

ARACENA

Aracena, although often overlooked by tourists, is one of the most picturesque towns in Andalucía. A medieval church and a decaying castle overlook this historical town in the heart of the Sierra de Aracena.



Location: Aracena is located in the northern part of Huelva province, very close to Extremadura.

Population: 7,000

Area: 184 km² (114 miles)

History: Aracena was one of the many towns in Andalucía under Moor control until the mid-13th century, when the Portuguese drove them out. The Portuguese controlled the town for 15 years, until the Spanish

invaded. The town historically served as a vacation site for the mine workers from Minas de Ríotinto.

Climate: Aracena's mountainous location means that the climate is very different from that of most of Andalucía. It rains frequently, summers are mild, and winters are quite cold.

Geography: Aracena is the principal town in the *Parque Natural Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche*, a region famous for its green forests and rolling mountains and the second-largest protected area in Andalucía.

Local Industries: Agriculture, Livestock, Tourism.

Famous Monuments: The castle and church are interesting sites to visit, but the most popular tourist destination is the Cave of the Marvels (la Gruta de las Maravillas), with lakes, stalactites and stalagmites. The cave served as the backdrop for the film *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*.



Local Highlights: Every 7th and 8th of September the residents of Aracena celebrate the "Peña de Arias Montano" with a procession.

Cultural Insight: Aracena and the surrounding towns, particularly Jabugo, are famous for their *jamón ibérico*, cured ham made from acorn-fed pigs.

More Information:

- <http://www.andalucia.com/province/huelva/aracena/home.htm>
- <http://www.todohuelva.com/aracena/aracena.htm> (Spanish)