

# JAÉN, THE LANDSCAPE OF THE OLIVE GROVE

Immersed in a sea of over  
60 million olive trees





**P**lains, valleys and mountains enveloped in endless rows of olive trees, lined up as perfectly as soldiers on parade. This living tapestry covers the province with silvery leaves, and at the end of the year, fills it with liquid gold. A unique landscape which identifies Jaén, the face it presents to locals and visitors alike. Because few visitors can fail to be impressed when they cross the invisible frontier of the province of Jaén and find themselves in a sea of more than 60 million olive trees, which cover the countryside and stretch as far as the eye can see. The largest man-made forest in Europe and the only one of its kind in the world, tended by generations of men and women of Jaén over centuries.

Olive groves and olive oil are part of the unique personality of this Spanish province and its people. An aspect which is so integrated in daily life that sometimes it is hard to discern the immense value it represents. From the earliest times, the economy of Jaén has depended on the cultivation of olive groves, the source of wealth for its communities and cultures over the ages.



More than 574,000 hectares of the province come to life in November and December with the olive harvest, a yearly turning point in the calendar of Jaén. And not just for the 108,000 families in the province for whom olives are a source of income and resources. This is an agricultural campaign on the largest scale, an economic powerhouse, especially in rural settings, home to more than 300 oil mills all over the province, which turn the fruit into the oil

which is at the heart of the Mediterranean Diet, part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

#### THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF CULTURE

Over the centuries, the cultivation of olive trees and the extraction of olive oil have created a set of practices, customs and beliefs that mark the character and way of life of the people of Jaén. We can go back as far as the Ibero-Roman city



of Castulo to find some of these early rituals relating to the olive harvest. It is easy to see how Jaén, its history, peoples and culture, have always been closely linked with the olive grove and olive oil.

The culture of the olive grove is an intrinsic part of the Mediterranean peoples, and in Jaén has historic, economic, anthropological, architectural and intangible dimensions that define the very roots of the identity of this

Andalusian province. Apart from the agricultural aspect, food, health, and tourism are a few of the sectors where olive oil takes centre stage, in a territory which knows better than any its flavours and nuances, properties and qualities.

A province which, as well as being the world's largest producer, is committed to quality and innovation in the olive oil industry.



# OLEOTOURJAEN

Jaén, the world's leading producer of olive oil, offers visitors the ideal setting for oil tourism, with a wide range of experiences relating to olive growing and oil. Museums, oil mills, specialist restaurants, country guesthouses, country estates, traditional festivals, sampling menus and oil tastings, offer a variety of tourism resources for designing a journey to the heart of olive culture. An experience in which you can see in situ how oil is produced, from the cultivation of the olive grove to the harvest, and the extraction and bottling of the oil.

This new and delicious tourism option is encapsulated in the brand OleotourJaén ([www.oleotourjaen.es](http://www.oleotourjaen.es)). The name sums up this tourism product, which balances the wealth of heritage and nature of Jaén's inner paradise, where the Southern Renaissance, the Iberian legacy, the Route of Castles and Battles and the natural parks combine with a gastronomy where tradition and the avant-garde meet.





OleotourJaén offers an exciting adventure to see how and why an exceptional product of the Mediterranean civilisation and the world's healthiest diet is at the heart of the 97 towns and villages of Jaén province. Knowing how a good oil is produced, learning to taste it, enjoy it and differentiate it, thrilling to a unique landscape, improving your health and beauty with olive oil as the basis for the best cosmetic treatments, and sampling the dishes which, as well as delighting the senses, are good for your health; these are some of the options offered by olive oil tourism. OleotourJaén enables the visitor to take centre stage, discovering the many aspects of a product which is part of the essence and identity of Jaén, and which is now conquering the most distant parts of the planet.

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE OLIVE GROVE, WORLD HERITAGE

The same horizon that inspired the verses of such universal poets as Antonio Machado and Miguel Hernández, or the work of painters like Rafael Zabaleta, is now a shared horizon as the province takes on the exciting challenge of its declaration by UNESCO as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape. The oldest and largest olive grove in Spain, which creates a geometric landscape, the only one of its kind in the world, rising and falling to cover every corner of the province. painters like Rafael Zabaleta, is now a shared horizon as the province takes on the exciting challenge of its declaration by UNESCO as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape. The oldest and largest olive grove in Spain, which creates a geometric landscape, the only one of its kind in the world, rising and falling to cover every corner of the province.





Since the Plenary Provincial Government approved the campaign in July 2014, firm steps have been taken to make this candidacy viable. From the start, we created an expert committee, most of whom are specialist technicians, to draft the basic document and do most of the work. Representatives of the Councils for Education and Culture, and for Agriculture, of the Junta de Andalucía; members of the Andalusian Organic Agriculture Committee and the Guillén Foundation; representatives of Jaén University, the Instituto de Estudios Giennenses, and the Regional Government itself, are working on a campaign which is enjoying national and international support. Our main allies are our neighbours, with whom we share the olive grove: Sevilla, Granada, Málaga and Córdoba. Alongside them, the Spanish Association of Olive-growing Municipalities (AEMO) and the

agricultural organisations which represent those who best know this crop, the men and women who work with it and who also shape the man-made forest we now want to present to the world.

At present, Spain boasts other landscapes on the UNESCO lists, such as the Cultural Landscape of Aranjuez, the Cultural Landscape of Sierra de Tramontana, Las Médulas, Monte Perdido in the Pyrenees, and the Palm Grove of Elche. And the candidacy “Cultural landscape of wine and vineyards of La Rioja and Rioja Alavesa”, presented by La Rioja and the Basque Country, is hoping to make the list. Alongside these spaces, the landscape of Jaén is woven of endless lines of a thousand-year-old tree, at the root of who we have been, are and will be. A tree which, now and forever, shapes the shared horizon of an entire province.

