

Albarracin



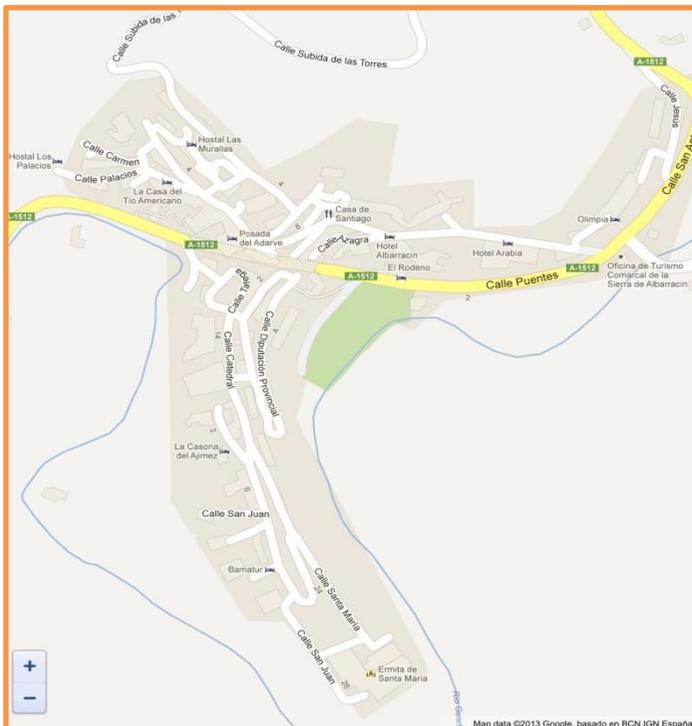
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Guide to Albarracin

It isn't known whether the name of this glorious hill-top town in Southern Aragon derives from the Islamic family – Aben Razin – which ruled Albarracin as a tiny kingdom in the 11th century, or whether it comes from the Celtic terms for Mountain (*alb*) and Vine (*ragin*). What is certain however, is that Albarracin is well worth some of your time. It is a jewel perched on a hillside almost totally surrounded by the River Guadalaviar, it's buildings seemingly suspended over the edge of the precipice, hanging elegantly yet perilous to the eye.

To be in Albarracin feels fairy-tale like – as the sharp winds blow off the *Sierra Albarracin* to the north, one feels transported in time through the blind alleys, sharp turns and cobbled streets. Albarracin feels loaded with history and uniqueness, because it has both. Ruled by the aforementioned Aben Razin family as a tiny hilltop kingdom for less than a century, then invaded and taken by the Christian *reconquistadores*, it is easy to see why it was so prized and so impenetrable.

To spend time in Albarracin is to wander in a picture book medieval village seemingly suspended in both time and space. As the buildings loom and lean, so one gets a feel for the weight of history in such a seemingly improbable place, often voted one of Spain's most beautiful villages by the Spanish themselves. If you're in the area, you're in for a treat.



What to See and Do

1. There is no greater pleasure in Albarracin than a stroll, taking in the remarkable architecture and sumptuous colours.
2. Go to the *Mueso de Albarracin* for a run down on the Muslim influence in the village.
3. Walk along the 14th century Christian walls and explore the Cathedral.
4. The off season. Albarracin can get very busy in the high season so if you can, come when the crowds aren't here and have the place to yourself (and the 1,000 inhabitants).

What to look for on the Menu

- Ternasco de Aragón* – Exquisitely cooked local lamb.
- Estofado de ciervo* – Deer stew, slow cooked to perfection.
- Conejo escabechado* – Pickled Rabbit dish, popular throughout Aragon.
- Jamon de Teruel* – Not from the village, but close enough, the delicious Jamon from the nearby town of Teruel.
- Almohábanas de Ben Razin* – Deliciously sweet pastries dedicated to the Islamic family that once ruled the village.

Need a hotel in Albarracin? Check out the competitive prices available at <http://hotels.itrainsinspain.com>