

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF ACINIPO



Acinipo's Roman Theatre

THE TOWN OF ACINIPO

Acinipo is placed in a limestone plateau that raises at 999 meters above sea level, with all the urban space protected by these sheer slopes. Beneath this geological formation there is an aquifer that drains into several springs. In the fertile surroundings there are iron, copper and lead mines, exploited since Prehistoric Age. Its strategic location allows the control of the upper basins of the Guadiaro and Guadalete rivers.

Archaeological works find out that Acinipo was first occupied in the Copper Age (since 3000 BC). In the 9th and the 10th centuries BC, the place comes into contact with Phoenicians established in Malaga coast. At the end of the 7th century BC Acinipo is abandoned and the population settled in the near Silla del Moro, returning to the old place in the 5th century BC (Iberian Period).

The Roman presence since the year 206 BC brought great changes, such as monumental buildings and an own mint, with coins that included sprigs and grape bunches, that showed the village prosperity symbols. Turned into Roman town, Acinipo was quoted by Strabo and Pliny the Elder. After the 3rd century, Acinipo fell into a decline, and was replaced by Arunda (Ronda as it is now known) like administrative centre. However, the plateau was occupied until the Middle Ages, when the ruin of the Roman theatre was used as an observation tower by the Moslem Kingdom of Granada.



Acinipo's Plateau

Acinipo was known since the 16th century as 'Ronda la Vieja'. After suffering several pillages, the archaeological works began in 1967, focused on the Roman theatre, declared National Monument. Afterwards protohistoric remains and new Roman buildings were discovered. In 2011 the Regional Government of Andalusia declared the plateau of Acinipo and an important part of its surroundings Heritage of Cultural Interest Site.

VISIT TOUR

The only access of the archaeological site is next to the parking. In the lower part of the plateau you find protohistoric cabins from the 9th and the 8th centuries BC. There are five housings and two of them stand out among the other ones. Some of these show circular shape (five metres in diameter) with a stone pavement in the entrance, as a porch. Entering them, you can see a small fireplace inside for warming the room and cooking. In these cabins the excavations have found hand made potteries, belonging to the local people, as well as Phoenician imported amphorae that contained salted fish.

Beginning the ascending path, the first thing that attracts the visitor attention are the big piles of stones ('majanos' in Spanish). We found their origin in the cleaning works to cultivate the land that were carried out until 1970. These 'majanos' are formed by building materials of the Roman demolished ruins.

The next stop is the 'domus', Latin name of the Roman lordly house. Partially excavated, the building consists of two floors organized around a courtyard, which included a 'lararium' (altar dedicated to the home deities), currently discovered and waiting for restoration. At the beginning, this house was built as a private home in the 1st century, but later turned into a handcrafted workshop, and maybe, into a commercial office that was used uninterruptedly until the 6th century.



Protohistoric cabins

Carrying on upwards, we arrive to the most important building of 'Acinipo', the Roman theatre. It must have been built in the middle of the 1st century BC, and it is probably one of the most ancient Roman theatres in Hispania. It is 62 metres diameter and has a 'cavea' (seating section) sculpted in the own limestone of the plateau. The scaenae (stage) offers a block stone background. Nowadays we can see the Roman theatre despoiled of previous decorative objects (sculptures, columns, polychromed marble, inscriptions, altars) that were pillaged after being abandoned between end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century.

From the theatre it is interesting to follow up to the upper part of the plateau, where we can enjoy a wonderful panoramic view that takes in the provinces of Malaga, Cadix and Seville.

Descending from the hillside, we finish the tour visiting the 'thermae' (Roman baths). The building complex is placed next to a spring with continuous flow. Remains of a 'hypocaust' (a heating system) were discovered. These 'thermae' include a 'palaestra', a rectangular courtyard bordered by columns, used to do gymnastic exercises. The 'thermae' was built in the beginning of the 1st century or earlier and was abandoned in the middle of the 3rd century. In the 4th century, the ruins were occupied by a glass workshop.

TO VISIT ACINIPO

Opening hours and admission requirements

Closed on Monday.
 Tuesday: 9 am to 3 pm.
 Wednesday to Saturday: 9 am to 5 pm.
 Sunday: 9 am to 3pm.
 Timetables may be subject to changes.

Closing days: 1st January, 1st May and 25th December.
 The admission to the archaeological site is not allowed up to 30 minutes before closing time.
 Visit and tour are free.
 There is no guide service available.
 There is no public transport service available.

Recommendations

Complete visit lasts one hour / Mini tour (only theatre) lasts 30 minutes.

1. The tour passes through natural stone. Some sections are difficult to people with reduced mobility.
2. It is forbidden to remove the ground or pick remains up from the area.
3. It is recommended not to raise stones because of bites risk.
4. In the upper area of the plateau and the edge of the precipice there is risk of fall.
5. Cap and sun cream are advisable during summer.
6. In rainy days and after them there is plenty of mud.

HOW TO GET THERE

GPS: 36° 49' 56"N – 5° 14' 10,9"W.

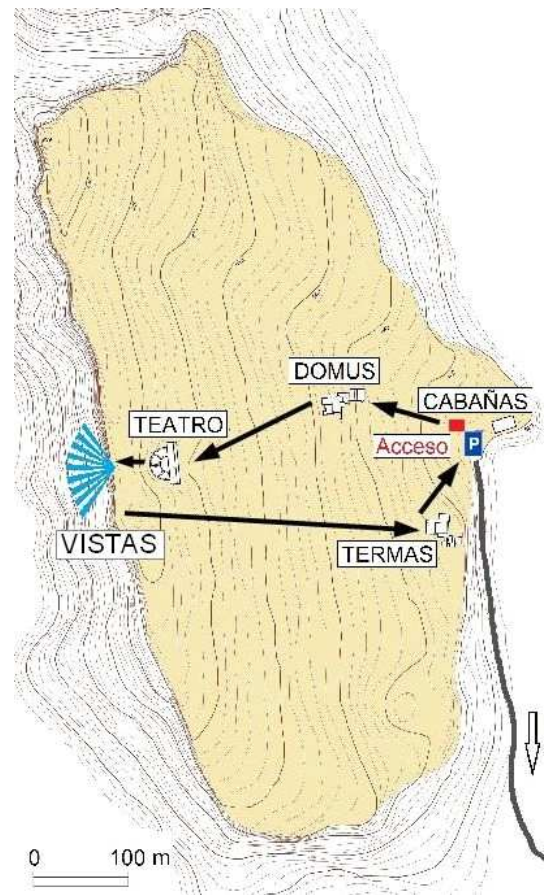
From Costa del Sol and Ronda: take the regional road A-397 towards Seville. Afterwards, on the left, continue the A-374 road and on the right, the MA-7402 towards Setenil, which leads to the archaeological area/zone.

From Málaga: Exit the A-357 road towards Ardales and then the A-367 to Ronda. In Cuevas del Becerro drive to Setenil, in Cadix, to access the archaeological area/zone through MA-7402 road.

From Seville: Take the A-375 towards Utrera and continue the A-374 to Ronda. You can reach the archaeological area/zona by the MA-7402, which you have to take on your left a bit before Ronda.

ADDRESS

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Visit itinerary

