

# Image: Extremadura, in western Spain captured by Sentinel-2A

November 20 2015

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Credit: Copernicus Sentinel data (2015)/ESA

This true-colour image of Merida was taken by Sentinel-2A on 11 August. Home to some 60 000 people, Merida is the capital of the autonomous community of Extremadura, in western Spain.

Owing to the satellite's high-resolution multispectral instrument, the colour distinction of this arid area is obvious. The greys are the small towns of Montijo and Santa Amalia, on either side of Merida, while the scattered greens are fields of different crops and plants, crisscrossed with canals.

The brown and reddish are the typical colours of fields without vegetation, which was the case when the image was captured in August.

The Guadiana River is also visible, crossing through the centre of the image, along with various smaller bodies of water, all fundamental for irrigating the many fields in such a dry area.

The land is divided into estates, where vineyards and olive groves are cultivated along with wheat. Dry farming predominates, with winter wheat and barley as major crops.

In the lower central part of the image, the small town of Almendralejo is visible, situated in a brownish area. Here the local agriculture features extensive cereals, fruit and grapes, with many vineyards around the town, where a local red wine and brandy are produced.

Sitting on the north bank of the Guadiana River, Merida was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993 because of its various archaeological remains. Founded by the Romans in 25 BC, the town still has many Roman remains.

A granite bridge, the longest of all Roman bridges still used by pedestrians, is one of the major remains. North of Merida, Proserpina Dam is visible, a large Roman reservoir that carried water to the town by a magnificent aqueduct, of which there are extensive remains.

Sentinel-2A has been in orbit since 23 June, and is a polar-orbiting, high-resolution satellite for land monitoring, providing imagery of vegetation, soil and water cover, inland waterways and coastal areas.

Provided by European Space Agency

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