



Advancing Sustainable Transition and Resilience in post-mining Areas

IO3 1st Case Study

Spain

Internet Web Solutions



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Río Tinto Mines

Place: Río Tinto Mines, Minas de Riotinto, Huelva, Andalusia, Spain.

Positioning coordinates: 37°41'41"N
6°35'39"W

Extracted materials:

- Copper
- Sulphur
- Iron
- Zinc

Riotinto is a mining landscape in Andalusia, characterised by the reddish colour of the earth and river.

Anthropological information

The Riotinto mines history goes back to the Copper age, with Phoenician and Tartessian civilizations. But the real mining exploitation came with the roman colonisation. They brought with them new technologies and techniques. The slags of mining activity help historians know the mining development and use. For example, later Almohad civilization used the mining dyed water as medicinal dyes. Extractive exploitation was not common until England bought Riotinto lands.



Sociological information

In 1873, Spain sold the mining territories to Río Tinto Company Limited (a British company), which exploited its resources (sulphurs, copper, iron...) massively until 1954. During this period, the industrial revolution brought new technologies such as railways and its tracks, built in a record time. The real locomotives from 19th and 20th century can be visited in the Mining Museum. When the mine profitability decreased in 1954, the mine ownership returned to Spain.

The technological innovations involved a social transformation: immigrants from Portugal and different Spanish cities came to Riotinto to work in the mine industry. As a consequence, the population increased by 6600 people in less than 25 years.

Archaeological information

One of the most interesting places to visit is Corta Atalaya, a huge outdoor exploitation with an inverted pyramid shape. The crater is 335 metres deep and more than 1 kilometre wide. Its spiral slope allows trucks and excavators to descend the quarry. The landscape reminds of a lunar crater. From Corta Atalaya you can access to Alfredo Well, an incredible ore cave with beautiful colours.

The Sierra Morena Mountains, the Abandoned Mining Infrastructure and exclusive natural places make Riotinto an unique destination in the world.

Creativity insights/curiosities

The red colour of Riotinto earth and river are a consequence of copper and iron concentration (in fact, Riotinto means “reddish river” in Spanish). This makes the landscape a unique place on earth, as only microorganisms can survive under such circumstances. NASA scientists have studied the ecosystem and concluded that Riotinto and Mars have similar conditions.

Environment sustainability

Guided tours are available in Riotinto. The Museum offers unique railways models, and the river tour in railway makes the experience immersive and almost real. There are caves and wells with an important geological wealth. Nearby villages have also preserved the British Victorian style, and some of them can be visited. Riotinto is full of incredible places to discover!

Environment sustainability

Despite the environmental impact of the mining activity, Riotinto has an unique essence. The damage caused is unfixable, but the cessation of the mining activity has helped nature to recover its place. Nowadays, Riotinto is a touristic and scientific destination, and its resources and landscape are protected by Spanish and European Legislation.

Related Videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SHUNmEMvIA&ab_channel=igeofv

Links of interest

<https://cminforturismo.webcindario.com/visitavirtual3.htm>



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