

Jaen Journal
on Approximation

ISSN: 1889-3066
vol. 8 (1) (2016), 7M-25M



EL TRANCO'S SOLAR BOAT ADDS THE FINISHING TOUCH TO THE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF SIERRAS DE CAZORLA, SEGURA Y LAS VILLAS NATURAL PARK







A boat ride in a fabulous natural park is no longer just a dream in inland Andalusia. The solar boat on El Tranco reservoir is the latest tourist attraction in Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Natural Park, in the province of Jaén. In the heart of the wilderness where the river Guadalquivir begins, its waters become a sea. And now, visitors can have the unique experience of gliding smoothly over the lake and discovering the hidden beauties of Spain's largest nature reserve.

The Provincial Council of Jaén and the Regional Government of Andalusia, as part of the agreement to use the reservoirs of Jaén province for sports tourism, have created El Tranco Reservoir Tourism and Leisure Centre, a complex providing restaurant services, children's play areas and activity spaces for adventures in direct contact with nature. Hiking and observing birds of prey, zip-line rides and a climbing wall are just a few of the activities on offer on land. On the water, as well as the touring boat powered entirely by solar energy and with seating for 60 passengers, you can also explore El Tranco in a kayak, enjoy paddle surfing, and even take a ride on a sailing boat.



The construction of El Tranco Reservoir Tourism and Leisure Centre entailed an investment of over two million euros, plus the purchase of the solar boat for 275,800 euros. This new tourist attraction complements the magnificent landscapes and wildlife of Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Natural Park and delights visitors with sport, culture and adventure activities.





In recent years, the tourism promotion plan of Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Natural Park has included substantial improvements and updated equipment in this protected space. Interventions included a plan to introduce signage in natural areas and lookout points, roads and town centres, which has now been completed, special training for companies, promotion initiatives, and alternative



options designed for different visitor profiles. Some of the most outstanding work has been in the GR 247-Southern Woodlands footpath, the Timber Culture Interpretation Centre, and the Miguel Hernández-Josefina Manresa Museum.

The GR 247-Southern Woodlands footpath is 478 kilometres long in total, divided into 21 main stages and 3 variants, in a circular route for hikers and cyclists, taking visitors through the main attractions





of the Natural Park. Walking or cycling to discover the beauty and freedom of its scenery. In fact, the Southern Woodlands trail crosses the tracks of red deer, fallow deer, Spanish ibex, mouflon and wild boar, while the skies are patrolled by the golden eagle, griffon vulture, and even the bearded vulture.





While catering for the fast-growing demand for active and adventure tourism, the Natural Park now also offers a rich and diverse range of cultural activities. As well as regular events like BluesCazorla, El Yelmo International Air Festival, and Cazorla International Theatre Festival, there are leading museums

such as the Miguel Hernández-Josefina Manresa Museum in Quesada, showing a large part of the poet's legacy, acquired by the Provincial Council of Jaén, alongside the work of the great 20th-century painter Rafael Zabaleta. This museum, in the town where Zabaleta was born, holds the majority of his



body of work, as well paintings by his contemporaries, such as Miró, Juan Gris and Picasso, holdings of incalculable value which are now enriched and complemented by the legacy of the famous poet Miguel Hernández, whose poem “Aceituneros” was set to music to become the provincial anthem of Jaén.









The Timber Culture Interpretation Centre is another new venue designed as a centre of reference for visits to the southern side of the Natural Park, especially around the source of the Guadalquivir. It is located on the site of the former industrial sawmill of Vadillo Castril, where logs were floated down the river, and later, railway sleepers supplying the RENFE lines all over Spain. The Timber Culture



Interpretation Centre (ciCUM) has restored part of the former Vadillo Castril sawmill as a visitor centre, recovering the heritage of the local forestry and timber culture and other traditional local occupations, with an emphasis on the people who lived and worked here.

There are plenty of options to enjoy direct contact with nature and truly experience Spain's largest protected area, declared a Natural Park three decades ago. The park continues to adapt to changing



needs, increasing its resources and infrastructure, and creating new spaces for unforgettable adventures in the inland paradise of Jaén province, where anything is possible - even a solar boat.

