

Mammals

Sierra Madrona represents an excellent environment for a diverse range of mammals. The most common species are the wild boar, the deer and the mountain goat. We should not forget the Iberian lynx, a national treasure which is unfortunately endangered at the moment.



Fish

In the rivers of the area (eg. "El Yeguas") it is not difficult to see the boga or the blade blass. However, there are also other ones such as the pike, the pumpkinseed, the cat fish or the trout.

Reptiles and amphibians

In the natural park of Alcudia and Sierra Madrona there live up to 21 types of different reptiles. One of them is the *vipera latastei*, which lives in regions of warm weather. Besides, you can also find the viper snake, a non-poisonous snake that dwells in the banks of the rivers. Another remarkable examples are the grass snake, also called snake of water or the Iberian lizard.

As for the amphibians, you can find up to 14 types in the surroundings of Fuencaliente, namely The Iberian Midwife toad, the Iberian painted frog, the Iberian ribbed newt and the Iberian frog.

4. HOLIDAYS AND TRADITIONS.

The Bonfire night (La candelaria)

This characteristic holiday is celebrated on the first days of February. People gather around big bonfires while they enjoy some traditional dishes like Migas.

The May Cross Celebration

It is celebrated during the first week of May. In this holiday all the neighbors make their popular cross all over the village. Then, it is decorated with natural flowers, lavender and broom.

St Isidro

It is a typical celebration held through decades to adore the Patron Saint of the farm laborers on May 15th. It consists of a mass, followed by a procession to the chapel, and of course lots of food and drinks.



Our Lady of August

The Virgin of August is held on the 15th and it is considered the most important day in the village, in honor to Nuestra Señora de los Baños. On the days before there are many activities: big-heads, the burning of the five bull and different concert in the Spain Square.

The Day of the Virgin

On September 8th, all the neighbors in Fuencaliente gets together to take their Virgin out in a procession. It usually takes four days. This religion festivity is accompanied with a jolly funfair, fireworks, or the so known "fire bull". The little ones have fun on the mats and the nights are enlivened with dances and "churros".

5. LOCAL GASTRONOMY

Ajo Braguetero: Thicker soup made with spinach, tomatoes, potatoes, dry pepper, garlic and bread crumbs of the day before. It can be eaten along with little pieces of jerky, barrel sardines, anchovies fried, codfish and grape.

Ajo blanco: Cold soup made with garlic, bread crumb, eggs, vinegar, water and olive oil. It can be served with pieces of bread, fruit, cucumber, pepper or tomato.



Borrachillos: It is a sweet made with flour, wine and lemonade. It is fried in oil and it is later covered with sugar.

Sopa cortijera: It is a stew of deer, jerky, potatoes, tomato, red pepper, garlic, onion, oregano and cumin. When it is served, it can be covered with sheets of bread and crowned with a poached egg.

Quince Dessert: The quince dessert is made with quince, sugar, cinnamon, clove and lemon.

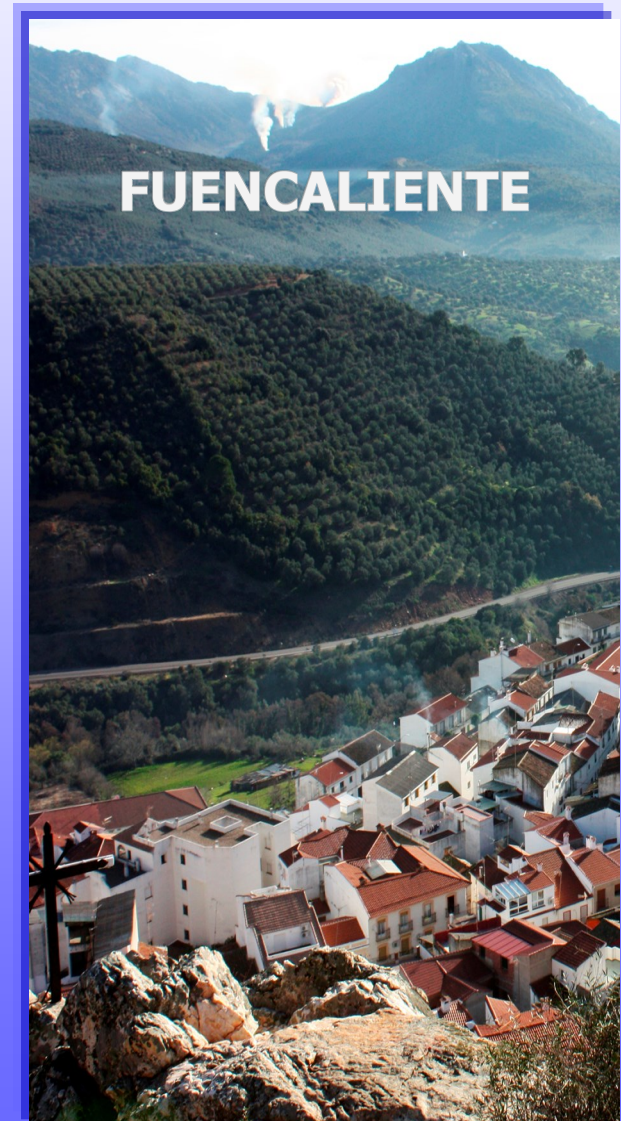
Sopaipas: It is a bread dough to which you can add sugar. They are served cold and accompanied with coffee or chocolate. To prepare them you need water, flour, yeast and of course virgin olive oil.

Other: Bagels of wine, fried bagels, oil cakes and of butter, buns of butter, flakes, shortbreads, magdalenes and cupcakes...

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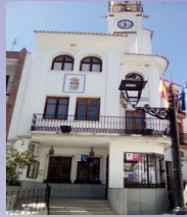
1. LOCATION

Fuencaliente is a small village that is located on the south-west of Ciudad Real (Castila la Mancha). It is near Sierra Madrona, and it is easily reached by car or bus through the N-420 road. Fuencaliente is 58 kms away from Puertollano and 46 kms from Villanueva de Córdoba. The village has got a population of 1055 inhabitants. Besides, it is placed at 695 metres above the sea level.

2. PLACES OF INTEREST

Description of the village

Fuencaliente is placed between the mountains. Its highest peak is "La Bañuela" with 1323 metres high. The village is mentioned in the most popular book of our history, "Don Quixote de la Mancha". Citizens from Fuencaliente are called "Cucones" and they mostly live on hunting and farming.



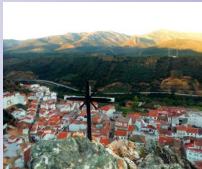
The Spa



The thermal spa of Fuencaliente can be found in the heart of Sierra Madrona, a natural environment where you will enjoy a relaxing experience. In addition, it is recommended to treat or prevent diseases such as rheumatism, arthrosis, backache or stress. This healing water contains bicarbonate, magnesium, silicon and ferromanganese and is located at Baño Street, where the main hotels are also available.

The viewpoint (El Mirador de la Cruz)

It is situated in the highest point of the village, near the outstanding mountains. To get there, you must go up Quintanilla Street where you will see an information sign indicating how to follow. It is recommended to go on foot since access in car is not possible. Do not forget to carry your camera to take a picture of the Cross, a popular landmark that is illuminated at night offering a magnificent view.



"El peñón del Cuervo"

You can also visit « El peñón del Cuervo », placed outside the village on the way out to Córdoba. Once there, you could also appreciate the astonishing views of Santa Ana.

Fountains

If you want to take a break from the trip, Fuencaliente is provided with a great set of fountains whose cristal-clear water comes from the mountains. They are the ideal choice to cool off and refresh yourself in a warm day.

"El Pilar de los Burros" was built in 1948 and is a very characteristic fountain in the village. It is located at Baño Street near the Spa and It is believed that donkeys used to go there and drink its water.

"La Fuente del compadre", placed on the west village outskirts.

"La Fuente del Almirez", a beautiful fountain at just 8 kms from Ventilla. If you decide to visit it, do not ignore the trees woods where you will find a fantastic picnic area.

Other remarkable fountains you should not miss are "la Fuente del Madroño", "la Fuente de la Teja" or "San Benito".



"Las Lastras".

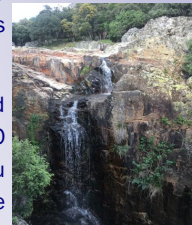


They are located at 5 km from the village and could be defined as a group of rivers of cold clear water. To reach the spot, you must go along Cereceda's path (or the Cave painting's path) for around 4,5 km

and eventually you will find it at the end of the stream. Most of people usually visit it for a bath in the hottest months of summer, although the slippery slopes make it a bit unsafe for the little ones.

"Las Chorreras"

The Batanes stream can be traced around 4 km from Fuencaliente on the road to Puertollano. You can drop in whenever you like because it is open and available all year through. The Batanes stream is named so in reference to Don Quixote, who placed the Batanes battle right here.



As for the Sierpes stream, it can be found at 7 km from Fuencaliente on the N-420 road. To get to this astonishing place, you must reach across San Isidro campsite and go past a bridge.

The Cave Paintings

"Peña Escrita" is considered one the most important prehistoric paintings in the region at only 4 km from the village, between the 101 and 102 km in the N-420 road. They were discovered by Fernando José López de Cárdenas, a parson from Montoro in 1783 only to be declared a monument in 25th April 1924.

In these paintings, mainly composed of red lines, you can appreciate drawings of different shapes such as animals, men or tress.



3. FLORA

In the area of Sierra Madrona and Fuencaliente there is a big variety of shrubs and trees. Among them you will find ferns, cork oaks, heathers, halm oaks, etc. Sierra Madrona has got 7500 species and subspecies because of the existence of a relief with big inclines. Besides, you will appreciate the carnivorous plant in the mountain peek "El Abulagoso".

The most frequent shrubs and trees in the area are the Labdanum tree, the thyme, the rosemary, the oak, oak apple, dwarf oak, holm oak, the heather and the ivy. There are also a number of river trees such as the alder tree, the ash, the white poplar and the birch tree.

4. FAUNA

Birds

Fuencaliente hosts more than 78 different species of birds. Three of them are endangered (The Black stork, the imperial eagle and the bonellis eagle).

The most characteristic in the area are the griffon vulture; a great planner bird with a sharp view and the black bird. Besides, you could easily see the robin, called like that for its red chest, the cuckoo (whose sound the demonym "cucón" derives from), the partridge, the common pigeon, the wood pigeon, the Azure-winged magpie, the goldfinch, the sparrow, the lapwing and the common Eurasian bluetit. Among the least common birds we can mention the black stork (endangered by the illegal hunting) the oriole, the black vulture (the largest bird in the Iberian Peninsula), the Eurasian eagle owl, the kestrel, the woodpecker or the hawfinch.

