



***LAS HURDES  
YESTERDAY AND TODAY OF A NATURAL PARADISE***

Ctra. de Coria, 1 -  
10624 RIOMALO DE ABAJO -  
Cáceres  
Tel.: 927434020 Fax: 927434100  
[www.riomalo.com](http://www.riomalo.com)  
[www.lashurdes.com](http://www.lashurdes.com)  
[riomalo@riomalo.com](mailto:riomalo@riomalo.com)





## INTRODUCTION

*"No one can deny us that these pages were written honestly and with great love for Las Hurdes. But there is still much to do in that land. They are needed many more pages, rigorous and serious, to counteract the offensive streams that were outlined on one of the areas with greatest personality of all ancient Iberia".*

*Félix Barroso*

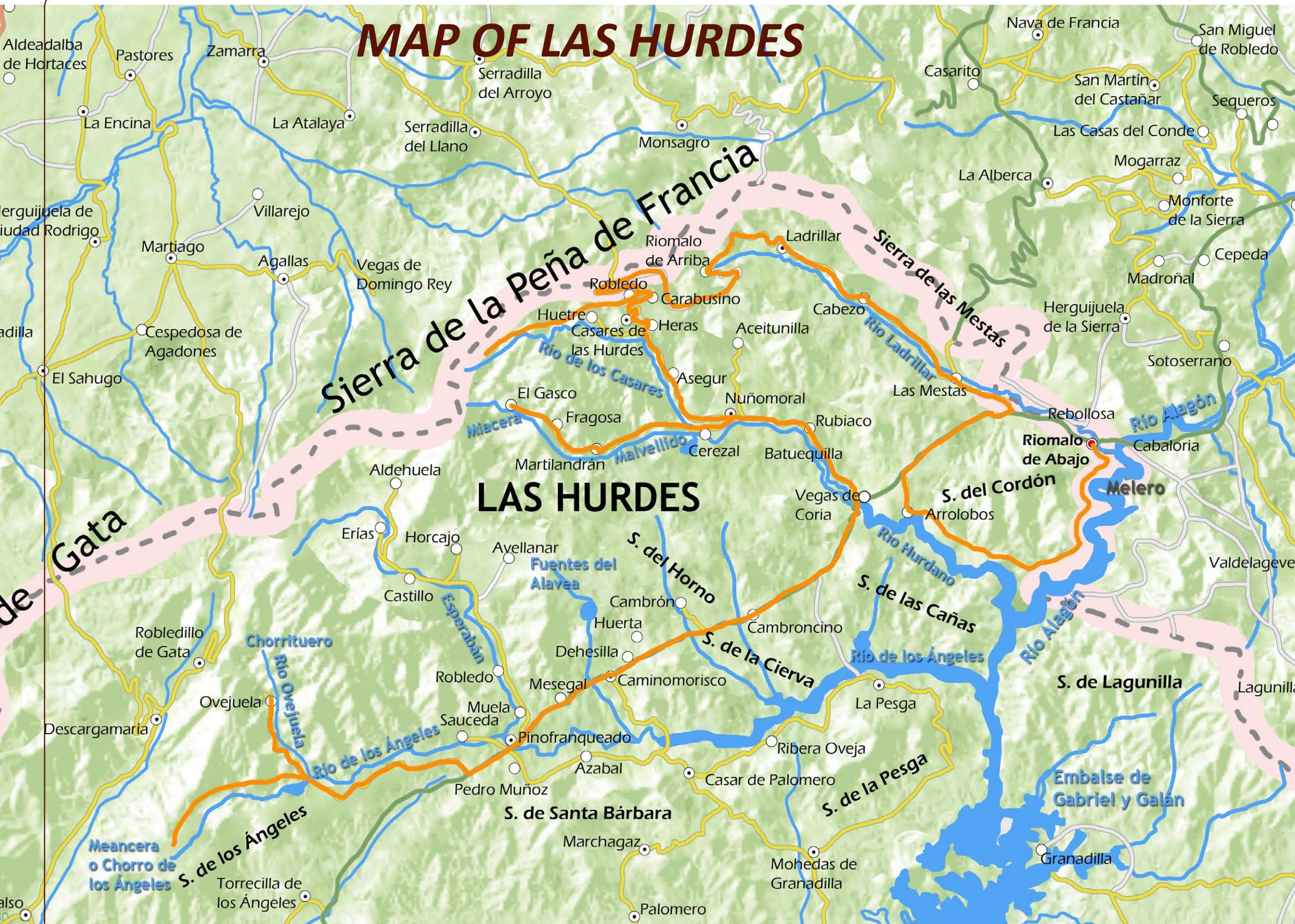
*The first time we hear of Las Hurdes and seek news about the region, we find a multitude of opinions about "a land without land", as they say, about the centennial isolation and the black legend that many travelers had helped to create; however, we also find some writers expressing a different view of ethnography and nature of Las Hurdes. The history, the opinions of the past and the today look took us there, to verify the accuracy of the documentation collected. No one can understand the surprise and feelings that the region caused us, its extraordinary beauty, its magnificent natural environment, the sad past and the happy present of their "alquerías"... At times we came to mute and feel like eagles, looking from the heights the infinite horizon and the closed valleys.*

*Here are the impressions of our adventure; they are another way to remove black legends and topics, as well as a way to pay tribute to Las Hurdes, to its people, to those who care for its stunning natural environment every day and those who feel lost a bit of themselves when their land is hit by one of those terrible fires that sometimes destroy the region.*

*Esther de Aragón*

*NOTE: This leaflet has been made by Esther de Aragón. Both, its texts and its photos, are a property of the authoress and Riomalo Rural Tourism Center.*

# MAP OF LAS HURDES



The traveler who goes into the region quickly understands why isolation of Las Hurdes for centuries. Located in the North of Cáceres and bordering with Salamanca, its perimeter is surrounded by mountains. The 470 km of its surface are configured by vertical and steep mountains, as well as closed and narrow valleys, that the rivers Batuecas, Ladrillar, Hurdano, Malvellido, Esperabán, de los Ángeles y Alagón are still drilling. Because of this configuration and the substrate of slate, which prevents the use of land, rains are true torrents dragging the little land that could produce natural erosion.

There are 40 villages that are scattered around the area and were called formerly "alquerías". Because of the steepness of the mountains most of the villages are located at the bottom of the valleys and on the edge of the rivers. They are grouped today in five municipalities: Caminomorisco y Pinofranqueado, which form Las Hurdes Bajas; Nuñomoral, which was the most inaccessible area and among its villages are some of the most emblematic alquerías: El Gasco, Fragosa, Martilandrán y Asegur...

Nuñomoral, Casares de las Hurdes and Ladrillar form Las Hurdes Altas and have a few almost vertical canyons of incredible beauty.

Out of the suggested route there are so indescribable places as those of this proposal, just remember the landscapes of terrace and the mountains of Las Hurdes Altas have been seen hundreds of time all over the world. They have also been left out Las Hurdes Centrales, from Vegas de Coria to Mesegal; these zones have other interesting possibilities, such as discovering the sources of Alavea, accessible from a path that starts in the Portilla de las Ánimas, near Pinofranqueado, and goes up the slopes of the Sierra del Horno. After 23 kilometers the path arrives in Cambrón, passing by the Mirador del Alavea, a river plunges at birth between vertical rocks. From the Portilla de la Buen Agua, near Vegas de Coria, it's possible to take another path that crosses the Sierra de la Mula and descends to the dam of Cerezal, enclosed between mountains and pine trees. From the upper zone, you can also get to the high summit of Arrobiey, one of the most emblematic of Las Hurdes. The path goes up little by little and passes by the small dam that retains the waters of Arrolamúa, next to the beautiful jumps of Arrobatuequilla, names that have always used people of Las Hurdes for both streams.

## STORY OF A JOURNEY



not far from a symbol of poverty. It had been built in response to a type of bioclimatic house, framed inside certain socioeconomic coordinates”.

We took a path, well signed, in Riomalo de Abajo and followed the course of Ladrillar River, which in this zone is dammed in a swimming pool during the summer. At once we moved away from its incipient mouth on the Alagón river and started the ascent. We could hardly suspect the landscape that the Alagón was going to offer us a little later; the most pronounced meander of its course, El Melero, and although we had watched it in photographs, the great scene left us astonished. From a viewpoint we saw how the river twisted on itself, surrounding a small peninsula and going on through high rock walls towards the reservoir of Gabriel Galan, visible in the distance. Above, in the Salamanca side, we took a look at the protected area of Arca y Buitrera, and beyond, at the Sierra de Béjar, who wore a large white blanket in those moments. The solitude and beauty of these landscapes impressed us, with more reason when we ventured to follow track and arrive in Arrolobos after a few kilometers.

It was obvious the question of the name, and not least the answer, since we learned that once upon a time the wolves inhabited the region, not long ago, and that massive



We begin our adventure penetrating in Las Hurdes through Riomalo de Abajo, little village that allowed us to learn about the ancient features of this region, of small houses of slates and narrow streets, but in this “alquería”, which has always been called here to the villages, the houses are whitewashed and only there still remain a few old buildings. Anyway, we thought the scenery was a good prelude of what later we would see and it made remind us the description about traditional architecture by Felix Barroso, a great connoisseur of the Hurdes: “slate on slate; rounded shapes; few openings; thick walls, plasterer, sometimes with red ochre; chestnut beams, flagstones instead of tiles, and constructions of small size. It is

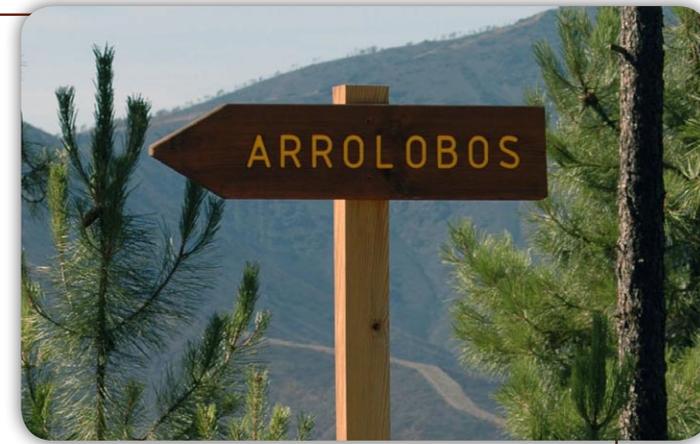
reforestation of pines wiped out part of the fauna and many of the herds of the goats which wolves fed and, therefore, they disappeared from the region. Nevertheless we knew about people who became famous in the early twentieth century for its ability to hunt wolves.

Passing Arrolobos we saw the Hurdano river, although this would not be the last meeting with it. Then we took the main road of Las Hurdes, we retraced our steps, to the northeast, and we turned off on the road that climbs and accompanies the Ladrillar river. Enclosed between the Sierra de las Mestas and el Cordón, the road reached Riomalo de Arriba, one of the villages that has best remained the features of Las Hurdes. Up the road, we saw breathtaking landscapes of mountains and endless horizons. Down, the closed Ladrillar river valley. The vegetation around us was a good test that had always existed in Las Hurdes, albeit with huge pine forests of re- population: pink and white heather, arbutus, rockrose ... After a few kilometers we went down and took a look at valley of the Hurdano. If we had remained surprised several times, now the prospects left us speechless. Infinite earths, magnificent, the blue tone by the reflection of the sun on the slate... Before coming to Casares Hurdes, a path showed us the access to the dam known as the “Majá Robledo.” It was worth it get to the place where the river of los Casares is dammed. The stunning scenery, the vertical slopes enclosing the place, the little village of La Huetre at the bottom, the wiewpoint of La Pregonera, the waterfall of El Ceño, the dam itself... everything is wonderful in the way of la Majá Robledo, especially the strong feeling of being in a place as beautiful as hidden and remote.

After strolling through the dam, we retraced our steps, took the road and reached the wiewpoint of Las Estrellas, from where we had a nice sight of the Hurdano river valley. The river descended before our eyes, enclosed by mountains, as it is usual in the lands of Las Hurdes.

Down the road and before finishing the “alquería” of Nuñomoral, we turn to the most remote ravine of all the region, the Malvellido

Cerezal was very close and, soon, the access road to the dam of Arrocerezal, enclosed in a beautiful landscape of mountains. We followed the road of the ravine of the Malvellido and arrived in Martilandrán, which has some classic houses of slate. Upstream we were staying more and more amazed. There the valley was very closed and the sun hit on the slate giving a bluish tone to the environment. We saw Fragosa before us and El Cottolengo, the renowned medical center; when finishing the village, we looked back over Fragosa and we saw the traditional houses sliding down the



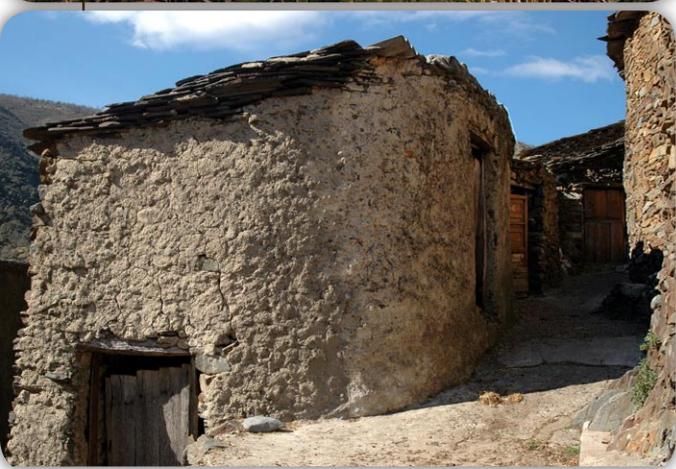


slope toward the Malvellido, where people of Las Hurdes had managed to make small terraces to create their gardens...

Then, El Gasco, one of the more remote villages of Las Hurdes, because you can only reach it by road or sliding down the mountains, literally; we were informed that there was a craftsman who made traditional houses of slate, although it was no longer the boy making objects with rock of the "volcano" ... "That you see in front, but is not a volcano but a meteorite that fell millions of years ago, as told experts who came to study it". The good woman who told us it also recommended a walk to Miacera, as rain and snow had restored

the beauty to the most famous waterfall of Las Hurdes. So we did, we wandered among rocks for a while and stopped to watch and listen to the thunderous roar of the echo reproducing the sound of water falling on the rocks. It was as shocking the sight as the contemplation of the village from the other side of the river, with its tiny streets, its little houses of black slate and the confined area of its settlement. There, surrounded by the extraordinary nature, we had the impression of having reached the end of everything and nothing. From the village of El Gasco, imagining the past and only one path to get there, we think how easy it had been to keep the black legend; Who would want to come and verify the existence of extraordinary creatures?, as Lope de Vega said about Batuecas and whose image also embraced Las Hurdes. However, we also realized that in the ravine of Malvellido, and at other times, life should have been terrible; we found very true the expression of "a land without land" by Miguel de Unamuno and we also thought that people should work too hard to survive in an environment as beautiful as unproductive.

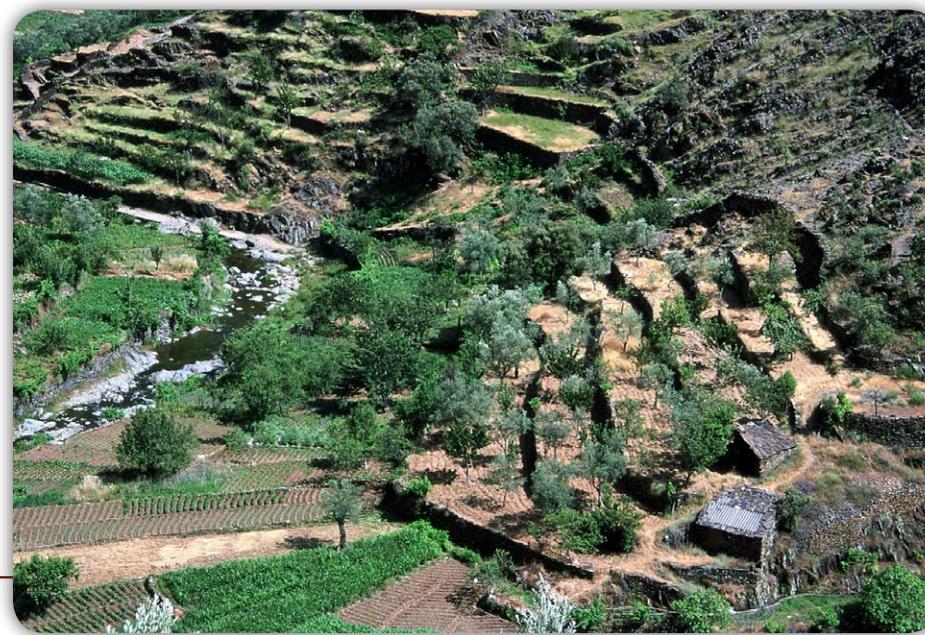
In the ravine of El Malvellido, as also happens in El Ladrillar, in upper of the Hurdano or in some lost villages of Las Hurdes Bajas, we understood the crusade carried out by many people to force the visit of Alfonso XIII in 1922 or to move the conscience of the country, that only seemed to remember the region to leave the illegitimate children. Terrible words those of many witnesses of the situation, as the verses of Gabriel y Galán aimed at Alfonso XIII: "I have watched so much pain / I sometimes cried / with tears of compassion / and other times my voice has issued / groans of indignation... And also the words of Miguel de Unamuno: "Who once saw that, especially the central ravine, which runs from El Gasco to Nuñomoral, going through Fragosa, who once saw that one, nevermore will be able to forget it. What evening one in which after having bathed in the clear river, between crags - what is missing there is land-, at the foot of Fragosa, people from the village surrounded us to the smell of the remains of our afternoon snacks, but also to wonder us about the world!".



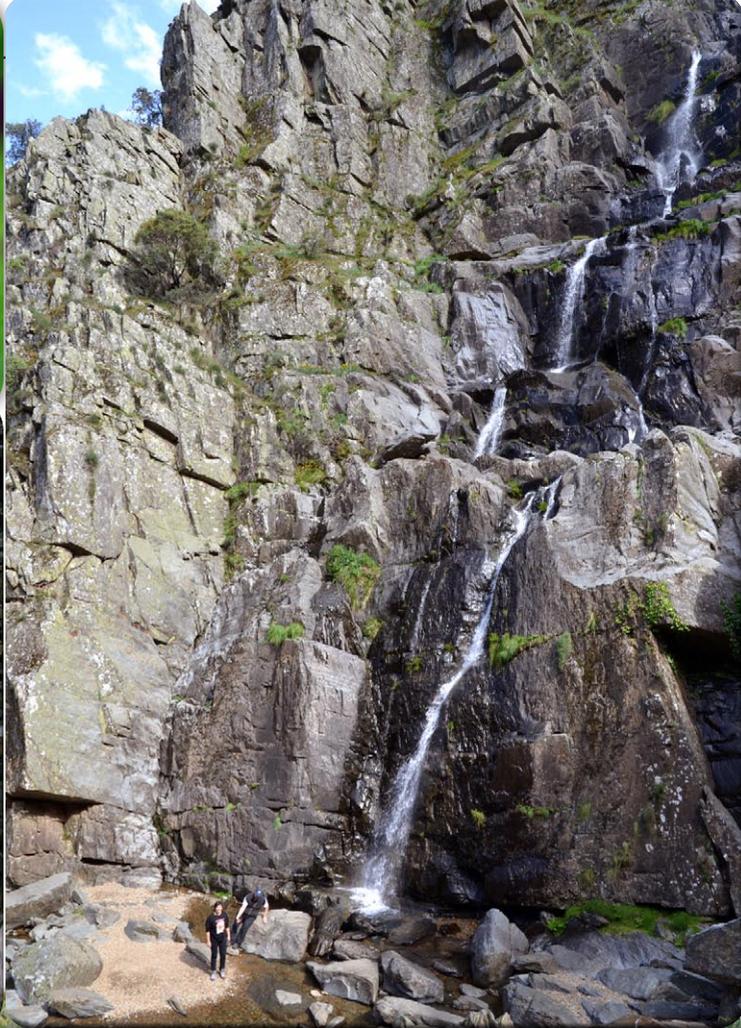
Back on route, we returned to the main road of Las Hurdes, in Vegas de Coria, crossed the central zone of the region and arrive in Pinofranqueado, where we turned off northward, looking for the Esperabán river valley. The villages again were giving the impression of being hidden, of issuing so many beauty as loneliness. We took the road to La Muela, Robledo and Horcajo, because we had read there was a set of slate and traditional cabins very close to the last village. They were placed in a great spot, upstream from the creek of Horcajo. We left the car there and walked along a path enclosed by walls of slate; at the end, in a magnificent site, the Corrales del Moral, almost a redoubt of traditional architecture of Las Hurdes.

If we found very beautiful these landscapes of Las Hurdes Bajas, we had the same feeling when we knew the Ovejuela river and Los Ángeles river, our following destinations. We took a small road and continue to the alquería of Ovejuela, which we approach to reach another waterfall of Las Hurdes, known as the Chorrituero, origin of the Ovejuela river. After a well-deserved rest in place, we retraced our steps and down the road we come to a place with posts of wood indicating the direction of another natural place: El Manadero of Angels. Above us, three black vultures were gliding while we were climbing the Sierra de los Angeles. Above, great and abrupt, the major waterfall of Las Hurdes appeared, origin of the river itself. A viewpoint gave good views of that untamed landscape and gave us the chance to enjoy the horizon that opened behind us.

Coming back, we turned left to see an old bridge and the ruins of the convent of the same name as the river and the mountains, a place that was very important in the region for centuries, even as a center of pilgrimage.



Following the river of los Ángeles we took the road to Pinofranqueado, stopping next to the natural swimming pool that holds the waters of the river during the summer. We knew we had left some areas out of our route, some places that had much to tell us about the nature of Las Hurdes, about its past and the great future that they provides the fact of having one of the natural spaces of major singularity of the Peninsula. But this is a matter of another trip.



## THE VALLEYS

### ALAGON RIVER VALLEY

*Our reference of the valleys of Las Hurdes must begin with the appointment of the first of the great rivers and this is the Alagón, to which all others flow into, directly or indirectly. The river establishes the natural border between lands of Cáceres and Salamanca in the northeastern area of the region, but its waters spring up farther north, in the Sierra de Frades, near Frades de la Sierra and not far from Salamanca town. After surrounding Las Hurdes, the river is dammed in the beautiful reservoir of Gabriel y Galán.*



*When the waters are released, they go towards the cities of Galisteo and Coria, flowing finally into the Tajo river, near Alcántara.*

*It was inevitably begin our journey to discover Las Hurdes through the Alagón, as the river has one of the most publicized images of the region near Riomalo de Abajo. It is the famous and magnificent meander, known as "El Melero". However, before watching El Melero, other landscapes collected our attention, starting with the mouth of the Ladrillar river on the Alagón, close to Riomalo de Abajo, and following with the other shore, belonging to Salamanca; in the distance, between olive tree, we could just make out the*

*unpopulated "alquería", Cabaloria, whose physiognomy was that of a typical village of Las Hurdes, as the houses that stay in foot testify. In this zone, the Alagón river twists in a way so unusual that its meanders, especially El Melero, get all the viewer's attention by the spectacular landscape. The river runs some kilometers making the border between Cáceres and Salamanca and the side of the last one takes part of a protected space, Arca y Buitrera, which is an extension of the Natural Park of the Batuecas. It is not difficult to see griffon vultures flying over the place, even some deer coming down the slopes to the water's edge at the evening, where the pines are sufficiently opened to allow the contemplation.*



*It is easy to descend the course of Alagón river from Riomalo de Abajo, as we did taking one path from the path that leads to El Melero; in fact there is an area from which you can reach the river and take a boat towards the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán and Granadilla, a beautiful place, almost isolated over the reservoir,*



whose walls have closed the village since the Middle Ages. When the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán was made, the expropriation of houses and the desolation almost destroyed the village, whose deterioration ended with the declaration of Historic Site and a rehabilitation program that is still ongoing and has given it back life to the walls, the tower-castle and its streets and houses.

### LADRILLAR RIVER VALLEY

The Ladrillar river was formerly also known as Riomalo, hence the name of the villages of its head and its mouth; the cause is none other than the destructive power of the rain, the verticality of the mountains, the narrowness of the valley and the substrate of slate, all of them turned the river in torrents that dragged everything in their path, including fragile and traditional houses of Las Hurdes.

The river, only at its mouth, has a certain amplitude; the rest is narrow, as usual in Las Hurdes Altas. Riomalo de Abajo, as village, hides some traditional houses, besides narrow streets, sheds and houses of slate, some whitewashed. Upstream, Rebollosa and Las Mestas, the first one of Salamanca. Closing the course to the south, the Sierra del Cordón has some strong-vegetation of Las heather, arbutus and in fact, it is said that des comes from “urz name of the heather; pines of repopulation prevalent image of llar also discloses the of honey production; of hives distributed by Hurdes, so no surprise of the most popular outside the region is invented by a resident is made with honey,



holds of the tradition-Hurdes, especially cistus, omnipresent; the name of Las Hur-or urce”, another nevertheless, the are now offering the the region. The Ladri-traditional activity there are thousands the territory of Las se to know that one products within and the Ciripolen, a drink of Las Mestas which pollen and herbs.

Close to Las Mestas, the Ladrillar receives the water from the Batuecas river. Watching the untamed landscape we can understand that Las Hurdes were considered as part of the unknown area of Las Batuecas since the emergence of the book by Lope de Vega, and we can also understand that people could think the region was inhabited by extraordinary beings, but that does not explain the oblivion to which it was subjected for so long.

Upstream the Ladrillar river there are some ponds and pools that had formerly gold. In fact, people from La Alberca, the owners for centuries of the region, washed the river long ago. Indeed, there are mine entrances in Las Hurdes that indicate an old exploitation of minerals. The “alquerías” that are grouped in the municipality of Ladrillar are: Ladrillar, Las Mestas, Cabezo and Riomalo de Arriba; the last one is a real relic of ethnography that fortunately is being restored with traditional criteria. Riomalo de Arriba is in the middle of a astonishing landscape, surrounded by high mountains and irrigated by the waters of the Ladrillar, which springs up above the village, under the Pico Espinal.



### HURDANO RIVER VALLEY

The valley of the Hurdano belongs to Las Hurdes Altas; the river springs up in the peaks of the Sierra de la Canchera and soon its water are hold in the dam of La Majá-Robledo. In this zone, from long ago, the river is known as river of Los Casares. From there to where it becomes River Hurdano, it twists between mountains, reaching the villages of La Huetre, Casares de las Hurdes y Asegur.



Up the road from Casares de las Hurdes, the region ends in the pass of Los Casares, offering a wide sight of the plain that extends as far as the city of Ciudad Rodrigo, close to Portugal. The pass of Los Casares also give a magnificent sight to the South. In close-up, Robledo, Carabusino and Casares are located in almost implausible places, because they slide down vertically through the slopes. And below, Asegur, or La Segur, as some people says. The landscapes of this section have the spectacularity of the valleys enclosed by high mountains, as usual all over Las Hurdes, although the inhabitants filled with terraces the hillsides, which once shaped the multiple images that witnessed the



hardness of a life as it was the one in Las Hurdes for ages.

The river of Los Casares receives, as we said, the Malvellido river and becomes the Hurdano river. The joint between both rivers occurs in Nuñomoral, head of municipality, point where the valley opens briefly. It is curious to know that, despite the enforced solitude that lived Las Hurdes for centuries, the region was not forgotten in order to exile politicians or to leave illegitimate children, in exchange for a few coins, probably. Without going back too far in time, for over half of the twentieth century, Las Hurdes continued being a place to which to send politicians and ecclesiastics not wished.



From Nuñomoral it is possible to access the Sierra del Cordón, and the village of Aceitunilla; in front, the Sierra de la Mula, or Múa, where the black stork have a nest, and below, Batuequilla, one of those magical places that preserve Las Hurdes, small, issuing all the flavor of traditional "alquerías", even with the old and typical threshing floor of the area.

Downstream the Hurdano it is Rubiaco, another small and beautiful village. La Horcajada is close to Rubiaco, but its ethnographic set unfortunately is coming down by neglect. The Hurdano River continues its descent and come to Vegas de Coria, a crossroads in the main road of Las Hurdes. From Vegas, the course

seeks the small town of Arrolobos and one of the branch of the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, where it flows into.

### MALVELLIDO RIVER VALLEY

If the chronicles talked about the inaccessibility of Las Hurdes for a long time, always they did about the ravine of the Malvellido river, and they did with insistence, because it has the most remote villages of Las Hurdes: El Gasco, Fragosa and Martilandrán. You can only reach them by a road that begins in Nuñomoral and ends in El Gasco, running along the "alquería" of Cerezal, from where the landscape is immersed in a disturbing series of mountains that fall vertically to the narrow and deep bed of Malvellido, squirming as it tries to free itself from the slate and increases its volume with the waterfalls that make their way between rocks from the upper zones of the mountains. And if one can speak



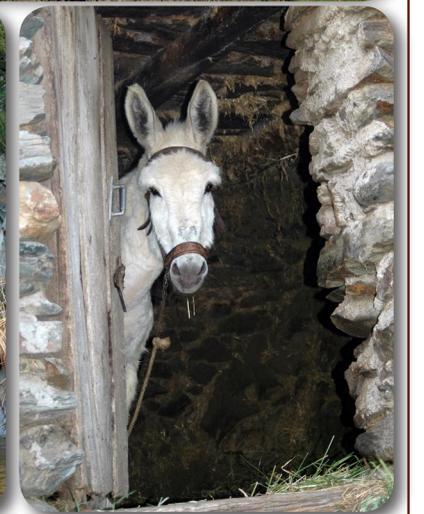
about patches (terraces) in Las Hurdes, it is among the narrows of the river where it is more obvious that lack of land, that Unamuno referred, and that has forced the people from Las Hurdes to steal the mountains every meter in which to plant olive and fruit or have their small gardens for ages.

Both Martilandrán as Fragosa, whose name conveniently graphic explains the narrow physiognomy of this land, are "alquerías" that vertically unhook their hamlets and preserve the old houses of slate. The famous Cottolengo is placed over Fragosa: it is a charitable institution, named as an Italian saint, that has done, and it continues doing, a great welfare labor. The roads finish in El Gasco, a remote village of incredible narrow streets, twisted and with stairs to save the difference of level; the streets are flanked by houses of slate, the same as today a local craftsman reproduces in miniature. Two natural sites must be visited: the known as El Volcán del Gasco, actually a meteorite according to studies, which is reached by a path that goes up the hill that is in front of the village and whose stone have always used by the people to make certain objects; the other is the waterfall Miacera, perhaps the waterfall best known in Las Hurdes, which is reached by following the course of Malvellido, on the other bank, and along a path that surrounds the volcano and goes up the mountain among rocks. The place is very beautiful, because the stream of Miacera, or Meancera, jumps almost a hundred meters high over a pond and looks for the Malvellido between smaller jumps.

Regarding the river, it also springs up between rocks above El Gasco and below the El Pico Solombrero, on the called Lancha of Malvellido, in the Sierra de la Corredera, whose high peaks are gently dyed of white in hard winters.

### ESPERABÁN RIVER VALLEY

The Esperabán river is born in the port of the same name, from which there are magnificent views of the Sierra de Gata and the plain of Ciudad Rodrigo. The waters descend quickly towards Aldehuela, as remote as many of the "alquerías" already mentioned. The Esperabán makes its way to Erías and El Castillo among magnificent meanders and arbutus, chestnuts, walnuts and pines. The village of Erías gives off the impression of having been walled, of what remains as a witness the access arch; on the other hand, it is also a graphic show of traditional building, because of its continuous balconies and its high passages.



There are many engravings that can be seen in Hurdes, as well as remains of fortified Celtic settlements, which the Esperabán is well stocked, as evidenced by the landscapes of La Zambrana and El Tesito de los Cuchillos, near El Castillo; very close to El Castillo is also one of the largest arbutus in the region, become tree several meters high.



Downstream from El Castillo is the deviation to Horcajo. It is worth stopping the steps in this place, as this village preserved traditional houses and narrow streets. There you can enjoy the company of a friendly neighbor while watching traditional domestic animals of Las

Hurdes, such as goats and donkeys. In addition, the village is the starting point for access on foot and after a short walk to Los Corrales del Moral. In a beautiful spot, enclosed by mountains, the inhabitants of Horcajo made a few pens with black slate; the site emits all the overwhelming beauty of the natural corners of Las Hurdes, in addition to a practical lesson in traditional architecture.



Returning to the course of Esperabán, after going beyond Robledo, the river leads its water towards the Alagón river, near the "alquerías" Saucedo and Pinofranqueado.



### RIVERS: LOS ÁNGELES Y OVEJUELA

Another of the most emblematic places of the region is the birthplace of the river of Los Ángeles. It begins its journey tumbling among rocks in El Manadero or Chorro, in the upper zone of the Sierra de los Angeles. To get there you need to climb about nine kilometers along a path from the road Ovejuela. Above, before reaching the top of the mountains there is a spectacular view that overlooks the 100-meter waterfall of El Manadero and the rough landscape of this border area of Las Hurdes Bajas.

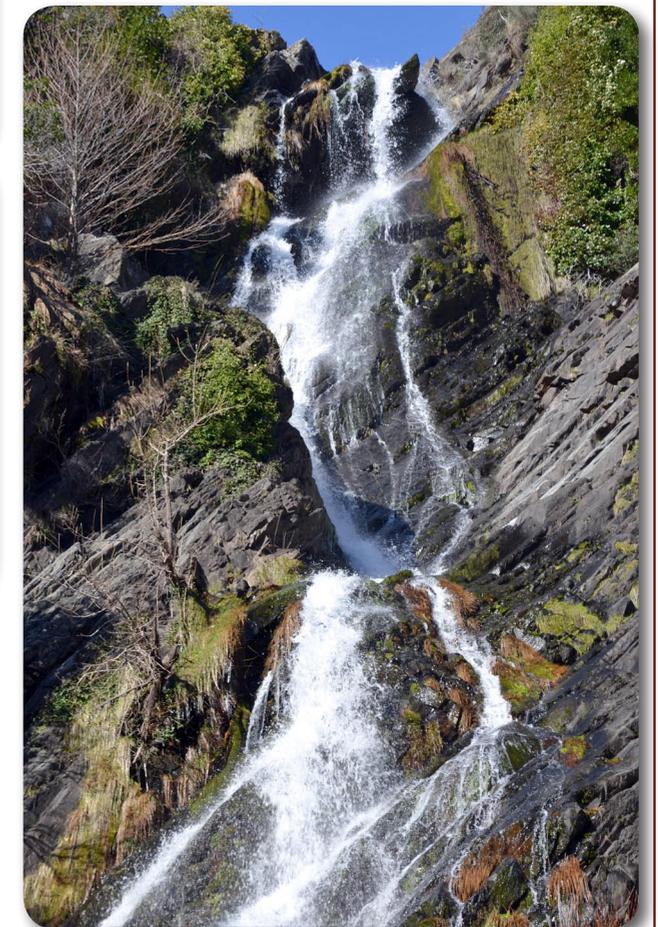
The river of Los Angeles slips between rocks and narrow places towards a small dam that holds the water before reaching the road to Ovejuela; however, previously it goes through the limits of the lands that belonged to the former Convento de los Ángeles, a Franciscan monastery of the XIII century that had great spiritual influence in the region. There still remain some of its walls and buildings. The monastery was abandoned after Mendizábal's Disentailment, in 1835. Very near the convent, on the river of Los Ángeles, there is a very beautiful medieval bridge of the same period as the convent, which is known as the bridge of "Los Machos".



The river of Los Ángeles crosses the road and receives the Ovejuela river in Entrambasguas, where there is a refuge for fishermen. Then both rivers slide between mountains towards Saucedo y Pinofranqueado, where there is another natural swimming pool. Downstream, the river merges with the Alagón river in the reservoir of Gabriel y Galán, close to La Pesga.



We can't stop talking about a beautiful waterfall that causes the Ovejuela River; to reach it it is necessary to follow the road to the town of Ovejuela and take a path from the cemetery that is marked with yellow arrows. After a while, the path and the rocky riverbed bind and suddenly it appears a delicious waterfall that slides between the walls that enclose the place. Its waters jump to a delicious pool, beginning soon the descent towards the valley. This jump is known as the Chorrítuelo or Chorrítuero and is the source of the river.





## WILD LIFE

The true stars of Las Hurdes, as to wildlife concerns, are the black stork, the golden eagle and the black vulture, three protected species for their gradual disappearance in the Peninsula. At the moment we wrote this leaflet, in Las Hurdes there were two nests of black Stork, one uptown Nuñomoral and another in the Sierra de los Ángeles. Regarding the golden eagle, in the area there are a couple, whereas there are some specimens of black vulture and several nests in the Sierra del Cordón and los Ángeles.

Other birds inhabit the region, being the owl the lord of the night. On the other hand, forest tracks of Las Hurdes allow visitors to watch various wildlife species, being a real pleasure the presence of deer and roe deer, very easy to watch the sunset. Although it is unknown how the drought of the past few years has affected otters that moved by some of the rivers, a few specimens can be sighted. It is also easy to watch a wildcat and there are many amphibians and reptiles and trouts, tenchs and barbels slip the river.



## THE VEGETATION

Formerly, the vegetation of the area consisted mainly of heather, arbutus, rockrose, te-rebinth, alder, oak and cork. However, a massive reforestation of pines made from the forties brought up the quantity of hectares of pine from six



hundred to thirty five thousand in three decades. However, fires have destroyed many of them.

As for the use of the environment, in addition to small gardens, the "hurdanos" have infinite number of terraces with olive and fruit trees. Meanwhile, the chestnut trees continue to produce the fruit which is used in many desserts, as always.

The mountains always have beautiful colors and when it is not the red or the white from heather, it is the white of the flowers of rockrose, the yellow of the broom or the "carquesas", the purple of the "cantuesos"... flowers that produce much honey, well known. Nevertheless, the arbutus is the plant that seems to resist all the difficulties in Las Hurdes. The arbutus grow all over the region, as always and despite fires, filling its branches of delicious red berries in autumn.

## PRACTICAL GUIDE:

**GASTRONOMY:** The traditional cuisine is based on raw materials from their environment, so the kid goat, game meat, honey sweets and candies, chestnuts, oil... They are also extraordinary, and very famous, the days of mushrooms that the restaurant of the Riomalo Rural Tourism Center (Riomalo de Abajo) celebrates in November. Well known also are roast or cooked kid goat all over the region. The salads of lemon or of peppers, the meneás potatoes, the rebujones - stew of kid goat-, the moje of fish, the cheese of goat, the socochones - dessert of chestnuts-, the matajambre - fried mass of flour and eggs-, form a part also of the traditional gastronomy of Las Hurdes. On the other hand, every year the region celebrates the slaughter in a municipality, which it rotates year a year, having public character.

**ARTESANY:** The objects of wicker are typical of the region, as the hats of straw, the carving wood or stone, the ceramics and the reproductions of houses of slate.

**INFORMATION:** There is the Association for the Integral Development of the Region of Las Hurdes (ADISC HURDES) that promotes numerous actions in the region and it has a website that provides information on everything related to the area: [www.todohurdes.com](http://www.todohurdes.com)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Viaje a Las Hurdes. El manuscrito inédito de Gregorio Marañón y las fotografías de la visita de Alfonso XIII. Ed. El País-Aguilar y Fundación Gregorio Marañón. Madrid, 1.993.
- Andanzas y visiones españolas. Miguel de Unamuno. Ed. Austral. Madrid, 1.922.
- Guía Curiosa y Ecológica de Las Hurdes. Felix Barroso. Libros Penthalon. Ed. Acción Divulgativa. Madrid, 1.991.
- Las Batuecas y Las Hurdes 1. Ed. Al Platá. Salamanca, 1.995.

