

CULTURAL ROUTES
in Spain



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Front cover: Pilar Basilica in Zaragoza
 Back cover: Segovia Aqueduct

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We invite you to discover Spain through its incredible routes.

INTRODUCTION

▲ THE ALHAMBRA
GRANADA

Come and discover our customs and immerse yourself in a thousand years of culture. Embark on a journey that will take you to monumental cities, incredible landscapes and places where history has left its mark. Discovering Spain's cultural heritage will be an unforgettable experience.

The possibilities are endless. Step into the shoes of a literary character like **Don Quijote** and discover the landscapes that Cervantes described in his novel. Follow in the footsteps of the Roman militias along **The Vía de la Plata route** or experience an adventure you will remember for a lifetime along the **Way of Saint James**.

If you have a passion for gastronomy, the **wine routes** will bowl you over. Sample some of the best wines in the world, spend the night surrounded by vineyards, visit historical mansions and relax with a wine therapy treatment. Do you like **Iberian cured ham**? In regions like Andalusia, Extremadura and Castile-León you'll have many opportunities to sample this delight.

Take a trip through time and trace the cultural footprints left on our civilisation by Moors, Jews and Christians. There are endless routes through landscapes that will leave you speechless.

Come with us and we'll tell you all about Spain. Whichever route you choose, you just can't go wrong.



ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTERS

▲ CONSUEGRA
TOLEDO

THE DON QUIXOTE ROUTE: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE NOVEL BY CERVANTES

Immerse yourself in a classic of world literature, *Don Quixote of La Mancha*. You'll travel through centuries-old towns, along historical pathways and enjoy the natural surroundings described by Miguel de Cervantes. Prepare yourself, because you'll be fighting against windmills, trying to win Dulcinea's heart and tasting dishes like "duelos y quebrantos", a traditional dish from La Mancha made with scrambled eggs, chorizo sausage and pork lard.

The route starts in **Alcalá de Henares**. This district of Madrid, whose university and historical centre are World Heritage sites, is the town where Cervantes was born. Discover the "**corral de comedias**", one of the oldest open-air theatres in Europe, and the **Plaza de Cervantes** in

the heart of the town. Under the arches along the picturesque **Calle Mayor** you'll find shops, cafés and bars where you'll get to try their renowned tapas. The **Cervantes Birthplace Museum** is a replica of the house where the writer was born and grew up.

Madrid is another obligatory visit. You'll be amazed by the burial monument in the church and convent of the **Trinitarias Descalzas** nuns. Miguel de Cervantes is buried there. Have a drink in the **Casa Alberto** tavern, opened in 1827 in a building constructed over another 16th century building where Cervantes lived for a time. This is where he wrote *The Works of Persiles and Sigismunda* and the second part of *El Quixote*.

Your trip should also include **Toledo**, the City of the Three Cultures. Discover the narrow streets and the old town, UNESCO World Heritage site. In the **Plaza de los Tintes** you'll find the house where the author lived. Don't miss **El Toboso**, the village where Don Quixote's sweetheart, Dulcinea, lived.

In **Ciudad Real** you'll see the famous **Campo de Criptana** windmills which Don Quixote fought against. When you visit **Almagro**, where a 17th century open-air theatre has been preserved, you can't leave without tasting the delicious Manchego cheese.



► SCULPTURE OF CERVANTES
TOLEDO



Photo: Irina Opachevsky.123rf.com

CHARLES V ROUTE: FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE EMPEROR

Follow in the footsteps of Charles V after he abdicated in Brussels. The monarch arrived in the North of Spain with more than 50 ships and journeyed through **Cantabria**, **Castile-León** and **Extremadura** before reaching his retreat in the **Yuste Monastery**.



▲ LAREDO
CANTABRIA

The route starts in **Laredo** (Cantabria) where he disembarked in 1556 and where today stands a bust of the emperor. Take a stroll through the old quarter of this charming town. Don't miss the defensive walls and the stately houses. Beaches like **La Salve** are great for sunbathing, or you could try a little windsurfing or take a boat trip in the Cantabrian Sea.

The next stop is in Castile-León. Visit the Medieval **Medina de Pomar** (Burgos), where Charles V spent the night, and the **Velasco Fortress**, an impressive 14th century castle. On arriving in the monumental city of **Burgos** you pass through the **Santa María Archway**, one of the ancient gateways to the



▲ SANTA MARÍA ARCHWAY
BURGOS

city. Once inside, there is a Medieval stairway leading to a number of rooms exhibiting interesting historical objects and paintings representing the emperor. Then continue as far as the **Cathedral**, a Gothic jewel declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO, and admire the incredible spires.

What awaits you in **Palencia** is **Venta de Baños**. Legend has it that the Visigoth King Recesvinto ordered the construction of the **Church of San Juan de Baños** by way of thanks, after noting the curative properties of one of its fountains. The magnificent interior is breathtaking.

After passing through incredibly beautiful areas like **Dueñas**, we come to the province of **Valladolid** and its capital city where the emperor stayed in the old **Royal Palace**. A pleasant stroll can take in the palaces, the **Plaza**

Mayor and the **Cathedral**. After such a hard day you deserve to reward yourself with a delicious roast suckling lamb, typical of the province.

When you reach the province of Salamanca, **Peñaranda de Bracamonte** is well worth a visit. You'll just love the historic quarter. Then comes the province of **Ávila**, where the town of **El Barco de Ávila** welcomed the emperor with open arms, and it will do the same for you. You should try their famous white beans and admire the Tormes River from the castle.

On the last stage of the route, now in **Extremadura**, what you'll most enjoy are the natural surroundings. If you have the good fortune of travelling in springtime, you'll be able to enjoy the cherry blossom which is abundant in the **Jerte Valley**. The "**Garganta de los Infiernos**" (Devil's Gorge) Nature Reserve will really surprise you. Watch the golden eagles and griffon vultures flying overhead and marvel at the incredible glaciers. This route of the kings ends at the Yuste Monastery, next to which Charles V ordered the palace to be built where he lived until the end of his days.

📍 www.theroutesofcharlesv.com



▲ CHURCH OF SAN JUAN DE BAÑOS
VENTA DE BAÑOS (BURGOS)



CHURCH OF SAN PABLO
VALLADOLID

▼ THE EL JERTE VALLEY
CÁCERES





THE WAY OF EL CID: RELIVE THE ADVENTURES OF A MEDIEVAL KNIGHT

Have you heard of "*El Cantar del Mío Cid*" (The Song of El Cid)? It is a famous 12th century Spanish song of heroic deeds which tells the story of the legendary knight Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, El Cid Campeador. This route which retraces his steps will take you through eight provinces: **Burgos**, **Soria**, **Guadalajara**, **Zaragoza**, **Teruel**, **Castellón**, **Valencia** and **Alicante**. It can be done on foot, by bike, by car or by motorbike.

You can start out in **Vivar del Cid**, where tradition assures us that our Medieval hero was born, and from there continue as far as **Burgos**. His remains and those of his wife, Doña Jimena, were laid to rest in the **Cathedral** here. If you go in October you can enjoy the El Cid Festival, when the city takes you back to the Middle Ages for a few days, with open-air performances, tournaments, a Medieval market...

In **Guadalajara** there are several impressive fortresses like the **Jadraque Castle**, which they call El Cid's Castle, and **Sigüenza**, where you can even spend the night and enjoy the culinary delights of the region as it is now a Parador de Turismo.

Next comes **Soria**, featuring beautiful places like **Medinaceli**, home to the only three-gated Roman arch in Spain.

The landscape is renowned for its diversity and contrasts: from the **Sierra de Guadalajara** mountains, and their Tejera Negra beech forest (World Heritage), to the lunar landscapes of the **Vega del Jalón** (Zaragoza).

Calatayud is another place of interest along this route. The Arab fortress is well worth a visit, as is the historic Mudéjar complex featuring the **Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor**, UNESCO World Heritage. In **Albarracín** (Teruel), apart from the city walls and the haunting old town, the Roman aqueduct will really take you by surprise.

The route continues on to **Valencia**, the city which El Cid succeeded in conquering in 1094. Discover its rich monumental heritage featuring such jewels as the **Cathedral** and the **Silk Exchange** (UNESCO World Heritage), and not forgetting surprising avant-garde buildings like the **City of Arts and Sciences**. While you're there, why not try a delicious paella or go to the beach to enjoy the sunshine for a while.

📍 www.caminodelcid.org

▼ FESTIVITIES OF SAN FERMÍN
PAMPLONA

THE HEMINGWAY ROUTE: DISCOVER NAVARRE THROUGH THE EYES OF A NOBEL PRIZEWINNER

Follow in the footsteps of the American author to discover **Pamplona** (the capital of Navarre) and the surrounding area, an unforgettable journey. The Hemingway Route will take you to the places which the Nobel prizewinner fell in love with and where he returned a total of nine times.

Take a stroll around the **Plaza del Castillo** and stop for a drink in one of the author's favourite watering holes, like the **Bar Txoko**, the **Café Kutz** or the **Café Iruña**. You could also stop by **La Perla**, one of the hotels where he stayed and which features in his book entitled *Fiesta*. If you go between the 6th and the 14th of July you'll be able to experience the **Sanfermines**, the festival which inspired the author.

And see some of the other places where he was captivated by the landscapes and the peaceful atmosphere. In **Arize**, **Burguete** and **Yesa** you'll be able to go fishing, relax and enjoy authentic Navarre cuisine.





PUENTE DE ISABEL II BRIDGE
SEVILLE

THE WASHINGTON IRVING ROUTE: ANDALUSIA AS THE ROMANTIC WRITER SAW IT

Follow in the footsteps of Washington Irving, who in 1829 was captivated by the wealth and exotic nature of the Hispanic-Moorish civilisation. The route runs from **Seville** to **Granada**, the two main destinations on his journey.

Discover Seville, a city steeped in history and which he fell in love with. The incredible **Cathedral** (UNESCO World Heritage) was originally a great mosque. Climb up to the minaret, the **Giralda**, and you'll be treated to unforgettable views of the city. Visit the **Triana** district, have a glass of sherry in one of the taverns and enjoy a Flamenco show (Intangible Cultural Heritage) in a "*tablao*".

The magic of Granada is truly seductive. Visit the **Alhambra**, an ancient Palatine city, fortress and residence of the Nasrid sultans (UNESCO World Heritage site). Stroll through the palaces and gardens which feel like something from *A Thousand and One Nights* then get your strength back with a few delicious tapas in the historic old town.

The route also includes picturesque towns and villages in the province of Seville like **Carmona**, **Marchena** and **Écija**; and in Granada, like **Alhama de Granada**.

① www.legadoandalusi.es/las-rutas/ruta-de-washington-irving



THE GIRALDA TOWER
SEVILLE





CULTURAL FOOTPRINTS

You'll love the landscapes you'll find along this route.

▲ TEMPLE OF DIANA
MÉRIDA

THE VÍA DE LA PLATA ROUTE: STROLL ALONG ANCIENT ROMAN STREETS

This route follows the course of an ancient Roman road that linked Seville with Gijón. Be adventurous and take this route that links the north and south of Spain and crosses four autonomous communities with an incredible variety of landscapes, cultures and gastronomy. **Andalusia, Extremadura, Castile-León and Asturias.**

You'll be travelling through several Biosphere Reserves and two National Parks: the **Doñana** in Andalusia and **Monfragüe** in Cáceres.

You can start the tour in **Seville**, the capital of Andalusia. Stroll through the bustling streets and squares of the historical old town which features three buildings with the World Heritage designation: the Royal Alcazar, the Cathedral and the Archivo de Indias. Experience popular districts like the Triana, with countless taverns and "tablaos" (establishments dedicated exclusively to Flamenco dance and singing), and while you're there try a little "gazpacho", a traditional Andalusian chilled tomato-based soup.

In **Extremadura** you'll see cornfields, vineyards and pastures. You'll be astonished by the historic quarter in **Cáceres** and the **Merida** archaeological complex, both designated as World Heritage sites by the UNESCO. The province of Cáceres awaits you with the picturesque town of **Hervás**, renowned for its Jewish quarter with steep, narrow streets, and **Plasencia**, which features a monumental complex with two cathedrals and a number of palaces and stately houses. The Iberian cured ham is delicious in Extremadura, one of the best in the country, and the Roman spa of **Baños de Montemayor** is a perfect place for you to relax.



▲ ROMAN MOSAIC
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMAN ART (MÉRIDA)

Castile-León has a number of impressive monumental complexes, like those in **Salamanca**, famous for being home to one of the oldest universities in the world and whose old town has the UNESCO World Heritage designation; **Zamora** with an incredible Romanesque legacy; and **León**, with its stunning cathedral, one of the most impressive Gothic temples in Spain. A delicious roast suckling pig or lamb will be the ideal way to give you the strength to carry on along the route.

There are further architectural jewels in Asturias, like the Pre-Romanesque

churches of **Santa María del Naranco** and **San Miguel de Lillo** in Oviedo (both UNESCO World Heritage sites). Another interesting point along the route is the municipality of **Mieres**, an important passageway for the Romans between the plateau and Asturias. The mountains, valleys and rivers are ideal for activities like hiking and cyclotourism. When you reach your goal, **Gijón**, you'll deserve a stroll along the beaches next to the Cantabrian Sea. Then take a seat in a restaurant to try some fish or a plate of "fabada", a traditional white bean stew, and a glass of famous Asturian cider. The route ends with a visit to the Museum of the Roman Baths in Campo

Valdés, in the historical neighbourhood of Cimavilla, and the remains of the Roman walls.

If you fancy a round of golf, there are a number of courses with up-to-date facilities in Gijón, Seville, León and Benavente.

📍 www.rutadelaplata.com

SEPHARAD PATHWAYS: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE JEWISH QUARTERS

The Sepharad Pathways involve a journey through the most beautiful Jewish quarters. An invitation to discover Jewish Spain and its most important monuments.

There are over 20 places of interest along this route. Special mention should go to **Toledo**, the city which was the spiritual and administrative centre of western Jewish culture for centuries and whose old town has the UNESCO World Heritage designation. The Calle de los Reyes Católicos is home to the **Synagogue of Santa María La Blanca**, with its impressive columns; and in the Calle Samuel Levi you'll find the **El Tránsito Synagogue** which houses the Sephardic Museum. Nearby, on the Travesía de la Judería, you'll find the **Casa del Judío**. In the cellar you can visit a Jewish liturgical bath or *miqva*.

The old Jewish quarter of **Cáceres**, within the walled city, houses the **Chapel of San Antonio** which in ancient times used to be a synagogue. There are surprising white-washed houses lining the steep streets and which back directly onto the walls. The city's old town has the UNESCO World Heritage designation; and in September, Cáceres hosts European Day of Jewish Culture, and in November there is the Three Cultures Medieval Market.



LOS MILAGROS AQUEDUCT
MÉRIDA



TOLEDO

Photo: Juan Alvarado



▲ SEGOVIA

▲ GREAT MOSQUE-CATHEDRAL OF CORDOBA
CÓRDOBA

In **Segovia**, whose **old town** and **aqueduct** are UNESCO World Heritage sites, you can take a stroll through the delightfully restored Jewish quarter. Here you'll find the old Great Synagogue which has now become the **Church of Corpus Christi**, and the old **Jewish cemetery**.

Other Jewish quarters well worth a visit can be found in **Ávila, Barcelona, Córdoba, Hervás, Plasencia, León...** Take out a Discoverer's Passport at any Tourist Office (free of charge) and start visiting the different cities in the network which have interesting incentives.

THE ROUTES OF THE AL-ANDALUS LEGACY

After eight centuries in Spain, the Moors left a deep footprint wherever they went, but it was Andalusia which reaped the greatest benefit from this culture. You can visit numerous buildings and sites designated as World Heritage by the UNESCO.

The Routes of the Andalusian, or *Al-Andalus*, Legacy take you along the high-

ways which communicated the Kingdom of Granada with the rest of Andalusia, Murcia and Portugal.

Make a fascinating journey back in time along the **Caliphate Route**, which links **Córdoba** and **Granada**, the capital cities of the *Al-Andalus* of the Caliphs and the Nasrids. You'll be travelling along the highways that were the busiest on the Spanish mainland in the Middle Ages, just like the traders who came from all over the world.

The **Nasrid Route** takes you deep into the history of the ancient Kingdom of **Granada**. Along the way, you'll find fortifications and castles which remind us of the territorial wars waged between Muslims and Christians in this region. We start in the town of **Navas de Tolosa**, taking in cities like **Úbeda, Baeza** and **Jaén**, and finish in **Granada**. The route also takes you through beautiful natural areas like the **Sierra Mágina**, and the biosphere reserves of **Las Dehesas de Sierra Morena** and **Sierra de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas**.



▲ ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE IN ITÁLICA
SANTIPONCE (SEVILLE)

On the **Route of the Almoravids and Almohads** you'll discover the architectural heritage of this civilisation which consists mainly of castles and defensive structures. You'll travel 400 kilometres, starting in the city of **Algeciras** (Cádiz) and ending in **Granada**, including the two branches. The itinerary includes visits to **Jerez de la Frontera** (Cádiz) and **Ronda** (Málaga).

📍 www.legadoandalusi.es/las-rutas/

THE BAETIC ROMAN ROUTE

This route passes through the provinces of **Seville**, **Córdoba** and **Cádiz**, the southernmost part of ancient Hispania Romana.

In **Seville** you can visit the **ruins of Italica**, the birthplace of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Admire the splendid Roman theatre and amphitheatre, trace the ancient streets and discover the houses, public buildings and utensils used in daily life by the inhabitants. The next step should be **Carmona** to visit the **Necropolis**, the city's museum and its two Roman gates. In Écija you'll

be able to enjoy the spectacular **Cortejo de Baco mosaic** in the Municipal History Museum.

Climb up to the **Almodóvar del Río Castle**, in Córdoba, a location for the Game of Thrones series, and look out over the meandering Guadalquivir River. There is a restaurant which regularly organises Medieval lunches. The city of **Córdoba** is nearby. There you can find three UNESCO World Heritage sites: the picturesque historical **old town**, one of the largest in Europe, the remains of the caliphate city of **Medina Azahara**, and its impressive **Mosque-Cathedral**.

Another city you shouldn't miss on this route is **Cádiz**. Stroll around its streets which have a colonial feel and visit the **Roman theatre**, the **Bishop's house** and the **Archaeological Museum**. If it gets a bit warm for you, you should go to the **La Caleta** beach for a dip or move on to the **Bolonia** beach in Tarifa where the sunsets are incredible and you can enjoy the architectural ensemble of **Baelo Claudia**.

📍 beticaromana.org

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

▲ ALTAMIRA CAVE
CANTABRIA

How about a trip back to Prehistoric times? Discover mysterious caves and see the landscapes preserved in paintings and engravings which are humankind's first works of art.

CAVE ART ROUTES: ITINERARIES IN PREHISTORIC MAINLAND SPAIN

There are nearly a hundred destinations in Spain where you will be able to appreciate what our ancestors have bequeathed us. Three of them have been declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Altamira and the caves along the Cantabrian Coast, the Siega Verde archaeological site and the cave art of the Mediterranean Basin. There are a total of 12 routes for you to discover the earliest cave art galleries in Europe.

The caves in Green Spain, featuring **Ekainberri** (Guipúzcoa), **Altamira** (Cantabria) and **Tito Bustillo** (Asturias), will transport you to the mysterious world of the Stone Age and the extraordinary paintings and engravings created between 40,000 and 12,000 years ago. And then there is the open-

air site at **Siega Verde** (Salamanca).

The decorated shelters in the **Mediterranean Basin** (Aragón, Catalonia, Valencia Region, Murcia and Andalusia) will provide details of the hunting rituals of Europe's last hunters, in an artistic style known as **Levantine** which is unique in the world.

There are extraordinary examples of the distinctive **Schematic Art**, developed during the Neolithic era and the Age of Metals, in the petroglyphs you'll find in **Campo Lameiro** (Pontevedra), the shelters in **Valonsadero** (Soria), **Fuencaliente** (Ciudad Real), **Monfragüe castle** (Cáceres), **Los Letreros** (Almería) and the **Gáldar** cave (Gran Canaria).

① www.prehistour.eu
rutasrupestresespana.prehistour.eu

DISCOVER ROMANESQUE ART IN NORTHERN SPAIN

Travel back in time to the Middle Ages. Discover the wealth of Romanesque heritage to be found in the north of Spain and enjoy landscapes of extraordinary beauty.

The **Pre-Romanesque Route** in Asturias is fascinating. Located in impressive valleys and mountains, this building complex has been designated as World Heritage by the UNESCO. The most famous is **Santa María del Naranco**. You'll be amazed by its stylised silhouette on the mountain top. Inside the cathedral of **Oviedo** you'll come across the **Cámara Santa** where you can admire its treasure trove of jewels and precious stones.

The **Romanesque Route in the Valle del Boí**, in the Lleida Pyrenees, is home to a complex of churches awarded the UNESCO World Heritage designation, like the Church of **Santa María de Taüll**, which has looked out over these incredible natural surroundings since the 12th century and will leave you speechless.

Also in the Pyrenees, in Huesca, you'll find the city of **Jaca** which houses one of the oldest Romanesque temples in Spain, the **Cathedral of San Pedro de Jaca**. In the same province you'll also find the **Loarre Castle**, one of the best preserved Romanesque fortresses in Europe.

Towards the west, in **Castile-León**, the town of **Santo Domingo de Silos** (Burgos) awaits you with its Benedictine monastery, a universal Romanesque jewel which has been converted into a spiritual and artistic centre for pilgrims.

Part of the **Palencia Romanesque Route** takes you through a natural

environment which houses the greatest concentration of Romanesque churches and shrines in Europe. You'll come across delightful little towns like **Frómista**, which houses the **Church of San Martín de Tours** and **Carrión de los Condes** which enjoyed a certain importance in the Middle Ages.

Zamora, for many the Romanesque capital, preserves the greatest concentration of buildings in this style. You should visit the cathedral, one of the smallest and oldest in Castile-León. You'll be amazed by the spectacular lantern tower, with 16 openings with stained-glass windows. In Zamora you'll love the delightful town of Toro which is in the shape of a fan, with the 12th century **Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor** at its centre.

In the city of **León**, you will find another of the most important Romanesque buildings in Spain, the **Royal Collegiate Basilica of San Isidoro**. The frescoes on its royal pantheon are awe-inspiring.

In the **Ribeira Sacra**, an area in the interior of **Galicia** which consists of the banks of the Sil and Miño rivers, there are a dozen Medieval monasteries which remind us of the importance of this region in the Middle Ages. Special mention should go to the monastery of **San Esteban de Ribas de Sil**, located to the north of the district of Nogueira de Ramuín. Not only is it the largest in the Ribeira Sacra, it is now a luxurious Parador Hotel.

YOU'LL LOVE THE MUDÉJAR ART IN ANDALUSIA

For those who love art and architecture, this route is ideal for discovering a unique style: Mudéjar art, which is a blend of two artistic traditions, Islamic and Christian.

There are examples of this art form throughout Andalusia. In **Córdoba** there are incredible monuments like the **Synagogue** and the jewel in the city's crown: the **Great Mosque**. It is a veritable forest of columns and superimposed arches, domes, carved marble, mosaics, drawings... And in the centre, a surprising Christian cathedral.

The **Real Alcázar in Seville** is a walled complex of palaces. It has contributions from all periods, although Mudéjar and Renaissance styles are predominant. You can visit the **Patio de Las Doncellas**, where official life took place, and the **Patio de Las Muñecas** which was reserved for private events. You'll love the gardens. Relax as you stroll by channels, fountains, water spouts and tiles with a Moorish atmosphere.

Granada also has its own Mudéjar route, with beautiful buildings like the **Convent of Santa Isabel La Real** and the **Palace of La Madraza**, as well as the Alhambra which we have already mentioned.

LEGENDARY CASTLES

Spain is the land of castles. Discover authentic fortresses built in precipitous locations and which were really difficult to conquer. Most of the history of castles in Spain is the history of the Reconquest. They were also built to defend the coast from attacks by pirates. Only a tenth of them have survived to the present time.

Belmonte Castle in Cuenca is a treasure from the Renaissance. It is in the shape of a six-pointed star with a cylindrical tower at each point. If you visit it in May/June, you'll be able to witness a historical re-enactment of Medieval military life in the castle in all its aspects.



▲ PATIO DE LAS DONCELLAS IN THE REAL ALCAZAR IN SEVILLE SEVILLE

Coca Castle in Segovia will take you back to another era. Pass under the iron gate to reach the keep. There's a beautiful Gothic-ribbed vault with geometrical mosaics in the weapons room. While you're here you really must visit this monumental city. Most surprising is the Roman aqueduct.

Ponferrada Castle (León) will also fascinate you. It was founded by the Templars and houses the Templars' Library and the Historical Research and Study Centre, which contains more than 1,000 works including facsimile editions of works by Leonardo da Vinci.



▲ BELMONTE CASTLE
CUENCA

PATHWAYS OF PASSION: A ROUTE TO THE HEART OF ANDALUSIA

Would you like to discover Easter Week in Andalusia and its religious imagery? Pathways of Passion is a route which is a blend of history, artistic heritage, traditions, gastronomy and nature in ten municipal districts in the heart of Andalusia: **Alcalá la Real** in Jaén; **Baena, Cabra, Lucena, Priego de Córdoba** and **Puente Genil**, in Córdoba; and **Carmona, Écija, Osuna** and **Utrera** in Seville.

Mota Castle in Valladolid, **Loarre Castle** in Huesca, **Almodóvar del Río Castle** in Córdoba... There are incredible castles scattered all over the Spanish mainland. Just ask in any tourist office, each autonomous region has its own route.

Discover places with incredible historical wealth and heritage. Witness moving demonstrations of religious fervour. Gaze on the spectacular sacred imagery to be found in this region. Sample Andalusian cuisine, get to know its people and enjoy their hospitality.

📍 www.caminosdepasion.com



EASTER WEEK IN CARMONA
SEVILLE

Photo: Carmona Tourist Board



EXPERIENCING GASTRONOMY

▲ WINE TASTING
LA RIOJA

WINE ROUTES

La Rioja is one of the most famous designations of origin for wine in the world. Discover it while eating surrounded by barrels of wine, visit the wine cellars and enjoy a wine-tasting. You can sleep in wine-cellar hotels or relax after marinating perfectly with a vinotherapy treatment. There are over 500 cellars in this wine-producing region. About 80 of them are open to visitors.

The Basque Country offers the **Rioja Alavesa Route**. You'll be amazed at the new cathedrals to wine in this region: avant-garde buildings and wine-cellars, the work of prestigious contemporary architects such as Santiago Calatrava, the creator of Bodegas Ysios in

Laguardia, and the City of Wine by Frank Gehry in Elciego. All around these areas you'll find numerous opportunities for spas and relaxation to round off your experience.

The **Rías Baixas** in Galicia is where you'll learn all about "Albariño", the cool, young wine produced in this area. Visit the wine-cellars and vineyards where it is produced. Meet the people who make it possible and discover their way of life. Enjoy the unique blend of this wine with the gastronomy of Galicia.

Take part in popular gastronomic events, like the Albariño Festival in Cambados and the Seafood Festival in O Grove. Enjoy the natural surroundings and the

birds in the Islas Atlánticas National Park. Sail in a catamaran on the Arousa estuary or enjoy water sports on the beaches in Sanxenxo. Discover the interesting monumental heritage in the towns and villages in the region, from Romanesque churches to "pazos" (traditional stately houses in Galicia) like those in Cambados.

In southern Andalusia, the district of **Marco de Jerez** awaits you, a region with a deep-rooted wine tradition and an incredible tourist attraction. You'll be able to taste dry wines like "fino", natural sweet wines like muscatel and liqueur wines like "manzanilla". The natural surroundings, the culture and the gastronomy will simply captivate you.

Some of the towns you can visit while you're here are El Puerto de Santa María, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Rota and Chiclana. They boast of 3,200 hours of sunshine per year, so put on your swimming costume and take a dip. You should go to an equestrian show at the Escuela de Jerez or the famous Sanlúcar Horse Races. You'll also enjoy the fresh air in protected natural areas like Doñana National Park and Biosphere Reserve and the Los Alcornocales Nature Reserve.

Cava is the Spanish sparkling wine par excellence. One of the main cava-producing regions is Catalonia, where you can learn about its peculiar preparation method by visiting, for example, some of the modernist architecture wineries in the **Penedès Wine Route**.

THE IBERIAN HAM ROUTE

Of all the ham produced in Spain, only about 10% is Iberian cured ham. It is produced in the pastures in southern Salamanca (**Guijuelo**), Extremadura (**Dehesa de Extremadura**), Córdoba (**Los Pedroches**) and Huelva (**Jabugo**). This is where one of Spanish gastronomy's leading players is bred in the open air: the Iberian pig.

All these regions have their own tourist routes. The best time of year to enjoy these routes is between October and May. These are the months of the "montanera" (the final stage of breeding the Iberian pig which consists of free-range foraging in the pastures), and you'll be walking amongst animals weighing over 100 kg that seem completely unaffected by your presence and will accompany you as you listen to the breeder's explanations. These getaways are ideal for enjoying tasting sessions of Iberian pork products, ham carving exhibitions, mountain bike routes through wooded pastures, 4x4 excursions...

IBERIAN CURED HAM



WAY OF SAINT JAMES

▲ CATHEDRAL OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Get your walking boots on and take up the challenge of completing an ancient World Heritage route. Your goal is to reach **Santiago de Compostela**, the city in Galicia where the remains of the apostle Saint James the Elder rest. Thousands of people make a pilgrimage there each year for different reasons (religious, personal, cultural, sport, etc.). Whatever your reason the route won't disappoint you and you'll get to know people from all over the world.

First of all you need to decide how you want to travel along the route. On foot, by bicycle, on horseback or even sailing across the Cantabrian Sea.

There are a number of routes leading to Santiago. The most popular is the **Camino Francés** which will take you from the **Pyrenees** and across the south face of the Cordillera Cantábrica mountains until you reach Galicia.

In the province of **A Coruña** you'll reach your final destination: the majestic **Santiago de Compostela**. You can just feel the spirituality as you walk through the naves and chapels of the **Cathedral**, a Romanesque gem. It stands in the beautiful **Plaza del Obradoiro**, where the different routes to the city converge.

There are other routes apart from the "Camino Francés" which will take you to Santiago. The **Primitive Route** is the oldest, and takes you through the green interior of western Asturias. If you choose the **Northern Route**, along the coast of the Cantabrian Sea, you'll enjoy the privilege of discovering the coastline of the **Basque Country, Cantabria, Asturias** and **Galicia**.

Whichever route you choose you'll have an unforgettable experience and enjoy the magnificent cuisine of the regions through which you travel.

▼ MONTE DE GOZO
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA





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