rio Tinto and Odiel rivers merge and flow into the sea.

The municipality of Niebla, in a hilltop location to the left of the road around 20 kilometres east of Huelva, has 4,000 inhabitants and a fully preserved historic city wall with over 30 towers – of which it is justifiably proud. That means we are just a few kilometres away from Seville. We finish up on the Autovía del Quinto Centenario and across the Guadalquivir river into the city centre – for a second chance to stroll through the historic city.