

Ahlama de Granada - Cave accommodation and Hamam bath.



We go up the road to Granada. The highway runs through a hilly landscape with particularly extensive plantings of olive trees. The dry ground is lit red in the harrowed soil under the trees. We cross the Rio Frio which to grow a species of Sturgeon Fish. The eggs are said to be just as good as the Russian Caviar and the price is not far away. We take off into the mountains. The narrow road winds through the hills and we will soon reach the town of Ahlma de Granada. City? well it has been an important center during Roman times as well as during the time the Moors in Andalusia. The city was badly damaged by an earthquake in the mid nineteenth century, but the legacy of the Moors still clearly visible. Here are several derelict palaces that a broker would call for the renovation project, although I would consider those who have already passed this

stage. A brief tour of the city where the main attractions are the Inquisition's house and jail. Then you have made most of the town.

The most powerful is probably the view. The city is situated on the edge of a deep ravine, a little bit of Spanish Grand Canyon. Down in the valley is home to several multi-year dog mills, now derelict, but that goes back to the Moors time. An extensive canal system has supplied the mills with water power. A magnificent view unfolds before you. For all the winding roads down to the bottom of the ravine.



After a cafe con leche, we get on to the hotel. We pass a large pond where the hotel is unassuming in a curve. So unassuming that we passes it without adding note of it. After some kilometers we wake up and realize that something is wrong. We turn back and turn into the parking lot. A large white rock wall is towering above us. There are multiple ports. It turns out that behind the doors are hotel rooms excavated in the rock and decorated in Moorish style. Delicious

and different. The standard is excellent and we install ourselves. Lunch is taken at the restaurant. We choose to share the entrees as well as main courses. If I say that we ate Goat and Rabbit so some might frown, but it was exquisitely good. Besides eating local foods we enjoy local wines. It became a long lunch while the rain poured down outside.



One of the ports in the rock can hold an Arabian hammam. Wearing swimsuits, bathing cap and flip-flops - what a sight! - we enter this bathers Mecca. We are greeted by a large pool in dull lighting. We sneak down in the warm waters and enjoy the ambience and warmth. After a while you take a dip in the cold pool and then go into the sweet-scented Turkish steam bath. It's so foggy that you can barely see each other. Once outside again we step into the warm little pool which holds thirty-eight degrees. So we enjoy the bath for an hour or two before it's time to get ready for dinner.

We take the old donkey path at the bottom of the ravine. A little exciting when you think that s men and animals have been using this road for two thousand years. Today it is a walkway. Just before the town of Alhama are several old mills that gave the city a valley of his wealth, now collapsed. An ingenious system of canals gave the windmills water power they needed to grind the grain. We walk up approximately hundred meters on the winding path up to the town itself. It would be exaggerating if I said that night life a Saturday evening was intense. This evening, both Real Madrid and Barca were playing football. Real met Granada. We are went to a bar to share soccer enthusiast's devotion. Granada score first. What a life! Unfortunately Granada lost the match in last game minutes on a goal made by themselves. Poor players! The quietness was total at the bar. We sneak out of the bar to go home. No taxi could be found. We toured the town but the few taxis that are available seem to be on behalf of the more profitable urban areas. We are tried to persuade a jeep owner to take us to the hotel for twenty euros, and after much hesitation, he drives us the few kilometers to the hotel.





Nice rooms, poor breakfast, nice hammam

After a good night's sleep, we got a very simple breakfast at half past ten. Do you think it sounds too late? There was no one on site who wanted to come earlier, and I will be honest, we could have skipped breakfast and stop on the road to get something better. Well we did have a long sleep that morning.

Facts about Ahlama de Granada

The name derives from the thermal baths that are available here, called al-hammam in Arabic. In 1482 the town's castle was captured by the Catholic army and the Moors fled. The city's location between Granada and Malaga was strategically important, which already the Romans realized. From this time there is a bath - Balneario – to see. In the winter, you can see the snowy Sierra Nevada mountains. In the summer you go to the lake Bermejales sandy beaches and enjoying the beach life. The area lies 50 kilometers from Granada and has approximately 6,000 inhabitants.

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A return visit to Ahlama de Granada

There are places where you can happily return several times. There may be feelings, experiences, friendship or love that is linked to a site. In this case it is all of them.

Living in a cave is a very special feeling. Dark and quiet. The walls are thick and helps to control indoor temperature. They are doing so that it never gets really hot inside in the summer and they maintain a comfortable temperature in the winter. The rooms are four-star standard, so you have everything you need. Beds are perfect so you get a good night sleep.

In Guadix in eastern Andalusia people are still living in caves - thousands of residents. The caves are from the 1600 century when the Muslims were expelled, dug out caves in the mountains, where they were living. Nowadays there are electricity, running water and air conditioning in the caves.



The road to Ahlama goes through an undulating landscape of olive groves in the infinite. Everything is framed by mountains in the background.

Upon arrival we are greeted by a typical Spanish 1900-century village. Most of the houses built after 1843 when the great earthquake destroyed most of the village. Some of the houses that survived was the church, the Inquisition House, and the Prison. If you take a guided tour takes two hours around the city but probably you're satisfied after a 20-minute private walk.

We drive to the cave site and install us and then walk to the village through a large canyon along the river formerly supplied the village with water power mills.



It's exciting. The trees are all the autumn colors. We stop and serve a picnic on a bench. Water gurgles in the river below. The birds hovering over our heads. What outdoor experience.

In the evening we go to the hamam. Hamam, or Turkish bath, is the Turkish variant of a steam bath, a kind of sauna. Originally there were no pools, but the water flowed freely over marble slabs. In modern hamam we bathe are three pools with different water temperatures. The Hamams are like the hotel rooms carved the mountain. There is no bath attendant who scrubs you clean but if you wish you can get a massage.

Clean and tired we fall asleep quickly in our comfortable beds.