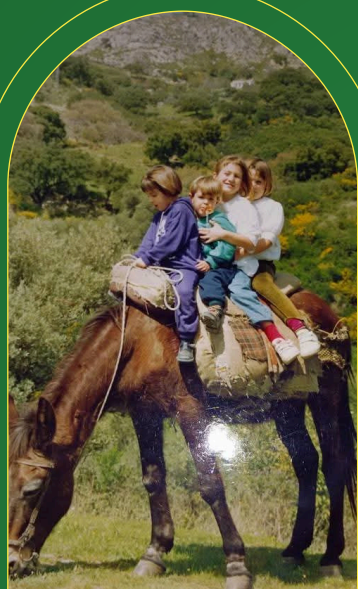


My Grandmother's old farmhouse



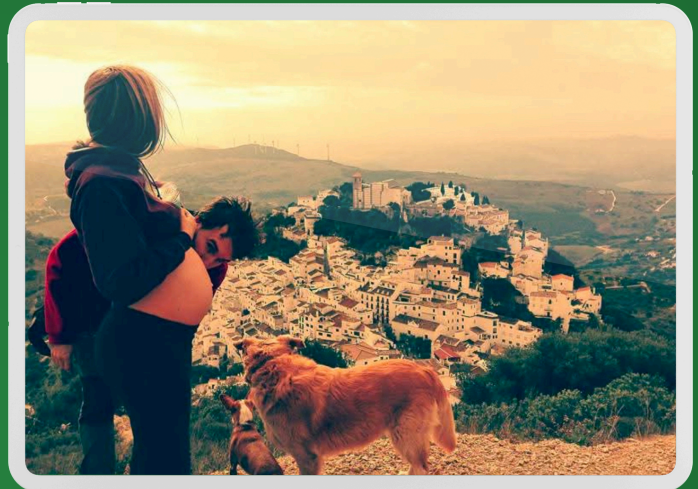
Thirty years ago, when I was a little girl, I loved to go to my grandmother's farmhouse during summer and Christmas holidays. I knew I would be with her and my cousins in the country, around trees, chickens, horses, donkeys and sheep. In the evenings, Grandma used to tell us stories of herself, when she was a little girl like me and she had to walk to town to sell eggs or buy soap and other things needed for everyday life. It sounded like an adventure for my cousins and me. One day, we convinced grandma to show us the way to the village through the forest. That was incredible! We had to go through several farms, climb a mountain, pass the vultures' dunghill and... after almost three hours, we arrived at the village!

Since then, every time we had a vacation, we would go to grandma's old farmhouse to walk through the path to the town. But, as the years went by, we all grew up and we hardly ever went there anymore. Grandma got older and had to go to live in the village. The house deteriorated more and more. Nobody maintained it and it ended up collapsing. One day some years ago, I was walking with my father in the field around the old farmhouse in ruins, only a few sheep of the neighbor could be seen, but enough to convince my father to raise that house again, remembering the last Christmas spent there in family.



He started rebuilding the old house and... two years later it was back on its feet sturdier than ever! We started to go there from time to time, especially in summer and autumn.

But it was last year when we decided to go to spend Christmas time in family, this time with my little children, the puppies... Two days before Christmas I wanted to show the children the way to the village for the first time, but we were very disappointed. Rain and soil erosion had destroyed the old path... it was impossible to walk there. The next day, my father and the children woke me up with tools in hand ready to connect the old and the new path. It was really the best Christmas present ever for me. On December 25th, we arrived the town walking through the old- new path. Our visit surprised Grandma. She could not believe that we had arrived on foot, as it had been years since anyone had walked there. It was, undoubtedly, an unforgettable Christmas.



Today the grandmother's old farmhouse is used as rural lodging during the periods of the year when the family cannot enjoy it. We all contribute to keep the path cleared and the forest well cared for. Fruit trees and almond trees are grown. The neighbor's sheep continue grazing to keep the ground clean of vegetation and prevent forest fires. At night, at times, wild boars and foxes can be heard and seen. It is as magical a place as Casares, one of the most beautiful white villages in Andalusia.

Written by Paula Ledesma Ribot.



Agritourism has advantages for everyone involved. The additional revenue stream from offering guests overnight accommodation can be crucial to the livelihood of small farms, diversifying business and providing a stable income for the farmer. There is often a flow-on effect on the local community. As more “slow travelers” visit a region and stay longer, they spend more of their money in the immediate area – eating at nearby restaurants, and seeking fresh, organic produce and crafts from local artisans. This economic influx helps the community preserve its local food and traditions. It allows farmers to hold onto their homes and protects farmland from developers. In return, farm stays offer guests new insights and authentic experiences, the opportunity to develop a connection with the land and to learn about local cultures and lifestyles from their hosts. Staying on a farm is generally far less expensive than staying in a hotel and some farm stays offer the chance to work in exchange for free or discounted accommodation. It's ethical travel at its eco-best. AgriNext project believes in and supports agrotourism as an important part of multifunctional agriculture.

