

NATURAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL GUIDE OF MONTANEJOS

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Natural environment

1. River ecosystem. On the river we find an ecosystem characterized by the establishment of a network of feeding relationships (some feed others) among the organisms that inhabit it.

1. Phytoplankton: they are the producers of the food chain. It is mainly composed of microscopic algae that synthesize organic matter from sunlight.

2. ZOOPLANKTON: They are herbivores, FIRST ORDER CONSUMERS. Composed of very small animals (0.1 to 3 mm).

3. Microphagous: They are carnivores, SECOND ORDER CONSUMERS. Like aquatic insects, small fish and crayfish.

4 and 5. PREDATORS: They are also carnivorous and occupy the position of third order CONSUMERS. Large fish and aquatic reptiles.

6. Super predator: The kingfisher marks the end of this food chain.

7. LINK: Frog in this chain only works as a food source, an example being that these food chains are not isolated but are interrelated with other present in the same ecosystem.

1.2.- The fountains. The spring water comes from rain that seeps into the ground and runs through the subsoil, when there are soil layers that are waterproof; the water is stored forming large water tables.

When groundwater is surplus comes out, either running along a slope or else the top level of the water layer.

Water sources are usually cold, but it can happen to come from deeper layers of the earth and then the temperature of these sources is warmer, this type of sources are called thermals.

Sometimes soil minerals are mixed with water and give it special properties, in this moment the waters are classified as MINERAL.

Pay attention: If you approach the water and look carefully you will see how the wellspring appears. The signal are small bubbles sprouting between the stones of the riverbed.

1.3.-Fauna. The fauna of this natural area is rich and varied due to the different environments we find, forest, scrub, rocky areas and ravine, as well as certain areas more influenced by man.

BIRDS

Given the volume of forest covering this route, there are observable with relative ease small forest birds like Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*), the Eurasian blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*), the Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*), the Great tit (*Parus major*) or the Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*).

-Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*): 9 cm in length, it is the smallest bird of the European wildlife.

-Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*): Its name comes from the spiral patten that makes touring the tree trunks in search of insects and larvae with which it feeds.

There are also well represented other larger birds that nest on the branches of pine trees, such as the Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and the Turtle Dove (European Turtle Dove).

It is also noteworthy the existence of raptor populations that serve as an indicator of the good conservation status of these mountains. Among other is possible to observe Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*), Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*).

The nocturnal birds of prey are represented by the Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) and Scops owl (*Otus scops*).

Pay attention: This location is a great spot to observe the colony of Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) that nests in the rocky cliffs of the surrounding mountains.

It is one of Europe's largest birds.

Characteristics

Length: 100 - 110 cm. Wingspan: 236-280 cm. Weight: 6.5 to 8.2 Kgs.

They locate their food, carrion, thanks to its keen sense of sight, once detected they descend sharply and soon they are accompanied by the rest of the colony of vultures.

Amphibians

This interesting zoological group, which performs a beneficial work eliminating a large amount of insects that are harmful to our fields, is represented by species such as the common toad (*Bufo bufo*), the toad (common midwife toad) and the scarcest Speckled Toad (common parsley frog), all of them are difficult to observe because of their nocturnal habits.

-Midwife toad: The name of this toad comes because the male carries the set of several fertilized eggs of females until the eggs hatch.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Toads, despite being amphibians, are highly adapted to dry conditions and some of these species can remain during some time away from water. However the presence of this medium

is essential to carry out reproduction.

PAY ATTENTION: Most amphibians are endangered, in danger of extinction and therefore they are protected throughout the national territory.

Reptilian

Reptilian wildlife found in this area is well adapted to dry and high temperatures during summer, many of the species are reduced in size. Among the most abundant snakes are the Ladder Snake (*Elaphe scalaris*) and Viper Snake (*Natrix maura*) and in the case of lizards it is not difficult to stumble upon a specimen of Ocellated Lizard (*Lacerta lepida*).

Ladder Snake (*Elaphe scalaris*) is so named because the young species have in their dorsal H-shaped drawings reminiscent of a ladder.

Viper Snake (*Natrix maura*) despite being very similar in its aspect to the dreaded viper, this snake is completely harmless to people.

Ocellated Lizard (*Lacerta lepida*) is a large and vigorous lizard, characterized by the presence, on its flanks, of blue spots surrounded by dim and which are named "Ocelli"

PAY ATTENTION: in the Iberian Peninsula all species of reptiles are protected by law and therefore their capture and trade are illegal.

Mammals

They are one of the most important groups inside any wildlife territory, however they are also the most difficult for observation, because they are usually very elusive and they have nocturnal habits. Therefore it is easiest to detect its presence by certain signs such as tracks, droppings and bites.

Insectivores

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*): the most characteristic are its barbs, which are actually modified hairs. He has strong muscles in his upper back that allows him to become a "ball of barbs" when it feels threatened.

Rodents

Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*): because of their daytime activity and restless character they are easy to observe. Of his anatomy, highlights its long bushy tail, which in the case of falling prey to a predator can be detached.

Garden Dormouse (*Elyomis quercinus*): takes its name because of the distinctive mask that masks her big eyes.

Carnivores

Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is a very adaptable species, despite the intense persecution of which it is subject, it has maintained or even increased the size of their populations.

Stone Marten (*Martes foina*) presents great similarity with his best-known relative, the Marten. It is characteristic their whites stain, occupying the entire throat and chest and which is called bib or ruff.

Genet (common genet): it has a catlike appearance with elongated factions. This animal is thought was introduced in the Iberian Peninsula by the Arab towns, as like with cats nowadays, they used to have genets in houses and boats to keep them free of rats.

ARTIODACTYLS (Hooves pairs)

Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) Easy to detect by its traces:

-“Hozaderos”: (holes to search for roots): Excavations that leaves when it is searching roots.

-Scratchings: tree trunks where it goes to scratch himself.

-Wallows: Mud puddles where they wallow.

The cave fauna

The caves are very unique habitats for wildlife and even though life inside these rock walls seems very poor, there is a great diversity of species living perfectly suited to this type of environment.

The cave environment is characterized by very different environmental parameters that can be found outside:

- Shortage or absence of light
- Very high humidity
- Stable temperature throughout the year

Food is another limiting factor, since it is extremely scarce, so the species that live in caves are characterized by having undergone a series of changes aimed at saving energy:

- * Reduction or complete absence of eyes
- * Decreased oxygen consumption
- * Structural reductions in the reproductive system
- * De-pigmentation.

Within all this fauna stand out two groups, Troglóbites Invertebrates and bats

TROGLOBITES INVERTEBRATES

The most numerous group regarding the number of species are the Coleopters (Beetles), followed by the Arachnids.

THE BATS

They is a large group of vertebrates, which are encompassed within the zoological group called Chiropters, this term of Greek origin refers to having wings in the hands, a characteristic that has allowed them to be the only mammals that have colonized the aerial medium.

The most characteristic features of these animals are:

- Wings constituted by a thin membrane called patagium.
- ECHOLOLOCATION, consisting of ultrasound emission through the mouth or nose to orient themselves. When the ultrasound bounces off an obstacle, the bat again receives the sonic image processing then the obstacle.
- Hibernation to face the coldest time of year when their food becomes scarce, insects.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Due to the large amount of food they need to eat, bats are great insects' consumers, so their disappearance would produce serious ecological consequences.

CAVES ... A VULNERABLE ENVIRONMENT

Despite its underground and apparently protected situation, the dynamics of the cave ecosystem is very likely to be affected as a result of changes in the external environment such as the transformation of soil, vegetation degradation or pollution by the water residual

filtration of insecticides or fertilizers. This combines the physical and environmental degradation by frequent visits of which many caves are subject.

It is therefore very important that we are all aware of the fragility of these unique ecosystems and that we strive to leave no trace of our visit: paint in walls, remains of rubbish, bonfires, etc.

Foreign species

In the place of the Source of the Baths we can find several species of fish whose presence is not natural, the man is who introduced them.

This sadly common phenomenon in many ecosystems is a source of problems for native wildlife causing a strong impact on the dynamics of native populations and community structure.

The type of aggression that may have against the native ecosystem is varied:

- Predation on native animals or plants
- Competition for food or space
- Hybridization with native species
- Transmission of diseases and parasites.

Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*): species, highly prized in aquariums, which naturally live from Central America to Brazil. For its tropical character does not survive in waters with temperatures below 15 ° C, however the thermal characteristics of this area have allowed him to live without problems.

Crucian carp (*Carassius auratus*): species from China, also widely used in aquariums. Like the "Guppies" their presence in these waters is due to the release by someone who didn't know the evil effect of their action.

GAMBUSIA (*Gambusia affinis*): specie from America. It is the invasive species per excellence. It was introduced in the first half of the twentieth century to combat malaria-causing mosquito as this fish eats larvae mosquito "Anopheles" who is the transmitter of this disease. The oddest thing about this incident is that all the Gambusias that populate the Mediterranean, Italy, France and North Africa come from only 6 individuals introduced in the town of Talayuela in Caceres

CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*): originally from Central Asia. It is a large fish, up to 80 cm in length, widely used in fish farming. Its origin in our waters is due to loose and leaks in the fish farms.

Geology: This area is one of the most important outcrops of the Jurassic period, in the Alto Mijares. The geological materials present are limestones and dolomites that have been excavated by the river for fracture planes and karst topography.

ORIGIN OF THESE MATERIALS

The limestones are rocks originated by a process of direct sedimentation, usually what happens is a chemical precipitation: calcium carbonate, which is dissolved in water, it is set to certain nuclei of concretion such as shells or skeletons of certain organisms (microscopic or macroscopic), and at his death, these shells or skeletons accumulate, causing a carbonated sediment.

This type of rock is formed in marine environments, warm water and shallow depths. When in this type of waters, by the increasing in temperature, CO₂ content decreases, precipitation occurs.

In the geological period, named Jurassic, it occurred a marine transgression in this area that was what gave rise to these geological materials, what now we observe.

More than 100 million years ago the area where we are now it was the bottom of the sea, where sediments from the closest mountains and marine organic remains were deposited.

By the compaction of sediments limestones were originated. And the pressure of these tectonic plates compressed the rocks causing their elevation and the gradual decline of the Sea.

The compression folded the rocks rising from the sea floor while it was retiring. The forces were so intense that came to fracture the rocks forming faults.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The limestone rocks are very common throughout the Iberian Peninsula, the peculiarity of the limestone of this area is that they have suffered what is called dolomitisation, this is that these rocks when in contact with the enriched waters of magnesium undergo a chemical change that transforms in dolomites, with this change these rocks lose the most characteristic property of the limestone that is the solubility and therefore they are more resistant to the erosion caused by the continuous flow of water.

1.5.- Hydrography. Montanejos is located in the valley of the River Mijares, in the area corresponding to the last foothills of the Iberian Mountain Range, whose folds and fault lines going in a NW-SE direction, have favoured the existence of a particular terrain in which areas are intermixing large slopes with interior highlands.

This rugged terrain offers a number of peaks close to 1,000 m such as Frontón (966 m), Rosada (953 m), Pastora (919 m) and Campero (915 m).

HYDROGRAPHY

Hydrograph is perhaps one of the most significant elements of Montanejos, in fact three rivers are delimiting the town centre as it is located on a plateau on the right bank of the river Mijares and between the mouths of two of its tributaries, Montán and Maimona, resulting in a small river peninsula.

MONTÁN RIVER is one of the tributaries of the first order and is in Montanejos where it Mijares River joins with him. It has an area of 58 km² and a 10 km length. The course follows the great divide that separates the Massif of Espina from the Massif of Espadán.

This river feeds on several ravines, the most important:

- Barranco de Más del Moro, which descends from the mountain of Santa Barbara de Pina.
- Barranco de Mascador, whose waters come from the Espadán Mountain Range.

RIVER MIJARES

The Mijares river has its source in the Gudar Mountain Range (Teruel) over 1,500 m above sea level, its main course has a watershed area of 4,028 km² and a length of 156 Km.

Outside the province of Castellon, runs along a tectonic depression between the mountains of Gudar and Javalambre called "cubeta de Carrion". Once in Castellón this "bucket" is divided into two courses between Espina and Espadán Mountain Ranges, Mijares valley occupies the part left to the Nord, while the river Palancia occupies the one left to the South.

Mijares stands out as one of the rivers of Valencia with higher flow and annual regularity. An important feature of this river is twice Mediterranean / snowy rainfall regime. On the one hand has the characteristics of a river of the Mediterranean area, i.e., the water regime depends on the rates of rainfall and on the other hand, since his head is in an enclave where are usual snowfall, presents withholdings frost in winter (which accentuates the

Mediterranean dry winter rainfall) and increases when melting occurs. Therefore we can summarize stating that there are two moments of maximum flow:

- June: because of its snowy feature.
- September: because of its Mediterranean character.

RIVER MAIMONA

It is a gorge that carries water only at certain times of the year, mainly spring and autumn. It originates south of the Pina Mountain Range, which is located SW of Montanejos.

1.6. - Vegetation

FLORA IN THE PATH LA BOJERA

The flora is one of the most important elements of this journey, in fact its name "BOJERA" refers to the abundant presence in certain sections, of a bush called BOJ (*Buxus sempervirens*).

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? By their robust oval leaves that are arranged in pairs and in spring when flowers, because they are placed in a cluster in the axils of its leaves.

USES: Its wood is very hard and homogeneous; therefore it is used for engraving, sculpture, marquetry and manufacture of kitchen utensils.

PAY ATTENTION: The fruit and the rest of the plant are toxic; its intake can cause serious problems.

It is also important to note that the existence of certain botanical values such as *Acer granatense*, have led 1, 32 hectares to be declared as a FLORA micro reserve for conservation purposes.

MAPLE (*Acer granatense*): It is one of the 120 species of maple which are accounted for in the world and that grows exclusively in the southern regions of the Iberian Peninsula, island of Mallorca and North Africa.

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? Leaves, deciduous, are webbed and have a long and reddish petiole. The fruits, which ripen in autumn, are very characteristic, go in pairs and have two divergent wings that serve to facilitate its spread by the wind.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The FLORA micro-reserves are a protection of species of small size, created exclusively in Valencia in order to improve the conservation status of endemic, rare or threatened plants.

Along the trail we will find various types of tree formations being the most extensive the pine forests, where the Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) is the dominant species. Their presence should be much less frequent as in the forests corresponding to the potential vegetation these trees usually occupy only exceptionally steep topography and terrain. But the reality is that today this species, with large dispersion capacity, occupies a prominent space in our forests due to several factors:

- Reforestations
- Abandonment of the farmland
- The erosion situation of the soil becomes when the potential vegetation disappears

Different views of Pine Forests along the route.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The potential vegetation is one that would live if there were no human intervention for many years.

Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*)

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? The needles (pine needles) are light green tone and the cup is sparse, the bark is reddish-brown and the most characteristic are pineapples arising from a peduncle 1-2 cm long.

Aleppo pine: general appearance of the tree, pineapple and trunk.

Aleppo pine occupying more rugged enclaves.

Alongside these pines we find a Mediterranean scrub where bushes of evergreen species and sclerophyllous (hard leaves) predominate among which stand out, LENTISCO (*Pistacia lentiscus*), CORNICABRA (*Pistacia Terebinthus*), BOJ (*Buxus sempervirens*) and the poisonous EMBORRACHACABRAS (*Coriaria myrtifolia*).

Scrub with emborrachacabras / Scrub with Lentisco

And also, in those areas where the humidity is slightly higher, shadier and troughs, we find other more impenetrable thicket, due to the thorny nature of most of the species that compose it, such as blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*), ROSAL SILVESTRE (*Rosa agrestis*) and the ultimate climbing plant of these plant communities, ZARZAPARRILLA (*Smilax aspera*).

DID YOU KNOW...?

Brambles, despite their thorns seeming unsympathetic, are important for animals, especially for birds as a shelter and food source since most of the plants that integrate them produce fleshy fruits like blackberries.

Mastic (lentisco) (*Pistacia lentiscus*)

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? Leaves, bright green, are divided into many flakes that occur in pairs. The fruit in summer, when it is not yet mature, has a striking red colour.

USES: Because of its high tannin content is used for tanning leather.

CORNICABRA (*Pistacia Terebinthus*)

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? Leaves, deciduous, are divided into many flakes that come in pairs, except the last one appears alone topping the group. In summer presents a striking clusters of red berries. The most characteristic feature of this plant is the appearance of galls on its leaves, in the form of goat horns as a result of an insect bite.

Emborrachacabras (*Coriaria myrtifolia*)

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT? Leaves, very bright, are presented in pairs or in threes and are traversed by three ribs very marked. The fruit has a very particular aspect since the petals become fleshy and acquire a greenish colour when ripe so it becomes almost black.

USES: Because of its high tannin content is used for tanning leather.

CAREFUL: This plant is very toxic, being its ripe fruits very dangerous as they have a pleasant taste and look like blackberries, which can lead to ingestion by confusion.

Alternating with these pines are two other types of tree formations, CARRASCAL and SABINAR.

CARRASCAL

Are the forest formations where the dominant species is the "Carrasca" (*Quercus ilex*). This species is the most representative of the western Mediterranean vegetation.

They are the potential vegetation in most of the Valencia region but today only remain small isolated forests, since most have been destroyed by various causes:

- Establishment of crops.

- Exploitation for obtaining charcoal.
- Forest fire.

The “Carrascal”, seen from afar, has a very characteristic appearance due to uniform round leaves, dark green, *Quercus ilex*. Unlike pine, the inside is dense and dark and impassable because of the abundance of shrubs and lianas.

THE SABINAR

The type of “sabinar” found in this journey is what is called SABINAR NEGRAL. They are very open forests, with a degree of coverage that does not exceed 60%, where the dominant species is the SABINA NEGRAL (*Juniperus phoenicea*), accompanied by juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and a rather poor but very interesting herbaceous layer as it usually settle in endemic species with a great genetic variability.

This type of vegetation appears in areas where land is scarce or nonexistent, and where drought conditions are also very limiting due to the high daily thermal oscillation. In this extreme environment, only plants able to take advantage of the landings and wide cracks to settle can grow.

Aromatic plants: Along the route we can enjoy the abundant aromatic flora of the area.

ROSMARY

PROPERTIES

- Digestive Diseases: Increases the production of gastrointestinal juices, promoting digestion
- Antispasmodic: Rosemary produces smooth muscle relaxation
- Carminative: relaxes smooth muscle sphincter, favouring the elimination of gases
- Colagogo /choleretic: It increases both production and removal of bile

THYME

PROPERTIES

- Expectorant: Thyme essential oil increases the activity of the bronchial cilia, while an irritant effect by increasing production of bronchial alveolar secretion.
- Antispasmodic: Thyme essential oil has a relaxing effect of bronchial smooth muscle. Traditionally it has been used in the treatment of the common cold and gastritis. And topically in skin lesions and itching.

LAVENDER

PROPERTIES

- Hypnotic: Decreases the latency period of sleep and motor activity and lengthens the duration of sleep
- Digestive Diseases: Increases the production of gastrointestinal juices, promoting digestion.
- Antispasmodic: Lavender produces smooth muscle relaxation
- It has traditionally been used in the treatment of headaches, abdominal cramps and arthritis.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Aromatics have functionality in nature; prevent these plants from being eaten by some

herbivores as they give them an unpleasant taste. But humans have taken advantage of these substances, employing them in perfumery, food or medicine. The collection of these plants is carried out before flowering, as it is when they have more aromatics substances.

RIPARIAN VEGETATION

If we take a little walk beyond the "CHORRO", we can enjoy a short tour that offers a little taste of what is called riparian vegetation.

On the shores next to the rivers, moisture conditions and soil depth are a limiting factor, which makes that the different plants install themselves more or less close to the shore depending on their soil water logging tolerance.

Furthermore, these soils due to sediment leaving the water have an important wealth in mineral nutrients so that the species growing in these areas often reach an important development in a short time.

These plant communities play an important role in ecosystem conservation:

- They slow the erosive force of floods.
- Create fertile soils.
- Keep water fresh due to the shadow of the trees.

WILLOW "SAUCE" (*Salix* spp.)

- They are in the front row, on the permanently waterlogged area
- The willows can be both trees and shrubs; they are characterized by very elongated leaves that emerge often from overhanging branches
- They bloom in March presenting a showy inflorescences

DID YOU KNOW...?

Its flexible branches are used as a substitute for wicker. Willow bark contains salicin, which is one of the main components of aspirin (aspirin base).

BLACK POPLAR (chopo negro) (*Populus nigra*)

- are placed somewhat withdrawn, in moist and deep soils on the banks of the rivers, which they explore with its large roots.
- There are large trees (up to 30 m high) and rapid growth. It has the ability to survive in the presence of contaminated water and lack of oxygen.
- They bloom in March.

DID YOU KNOW...?

For its rapid growth and the brevity of his short turn is used as raw material for the production of cellulose in papermaking.

ASH TREE (fresno) (*Fraxinus angustifolia*)

- They are in the most secluded area of the shore. This species does not need direct contact with the water but they need the proximity of the water table.
- Trees are medium sized (up to 10 m) with leaves composed of numerous elongated flakes features and serrated edge.
- It blooms in March before removing the leaves.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The scientific name "*Fraxinus*" derives from the Greek verbal voice "*Frassin*" which means "to put hedges" use commonly given to these plants.

2. - Climatology

Montanejos has an average annual temperature of 14.6 ° C. Temperatures are at their annual pace typical seasonal patterns, with summer highs and winter lows. The warmest month is July or August, with average temperatures close to 23 ° C, while January, with 8 ° C on average, is the coldest month.

As for precipitation, the average is 508 mm / year, which means a dry climate. These rainfalls occur mainly in the form of rain, with the very occasional snowfall. The distribution throughout the year is typical Mediterranean climate, i.e. spring and autumn peaks interspersed with winter and summer lows.

3.- Socio-economic data.

DEMOGRAPHY

Currently (2015 data), Montanejos has a total population of 549 inhabitants, which makes this municipality the most populous of the entire region of Alto Mijares, which has an average population of 189 inhabitants per municipality.

If demographic data observed since the early twentieth century can be seen from the 60s, like many towns in the region, a process of demographic regression is initiated as a result of the crisis of the traditional agrarian economy which meant a significant loss of human resources.

However the data of the last decade suggests that this regressive process is slowing and even reversing since the size of the population is on the rise since 1996.

ECONOMY

The economic activity of the municipality is based on agriculture and services.

“orchards along the river”

FARMING

Despite the difficulty of the rugged topography of the area, agriculture is and has been the main economic activity on the Mijares valley, since there is virtually no industry. However this activity is frankly affected by a progressive loss of human resources, so there are plenty abandoned fields and terraces in the mountains overgrown with vegetation, mainly pine forests.

Forested upland crops, olives and almonds, have been important historically and currently remain part of the economic activity of the people. In addition, albeit on a smaller scale, also they are grown various types of there are also grown fruit trees also they are grown, like cherry, pear and apple trees. And are also noteworthy fertile orchards established along the river valley.

Historically cultivation of vine is also a reference, but the problem of phylloxera plague in the early twentieth century led to its abandonment. However, the large number of terraced farming ("ribazos") that surround the town, remain as witnesses of the importance of this crop. Current data of land use in agricultural activities are as follows:

SERVICES

This town is graced by a number of natural beautiful settings, an exceptional physiographic and the existence of springs of medicinal mineral waters all together with a spa. These three elements, plus the existence of an acceptable communications network make Montanejos an important and attractive town for tourism.

That is why services are currently the most important source in the economy of the town, which is clearly reflected in the figures for the catering establishments:

4.- History, culture, traditions and customs

4.1. Folklore. The folklore of the region of Alto Mijares, and therefore Montanejos, is rich and varied. The most notable expressions are music, dances and clothing.

“LA JOTA ARAGONESA” is not only the popular folklore of Montanejos and its region, but also a local symbol that serves as a link between its neighbours.

The famous RONDALLA has always been the entity responsible for its interpretation, which was always present in any festive event, both household and the town. Any circumstance was valid to use this musical repertoire which stars the typical instruments such as guitar, "guitarrico", the mandolin and castanets.

“LAS SEGUIDILLAS and EL FANDANGO” complete the trilogy of the musical heritage of the region.

At present various county associations collaborate in the recovery and dissemination of folklore:

- The School of Jota "LA ALEGRÍA DEL MIJARES" in its forms of dance, song and “RONDALLA”, is undoubtedly the most important association of the whole region.

Language. The language spoken in Montanejos, like all peoples of the region of Alto Mijares, is called CASTILIAN ARAGONÉS.

The Aragonés language is currently spoken in some regions of Huesca, it influenced markedly during the Re-conquest (Reconquista) in the evolution of Castilian in the eastern peninsular. The characteristics of this speech can be seen easily when entering conversation with the locals. Some examples are:

- Using the diminutive suffix -ic FINISH: poquico, bonico, pequeñico ...
- ARAGONÉS GERUND VERBAL: haciendo (haciendo), diciendo (diciendo) ...
- Using WORDS OF ARAGONÉS: Jada/hoe (azada), hiemo/manure (estiercol), panizo/corn (maiz)
- Aversion to proparoxytones: médico, cantáro, pájaro ...

4.3.- Ancient customs.

Traditionally the people existed in certain customs that over the years and for various reasons have been left unused, but still remembered and even some are trying to be recovered.

“Matapuerco”: Pig slaughter that took place one day between the months of December and January.

Families and friends gathered to celebrate the death of the animal and after they will use all their skin and meat to prepare tasty sausages. The slaughterer was responsible for killing the pig and bystanders helped him while sipping some liquor and eating some pastries.

SINGING PROSE “canto de la prosa”: they were festive poems of pseudo-religious character, which were sung at Christmas to get the Christmas Bonus (“aguinaldo”).

It was customary on the eve of December 28 that the Prose was sung by married men, who sang it at the door of the church, after they had paraded through the streets of the town with a long pole whose tip had placed a cabbage and a turnip. This action also again repeated every Jan. 5, but this time were masked bachelors who sang it.

ARCHES OF FLOWERS AND AGAVES: On the eve of San Juan and San Pedro (24 and 29 June), young singles placed arches of flowers at the door of the house of the girl who they had claimed, while placing agaves in the house of the girl who had rejected them .

Likewise, friends of a "potential partner" painted a dash of lime in the soil that ran from the front door of the boy's house to the front door of the girl's house.

