

The name Antequera derives from the iberian name Antikaria, which means "opposite the enormous lime rock". This town has been settled by all the different civilisations which have established themselves on this land. Its geographic location has made it the very heart of Andalusia as well as the ninth city of Spain in the Spanish Golden Age, because of its number of inhabitants and commercial activity, as well as being a cross roads between Seville-Granada and Málaga-Córdoba. After the conquest of the town by Prince Ferdinand (the grandfather of the Catholic King Ferdinand) in 1410, Antequera became a frontier land and the most beautiful



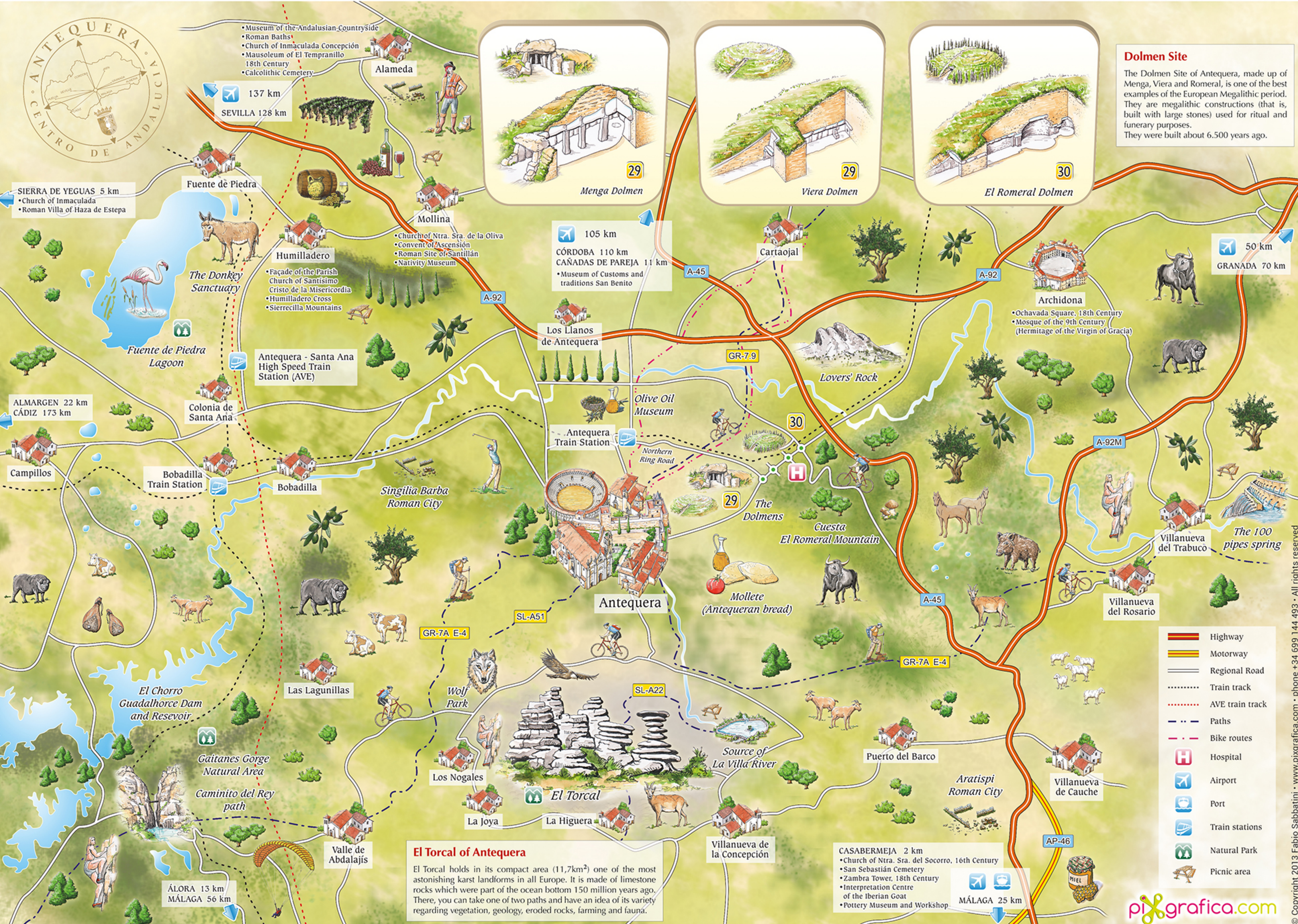
Moorish legends appeared, such as the "Abencerraje and the beautiful Jarifa" or the one which gives name to the Lovers' Rock. The fortress which crowns the city became a meeting point for poets and historians who, around the grammar school founded in the Royal Collegiate Church of Santa María (the first pre-Renaissance church in Andalusia) formed the Antequera Poet Group. This group which was a precursor of the Golden Age poet Góngora. Pedro Espinosa or Cristobalina Fernández de Alarcón stood out among others. Step by step, Antequera, due to its spirituality and location, became a city of churches. The city spread to the lower part, and the Baroque style was used in the construction of new temples as the Collegiate Church of San Sebastián, San Juan, San Pedro, San Zoilo, San Agustín, La Encarnación or the Carmen church, which has one of the most relevant altarpieces of the 18th Century-Andalusian Baroque.

All the religious orders which were required settled in Antequera and lots of Mannerist and Baroque churches were built in the 16th and 17th Century. Most of them still remain nowadays: Trinidad, Loreto, Santo Domingo, Belén, San Juan de Dios, Remedios, Victoria, Descalzas, Santa Catalina, Madre de Dios, Santiago, Santa Clara, San Miguel, etc. The arrival of lots of noble families also helped the city to reach its Golden Age, its period of splendor. These rich families built big houses. The majority of these buildings are still used as houses, others have other uses: the Nájera Palace (nowadays Museum of the City, where unique pieces such as the Roman sculpture El Efebo de Antequera or Pedro de Mena's sculpture San Francisco de Asís can be found), the Palace of the Marquis de la Peña de los Enamorados, the Palace of the Marquis de las Escalonias, the House of the Colarte Family (museum-house), the House of the Baron de Sabasona, the Palace of the Marquis de Villadarias and the House of the Count de Pinofiel, among others.

Nowadays, we do not only preserve the historic-artistic heritage, churches and stately homes. Antequera also keeps lots of traditions, such as the Easter Week processions which are completely different to the rest of the cities in Andalusia: the floats in Antequera style, the hermanaco (person in charge of the float), "Correr la Vega" (to run in front of the float) which has been declared Provincial Feast of Tourist Interest. All the Baroque statues from

the course of the year. Some of the most important are those of its patron saints: in May, El Señor de la Salud y de las Aguas and in September, the Virgen de los Remedios and Santa Eufemia. To really discover Antequera, you also have to enjoy its fairs: In spring, during the last weekend in May, Agrogant (a farming and livestock fair) and the Real Feria (Royal Fair) in August. You also have to taste its gastronomy: try the mollete antequerano (a kind of bread), and some of its typical dishes such as porra (a thick puree consisting

of tomato and bread), guisado de patas (a pork stew), ajo blanco (a soup consisting of garlic, almonds and bread), gazpachuelo (a soup consisting of mayonnaise and fish), migas (a dish consisting of fried bread), cardoon salad, pio antequerano (consisting of cod and oranges), rabbit a la cazadora (cooked with tomato, mushrooms, and garlic) style or goat a la pastoril (cooked with liver, oregano, thyme and paprika). Outstanding desserts include the Bienmesabe (a pudding consisting of grinded almonds), the Angelorum (a sponge cake with meringue) and lots of recipes coming from the Arabs such as mantecados, pestiños, torrijas and roscos. Experience Antequera, straight to your heart!



Dolmen Site

The Dolmen Site of Antequera, made up of Menga, Viera and Romeral, is one of the best examples of the European Megalithic period. They are megalithic constructions (that is, built with large stones) used for ritual and funerary purposes. They were built about 6.500 years ago.

El Torcal of Antequera

El Torcal holds in its compact area (11,7km²) one of the most astonishing karst landforms in all Europe. It is made of limestone rocks which were part of the ocean bottom 150 million years ago. There, you can take one of two paths and have an idea of its variety regarding vegetation, geology, eroded rocks, farming and fauna.