

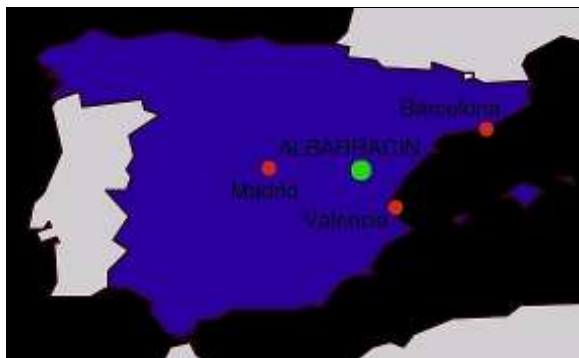
Bouldering in Albarracin

Albarracin

Albarracin is a little town next to the city of Teruel, in northeast Spain. The town itself is worth a visit. The old center makes an interesting visit, together with the walls of the old fort. Find more historical and tourisitc information about Albarracin in www.albarracin.org.

How to get there

You can fly to either Barcelona or Madrid and then drive to Teruel and from there, to Albarracin. The airport of Valencia, being closer to Teruel -but with less international connections-, is also a good option. It is difficult to access the town and the boulders without a car. There are buses connecting Teruel with other major cities, and then another bus takes you from Teruel to Albarracin (more info in www.teruel.org). But then, going from the town to the boulders is a long walk (around 1 hour). So you better rent a car if you can afford it.



Best Season

The boulders are on a high plateau around 1200m (4000 ft) relatively far from the sea. The weather is usually sunny and dry, with a big contrast between the winter and summer seasons. During winter it gets very cold (usually freezing) and sometimes it snows. In summer it gets quite hot, but it' still possible to have good bouldering sessions starting early in the morning or going late in the afternoon, like in Hampi. So the best seasons are probably spring and autumn. Easter vacation is a good time time to go, although it gets crowded.

Accomodation

One good and affordable option is the camping of Albarracin (www.campingalbarracin.com). It is clean, full of services (showers, restrooms, washing machine, bar, barbaque...) and cheap. You can stay there with your car in a tent or in a (auto)caravan. They also have bungalows (previous reservation recomended).

If you go with a van or an autocaravan, it is also possible to stay in the parking lot next to the boulders. There are no facilities in there, not even water, but is free. Very important: NO TRASH AT ALL IN THE FOREST. Otherwise, the site, soon or later, will be closed.

All sorts of classical, and much more expensive, accomodation are also available in the town (hostels and hotels).

Rules

This is a sensitivie special area: a unique forest with unique rock paintings dating from the prehistoric era. So there are several rules that should be obeyed: NO TRASH AT ALL IN THE FOREST, no climbing in the boulders next to the old paintings, season-restrictions due to wild birds nesting, no climbing next to the road, and so on... (more information in www.boulderalbarracin.com). So before climbing, get informed about the rules and restrictions.

Follow the rules. There are few and clear. Otherwise, this site, as others before, will be closed. Indeed there is strict control by forest wardens which patrol the area.

The Climbing

Excellent orange sandstone featured with crimps, pockets and sloppers. There's a lot of variety: cracks, walls, roofs, traverses, dyno' s,.. And all levels of difficulty, being specially good for those climbing in the 6th (V1-V5) and 7th (V6-V10) grades. The following are five-star big areas not to miss: "El Arrastradero", "Los Techos" and "Tierra Media". "El Arrastradero" is full of high quality problems, like "Vuelo sin motor" (6c), "El succionador" (7c), "Esperanza" (7a) and "El Concilio" (7b). The area of "Los Techos" is a paradise specially for those climbing in the 7th grade. Good problems in here: "Supernafa macho" (7b), "Chicha España" (7b) and many others. It is full of a typical Albarracin problem: roofs ("techos") featured with big holes leading to desperate exits over sloppers. "Tierra Media" is the biggest area, still

with big potential for opening new problems. The climbing here is usually in technical crimp walls, although there is also a must-do 7a big roof problem.

The Topo

With the site being so good but still with a very short bouldering history, there is no official guide book. However, you can find a good PDF topo with some of the best areas in www.boulderalbarracin.com.

Climbing alternatives around Albarracin

Albarracin is not so far from the south of Catalonia (about 3 hours by car). And this means close to a sport climbing mecca: Siurana, having some of the hardest routes in the world (like the 9a "La Rambla"). Other excellent and less crowded venues are: Arboli, La Mussara, Cogullons, La Riba and Montral. The game here is one-pitch bolted routes on very good limestone. There are also excellent areas with conglomerate rock, including Montsant and Margalef. If you like conglomerate, the world-temple, where hard sport climbing was born in Spain, is not so far away: Montserrat (www.kpujo.com).

Costa blanca is also close. South of Valencia you will find Sella, Gandia and many other excellent areas with good limestone.

Cuenca, one of the best limestone areas in Spain, is also close.

The whole Spain is full of excellent climbing areas: "El Chorro" (Malaga), "Rodellar" (Huesca), "La Pedriza" (Madrid), "La Cueva de Batzola" (Euskal Herria), "Montgrony" (Girona) and many, many, many others.

Resting days

If you like beer go to "El Molino del Gato", where many climbers meet to enjoy a good selection of spanish and international beers. Walk the narrow alleys of the old town. Watch the ancient paintings in the boulders or walk the awesome Cabrerizo Canyon which goes from the town to the boulders plateau. It looks like a piece of Zion. If you go with kids, maybe they will enjoy a visit to the "Dinopolis" theme park (www.dinopolis.com) close to the city of Teruel.