

magazine traveling

ENGLISH EDITION

TRAVEL AND GASTRONOMY MAGAZINE

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GRAN LUJO
A cruise on rails

**Camino
Lebaniego**

A route of tradition and faith

**Guadalajara
México**

The city of roses

Amish

A journey
through time

LEÓN
A destination to connect
with nature and history



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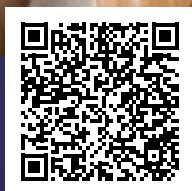
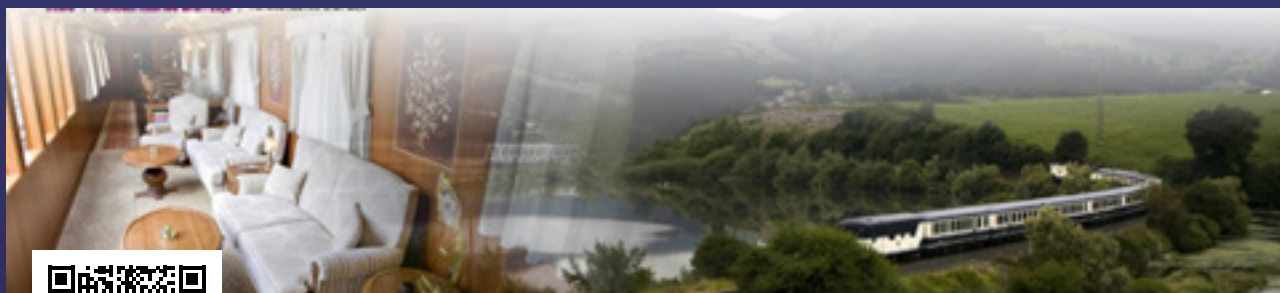




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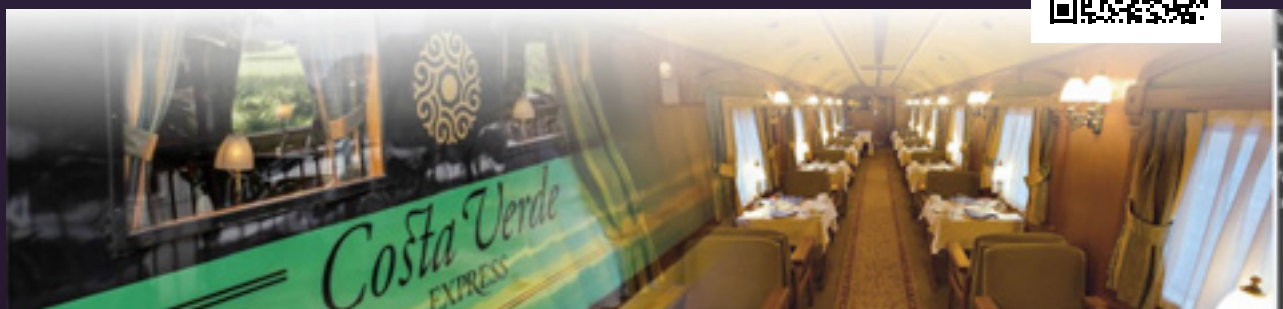
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Welcome aboard

Travelling isn't just about moving from one place to another, it's about feeling.

And in this edition of Traveling, we invite you to do so with all your senses. We immerse ourselves in the blue intimacy of the **Maldives** and lose ourselves in time among the landscapes of **Amish country**. We cross the Atlantic to **Guadalajara (Mexico)**, sail with dolphins off **Setúbal** and relive the splendour of **León**, also in Castile, the cradle of Romanesque art. And if you prefer to let yourself be carried away on rails, the **Transcantábrico Gran Lujo** awaits you: a signature journey that combines flavours, landscapes and luxury.

We continue to promote sustainable and grassroots tourism, with routes along the **Camino Lebaniego** and discovering the natural verticality of **Alcalá de Guadaira**. History also peeks out from the **vineyards of Paris**, where the Revolution began fermenting among barrels. On the gourmet side, we travel from pintxo to pintxo in **San Sebastián**, taste the wine-making passion of **Bodegas Bucrana** and explore the latest offerings at the **Salón Gourmets**.

And, as always, we try some of the best restaurants: from the Asturian tradition of **La Madreña** in Madrid to the Mediterranean flavours of **Tragaluz** and the oriental fusion of **Kōkōchin**. Fashion, cinema, dream destinations and personal stories complete an issue designed to inspire you. Because every page is an invitation to let yourself go, to discover and to dream. Thank you for joining us once again on this journey.

At Traveling, we want to be your companion on every adventure. Welcome aboard a new issue!

Jose Antonio Muñoz and Rosario Alonso



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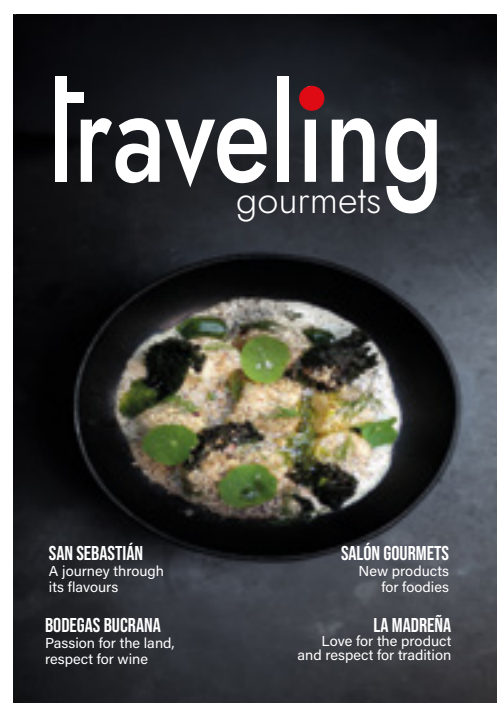
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Church of Santo Tirso in Sahagún
© TURISLEÓN



COVER

Leeks, beurre blanc, kale and hazelnuts © Tragaluz (Madrid)

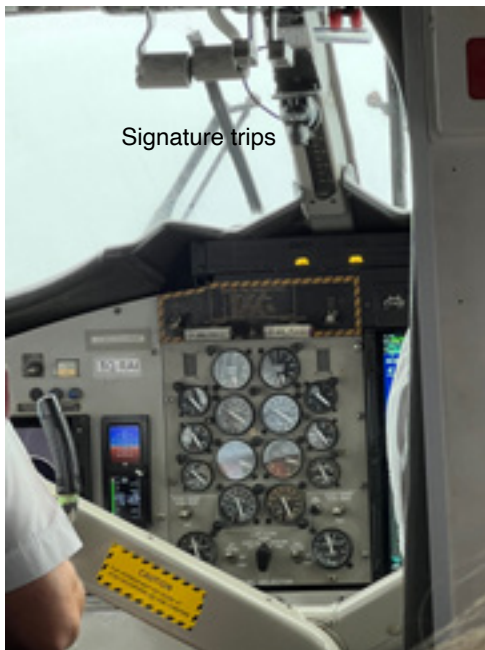


Typical fishing boat, now converted into an excursion vessel

Maldives

A journey into the ocean's intimacy

Words and photos: Jose A. Muñoz



View of small islets from the seaplane.

There are places you don't just go to—you escape to them. Places where a map isn't enough to explain the destination. Where the goal isn't to see new things, but to stop seeing the usual. You don't visit the Maldives. You dwell in them, you float, you listen. You slowly become a lighter version of yourself. On paper, the country is a cluster of thousands of islands scattered across atolls, lost in the Indian Ocean, in the middle of nowhere, southwest of Sri Lanka and near southern India. A geographical point, yes. The archipelago looks like a constellation spilled over the water. Blue, turquoise, white. Nothing more. Nothing less.

There are no mountains, no rivers, no trains, no highways. The islands rise no higher than a sigh. And yet, the silence has depth.

In a world measured by speed, the Maldives suggest a different unit: stillness. There, disconnecting isn't turning off a device or stepping away from Wi-Fi—which they do have, though you sometimes forget it exists—it's rediscovering a different way of being. Looking without searching, listening to the sound of the sea, spending hours admiring the colours of the ocean—in short, floating, literally, in another kind of time. That was the goal of this journey: not to flee, but to disappear a little from the noise of the world. To disappear, but in style.



Between islands and atolls, I found myself alone with the Indian Ocean

The Maldives are not a country—they're a floating constellation. From the air, they look like ellipses drawn across the Indian Ocean, as if someone had meant to leave the sentence unfinished. The nation stretches over 1,192 coral islands grouped into 26 atolls, though only about 203 are inhabited. The rest are fragments of coral, lone palm trees, tiny beaches, and reefs that shyly peek above the surface. The capital, Malé, is a dense and most populated island, standing in stark contrast to the absolute calm that defines the rest of the country.



My journey began there, in Malé, though calling it a "beginning" is just a way of speaking. The real start was the seaplane takeoff.

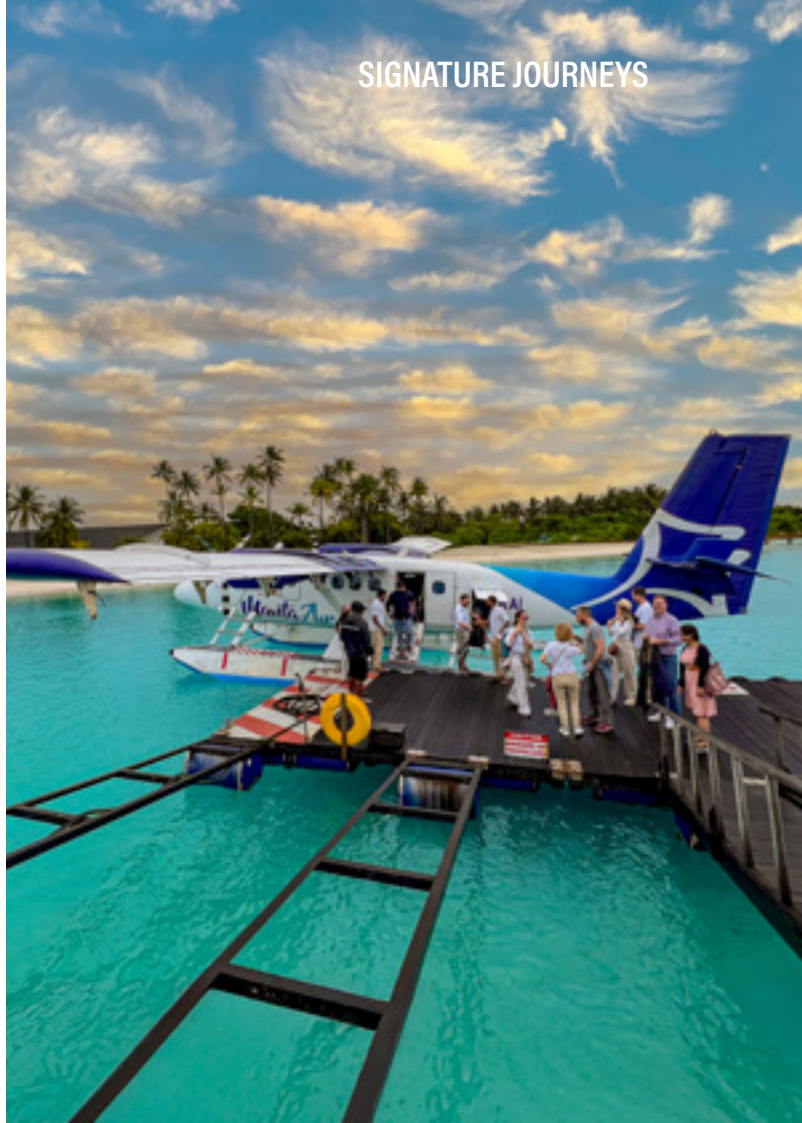
I had never flown in one before. The engine roared loudly, the heat was thick, but none of that mattered once we lifted off. Through the window, the atolls began to reveal themselves—perfect circles, impossible shades of blue, turquoise lagoons encircled by reefs and slender stretches of sand. It was like flying over watercolours. The pilot wore flip-flops, the cockpit was open, and the deafening noise of the engines shattered the peace that seemed to reign below. We landed directly on the sea, in the middle of nowhere, and a small floating dock welcomed us to Raaya by Atmosphere.

First island: Raaya by Atmosphere

Raaya is located in the Raa Atoll, about 45 minutes by plane from the capital. The tiny island, measuring 553 metres wide by 1,000 metres long, hosts the entire resort. It features 163 luxury villas, many of them built over the sea. Dirt paths run across the island, and electric buggies serve as shuttles to take guests to various restaurants, the jetty, or their villas. Another option is the bicycle—scattered throughout the island and available for guests to ride. That's the island's entire transport system: no traffic, no asphalt, no noise, except for the seaplanes that break the silence a few times a day. The silence is thick, almost deafening. The first thing you feel upon arrival is not the heat or humidity, but the absence of everything else.

Some of the villas are nestled in dense vegetation, built with materials like wood that blend harmoniously with the surroundings. The architecture doesn't try to stand out—just to exist. Some villas are located on the beach, hidden among thick foliage and equipped with private pools, while others are built on stilts like palafittes, suspended above the lagoon. All are fitted with modern comforts: Wi-Fi, air conditioning, home automation, open-air bathrooms...

I chose one over the water—not for the luxury, but out of curiosity. Sleeping with the sound of the sea beneath your feet is an experience that changes the way you breathe.



Guest reception at Raaya by Atmosphere

Days at Raaya slip by effortlessly. There's no rush, no schedule. Just a slow cadence imposed by the environment. In the mornings, you can step off the terrace of your villa straight into the lagoon for a swim. After a shower, a walk along the shore brings you to one of the buffets, where you have breakfast facing a sea filled with every shade of blue. That's where I discovered the true colour of turquoise, with sand so fine and white it felt like flour. After breakfast, the day begins—facing a motionless sea.

One of the most intense experiences is snorkelling. You can access living reefs right from the shore. But it's well worth joining one of the excursions the resort offers: boat trips that take you to places you'd never imagine—reachable only with mask and fins. The professional guides provide the highest level of safety at all times. The moment you dip your head beneath the surface, the world changes. Shoals of fish in a thousand colours, corals that resemble underwater trees, rays floating like kites, turtles swimming with timeless calm. I spent long stretches floating without moving, just observing. The water is so clear you sometimes forget you're even in the sea.

MALDIVES



Snorkelling among anemones, clownfish, and coral

The resort staff also organise guided trips to deeper areas, where the corals grow like underwater cities. There, the current is stronger, and you feel the ocean's power. We saw reef sharks—harmless but imposing. Words fall short. You have to see it—and, above all, you have to be there.

In the afternoons, a sunset cruise made me rethink the very concept of beauty I had held until then.

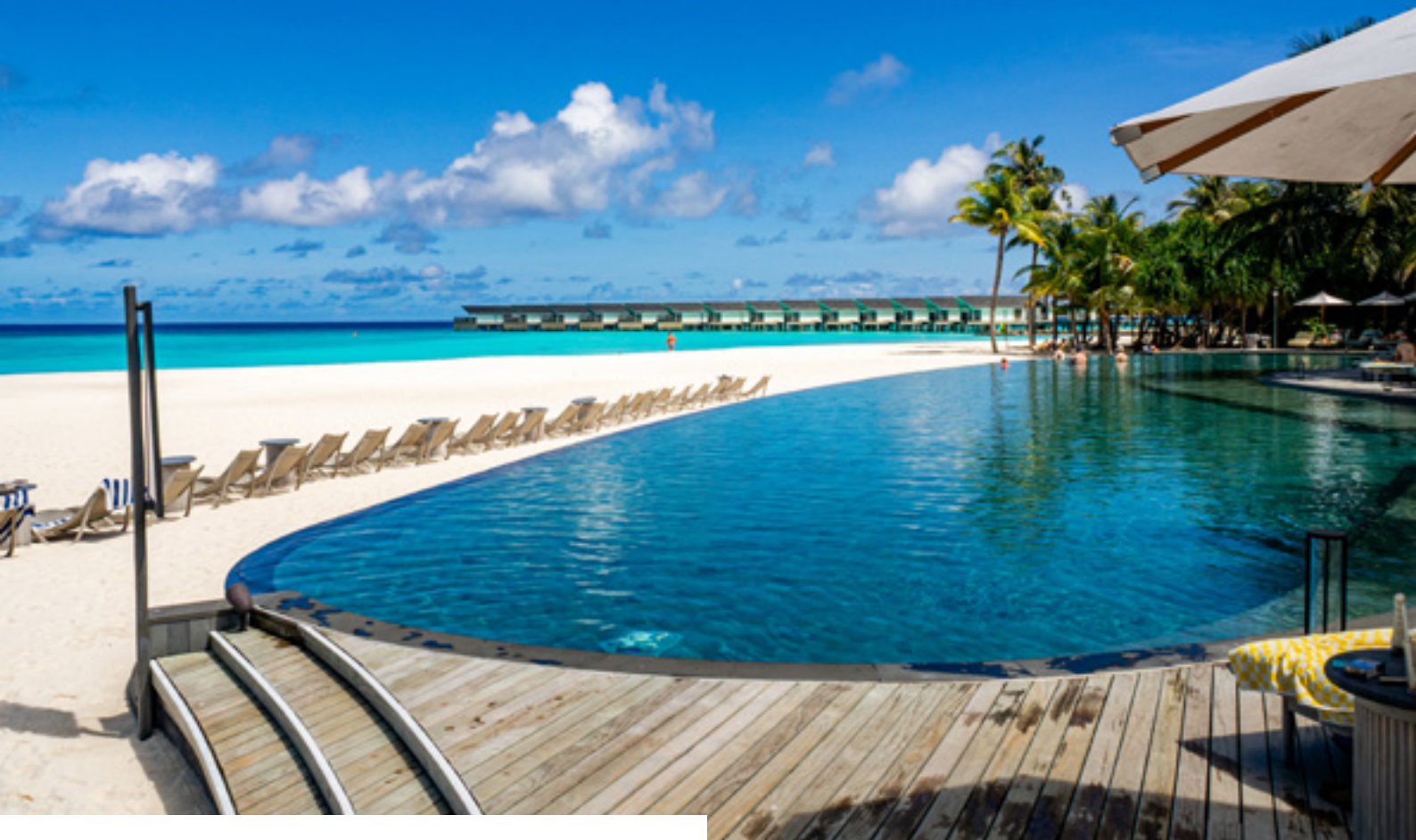
Nights at Raaya are dark, free from light pollution. The sky fills with stars that seem as close as the atolls did from the seaplane. Sleeping after a day in the water is not sleeping. It's surrender.

Raaya by
Atmosphere



Overwater villas, some with private pools and all with direct access to the sea





Pool and one of Raaya's restaurants, located at the heart of the resort

One of Raaya's beachfront villas with a private pool



After a few days at Raaya by Atmosphere, it was time for a change of scenery. The next stop was Atmosphere Kani-fushi, in the Lhaviyani Atoll. The journey is made by speed-boat—a 50-minute crossing through stretches of open sea and narrow channels between islands. During the ride, your sense of space shifts. There are no fixed points of reference, only the motion of the water, a distant buoy now and then, and occasionally an island that appears and vanishes like a mirage.

During this transfer, I understood just how isolated everything truly is. Each resort is not just a hotel—it's an entire island operating like a small country. They generate their own electricity, desalinate seawater, manage their waste, and grow some of the food consumed. Everything is designed to be self-sustaining without relying too heavily on external sources, but the balance is fragile. One only needs to look around to sense it.

From time to time, a different kind of island appears in the distance. With buildings. With movement. I ask what it is. "Residential islands," they tell me. That's where the resort staff live. There are schools, shops, public services, even hospitals. We don't stop at any of them, but from afar, they look like miniature cities—compact, self-sufficient, and invisible to the guest.

The luxury that surrounds you at the resorts floats on a silent, precise choreography. There is an entire world making it possible, and you don't always see it. But it's there. And understanding that is part of the journey.



Second island: Atmosphere Kanifushi

Kanifushi is another resort island, but with a different personality. More elongated, more open, more exposed to the wind, it lies deep within the remote Lhaviyani Atoll, stretching like a ribbon of white sand and tropical vegetation for two kilometres, with an average width of about 90 metres. Unlike more compact islands, this one offers a broader, more expansive experience, where the sea breeze constantly brushes against the lush vegetation.

The villas are spread along the beach and over the water. The Sunset Beach Villas, nestled among the greenery, offer direct beach access, with some featuring private pools. The Water Villas, perched on stilts over the lagoon, include terraces, private pools, and direct access to the sea—offering a luxurious overwater experience.

Although the island doesn't have a reef accessible directly from the beach, Oceanix organises daily dhoni (traditional boat) excursions to some of the atoll's best snorkelling spots, as well as diving courses, dive trips, and water sports. These outings provide the opportunity to explore vibrant reefs and observe a wide variety of marine life, including turtles, rays, tropical fish, and sharks.





5

- 1.- Jetty and entrance to Kanifushi
- 2.- Entrance to the resort lobby
- 3.- Oceanix, dive and snorkelling centre
- 4.- Welcome committee for new guests
- 5.- Water Villas with private lagoon and pools
- 6.- Sunset Beach Villa with private pool
- 7.- The seaplane, the Maldives' version of a bus



6



7

At sunset, the island transforms. The sun slips behind the palm trees, painting the beach in golden tones and creating a serene atmosphere. Moonlit nights invite reflection and silence, offering moments of connection with nature in its purest form.

Atmosphere Kanifushi is not just a destination—it's an invitation to disconnect, to immerse yourself in natural beauty, and to rediscover the joy of tranquility.

The return: by seaplane back to Malé

The journey ended as it began: by seaplane. This time, from Kanifushi back to Malé. I knew what was coming, but the flight hadn't lost its magic. Flying over the Maldives never gets old. The atolls, the underwater shadows, the reefs tracing circles on the ocean, the channels between islands—all of it is awe-inspiring once again, especially when the flight takes place at sunrise. Everything is bathed in golden light, merging with the turquoise waters...

We landed on the sea at Malé's "hydroport," near the international airport, where what they call urban chaos takes over the streets—hundreds of motorbikes swarming like ants through the city. And yet, something lingers. The Indian Ocean is behind me now, but I still think of that silence, that sea, and those colours





Amish buggy in winter



Young Amish on bicycles – Indiana

Amish

A journey through time
To discover their culture and traditions

While America's big cities shine with skyscrapers and neon lights, there is another United States that remains faithful to simplicity. In rural communities across Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, the Amish live apart from modern life, guided by faith, family, and cooperation. No electricity, no cars, no social media. Curious? Fascinating? Yes. But also profoundly human. This is a journey into a present lived as if it were the past—and into a culture that defies the logic of the modern world.

Words: Larissa Rolley - larissarolley@outlook.com

Photos: LarissaRolley and La Grange County CVB



Amish buggy towing a boat

When thinking about travelling to the United States, most people aim for the big leagues: New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami. But beyond the urban noise and endless highways, there is another country within the country—one where there is no social media or internet, where carriages are still pulled by horses, and where community is everything.

Welcome to the Amish world

In a country obsessed with the new, the Amish have chosen to live without haste, without screens, without noise. And in that contrast lies their appeal. Visiting an Amish community is not just alternative tourism—it's a window into a different rhythm of life, a reminder that there are other ways of being in the world.

Who are the Amish?

The Amish are an Anabaptist Christian community with roots in Switzerland and southern Germany. They migrated to North America in the 18th century to escape religious persecution. Their history is marked by a rejection of hierarchies, a commitment

to adult baptism, and separation from the secular world. Today, they are primarily found in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and New York.

Although all Amish share core principles—simple living, strong faith, nonviolence, and rejection of pride—there are significant differences between communities. Each church district sets its own rules, known as the *Ordnung*, which regulate everything from technology use to the types of buttons allowed on clothing.

Community over the individual

The cornerstone of Amish life is community. In a world dominated by individualism, they have chosen the opposite: to cooperate rather than compete, to share rather than stand out.

A clear example: when a young couple gets married, their family and neighbours come together to build their new home. If someone falls ill, everyone helps. If a barn needs to be raised, dozens organise to do it in a single day. This spirit of cooperation even shapes how they make decisions: collectively, by consensus, and without imposition.



Scene of Amish life – Lancaster

Amish buggy at sunset - Indiana



Clothing: Humility as a Principle

Amish clothing is not a costume or a quaint tradition: it is a declaration of values. It reflects modesty, unity, and a rejection of ego. Men wear dark trousers, plain shirts, and wide-brimmed hats. Women dress austere: no low necklines, no bright colours, with aprons and head coverings that indicate their marital status and community.

There is no jewellery, no make-up, no rings. Instead of wedding bands, married men grow beards—though never moustaches (due to their military association). Fastenings are avoided: hooks and pins are preferred.

Technology—But Under Control

Far from the stereotype, the Amish do not completely reject technology. Their approach is not one of denial, but of selection. Each innovation is evaluated for its impact on community values. Does it encourage pride? Does it isolate people? Does it break social bonds? If the answer is yes, it is rejected.

This is why many Amish homes are not connected to the public power grid, but may have solar panels, battery lamps, or gas refrigerators. At work—especially in trades such as carpentry or baking—technology is more present, provided it remains outside the home.

Mobile phones, for instance, are not used at home, but some Amish businesses use them to communicate with suppliers or clients. The same applies to computers or the internet in certain business contexts.

Rumspringa: The Road to Decision

One of the most talked-about—often misunderstood—traditions is Rumspringa. From the age of 16, Amish youths may explore the outside world before deciding whether to fully join the church.

During this period, which can last from a few months to several years, teenagers enjoy more freedom: they may wear modern clothes, have mobile phones, go out with non-Amish friends, and even try life in the cities. The decision is not imposed. Baptism must be voluntary. And when it comes, it is a real commitment—with no turning back.

Though it may seem like a phase of rebellion or experimentation from the outside, in most cases it is much calmer. Many young people simply use this time to meet a future spouse, attend youth gatherings, and socialise.

What's surprising is the statistic: between 85% and 90% of Amish youths choose to be baptised and stay. Not out of obligation, but because they choose that way of life.

Steam tractor



Festivals and Celebrations

Amish life revolves around spirituality, so do their celebrations. They do not observe Independence Day, Labour Day, or Memorial Day. Nothing related to war, patriotism, or politics is celebrated.

Their most important holidays are religious: Easter, Good Friday, Pentecost, Ascension. Thanksgiving is acknowledged, but many families spend it at weddings, as it coincides with the traditional marriage season (October to December). They also celebrate 26 December as a "Second Christmas Day", set aside for extended family visits and gatherings.

Three Key Destinations:

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

The most famous, tourist-friendly, and accessible. It has restaurants, markets, shops, and carriage rides. But also crowds, heavy traffic, and a more commercial atmosphere.

Holmes County, Ohio

Home to around 40,000 Amish. Fewer tourists, more authenticity. Ideal for those seeking a peaceful and immersive experience.

Shipshewana, Indiana

A perfect middle ground: well prepared for visitors, but still true to itself. Just 2.5 hours from Chicago.

In Shipshewana you'll find a complete experience. The Wednesday flea market and auction draw people from across the region. Before going, it's best to have breakfast at one of the nearby restaurants—many serve traditional Amish food. The Menno-Hof Cultural Centre is an excellent first stop. It tells the story of the Amish and Mennonites (a related group) in a visual and educational way.



Amish family at the flea market - Shipshewana



Curious scene at the market - Shipshewana

Shipshewana wall painting





Amish community constructing a new building

Father and son playing



Don't Miss:

- Rise'n Roll Bakery: famous for its cinnamon caramel donuts.
- Blue Gate Restaurant & Theater: Amish cuisine and live shows.
- Davis Mercantile: four floors of shops and local products.
- Yoder Popcorn: rural shop specialising in popcorn and corn varieties.

You can also take a buggy ride or visit a farm with Buggy Lane Tours, and even have dinner with an Amish family in their home—an unforgettable experience.

More Than a Destination: A Life Lesson

Travelling to Amish country is not just tourism: it's a pause. To observe, to understand, to respect. It's seeing how a community has chosen a different path—and lives it with consistency, humility and conviction.

In a world that often moves too fast, perhaps that is the most valuable lesson: that sometimes, what we need most is to slow down.



Amish family at a livestock auction in Shipshewana

Practical Tips for Visiting an Amish Community

- **Travel by car:** Amish communities are in rural areas with little or no public transport. You'll need your own vehicle to explore freely.
- **Avoid Sundays:** It's a day of worship, rest, and family. Shops and markets will be closed.
- **Respect their pace:** Don't insist on taking photos. Always ask first. Never enter private property without permission.
- **Buy local:** Along rural roads, you'll find stands selling everything from baked goods to fresh vegetables, often using an honour system (the customer takes the product and leaves the payment voluntarily, trusting in mutual honesty without direct supervision).
- **Ask locals:** Many will recommend other Amish businesses, lesser-known routes, and interesting activities.

On Photos and Privacy

Most Amish avoid being photographed, especially in posed portraits. This is based on a literal interpretation of the biblical commandment against making images of oneself. Posed photos are usually declined, but many communities tolerate being photographed naturally, without posing or being the central focus.

The same applies to images of their farms, buggies, markets, or goods: in general, there are no objections as long as their privacy is respected.

Yoders Meat gift box



Guadalajara

México

The City of Roses is the capital of Jalisco and the birthplace of charrería, mariachi music, and tequila.

Words and photos: Manena Munar - manena.munar@gmail.com

Photo: The Expiatorio temple in Colonia Americana

Guadalajara lies just fifty kilometres from Lake Chapala, Mexico's largest natural reservoir. Water has always played a key role in the founding of cities, and it must have been so for the twenty Spanish families who chose to settle in the Atemajac Valley, the heart of Mexico—then known as New Spain.

After various ventures and misfortunes with the Ecuex and Coca peoples—original inhabitants of the area—Guadalajara rose to become the capital of New Galicia, a territory that spans the country's western region. The city took its name from conquistador Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán, a native of the Spanish Guadalajara and appointed governor of the region. One must mention Beatriz Hernández, whose bronze statue—created by Ignacio Garibay Anaya—stands before the Supreme Court of Justice, honouring the memory of a woman who played a pivotal role in choosing the site for the city's foundation, fighting to make it a reality.

There is no gathering, celebration, or ceremony in Guadalajara without the sound of trumpets, violins, vihuelas or guitarróns—and the heart-wrenching cry of the mariachi

Tradition and cutting edge

If there is a city that could be said to have it all, it is Guadalajara. Now the capital of Jalisco and the second most populated city in Mexico after Mexico City, it is the birthplace of charrería, mariachi music and tequila—the elixir of the goddess Mayahuel. Guadalajara enjoys a mild climate all year round, which allows for lush flora that adorns the city. Yet it is also a trendsetting hub: according to Time Out International, its Colonia Americana has been named the coolest neighbourhood one could ask for.

In terms of technology, it is known as the Mexican Silicon Valley, recognised worldwide for its software development industry.

But what the city truly prides itself on is fiercely preserving its tapatío traditions—the term used for natives of Guadalajara, of Nahuatl origin, with several possible meanings. The most common interpretation is “you are worth a lot”, dating back to the 17th century when the people of Guadalajara prided themselves on being skilled merchants, using sacks of cacao beans as currency in the local tianguis (markets).

In fact, they had their Círculo Mercantil—a Chamber of Commerce since 1888—and in 1953, the first great fair of Jalisco was held, paving the way for over a hundred exhibitions each year. Not to forget, Guadalajara is home to the Mariachi Festival and its Book Fair—second only to Frankfurt's—is considered the most important in the world on the international stage.

Prisciliano Sánchez, founder of Jalisco, in the Rotunda of Illustrious Jaliscienses



GUADALAJARA - MÉXICO

Just like home

The direct flight operated by www.aeromexico.com/es from Madrid to Guadalajara International Airport is both comfortable and swift. One recent film, a bit of reading, a snack or two—and before you know it, you're landing. No layovers needed, as Aeroméxico has recently launched the direct Madrid–Guadalajara route.

Accommodation at Hotel Indigo comes highly recommended. Strategically located between the city centre and Plaza de la Minerva—whose statue of the goddess of wisdom becomes a gathering spot for locals when Los Chivos win the national league—the hotel offers comfort behind its doors. Rooms are arranged around a classic arched Spanish patio.

As for dining, JAL Cocina de Raíz serves up the best of tapatío cuisine, all beneath a towering shelving unit stocked with every variety of tequila you can imagine.

Brunch in Guadalajara is a beloved ritual—hearty and diverse. One of the top spots for brunch is Palreal www.instagram.com/palreal, a culinary lab open to the public, offering organoleptic experiences. Great coffee, huevos rancheros with tomato salsa and longaniza, homemade lonche de panza, and a warm, family-friendly atmosphere that makes you want to return. The place also boasts a true privilege: barista Fabrizio Sencion, a two-time winner of the Mexican Barista Championship.

A Cross of Plazas Shapes the Old Town

The Historic Centre is adorned with grand buildings from Mexico's viceregal architecture, embellished by native flora that carries the scent of cempasúchil and boasts centuries-old trees blooming in exuberance. The City Hall now occupies the former **Municipal Palace**, while the **Santos Degollado Theatre**—considered Guadalajara's most important 19th-century artistic building—is home to the Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra.



Palreal is famous for its hearty and tasty brunch

View of Guadalajara Cathedral from the Plaza de Armas



The Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, **Guadalajara Cathedral**, with its striking Gothic towers, is the most important heritage monument in western Mexico—and has stood for over three hundred years. It could be said that the city grew around it, and within its walls took place many of the key public events in the shaping of Guadalajara. It has borne witness to earthquakes, wars, and fervent prayers during the Cristero War.

The Cathedral is part of the cross formed by the Plazas de Armas, Guadalajara, and the Rotonda de los Jaliscienses Ilustres. This neoclassical pantheon, built in 1952 by architect Vicente Mendiola, holds a total of ninety-eight urns containing the remains of notable figures in Jalisco's arts, sciences, and literature. Twenty-two sculptures stand among the blooming jacarandas, paying tribute to their essential role in the city's history. Among them is the statue of Rita Pérez de Moreno who, alongside her husband Pedro Moreno González, was active in the insurgency during the Mexican War of Independence.

Also present is the statue of muralist José Clemente Orozco, who captured like no other the pre-Hispanic and Hispanic history of Mexico. The power of his work expresses kindness, corruption, oppression, and generosity; virtue and evil reflected in recurring elements of his murals such as fire, and in his pictorial wisdom that reaches the sublime through the grotesque—driven always by his relentless desire to portray the human condition.



The Calandrias or Calesas, from Guadalajara



Sculpture of Beatriz Hernández, the Woman Who Shaped Guadalajara's History

The Man of Fire, considered José Clemente Orozco's masterpiece, crowns the dome of the Hospicio Cabañas

The Man of Fire





Museo Cabañas, a former orphanage, now home to the works of José Clemente Orozco
 Peligro al Fondo It is one of the trendiest spots in Colonia Americana



His painter's palette is dominated by shades of red, orange, blue, and green—as clearly seen in the fifty-seven frescoes of the Museo Cabañas <https://museocabanas.jalisco.gob.mx>, a former orphanage and UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997, now dedicated to showcasing Orozco's most iconic mural work.

The “Cool” Colonia Americana.

Many of the houses in Colonia Americana are built in the Art Deco style. Notable examples include the Casa González Luna—home of the 1952 Mexican presidential candidate—with its half-moon arches, designed by renowned architect Luis Barragán, winner of the 1980 Pritzker Prize; the Casa Farah by Rafael Urzúa; and the Casa Blanca, once the residence of Mario Moreno “Cantinflas”, among many others. Today, most of these buildings house stylish venues that have led to Colonia Americana being regarded as one of the coolest neighbourhoods in the world.

Take, for example, Peligro al Fondo www.instagram.com/peligroalfondo, where evening cocktails, sábado joto parties, and drag shows are held, all while enjoying delicious tortas ahogadas in tomato sauce, surrounded by plants, flowers, and a relaxed atmosphere where everyone is welcome—especially members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Expiatory Temple, designed by Italian architect Adamo Boari, is the neo-Gothic jewel of both Mexico and Colonia Americana.

Its construction, considered the treasure of Colonia Americana, spanned from 1897 to 1972, having withstood the Cristero Wars and the Mexican Revolution. In front of the entrance stands a fountain featuring a large agave sculpture by Diego Martínez-Negrete—an offering to the plant that symbolises health and abundance in Mexico.

Of Delicious Poisons

Avenida de las Américas is lined with modern buildings, mostly office spaces, and also features twenty-three busts of iconic figures from across the Americas. At number 1254 on the avenue stands Veneno restaurant <https://venenorestante.com>, whose design—featuring adobe, natural wood, and leather—is inspired by the architecture of the Star Wars planet Tatooine and the archaeological site of Paquimé in Chihuahua. It was named the Best in the Americas in 2020 by the Restaurant & Bar Design

Award. Chef Alfonso Cadena and his partner Juan Monteón aim to highlight tapatio flavours in their restaurant, notably with dishes such as picaña and arrachera tacos.

And speaking of signature cuisine, one mustn't miss a visit to Alcalde <https://alcalde.com.mx>, where executive chef Paco Ruano works wonders with local produce—among them, salads of flowers and herbs that are as delicious as they are beautiful.

Back at Hotel Indigo, and before slipping between the softness of its sheets, a final cocktail is a must at Setenta Azotea, the rooftop bar, to enjoy the city's gentle breeze and reflect on the marvels of Mexican Guadalajara.



<https://visitagdl.com>

The design of Veneno restaurant, acclaimed as the best in the Americas





BETWEEN DOLPHINS AND VINEYARDS: SETÚBAL AND THE RIVER SADO

Words and Photos: Joaquín del Palacio - joaquingeografo@gmail.com



In Setúbal, the River Sado flows between vineyards and dolphins, tracing a landscape where nature and wine share the same salty whisper of the Atlantic.

Phoenicians and Romans once sailed to the edges of the Mediterranean and even ventured into the Atlantic, rounding Cape St. Vincent—now part of Portugal—northward to reach a liquid paradise: the mouth of the River Sado. This estuary, governed by ocean tides, is sheltered from the cold northern winds by the Arrábida mountain range on the Setúbal Peninsula, and protected from Atlantic swells by the vast sandbar that forms another peninsula; Tróia.

Everyone wants to live there

The Romans settled here, founded factories such as the one in Creiro, and exported salted fish throughout the Empire—along with their most prized sauce, garum. On the south-facing shore, they founded Cetobriga, today's Setúbal, which still makes use of this natural harbour. In the calm waters of the estuary they built their docks, and even today some small wooden piers for fishing boats remain—visually striking structures from the mid-20th century known as the Cais Palafítico de Carrasqueira, considered unique in Europe.

Yet this remarkable site had already been occupied since time immemorial by early Palaeolithic settlers who inhabited the Santa Margarida cave, now at sea level. This landscape forms such a unique ecosystem that it is home to a group of around thirty dolphins, which have lived in the area for centuries. This is due to the meeting of salty Atlantic waters with the fresh waters of the River Sado, which carries sediment along its 180 km journey from southern Portugal. In its final stretch, the river irrigates the rice fields around Alcácer do Sal. The mix of salt and fresh water creates such marine abundance that the dolphins find everything they need to thrive—and so they remain.



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- 1.- Cloister of the Convent of Jesus
- 2.- Central Street in Setúbal
- 3.- Fort of Santa Maria da Arrábida
- 4.- Setúbal Square and Tourist Office
- 5.- Working on Traditional Tilework
- 6.- Historic Centre and the Statue of Manuel
- 7.- Maria Barbosa du Bocage, Renowned Poet



3



4

Exuberant and Diverse

Around Setúbal, nature remains almost untouched. The city is surrounded by three distinct protected natural areas: the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve, the Arrábida Natural Park, and the Professor Luiz Saldanha Marine Park. Nearby are some of the most beautiful beaches in Portugal—two of which stand out in particular: Tróia Beach, one of the longest in Europe, stretches over 40 km along the peninsula that bears its name; and Galapinhos Beach, in a privileged spot where the mountain plunges wild and steep into the turquoise waters of the Atlantic.

From its white sands, only the shared blues of sea and sky are visible, along with the many shades of green from the forest, on whose slopes, scattered among the trees, stands the Arrábida Convent, dating back to the 16th century.

On the seashore, nestled within this lush natural setting, lies Portinho da Arrábida, one of the Seven Wonders of Portugal. And right next to it, the Fort of Santa Maria da Arrábida—once built to defend this coveted bay—has been perfectly preserved thanks to its conversion into an Oceanographic Museum.

Urban Corners and Hidden Secrets

This rich and varied natural setting provides Setúbal with a diverse range of gastronomic products, many of which can be found at the Mercado do Livramento. From the sea: oysters, sardines, prawns, octopus... And from inland: cheeses, breads, sweets, wines... And what wines, and what wineries!

Since 1834, the wines of José Maria da Fonseca have been produced in Azeitão—a winery steeped in the kind of magic required to make truly great wine. In the dim light, amid aged aromas, huge wooden casks lined with solera rest, slowly nurturing the rich muscats of Setúbal. The former family home is now Azeitão's most interesting house-museum, and preserves Portugal's first bottling machine among many other evocative relics. In this parish of Setúbal, also famed for its cheeses, traditional tilework still survives—crafted slowly, entirely by hand. The colour and drawing of each azulejo is always slightly different from the next, even if made by the same artisan and appearing identical. That's precisely where their charm lies.

Setúbal also treasures three remarkable urban elements: two historic, singular buildings and the grand Avenida Luísa Todi—an expansive boulevard, or elongated square, that runs parallel to the coast and serves as the city's backbone. It is named after the renowned soprano Luísa Todi, born in Setúbal in 1753.

Portugal's famed Manueline style was first executed here by architect Diogo Boitaca in the Church of the Convent of Jesus—a building where King John II of Portugal ratified the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, just two

months after it was signed by the Catholic Monarchs in Spain. A church that not only dazzles but also endured the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. Since 1980, it has housed the Museu de Setúbal.

In the 16th century, one had to defend what was then one of the most beautiful and strategic bays in the world. Thus Philip I of Portugal—also Philip II of Spain, since both Iberian crowns were united at the time—ordered the construction of the Fort of São Filipe. It was meant to defend against pirate raids and possible civil uprisings, as relations with the crown were tense. The fortress, designed in a six-pointed star layout, today offers a stunning viewpoint for sunsets over a one-of-a-kind landscape.

From this castle one can see the steep mountain cliffs with their white-sand beaches meeting the sea. Across the way, the Sado Estuary and port come into view, along with the Tróia Peninsula—its sandbanks rising or sinking with the tides—and there, leaping playfully, dolphins can be spotted. At the foot of the fortress lies Setúbal itself, and to the west stretches the vast Atlantic, sometimes shrouded in mist and mystery, always the place where the sun disappears. Few places in the world gather so many natural elements—and with such harmony.





Transcantábrico Gran Lujo

Words: Rosario Alonso

Photography: Jose A. Muñoz

Aboard the Transcantábrico Gran Lujo, every detail is designed to delight the senses. The suites, decorated with fine woods and high-quality fabrics, offer comfort and privacy. The panoramic lounges allow guests to admire the ever-changing landscape, from the green meadows of Galicia to the rugged Asturian mountains and the dramatic Basque cliffs. Gastronomy is another cornerstone of this experience, with dishes prepared using local ingredients and paired with wines from each region

Born in 1983 as Spain's first tourist train, El Transcantábrico was conceived by FEVE as a "cruise on rails" to travel along the narrow-gauge railway network of the country's northern coast. In 2011, following an extensive renovation, it was transformed into **El Transcantábrico Gran Lujo**—a five-star hotel on rails that combines the charm of early 20th-century trains with the comforts of the 21st century.

Its original 1923 Pullman carriages, lovingly restored, house panoramic lounges, suites with private bathrooms, and shared spaces that evoke the elegance of a bygone era. With a maximum capacity of just 32 passengers, the train offers 14 suites—some of which can accommodate up to three guests—providing an intimate and exclusive experience, where every detail is carefully attended to.



In the heart of Green Spain, where mountains kiss the sea and rivers whisper ancient tales, El Transcantábrico Gran Lujo glides along the rails as a witness to history. More than a means of transport, this train is a sensory journey that invites travellers to discover the essence of northern Spain, from Santiago de Compostela to San Sebastián, on an eight-day, seven-night route that weaves together luxury, history, and nature.

El Transcantábrico Gran Lujo is not just a train journey; it is an immersion in the culture, history, and landscapes of northern Spain. Every stop, every view from the window, every dish savoured, contributes to a unique experience that blends refinement with authenticity. A journey that doesn't simply take us from one place to another—it transforms and enriches us.





Facade of the Cathedral in the Obradoiro Square

The city orbits around its temple: the Praza da Quintana, with its two stepped levels; the Praza das Praterías, with its fountains and craftsmen; and the intimate Praza da Inmaculada, or Azabachería, the final stop for pilgrims completing the French Way. Together they form a harmonious ensemble, permeated by the sounds of bagpipes. Walking through its winding streets, one feels that history comes to meet you, and that the shadows cast by the old lanterns are keepers of secrets.

After lunch at the Hostal, a luxury coach collects the passengers for the journey to **Ferrol**. The road winds through eucalyptus forests that seem to whisper, and slate-roofed villages from which wisps of smoke curl gently through the mist. The Galician landscape—with its endless meadows and gentle hills—becomes a prelude to what lies ahead.

The journey to **Ferrol** is more than a transfer: it is a transition. The traveller leaves behind the solemnity of Santiago to enter the gentle murmur of the train that awaits. Upon arrival at the station, the Transcantábrico Gran Lujo gleams like a black-and-gold serpent, poised to glide along the Cantabrian spine. Its image could have leapt from the pages of a **Scott Fitzgerald novel**, and the warm, ceremonious welcome from the staff—who will accompany us on this unique experience—evokes scenes seen only in film.

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

The beginning of an unforgettable experience

The journey begins in a city where every stone tells a story: **Santiago de Compostela**. The air here smells of incense and rain freshly fallen on granite. When the sun chooses to break through the Galician clouds, it casts golden glints across the Baroque façades of the Plaza del Obradoiro, where the cathedral rises like a stone colossus, guardian of centuries of pilgrimage and devotion.

Travellers arrive at the historic **Hostal de los Reyes Católicos**, a Plateresque jewel built in 1499 as a hospital for weary pilgrims on the Camino. Now a luxury Parador, the building is much more than accommodation: it is the spiritual threshold of the journey about to begin. Its quiet cloisters, Gothic arches and flower-filled courtyards offer a first encounter with the solemnity and beauty of the north.

Just opposite stands the Cathedral of Santiago, presiding over the vast Plaza del Obradoiro with its majestic western façade, crowned by towers that merge with the ever-changing sky. Inside, the tomb of the Apostle James rests in soft light, wrapped in whispered prayers. There is no rush: every corner invites stillness, contemplation.

Facade of the Cathedral from Quintana Square





View of one of the carriages and photos below showing one of the train's suites



Thus begins an **“indelible experience”**: with a sacred city, a palace that once welcomed kings and pilgrims, and a route that, from the very start, promises to be unforgettable.

The first leg takes us to **Viveiro**, a vibrant fishing town on the edge of the Cantabrian Sea, where history and natural beauty blend in perfect harmony. The journey by rail lasts just two hours.

Our first dinner will be served on board and will stay true to the excellence of Galician cuisine, with fish and seafood taking the leading role.



Entrance to the Parador, Hostal de los Reyes Católicos





VIVEIRO Y RIBADEO

Between Cliffs and Dreamlike Beaches

From Viveiro, as we enjoy breakfast, the train continues its journey towards **Ribadeo**. There, our coach awaits to take us to one of the most breathtaking places on the itinerary: the **Beach of the Cathedrals** "Playa de las Catedrales". Here, stone arches sculpted by sea and wind unfold to create a natural cathedral that leaves visitors speechless.

This natural wonder, officially known as Praia de Augas Santas, is one of the most spectacular treasures on the Cantabrian coast, located near Ribadeo, in the province of Lugo. Its name evokes the grandeur of its rock formations: arches, vaults, and columns reaching up to 30 metres in height, carved over millennia by the relentless erosion of sea and wind. These structures, reminiscent of the flying buttresses and aisles of a Gothic cathedral, stretch for over a kilometre along the shoreline, forming a near-mystical landscape where the power of the ocean merges with geological artistry.

Access to the beach depends on the tides: during low tide, visitors can walk beneath the towering stone arches, explore hidden caves, and admire the natural pools that reflect the sky.

Stone bridge of Viveiro





Catedrales Beach near Ribadeo

However, at high tide, the sea reclaims its territory, partially submerging this stone labyrinth and offering an equally dramatic perspective from the viewpoints atop the cliffs.

Declared a Natural Monument in 2005, beyond its scenic value, this site symbolises the harmony between untamed nature and the fragility of its ecosystems, reminding us of the importance of preserving such marvels for future generations. A place where time, carved in stone, invites contemplation and awe.

After lunch at Restaurante **Casa Vicente** in Castropol, our train takes us from Ribadeo to **Luarca**—less than two hours that bring us to the “White Town of the Green Coast”, offering a peaceful view of white houses reflected in the waters of the harbour. The indiano heritage of this part of Spain already greets us and will soon appear in all its splendour.

Now in Asturian lands, dinner aboard the train offers a first tribute to the region’s cuisine, as we enjoy the beautiful scenery between Cudillero and Oviedo. It’s our second night on board, and we’ll sleep in the capital of the Principality of Asturias. To close the evening, a piano concert invites us to unwind after a full day.

View of the lounge car





View of the train between Asturian meadows

ASTURIAS

Gijón and Oviedo

An intense day, like all others, begins with a bell ringing at 8 a.m.

Experiences include a visit to one of the most important cider mills in Asturias, "**Llugar Trabanco**"—a true temple of Asturian cider—and free time to explore the lively city of **Gijón**, complete with a tasting menu at **Restaurante Kraken**, located inside the city's Aquarium: a true temple of Asturian gastronomy with a contemporary touch, both in its dishes and its décor. From there, we travel by road to discover the artistic and historical heritage of beautiful **Oviedo**. An excellent guide introduces us to its superb cathedral and beautiful cloister, leading us through the historic streets of the old town—a historian who knows better than anyone the corners of "Vetusta", as immortalised by Leopoldo Alas Clarín.

While we enjoy dinner aboard the train, we head towards **Llanes**, and once again, the evening is accompanied by music—this time, the sound of a violin.

El Fontan Market located in the historic center of Oviedo



LLANES AND PICOS DE EUROPA

Nature in its Purest Form

From Llanes, we set off by road into the heart of the **Picos de Europa Natural Park**. This route—one of the most dangerous in Spain, and also one of the most beautiful—is suitable only for seasoned drivers. It leads us to the famed “Lagos de Covadonga”, Enol and Ercina, perched over 1,000 metres above sea level. These crystal-clear lakes, surrounded by mountains, offer a breathtaking display, reflecting the peaks on their surfaces like natural mirrors of extraordinary beauty.

In the very heart of the Picos de Europa, the **Sanctuary of Covadonga** rises as both a spiritual and natural icon. The Santa Cueva, carved into the rock, shelters the image of the Virgin of Covadonga, patron saint of Asturias, whose veneration dates back to the 8th century, linked to the legendary **Battle of Covadonga** (722)—the symbolic beginning of the Reconquista. Beside it, the neo-Romanesque Basilica of **Santa María la Real** stands amidst green valleys, cascading waterfalls, and glacial lakes.



Enol lake

This setting, wrapped in mist and ancient woodland, blends devotion, history, and the grandeur of the Cantabrian range, offering a landscape where the sacred and the wild embrace one another.

After this moment of spiritual reverence comes a culinary one. At **El Corral del Indianu** in Arriondas, all expectations are more than met—especially with its spectacular fabada.

We return to Llanes to wander its streets, stroll along its beaches, and pick up a few Asturian specialties: a richly flavoured cabrales cheese and a ready-to-cook fabada to take home. And for those still eager for more, we seek out culinary excellence for dinner: El Retiro is the perfect place.

Basilica of Covadonga / Fabada at El Corral del Indianu / Our support coach and its driver, Benito is a true legend!





Gorge of the Deva River in the Hermida Spa.
The capricho of Gaudí in Comillas



CANTABRIA

Cabezón de la Sal, the Deva river gorge, and Comillas

After spending another night in Llanes, we set off early—prompted by the sound of the bell—towards the first Cantabrian stop: **Cabezón de la Sal**. From there, we travel by road to experience nature in its rawest form with all five senses:

The **gorge of Río Deva (also known as de la Hermida)**, carved out by the river of the same name, is a spectacular gorge that leads visitors to the Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana. Though we didn't reach that final destination, we did enjoy much of the day relaxing in the Thermal **spa circuit of the Balneario de la Hermida**—a day of wellness and lifestyle that proved as gratifying as the superb cocido lebaniego we savoured at the spa's restaurant.

The gorge of Río Deva, straddling Asturias and Cantabria, is a 21-kilometre gorge flanked by the Picos de Europa. The N-621 road winds through it—undergoing improvements since 2022. This corridor, perfect for hiking and rafting, links villages like Potes and Unquera, and includes scenic viewpoints like Santa Catalina, where lucky visitors may spot bearded vultures in flight.

The day concludes with a visit to **Comillas**, one of the most elegant towns in Cantabria, where **El Capricho of Gaudí** (1883) unfurls its Modernist charm: green ceramic tiles, a cylindrical tower, and nature-inspired motifs. Commissioned by indiano Máximo Díaz de Quijano, this small palace blends Oriental influences with the Catalan master's beloved symbols of nature and music—making it a unique Modernist gem in the north of Spain. The legacy of the indianos is so deeply woven into the Cantabrian coast that it reads like a living manual of cultural and artistic heritage.

We round off the day exploring some of the town's most iconic landmarks—the Palacio de Sobrellano, its unusual cemetery, and the imposing Pontifical University. Then, it's back to Cabezón de la Sal, dinner aboard the train, and a delightful magic show to end the evening. Incredible!



Santillana del Mar

CANTABRIA

Altamira, Santillana del Mar and Santander

From **Cabezón de la Sal** we travel to Santillana del Mar, a medieval village that seems frozen in time. Its cobbled streets and noble houses proudly displaying their coats of arms transport visitors to another era. Just a few kilometres away lies the **Neocueva de Altamira**, a perfectly accurate reproduction of the original cave—an open-air medieval museum featuring replicas of prehistoric paintings that bear witness to human presence in these lands since time immemorial.

An intense day begins in the historic centre, declared a National Monument and home to the **Collegiate Church of Santa Juliana** (12th century), a Romanesque jewel with a finely sculpted cloister. On the outskirts, the Cave of Altamira—often called the “Sistine Chapel of the Palaeolithic”—displays faithful reproductions of its bison, painted some 15,000 years ago. An experience that transcends art and takes us deep into the origins of humanity.

Paintings from the Neocave of Altamira





Santander City Council

Pub car



Today, we enjoy lunch on board our beloved train, which rarely exceeds 70 km/h. Ahead lies **Santander** and a packed, panoramic visit to the stately capital of Cantabria.

Santander offers a blend of elegance and natural beauty, uniting its two souls: the historic city centre nestled around the bay, and the coastal area, which includes the Península de la Magdalena, the seafront promenade, and beaches such as El Sardinero.

Dinner is served at **Querida Margarita (El Serbal)**, and back on the train, we are treated to yet another entertainment show—each night brings something new and delightfully unexpected.

The train continues its journey towards Carranza, nestled among green valleys and mountains, where the peaceful surroundings invite rest and reflection. We set off very early, and as we sleep, we leave behind Cantabria and cross into the Basque Country. First stop: Bilbao.

BILBAO

Steel, Water and Avant-Garde

Bilbao emerges from the mist as a city that has known how to reinvent itself without betraying its soul. At its origin, seven streets — **the Siete Calles of the Casco Viejo** — wove the heart of the medieval town, still today full of life, txikiteo (small glasses of wine and groups of friends), and echoes of merchants (salted cod). Over the Nervión estuary, bridges of iron, stone and modern design link past and present: the Puente de San Antón, symbol of the coat of arms; the elegant **Zubizuri Bridge by Calatrava**; and the monumental **Bridge of La Salve**, which embraces the Guggenheim like a frame of titanium.

And it is there, beside the water, where **the Guggenheim Museum** rises like a mythological creature with impossible curves. Its titanium skin reflects the sky and the estuary in a changing play of lights. Inside, reverential silence envelops monumental works by Serra and Rothko, rooms that breathe metal, emptiness and emotion. Bilbao is no longer just industry: it is art floating on water.

This avant-garde Bilbao contrasts with that of **Restaurante Aspidiko**, a 15th-century Basque farmhouse, monumental, surrounded by gardens where peacocks parade and which offers the best of exquisite Basque cuisine. A contrast of history and modernity that defines the essence of Bilbao.

Exterior of the Guggenheim Museum



Bilbao train station (FEVE)



Bilbao Estuary and City Hall



Guggenheim Museum, The Matter of Time, work by Richard Serra



- 1.- Mouth of the estuary and the Kuursal
- 2.- Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 3.- San Sebastián Cathedral
- 4.- View of the port in La Concha Bay

SAN SEBASTIÁN

The grand finale

The final stop is **San Sebastián**, jewel of the Basque Country. Its La Concha beach, its old town full of pintxo bars, and the Peine del Viento, a work by Eduardo Chillida, bid farewell to the traveller with a blend of flavours, art, and sea views that linger in the memory. This city, elevated to international fame by Queen Regent María Cristina of Habsburg—who established the royal summer court here—never fails to dazzle with its elegance and aristocratic charm. It was the “wave baths” of that era, when swimsuits covered the entire body, that brought the city such renown.

We are, truthfully, overcome with sadness: the journey ends, the **chucu chucu chu** of the train has faded, and it is time to say goodbye to the friends we’ve made on this unforgettable trip, as well as to the staff who looked after us with such care. But we still have a few hours—perhaps even an extra day—to enjoy this beautiful city, the final stop of this unforgettable “Cantabrian experience.”

The cuisine aboard the **Transcantábrico Gran Lujo** is a celebration of the flavours of northern Spain. **Chef Nerea Fernández**, with experience in renowned restaurants, creates incredible dishes using high-quality local products from each region the train passes through.

Breakfasts include artisanal pastries, Iberian cured meats, and regional sweets such as sobaos pasiegos or carballones, depending on the area being travelled. In addition, passengers enjoy dinners in external Michelin-starred restaurants.

The wine list features a carefully curated selection of denominations of origin from northern Spain, perfectly paired with each dish.

In short, the gastronomic experience aboard the Transcantábrico Gran Lujo is a combination of tradition and sophistication, allowing passengers to enjoy the very best of northern Spanish cuisine while travelling through breathtaking landscapes in an atmosphere of luxury and comfort.



Dining car and detail of one of the restaurant's tables





Huelva

Land of sea, ham and endless light

Words: Redacción Photography: Agencia Destino Huelva

Mountain or sea, hiking or golf, local cuisine or a quiet beach. Huelva doesn't force you to choose. In this province of southwestern Andalusia, every landscape offers a different plan — and they're all close by. It's a complete destination, yet free of crowds: trails through the mountains, pine-covered countryside, wide beaches, and tables where flavour runs deep. Here, the journey adapts to the pace of those who live it.

In the far southwest of Andalusia, bathed in Europe's most generous light and watched over by the Atlantic, Huelva shines with a character all its own. It doesn't need grand gestures to win hearts: its charm lies in authenticity, in the warmth of its landscapes and its people, in that perfect balance between land and sea that makes it one of the most complete — and least crowded — destinations in southern Spain.

Huelva is not a place to be rushed. It invites you to take your time — to feel, to observe, to enjoy. From the pulse of history that flows through its villages to the calm of its beaches facing the open ocean, everything in Huelva speaks of real, unspoilt beauty. A destination that reveals itself step by step — and once discovered, leaves a lasting mark.

The sunset light over the dunes, the freshness of the air among ancient cork oaks, the salty taste of freshly boiled white prawns... Huelva is not just seen, it is tasted and heard. It is lived with all five senses. A terrestrial paradise where sun, nature, culture, golf and gastronomy don't compete — they complement one another in perfect harmony.

Culture and heritage: a universal province

To speak of Huelva is to speak of history. Here, in a corner of the province known as La Rábida, one of humanity's most momentous chapters began: the discovery of America. The Monastery of La Rábida, austere and full of symbolism, was the place where Christopher Columbus found both spiritual and logistical support to embark on his voyage into the unknown. Just a few steps away, at the Muelle de las Carabelas, replicas of the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa María await, ready to transport visitors back to the 15th century.

But Huelva's cultural legacy goes far beyond Columbus' journey. In Moguer, birthplace of Nobel Prize-winning author Juan Ramón Jiménez, time seems to stand still among whitewashed houses and quiet squares. The Monastery of Santa Clara, the poet's legacy, and his immortal *Platero y yo* continue to echo on every corner. Palos de la Frontera, Niebla, and Aroche are other names that invite a slow-paced discovery of a richly layered past. And then there is the popular devotion, so deeply Andalusian, which takes shape each year in the *Romería del Rocío*—one of the most moving and widely attended religious and festive events in Spain.

To this is added a unique British heritage. In the capital, traces of English presence linked to mining—such as the Barrio Reina Victoria or the old loading pier of the Rio Tinto Company—lend an industrial, Victorian atmosphere that further enriches the diverse soul of this land.

Living nature: Doñana, the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche

For those seeking direct contact with nature, Huelva is a little-known gem. To the south, Doñana National Park reveals its immense biodiversity. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this natural sanctuary is home to marshes, shifting dunes, unspoilt beaches and forests where more than 300 species of birds and emblematic mammals such as the Iberian lynx and the red deer coexist.

Doñana is not just a park: it is a symbol of conservation, a place where life follows its own rhythms. Exploring it—on foot, on horseback or in authorised vehicles—is a moving experience, both for its beauty and for the majestic silence that envelops it.

To the north, the **Sierra de Aracena** and Picos de Aroche offers a completely different, yet equally fascinating, landscape. It is a sea of holm oaks and cork trees that shelters charming white villages such as **Alájar**, **Linares de la Sierra** or **Fuenteheridos**. In Aracena, the heart of the sierra, the Gruta de las Maravillas astonishes with a subterranean universe of stalactites, stalagmites and crystal-clear lakes, sculpted by water over thousands of years.

This region is ideal for **active tourism**: hiking, cycling routes, birdwatching or simply getting lost along rural trails and breathing in fresh air. When night falls, the sky becomes a blanket of stars. Here, artificial light barely exists, and the Milky Way appears with a clarity rarely found elsewhere in Europe.



1

- 1.- Cave of Las Maravillas
- 2.- Cycling on the Rio Tinto
- 3.- Trails through the mountains of Huelva



2



3



1

Between the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir, more than 120 kilometres of golden beaches offer a haven of calm and unspoilt nature



2

4

- 1.- Mazagón Beach
- 2.- Isla Cristina, Punta del Caiman Beach
- 3.- El Rocío Church
- 4.- Aerial view of Punta Umbría

3



Sun and beach: A dreamlike coastline

If there's one thing that defines the Huelva coastline, it's the sense of space. No crowds, no skyscrapers. More than 120 kilometres of wide, golden, unspoilt beaches stretch between the Guadiana and Guadalquivir rivers, bathed by clean waters and open to the Atlantic.

Isla Canela, Isla Cristina, Punta Umbría, Mata-lascañas... each beach has its own character, but they all share a gentle rhythm—perfect for those seeking to disconnect. They are ideal for families, for evening walks, water sports, or simply lying in the sun without a care in the world.

Tourist infrastructure is excellent, yet it doesn't disturb the harmony of the surroundings. Quality hotels, charming restaurants, well-kept beach bars, and protected natural areas such as the **Marismas del Odiel**—a true haven for birdwatchers—exist in balance. It's hard to imagine a destination where tranquillity and comfort are so perfectly combined.

GOLF: A game of nature and elegance

Huelva is also a well-kept secret for golf enthusiasts. With courses scattered along the coast and inland, this province offers a different kind of golfing experience: more relaxed, more in tune with nature, and free from the crowds of better-known destinations.

Designed by renowned architects, the golf courses in Huelva stand out for their technical quality and privileged surroundings. Playing here means teeing off among pine forests, dunes or dehesas, with birdsong as your soundtrack. On the coast, the Atlantic breeze adds an extra challenge; inland, the silence and beauty of the landscape make for an unforgettable round.

Many of these courses are part of top-level resorts that also offer wellness, gastronomy and accommodation services—making Huelva an increasingly appreciated golf destination for both national and international players



Golf courses by the sea



Pink flamingos in Doñana



Coquinas (clams) and wine in El Rompido



Jabugo jam

Gastronomy: A feast for the senses

Huelva's cuisine is one of its greatest sources of pride. Few provinces can boast such variety and quality. In the north, Jamón de Jabugo, with its Protected Designation of Origin, reigns supreme. Cured in natural cellars thanks to the climate and mountain air, each slice embodies centuries of tradition and know-how passed down through generations.

Alongside it are products such as artisanal cheeses, seasonal mushrooms, chestnuts, Iberian cured meats, game meats, and rosemary-scented honey—ingredients that complete a culinary repertoire rich in both simplicity and depth.

On the coast, the sea offers up its finest treasures. Huelva's white prawn is a unique delicacy, but it is far from alone: coquinas, clams, almadraba tuna, chocos, sole and other local species take centre stage in recipes that honour the product and enhance its flavour. Freshness is a given. Often, what ends up on the plate was pulled from the sea that very morning.

The local wine also speaks with its own voice: the wines of the Condado de Huelva, made with native grape varieties such as zalema, pair elegantly with any meal. And to round things off, excellent extra virgin olive oils and a traditional confectionery where Moorish and Christian influences blend in perfect harmony.



www.destinohuelva.org



Romanesque art in León:

A monumental journey along the way

From the silence of cloisters to the power of sculpted façades, León offers travellers one of the greatest concentrations of Romanesque art along the Jacobean route

Words: Redacción - **Photography:** Turisleón - **Photo:** Royal Colegiata of San Isidoro



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ted portals, León
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Romanesque art is not merely a medieval artistic expression; in León, it is the visible trace of a cultural revolution that travelled alongside the pilgrims. Thanks to the Camino de Santiago, this province became one of the main centres for the spread of Romanesque art across the Iberian Peninsula, fusing spirituality, architecture, and political power.

The first major example of this legacy is found in Sahagún. There, churches such as San Tirso and San Lorenzo showcase a unique variant of Romanesque: brick-built or Mudéjar Romanesque. A few kilometres away, the monastery of San Pedro de las Dueñas houses capitals considered among the finest in Spanish Romanesque.

The city of León was the true epicentre. **The Royal Collegiate Church of San Isidoro**, with the frescoes of its Royal Pantheon—regarded as the finest Romanesque paintings in Europe—represents the artistic pinnacle of this style in the northwest of the peninsula. Its museum, housed within the former monastery and the Palace of the Kings of León, preserves unique relics such as the Chalice of Doña Urraca and the Banner of Baeza. It is also a site of historical significance: here, in 1188, the first parliamentary courts in Europe were held—recognised today by UNESCO.

León's Romanesque heritage also finds expression in sculpture. The León Museum holds exceptional pieces such as the Carrizo Christ, carved in ivory with inlays, and the Calvary of Corullón—both outstanding examples of medieval religious sculpture.

To the west, the Camino passes through Astorga, Ponferrada and Villafranca del Bierzo, where churches blend simplicity with symbolism. Notable is the church of Santiago de Villafranca and its "Door of Forgiveness", which granted indulgence to ill pilgrims. In Corullón, the churches of San Esteban and San Miguel, austere and adorned with carved canecillos, embody the most rural and expressive side of Romanesque art.

Further north, along the Camino de San Salvador, the Collegiate Church of Arbas del Puerto links the Leonese tradition with that of Asturias. And throughout the province, small rural churches—in Riaño, Carracedelo or Rabanal del Camino—preserve fragments of an art that once shaped the Leonese landscape and that, centuries later, still speaks powerfully to those who know how to look.

León

Capital of the Romanesque



Chalice of Doña Urraca

In the heart of the 11th century, León was a vibrant city, open to the world through the Camino de Santiago and established as the seat of a kingdom influential in European politics. Today, that trace of power and spirituality lives on in its extraordinary Romanesque legacy, one of the richest and best-preserved in Spain.

The undisputed emblem is the **Basilica of San Isidoro**, an architectural jewel built upon a Visigothic temple and transformed into the pantheon of the kings of the Kingdom of León. Its sober Romanesque façade, semicircular arches, capitals adorned with animals and biblical scenes, and interior frescoes form a remarkably coherent and beautiful ensemble. Inside lies the Royal Pantheon, known as the “**Sistine Chapel of the Romanesque**”, home to one of the most important pictorial cycles in medieval European art. Painted in the 12th century, the frescoes depict scenes from the agricultural calendar, the Last Judgement and the Resurrection, with an impressive mastery of colour, narrative and composition.

The San Isidoro complex also includes a museum that houses unique pieces. Among them is the legendary **Chalice of Doña Urraca**, made of onyx and precious stones and traditionally linked to the Holy Grail. Also noteworthy are the **ivory and silver reliquaries**, the **Pendón de Baeza**—considered the oldest standard in Spain—and a Viking artefact from a royal burial site. The Romanesque cloister, which hosted the first European parliamentary courts in 1188, reinforces the historical character of this site, declared by UNESCO as the Cradle of Parliamentarism.

Alongside San Isidoro, the city offers other key monuments of Leonese Romanesque. **The Church of Santa María del Camino**, or del Mercado, built in the 12th century, follows the typology of the royal collegiate church, with an elegant western portal, semicircular apses, and figurative capitals. It served as a pilgrims’ temple, parish church, and popular gathering place.

Also within the historic centre rises the **Torreón de Doña Berenguela**, a vestige of the former palace of Alfonso VII, the Emperor. Though altered over time, it retains its original defensive structure and evokes the imperial grandeur León experienced in the 12th century.

Among churches, frescoes and centuries-old walls, León holds one of the most complete Romanesque heritages in Spain

Carrizo Christ, León Museum





The Church of Santa María del Mercado

Detail of the Church of Santa María del Mercado




León Cathedral, although famous for its Gothic architecture and stained glass, stands on the site of an earlier Romanesque structure, and still preserves remains of the original apse and crypt. It represents the stylistic evolution from Romanesque to full Gothic, in a journey that links faith, art and light.

The Church of San Marcelo, of Romanesque origin, has undergone various modifications over the centuries, but retains its floor plan and elements from the 12th century. Associated with the Knights Templar and civic power, it was for centuries a central place of worship in Leonese urban life.

Finally, the **León Museum**, housed in the historic Pallarés building, preserves two exceptional Romanesque sculptures: the **Carrizo Christ**, carved in ivory and decorated with gold and jet, and the **Calvary of Corullón**, one of the oldest examples of polychrome wooden sculpture in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

In León, Romanesque is not just an artistic style: it is a way of looking into the past, of understanding history, and of travelling—through art—into the spirit of a city that was once a royal capital and still today preserves its monumental vocation.





The Royal Pantheon of San Isidoro is one of the most important pictorial ensembles in European Romanesque art. Beneath its vaults rest the monarchs of the former Kingdom of León, surrounded by an exceptional cycle of frescoes that has endured for nearly a thousand years as a testament to art, faith and history

Photo: Royal Pantheon at San Isidoro

SAHAGÚN

Where Romanesque art is transformed

Along the Camino de Santiago, the Leonese town of Sahagún is much more than a stop along the way. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, it became a key point in the evolution of Romanesque art, giving rise to a unique variant: Mudéjar Romanesque. Here, traditional stone gave way to brick, and the sobriety of Romanesque architecture began to engage with Islamic influences, resulting in a hybrid style that would mark an era.

The most representative example of this transition is the **Church of San Tirso**, built in the early 12th century. It is one of the first Romanesque churches in the peninsula to be built entirely of brick. Its elegant three-tiered tower, walls adorned with blind arcades, and use of construction techniques typical of Muslim alarifes make it a pioneering work. Although partially

reconstructed in the 20th century, it retains its original expressive power.

Very nearby is the **Church of San Lorenzo**, from the first half of the 13th century, which follows the same construction scheme: brickwork, horseshoe arches, a tripartite apse, and a vertical tower that dominates the ensemble. Its basilica layout and the decorative use of bands and horizontal friezes reinforce the link between Christian tradition and Mudéjar influences.

Another example of this aesthetic is the **Church of La Peregrina**, a former Franciscan convent that also served as a pilgrims' hospital. Its sober architecture, recently restored, maintains the characteristic brick harmony of the area. Today it hosts cultural activities, though it still preserves its hospitable spirit.

Church of San Tirso





Arch of San Benito

On the outskirts of town, beside the River Valde-
raduey, the **Hermitage of the Virgen del Puente**
welcomes travellers with its simple, solid silhoue-
tte. Of Mudéjar-Romanesque origin, it features a
single nave and a polygonal apse that reflect the
functional austerity of medieval rural churches.

Just five kilometres away, the **Monastery of
San Pedro de las Dueñas** completes the rou-
te. Founded in the 10th century as a convent
for nuns, its Romanesque church preserves fi-
nely carved historiated capitals depicting biblical
scenes, fantastic figures and vegetal motifs. Its
single nave, thick walls and sober decoration
convey a contemplative spirituality that defines
monastic Romanesque.

Sahagún represents not only a crossing point for
pilgrims, but also the transition from one style to
another. Here, Romanesque does not disappear:
it transforms, leaving a lasting mark on the lands-
cape and the history of art.

Interior of the Church of la Peregrina



De Astorga a Ponferrada

Romanesque art among the mountains



Church of Santo Tomás de las Ollas

After leaving Sahagún behind, the Camino climbs towards higher ground, where the Romanesque style—though more austere—continues to shape the landscape with quiet strength. In **Astorga**, a city with two thousand years of history, Romanesque traces can still be found in the foundations of its cathedral and other early structures, marking a time of both transition and continuity. From here, the Jacobean route splits into two branches that reunite in **Ponferrada**, crossing valleys where small churches and rural chapels mark the pilgrim's path. These are examples of a modest yet well-preserved Romanesque, integrated into nature and the everyday life of local communities.

Within the municipality of **Ponferrada**, the medieval legacy is enriched by pre-Romanesque landmarks such as **Santo Tomás de las Ollas**, **San Pedro de Montes** and **Peñalba de Santiago**—sites of great symbolic value. But the Romanesque shines especially in **Santa María de Vizvayo**, with its apse decorated in taqueado jaqués and delicate vegetal motifs; in the Church of **La Asunción in Villanueva de Valdueza**, which preserves the memory of Governor Lope García de Castro, a key figure of the 16th century; and in **San Martín de Salas de los Barrios**, with its elegant portico and sculptural details that recall the splendour of rural Romanesque in El Bierzo.

Villafranca del Bierzo

Romanesque finale in Leonese lands

Villafranca del Bierzo, embraced by the Burbia and Valcarce rivers, is the last major town on the Camino in the province of León. Its history is closely tied to the splendour of Romanesque art, a style that left here a profound and symbolic mark.

The finest example is the **Church of Santiago**, declared a Site of Cultural Interest (Bien de Interés Cultural), whose most famous feature is the Puerta del Perdón (Door of Forgiveness). This richly decorated entrance offered indulgence to ill pilgrims who were unable to continue to Santiago. That act of mercy made the church a sacred place within the Camino itself.

Another Romanesque treasure is the **Church of San Juan or San Fiz de Visoña**, also a Site of Cultural Interest, located on the road towards Corullón. Built in the 12th century atop the remains of a Roman structure, it stands out for its sober beauty. Its south portal, with recessed archivolt and simple columns, conveys the serenity of an architecture built to endure time.

Church of Santiago



Detail of the portico of the Church of Santiago

Villafranca is not merely a stop along the Jacobean route: it is a place where art, faith, and history are deeply intertwined, giving shape to a space rich in meaning. Here, in the last major enclave before crossing into Galicia, every church, every street, and every stone seems to whisper a message of welcome to the traveller. It is a final moment of pause and reflection before entering the mountains that lead to Compostela.



Corullón: art in the heart of El Bierzo

Nestled among the mountains, Corullón preserves two gems of rural Romanesque art in El Bierzo: **San Esteban** and San Miguel, both declared Sites of Cultural Interest (Bien de Interés Cultural). San Esteban dazzles with its western portal, linked to the Compostela workshops, and its rare porch-tower. Its carved canecillos depict scenes of everyday life and the seven deadly sins, addressing both the faithful and pilgrims.

Very nearby, **San Miguel** surprises with a façade inspired by San Isidoro de León, sculpted heads, and a portal adorned with taqueado jaqués. Its former Calvary, one of the oldest Romanesque wooden sculptures in the region, is now held in the León Museum.



Church of Corullón

High-altitude Romanesque, legend and architecture come together in Santa María de Arbas, the final great jewel on the Camino de San Salvador. A unique church that blends the pilgrim's spirituality with the frontier art between León and Asturias

Santa María de Arbas: Romanesque among the mountains

Along the Camino de San Salvador, which links León with Oviedo, stands the Collegiate Church of Santa María de Arbas, a gem of high-mountain Romanesque. Rebuilt in 1216 by order of Alfonso IX, its basilica layout with three naves and three apses is unusual within the province. The western portal stands out for its carved modillones, featuring ox and bear heads—figures central to a medieval legend that blends devotion, animals, and miraculous construction.

The last great expression of Leonese Romanesque, Arbas bridges the mountain art of Asturias with the heart of the old Kingdom of León

Church of Santa María de Arbas



Rural Romanesque: traces in living stone

While the great cities left us cathedrals, collegiate churches and monumental temples, Romanesque art also expressed itself in more humble forms: rural churches built with few resources, yet rich in symbolic intent. Small, single-nave buildings, roofed with timber frameworks or barrel vaults, with semicircular apses facing east and southern portals. Without towers, they feature triangular bell gables, masonry walls and round-arched openings framed in ashlar. These temples are time capsules that have withstood the centuries.

Many have disappeared, but those that remain still preserve apses, portals, canecillos or capitals adorned with biblical scenes, fantastic creatures or moral symbols. In the province of León, rural Romanesque dots entire regions: in El Bierzo, it can be found in **Cacabelos, Carracedelo, Pios and San Juan de Montealegre**; in the Riaño mountains, in **San Martín de Valdetuéjar, Puente Almuhey or Siero de la Reina**; and further south, in Tierra de Campos and Maragatería, in places like **Gordaliza del Pino, Lagunas de Somoza, Rabanal del Camino or Turienzo de los Caballeros**.

Beside them, great monasteries flourished: **Sahagún, Carrizo, Carracedo, Gradefes, Espinareda or San Pedro de Montes**. Some Benedictine, others Cistercian. All of them bear witness to a spirituality that transformed architecture—blending strength, simplicity and light. Leonese Romanesque remains alive, rooted in its landscape.

images of the Monastery of Gradefes



Leonese rural
Romanesque is
an art without
ostentation,
born of faith and
local stone. Iso-
lated, resilient,
and deeply tied
to the soul of the
landscape



Bridge Almuhey and the sanctuary of the Virgin of La Velilla





Lignus Crucis

The Lebaniego Way

A route through tradition, nature, and faith

Words: Diana Morello - Photography: Camino Lebaniego - Gema Fernández López

In a land where the peaks kiss the clouds and the valleys guard centuries-old stories, the Camino Lebaniego presents itself as an experience that transcends a mere pilgrimage route. Declared a World Heritage Site in 2015 and set to become the epicentre of the Jubilee of Religious Tourism in 2025, this 72-kilometre journey between San Vicente de la Barquera and the Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana becomes, year after year, a voyage inward: from landscape to soul, from past to present, from faith to fulfilment.

A journey that begins by the sea

The adventure begins in San Vicente de la Barquera, where the salt air of the Cantabrian Sea accompanies the traveller's first breath. This fishing town not only boasts its Church of Santa María de los Ángeles, the bridge of La Maza and its medieval castle, but also a cuisine that pays homage to the sea: stews, baked fish and, of course, sorropotún, the flagship of the local recipe book.

From here, the Camino leaves the coast behind and enters the green valleys, passing by Romanesque chapels, villages like Cades — with its historic forge — and river paths such as the Nansa, a route of centuries-old trees and waterfalls that whisper stories of salmon and ancient travellers.

Where the pilgrim becomes a mountaineer

As the journey progresses, the landscape becomes more rugged and the mountains rise like guardians of mystery. The mountain passes become natural viewpoints, and the silence of the forest accompanies contemplation. Places such as the chestnut grove of Pendes, with its thousand-year-old trees, or the Santa Catalina viewpoint, watched over by figures from Cantabrian mythology, reinforce the feeling that along the Camino everything is alive: the land, the myths... and the memories.

The most demanding stage climbs up to the Church of Santa Juliana in Lafuente, a Romanesque jewel from the 12th century, and descends towards villages like Cicera or Lebeña, where pre-Romanesque art appears in the Mozarabic Church of Santa María. This entire stretch is a feast for the senses, and also for the palate, with products born of this generous land: quesucos from Liébana, cocido lebaniego made with pedrosillano chickpeas, or Tudanca beef, a native breed that sustains Cantabrian gastronomic tradition



View of San Vicente de la Barquera





Potes and the final embrace of the sanctuary

The route culminates in Potes, considered one of the most beautiful villages in Spain. Its heraldic houses, cobbled alleyways and vibrant rural life invite visitors to pause. Here, in addition to tasting artisanal orujo or sweets such as canónigos or fri-suelos, one can visit wool or wood workshops, family-run distilleries, accompany a shepherd in the heights of Bejes or take part in activities linked to the region's natural heritage.

Just four kilometres away stands the monastery of Santo Toribio, both destination and symbol, home to the Lignum Crucis (the largest known fragment of Christ's cross recognised by the Church). Reaching the temple, embraced by Mount La Viorna, is not only a milestone for the believer, but also for any traveller who sought to find something along the way: peace, silence, emotion, or simply the joy of having arrived.

2025: a year to walk with purpose

With the Jubilee of Religious Tourism as the major spiritual and cultural event of the year, 2025 becomes the ideal moment

to walk this path that unites history, nature, spirituality and pleasure. Cantabria is, in fact, the only region in the world through which two jubilee pilgrimage routes pass, both declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Each has its own Holy Year of Jubilee: the Coastal Camino, towards Santiago de Compostela, and the Camino Lebaniego itself, leading to the Monastery of Santo Toribio in Liébana—remarkable for its ability to unite the sacred and the everyday, the inner and the outer.

And if there's one thing this path offers, it's transformation. One does not return the same after crossing its valleys, sharing a table with strangers, or gazing at the Picos de Europa from a stone shelter. Because more than a destination, the Camino Lebaniego is a complete experience.

Potes Confluencia del río Quiviesa con el río Deva



That's the way Lebaniego is not only walked with the feet, but also with the heart. It is an invitation to pause, to listen to the silence of the mountains, and to rediscover what is essential. Because between each step and each encounter, this path leaves a mark that does not fade. And in the end, more than having arrived at a place, one feels they have returned to themselves



Monastery of Santo Toribio, end of the route

Camino Lebaniego, riverside path
Street in Potes, traditional architecture and flower-filled balconies

Tips for the 2025 pilgrim

If you decide to embark on the adventure of the Camino Lebaniego in 2025, here are some tips to make the most of your experience:

- Prepare your body and mind: the route can be demanding, especially in its mountainous sections, so it's important to be in good physical and mental shape.
- Visit the villages at your own pace: along the way, you'll find charming villages such as Potes and Cades, perfect for taking a break and immersing yourself in their history and traditions.
- Embrace the spirit of the Jubilee: take advantage of the Jubilee of Religious Tourism to connect with the spirituality of the journey, regardless of your beliefs.
- Take your time: the route is not only a physical pilgrimage, but also an opportunity to disconnect and reflect. Take your time to enjoy the landscape, the people and nature.





eco destinations

Alcalá de Guadaira

Sevilla

Words and Photos: Jose A. Muñoz

Alcalá de Guadaira, Located just a few kilometres from Seville, it has become in recent years a key reference point for those walking the Camino de Santiago from the south of Spain, integrating historical heritage, sustainability and ecotourism into a balanced and authentic proposal. This stretch forms part of the ancient Via Augusta, a Roman route that connected Cádiz with Seville and later with the Via de la Plata towards Santiago de Compostela, and which is now experiencing a significant revival as a route for pilgrimage and sustainable hiking.

Historically, Alcalá de Guadaira has been shaped by its direct relationship with the river that bears its name, the Guadaira, a central axis for the town's economic, social and environmental life. The river has influenced not only the landscape but also the local economy, which in past centuries was sustained by milling and breadmaking.

The flour mills are direct witnesses of that era, some dating back to Arab times, others to the medieval period, and still standing today—partially functioning but now converted into cultural symbols and reminders of the region's ecological and heritage memory.

The Camino de Santiago, in its passage through Alcalá, makes use of these cultural and natural elements to develop a sustainable strategy. In 2019, the City Council of Alcalá de Guadaira officially presented the "Via Augusta of the Camino de Santiago", with the clear intention of promoting a type of tourism that respects both the natural environment and historical heritage. The city has set up specific places for credential stamping, such as the Tourist Office and the Museum, encouraging pilgrims to discover the local cultural and environmental values. One of the key stages of this Jacobean route connects Alcalá de Guadaira with Seville, covering approxima-

tely twenty kilometres. It begins at the emblematic Church of Santiago el Mayor, located in the heart of the town, and continues towards the distinctive Dragon Bridge—a modern and iconic structure that symbolises the town's urban renewal. From there, the path runs alongside the Guadaira River, crossing natural and cultural landmarks such as the mills of Realaje, Cerraja and Pelay Correa, which form part of a milling complex declared an Asset of Cultural Interest (Bien de Interés Cultural).

These mills, once the economic engines of the area, have been restored with environmental criteria that respect their original structure, fully integrated into the local strategy for sustainability and preservation of the river environment. Today, some of the mills serve as interpretive spaces, promoting environmental education and awareness about the importance of preserving the cultural landscape of the Guadaira.

The peri-urban parks along the riverbank represent another major investment in ecotourism. In recent years, Alcalá has developed an extensive network of footpaths and greenways that allow visitors not only to explore the milling heritage but also to enjoy the local biodiversity.

Oromana Park is the best example of this commitment to sustainability. This protected and carefully managed natural area is home to various native plant and animal species, serving as a vital ecological corridor for the metropolitan area of Seville.

From a heritage perspective, Alcalá offers a remarkable variety of monuments alongside its ecological initiatives. The medieval fortress, the Castle of Alcalá, stands proudly on high ground, offering panoramic views over the natural and urban surroundings. Recently restored according to architectural and landscape sustainability criteria, the castle is seamlessly integrated into the town's sustainable development and tourism project.

Alcalá de Guadaira, where historical heritage and bread-making tradition come together in a landscape of mills, medieval fortresses and authentic flavours, revealing the very essence of Andalusia

Panoramic view of Alcalá de Guadaira



Castle of Alcalá de Guadaira



Dragon Bridge and Park





Guadaira riverside park
One of the old mills that can be seen in the park



The respect for traditional building techniques, combined with discreet and efficient interventions from...

From an energy perspective, this has made it possible to recover this historic site as a cultural and environmental landmark.

Tourist management of the Jacobean route from Alcalá also takes into account the availability of accommodation adapted to this sustainable model. Pilgrims' hostels, with low environmental impact and often managed by local associations, complement the conventional hotel offering, providing alternatives that are more in tune with the natural and social environment. This approach creates opportunities for the local economy and contributes to a more authentic experience for the pilgrim.

In short, Alcalá de Guadaira is today an example of how a municipality can combine its historical and cultural past with the contemporary demands of ecotourism and sustainability.

The Camino de Santiago here is more than a religious or spiritual journey; it is also an opportunity to discover a balanced and responsible model of tourism and heritage management, where respect for the natural environment, the recovery of historical heritage, and the appreciation of local identity come together to form a unique and holistic experience in the south of Spain.



Escultura del pajineta



Fuente de azulejo en la Plaza del Duque



Church of Santiago el Mayor



THE VINEYARDS OF PARIS

SEED OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Words: Alejandro y Luis Paadín - **Photos:** Archivo y sortirasparis

La The City of Light par excellence is widely known for its bohemian and unyielding spirit; a capital of fashion and elegance for centuries, its streets breathe history and whisper legends alike. With more than 2 million inhabitants and over 100 km², it is impossible not to discover a new Paris with each visit. Today, we will explore one of its most overlooked facets, one that pays homage to a once-thriving industry: viticultural Paris.

To do so, we must travel back to 18th-century Paris, a time when the growth of a glorious city clashed with the economic interests of the Ferme générale, the General Tax Collection Company. During the Middle Ages, more than half of what is now the city was a major wine-producing hub, with vineyards covering much of the hills of Montmartre, Belleville and other areas now urbanised. Monks and religious communities cultivated vines both for

their own use and to trade in the bustling capital; although the quality of Parisian wine was never exceptional, its proximity to the market ensured its popularity.

Between 1784 and 1791, perimeter walls were built following a layout similar to that of today's boulevards Saint-Germain and Montmartre, under the order of the aforementioned Ferme générale. At the height of monarchical splendour, their purpose was not defensive, but rather served the greedy collection of taxes (octroi) on goods entering the city. Encircling a much smaller Paris than today, these walls became highly unpopular, symbolising fiscal control and contributing to the discontent that preceded the French Revolution. The droit d'entrée was the final customs duty that foreign goods had to pay to enter the lucrative Parisian market in the 18th century. It was not a new tax — the system had been in place for nearly four centuries and represented the city's main source of income.

At the time, wine was more a staple food than a luxury item (with the exception of the most prized vintages favoured by the court), and within the city walls its price could be three times higher than in the surrounding villages. Alongside this system, a network of smuggling gradually developed, in which wine was one of the most profitable commodities. Hundreds of smugglers operating from outside the walls often used a wide variety of methods to move their goods while evading tax controls—from home-made catapults to hot air balloons.

But without a doubt, the most popular method was the use of underground tunnels that had once served as quarries for the city's civil constructions. Their semi-abandoned state and labyrinthine complexity made effective policing impossible, so smugglers, bandits and thieves found in them the perfect allies for their operations. In particular, the vast quarries of Montrouge and Gentilly were well known to the authorities, as was made clear during the trial of the Montsouris smugglers. As the authorities began to uncover the smuggling networks and identify those involved, the contraband systems adapted accordingly.

One of the most notable events took place on the night of 11 July 1789. The smugglers Monnier and Darbon gathered a small group of accomplices to set fire to one of the strategic customs posts at the entrance to Paris: the Barrière Blanche. The following day, the spark ignited a

blaze and similar checkpoints burned along roads connecting neighbouring towns. On 13 July (the day before the storming of the Bastille), the customs stations in the districts of St-Martin and St-Antoine met the same fate—and the outcome of 14 July is well known to all. Under the pretext of the country's political and social situation, Monnier was hailed as the hero of the Barrière Blanche, but in truth, before the destruction of the checkpoints, this shrewd trafficker had already prepared the logistics to move his goods through the breached barrier.

The tax was repealed in 1791 but partially reinstated in 1798, as this income was essential to maintain public services and the entire Parisian bureaucratic structure. It is therefore no surprise that a network of *guinguettes*—"country inns" where Parisians went to drink cheaply—flourished on the outskirts of the city. Some of these districts developed their own way of life and identity around this tradition, and today we can still find vineyards scattered through some of the most iconic neighbourhoods of Paris.

Clos Montmartre (18^{ème} arrondissement)

Perhaps the most famous vineyard in Paris is Clos Montmartre, planted in 1933 as a tribute to the vineyards established in the area since the Middle Ages.



THE VINEYARDS OF PARIS

Certainly, its 0.15 hectares with northern exposure and the jumble of planted grape varieties (with Pinot Noir and Gamay being the most prominent) mean it stands more as a memory of a glorious past than as a major producing Clos. For this reason, its barely 2,000 bottles produced each year are auctioned for charitable causes.

But what we love most about this vineyard is its historical significance in the area, back when Montmartre was not yet part of Paris (that wouldn't happen until 1860) and its vineyards did not have the concession rights to sell in the capital. Having lost this natural market, taverns began to spring up all over Montmartre to allow for on-site consumption of the wine that couldn't be sold elsewhere. This marked the origin of the famous cabarets and the unmistakable bohemian atmosphere of Paris's 18th arrondissement. Without doubt, it's worth preserving a couple of thousand vines in gratitude for services rendered.

Clos de Bercy (Parc de Bercy, 12ème arrondissement)

Other districts took advantage of their strategic position on the city wall's edge and by the banks of the Seine to develop a prolific commercial relationship. Such is the case of Bercy, whose cellars and warehouses, owned by merchants and wine brokers, gave rise to one of the most important wine markets in the world. The cobblestones and railings of Cour Saint-Émilion, along with the remnants of old railway tracks, still bear witness to that

glorious past. With just 350 vines planted in 1996 (nearly half of which were replanted a few years ago), its 660 m² produce around 250 litres of wine, mainly from Sauvignon and Chardonnay varieties. This small vineyard pays tribute to what was once one of the most prosperous wine and spirits markets in the world.

During the 17th century, long before the commune of Bercy was annexed by Paris in 1859, it was a strategic hub for the wine trade, as its proximity to the River Seine made barrel transport easier, and its location outside the city limits allowed it to avoid the droit d'entrée tax. This led to its growth as a major commercial centre for wine, with deals struck on the riverbank and a colourful array of wine cellars and taverns springing up in the area.

El Viñedo del Hospital Bretonneau

(18ème arrondissement)

This small vineyard is tended by residents of the geriatric hospital and is usually opened to the public during the Fête des Vendanges de Montmartre. The purpose of this vineyard differs greatly from that of its counterparts: far from serving a touristic or commemorative function, its nature is purely therapeutic. Many of the elderly residents at the hospital have a strong emotional bond with the land and have, at some point in their lives, cared for vineyards to varying degrees.





Looking after this vineyard provides therapeutic and emotional benefits, offering gardening activities that stimulate cognition, reduce stress and encourage moderate physical activity, while also promoting social integration, a sense of belonging and pride, and a connection with local history and culture through participation in the harvest and events such as the Fête des Vendanges.

Clos de Belleville (Parc de Belleville, 20ème arrondissement)

A small 500 m² plot, planted mainly with Meunier and Chardonnay, has served since 1992 as a tribute to the winemaking past of this formerly high-producing region. In the past, its vineyards produced wines such as Guinguet, a light wine drunk at the end of the day to quench thirst after a day's work, and piquette, a young, slightly sparkling wine. In fact, the terms guinguette and piquette have their roots in this winemaking tradition of Belleville.

Clos des Morillons (Parc Georges Brassens, 15ème arrondissement)

Planted in 1983 with 700 Pinot Noir vines on four broad, sunlit terraces, it also includes around 20 Meunier vines and produces just over 300 bottles of organic red wine, which are auctioned each September during the antique book fair at the Grande Halle du Marché du Livre Ancien. Although access is limited, the vineyard contributes to the park's biodiversity and represents a living link between Paris's winemaking history and its contemporary urban environment.

Clos des Chauffourniers (Butte Bergeyre, 19ème arrondissement)

Also known as La Vigne de la Butte Bergeyre, this small urban vineyard was planted in 1995 on the Butte Bergeyre, a quaint neighbourhood in Paris's 19th arrondissement, situated 100 metres above sea level. This 600 m² vineyard is composed mainly of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, producing around 100 litres of wine per year.

In addition, the Butte Bergeyre features a shared garden created in 2004, where residents grow a variety of plants and fruit trees, fostering a unique sense of community spirit. Although the vineyard is not regularly open to visitors, it can be admired from the outside while enjoying panoramic views of Paris, including the Basilica of the Sacré-Cœur.

Clos des Arènes (5ème arrondissement)

One of Paris's most recent vineyards is located in the Arènes de Lutèce, an ancient Gallo-Roman amphitheatre in the 5th arrondissement, which takes its name from the time when Paris was known as Lutetia (Lutèce in French). It features over 200 vines planted in 2021 of the PIWI varieties Floréal, Vidoc and Artaban, a reminder that Île-de-France was once one of the three most important wine-producing regions in France.

The vineyard is managed by the association Le Clos des Arènes, whose members actively take part in all maintenance and beautification tasks, from clearing the embankments to harvesting the grapes.

Where the Paadíns eat



Bateaux Parisien

Port de la Bourdonnais

Although its stunning views of the city may overshadow the carefully crafted menu, the experience of cruising along the Seine at dusk while enjoying a genuinely French meal is well worth it. Despite losing some of the charm of a full gastronomic experience, the journey itself is a true luxury.

Tf.: +33 (0)1 76 64 14 45

reservation@bateauxparisiens.com

Le Jules Verne

2ª planta de la Torre Eiffel

If you choose to invest in a top-tier gastronomic experience, the Michelin-starred restaurant located in the Eiffel Tower itself will not disappoint. It offers an extensive culinary selection with various tasting menus and an excellent wine list. Although you forgo the view of the iconic monument by the renowned French engineer, securing one of the coveted window seats will reward you with a truly unique panorama of the city.

Tf.: +33(0)1 83 77 34 34

reservation.jv@lejulesverne-paris.com



La Grille Montorgueil

50 Rue Montorgueil, 75002 Paris

Called “The House of the Good Lord,” this is a renovated bistro where market cuisine, a chalkboard menu, and the ever-present smiles of the staff make you feel truly at home. Signature dishes like their sublime homemade foie gras, frog legs, celeriac salad, and lemon meringue tart have become iconic. Let yourself be guided and enjoy a truly authentic Parisian dining experience

Tf.: +33 1 42 33 21 21

contact@lagrille.paris



Le Sully

6 boulevard Henri IV, 75004 PARIS

Father and son at the helm, this is a true classic spanning four generations since 1917, where homemade, traditional cuisine reigns supreme. You can enjoy breakfast from 7:30 a.m. and dine until 8:30 p.m. with a “non-stop” kitchen serving daily stews, duck magret, snails, cheeses, crêpes, chocolate mousse, and more — all accompanied by a respectable selection of wines, draught beers, and an extensive tea menu.

Tf.: +33 01 42 72 94 80



Legrand filles et fils

1 rue de la Banque, 75002 Paris

In this wine-lover's temple, you'll find nearly 10,000 references of still wines, sparkling wines, and French spirits. Since 1880, generation after generation, they have been on a relentless quest for innovation, talent, and terroir. Today, more than 350 small producers consider them their ambassadors. It also features a restaurant and hosts numerous Bacchic events. Since 2022, you can also find this wine boutique in Tokyo, Japan.

Tf.: +33 01 42 60 07 12

info@caves-legrand.com



Caves de Taillevent

228 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, 75008 Paris
130 rue de la Pompe, 75016 Paris

With shops in Beirut and Japan, in addition to their Faubourg Saint-Honoré location and another on Victor Hugo dedicated to wines and spirits, here you'll find over 2,000 references of French wines. In its cellar rest dreamlike bottles from a wide range of historic vintages. Quite possibly one of the most beautiful wine cellars in Paris.

Tel.: +33 1 45 61 14 09

lescaves.faubourg@taillevent.com





Paris among girls

A plan for fashion, brunch, and Pilates

Words and photos: Kiara Hurtado - kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com

Paris isn't just a place to visit, it's a place to savor, stroll around in heels, and experience with friends. This is the trip we all need to take at least once in our lives.

If cities had a gender, Paris would undoubtedly be a woman: divinity, haute couture, and beauty in its purest form: celebrated as one of Europe's great capitals, known for its multicultural charm and endless experiences, Paris exudes a distinct feminine energy, radiating elegance and high fashion. That's why discovering it among girlfriends should be on our list of must-live adventures at least once in a lifetime.

Though it may sound like a cliché, for many women, shopping is pure dopamine—an opportunity to admire and learn from a fashion legacy steeped in history. Since the 17th century, with the court of Louis XIV, Paris has set the standard in style, giving birth to haute couture through Charles Frederick Worth. This legacy paved the way for iconic maisons like Chanel, Dior, Saint Laurent, and Givenchy. Today, some of these have become must-visit museums, such as **La Galerie Dior** and the **Musée Yves Saint Laurent**.

Brunch & Pilates

Another plan, less talked about but increasingly popular among women, is the “Pilates & Brunch” moment. This is where the thematic connection is strengthened: a trend that aligns with the desire to care for the body, enjoy time with friends, and indulge in experiences that blend wellness, pleasure, and style. Like any major capital, charming cafés are booming, and Paris offers a vast selection. Some options provide a unique, photogenic, and highly shareable experience:

YUJ Yoga Studio, for instance, offers a low-light yoga experience at various locations across the city. With multiple classes each day, their first-floor café is adorned with floral decorations and serves excellent specialty coffee—a perfect spot to unwind post-session.

And once appetite kicks in, another must-visit is **La Pistacherie**. More than just a café, this boutique is a delicate and aromatic universe dedicated to a single star: the pistachio. From the shopfront itself, the entire space breathes pistachio, honouring this nut from start to finish. Here, you'll find filled croissants, specialty coffees, frothy lattes, and handcrafted pistachio cheesecakes..

Of course, it's also worth making a strategic stop at **Ladurée** to savour their famous macarons.

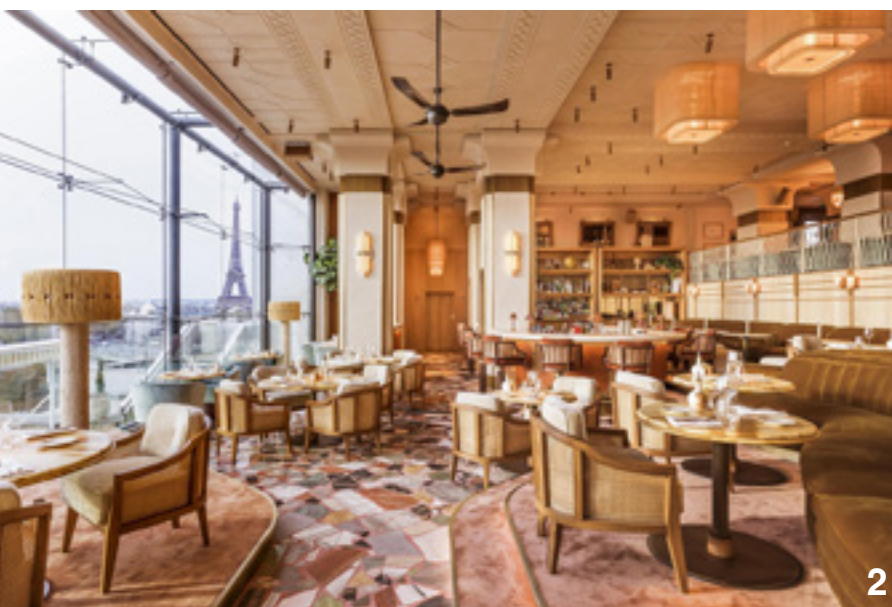




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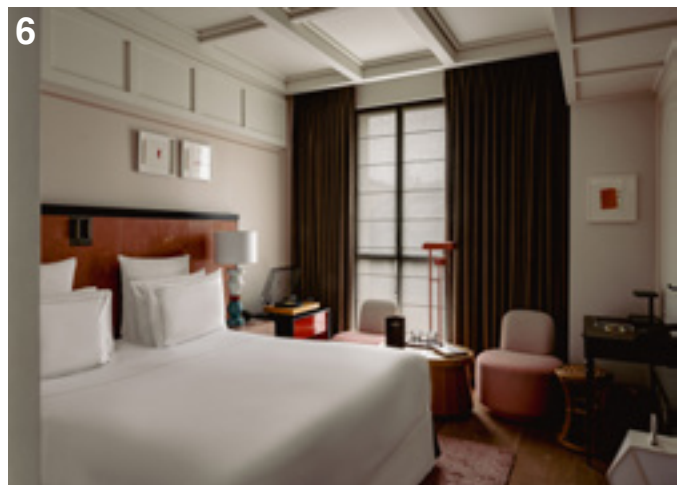
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- 1.- La Pistacherie
- 2.- Gigi restaurant
- 3.-Sacha Perrín, chef at Laia Monceau
- 4.-YUJ Yoga Studio
- 5.- Laia La Fuga Restaurant,
- 6.- Hotel Experimental Marais
- 7.- Laia Monceau restaurant, Mediterranean cuisine

Gastronomy in high heels

For those who are passionate about flavours, if you're among those who come to Paris determined to taste the very best—no matter the cost—L'Avenue is the place to be, where getting a reservation is an event in itself. Located on the exclusive Avenue Montaigne, this restaurant is a meeting point where fashion and gastronomy go hand in hand. Celebrities, fashion editors, and style lovers gather here, making L'Avenue a showcase of opulence, perfect for lunchtime indulgence.

When it comes to dinner, Paris never disappoints: there is always a place and a company to fall in love with and enjoy the grandeur of the city. Beyond fashion, Paris hosts some of the most renowned names in haute hospitality, who have found in the French capital their ideal stage, offering extravagant and refined culinary proposals.

One must-visit this season is Gigi Restaurant, perched on the rooftop of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. This venue has become a sanctuary where la dolce vita meets privileged views, accompanied by a blend of modern and classical live music that ignites the night. At Gigi, you come not only to dine but to dazzle, so your best outfits are a must.

Looking ahead to this summer, one of the city's latest hotspots is Laia Monceau, a modern gem in the heart of Paris' 8th arrondissement. Here, chef Sacha Perrin reinterprets haute Mediterranean cuisine with an exquisite fusion of Italian and French flavours. With a contemporary and sophisticated approach, Laia Monceau reflects the experience of its young talent, who has honed his craft in renowned kitchens such as Le Trianon Palace and Four Seasons George V. Moreover, its rooftop, La Fuga Rooftop, offers a stunning 360-degree view of the city, crowned by the Eiffel Tower in the background.

Resting is also a plan

Regarding hotels, Paris overflows with a wide variety of options. Just a few minutes from Montmartre, Le Grand Pigalle Experimental is a 4-star petit hotel located in the vibrant South Pigalle (SoPi) neighborhood. It offers a simple and effortless experience, where bohemian aesthetics and classic Parisian details reflect modern France. Its "bed & beverage"

concept integrates the hotel experience with an outstanding selection of wines and cocktails. On the ground floor is Frenchie Pigalle, the restaurant led by chef Gregory Marchand, presenting contemporary bistro cuisine with dishes like bacon scones and sweetbread nuggets with caviar. Its location is ideal, just steps from the iconic Montmartre neighborhood and the Moulin Rouge, perfect for exploring Parisian nightlife and culture.

If we are looking for an even more chic and elegant option, the Hotel Experimental Marais is the right choice. Recently opened in the Haut Marais district, this five-star hotel is a luxury haven offering the full French experience with a plan that pays homage to relaxation and fine gastronomy. In addition to its spacious and charming rooms, it houses the restaurant Temple & Chapon, with a menu created by the acclaimed French chef Mélanie Serre (Joël Robuchon, Louis Vins, L'Auberge du Bassin).

The Hotel Experimental Marais was redesigned by Tristan Auer, inspired by the Marais district, and is the group's third Parisian property, after Le Grand Pigalle Experimental and Grands Boulevards Experimental. Auer created an elegant neo-Gothic space with arches, stained glass windows, and an intimate atmosphere. In its spa area, the hotel features an indoor pool and is designed as the home of an epicurean traveler, with artworks and a warm color palette that evoke a refined and adventurous spirit.

In the heart of the Rías Baixas, where the Atlantic embraces the Galician coast and history mingles with the sea breeze, a new destination emerges, reinventing the hotel experience: Hotel Boutique Faro Silleiro. This historic lighthouse, which has guided sailors from Cape Silleiro since 1924, now opens its doors as an exclusive accommodation, perfectly blending maritime essence with contemporary luxury.

Hotel Faro Silleiro

Words: Redacción - Photography: Hotel Faro Silleiro

Architecture and design: a restoration project

The transformation of Faro Silleiro is the result of a carefully conceived and executed project over fourteen months. The technical direction was led by Vigo-based architect Pedro de la Puente, with construction carried out by Di Milano, and the fundamental involvement of Carpintería Vilas and Raúl Lamarca Interiorismo. Together, they have succeeded in respecting and enhancing the soul of the building, creating modern and comfortable spaces without losing the lighthouse's original essence.

The interior design, by Raúl Lamarca Interiorismo, is a constant tribute to the duality of sea and mountain, capturing an adventurous spirit through carefully selected materials and textures: wools, boucle fabrics, deep blues, and vibrant reds intertwine in custom-made furniture that harmoniously adapts to the building's unique architectural forms.

Facilities and rooms: luxury with views

This unique boutique hotel offers a total of 17 exterior rooms distributed over two floors: eight with direct views of the Atlantic Ocean and nine facing the mountains, each designed with its own distinctive character. Among its facilities, a panoramic pool stands out, with its water surface transforming into a spectacular balcony overlooking the sea. Additionally, guests have access to a fully equipped gym and comfortable changing rooms,



Stairs to climb up to the lighthouse

as well as outdoor terraces from which to admire the breathtaking beauty of the surroundings.

Breakfast details

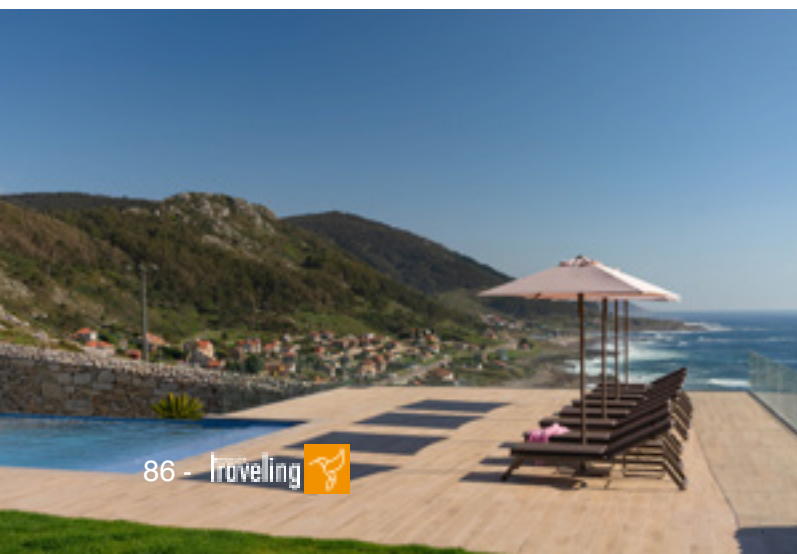
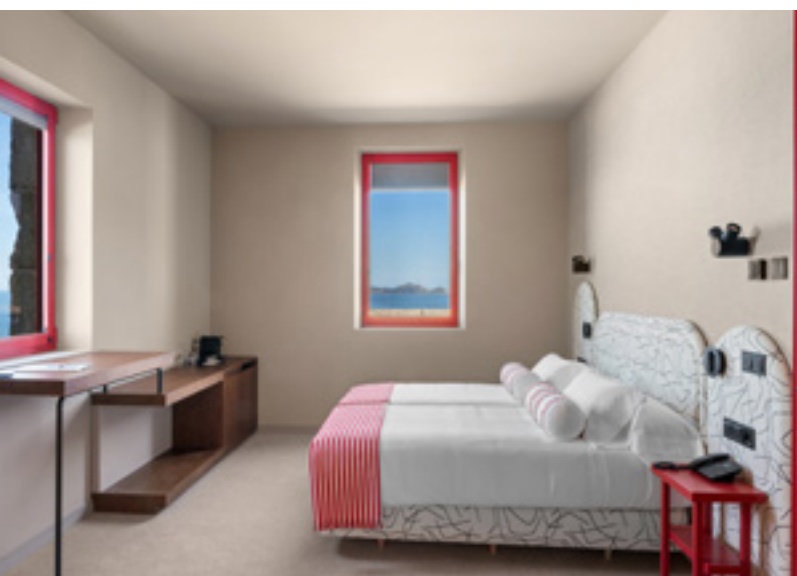


Gastronomy: flavors of the Atlantic

Complementing this high-level hotel project, the original Faro Silleiro, now renamed "Faro Pequeno", has also been restored, becoming an Atlantic Tavern that offers unique culinary experiences. Here, visitors can savour a cuisine based on local seafood products, such as prawn ceviche or squid with hints of mint and lime. This gastronomic space also serves as a meeting and resting point for pilgrims walking the Portuguese Coastal Way, providing additional services such as credential stamping and electric charging stations.

Strategic location: nature, culture, and heritage

The strategic location of Hotel Boutique Faro Silleiro is another of its major attractions. Situated just 23 minutes from Vigo Airport and approximately an hour and a quarter from Porto International Airport, it offers easy access to iconic towns such as Baiona, the renowned Bodegas del Rosal, the mouth of the Miño River in A Guarda, and numerous unspoiled beaches. Its proximity to the Portuguese Coastal Way adds further value for those travellers seeking a comprehensive experience that combines nature, culture, and heritage.



Commitment to sustainability and the community

Faro Silheiro's commitment to sustainability and local tourism development is unwavering. The 35-year administrative concession granted by the Port Authority of Vigo not only ensures the project's viability but also promotes a sustainable and responsible tourism model, with direct benefits for the local community and the natural environment.

Exclusive collaborations: Atlantic identity

A special partnership with the Galician fashion brand **elPulpo** puts the finishing touch on the hotel's value proposition. The staff wear uniforms specifically designed by the brand, whose maritime style and innovative fabric quality reflect their shared Atlantic identity. The "Lights of Summer" collection, presented at the hotel itself, exemplifies this collaboration, which strengthens Faro Silheiro's commitment to offering a unique experience, full of exclusive and authentic details.

Personalized services: memorable experiences

Additionally, to complete the guest experience, the hotel offers a private charter vehicle for transfers, making it easy to enjoy cultural, wine, and gastronomic tours in the area, as well as transport to key points along the Camino de Santiago. Guests can also take part in exclusive events—social, cultural, and corporate—held in an elegant room specially designed for such occasions. The events programme aims to revitalise the local offering, working closely with regional businesses and producers.

Since its opening, Hotel Boutique Faro Silleiro has set out to become a tourism icon, promoting personalised experiences with a highly qualified team committed to detailed, attentive service. Its dedication to providing a memorable stay includes tailored services ranging from wellness treatments to private gastronomic experiences and regional wine tastings.

PLACES TO DREAM



- 1.- Sunset at the lighthouse
- 2.- Room with ocean views
- 3.- Views of the pool and the Galician coast
- 4.- Room with mountain views
- 5.- View of the lighthouse and the pool

Hotel Faro
Silleiro



ARBASO HOTEL (San Sebastián)



ARBASO HOTEL

— SAN SEBASTIÁN —

Words: Jose A. Muñoz - **Photography:** Jose A. Muñoz y Hotel Arbaso

Hotel Arbaso is housed in a 19th-century neoclassical building, whose sandstone façade—like the rest of the architectural ensemble of the Plaza del Buen Pastor—is protected. Opened in 2020, the hotel has successfully preserved its original architectural essence, combining it with contemporary elements that bring warmth and elegance to its spaces.

Interior design: tradition and cutting edge

The interior design of Hotel Arbaso is an ode to Basque culture and cutting-edge design. The spaces were conceived by architect Iñigo Garate and interior designers Arantza Ania and Amaria Orrico, who have achieved a perfect balance between classic and modern. The furnishings include pieces by renowned designers such as Norman Foster and Rafael Moñeno, as well as local handcrafted elements that add authenticity and character.

Noble materials such as walnut and oak wood, wrought iron, and marble are combined with contemporary details, creating a warm and sophisticated atmosphere. Notable are the “walls of light” by artist Aitor Ortiz, a photographic installation that simulates solid stone blocks, adding an artistic dimension to the hotel lobby.



Detail of the dining area, Sua bedroom

View of the living room in the Sua room



Rooms: comfort and personality

Hotel Arbaso has 50 rooms distributed over five floors, each designed to offer maximum comfort and a personalised experience. The rooms, ranging from 23 to 73 square metres, are divided into ten different categories, each with its own name in Basque: Izar (Single Room), Xirimiri (Standard Double), Sustrai (Deluxe Room with Balcony), Olatu (Premium Room with Balcony and Bay Window), Ilargi (Junior Suite with Living Room and Bedroom), Sua (Duplex Penthouse with One Bedroom and a Living Room with Wood Fireplace), Zerua (Premium Penthouse with Living Room and Bedroom), Hodei (Two-Bedroom Suite), Basoa (Suite with Living Room and Two Bedrooms), and Zuhaitz (Family Room with Two Interconnected Bedrooms).

Each room is equipped with king-size beds, Marshall speakers, Apivita amenities, and state-of-the-art technology such as automated lighting and rain-effect showers.

The décor, in green and white tones, evokes the forests of the Basque Country, creating a serene and relaxing atmosphere.

ARBASO HOTEL (San Sebastián)

Services and amenities

Hotel Arbaso offers a wide range of services designed to meet the needs of its guests. These include a gym equipped with state-of-the-art Precor machines, a sauna for relaxing after a day of exploring the city, and a valet parking service for added convenience. In addition, the hotel features reading and wellness areas, designed to provide calm and rest.

A privileged location

Located in the centre of San Sebastián, Hotel Arbaso is just a five-minute walk from the famous La Concha Beach and the city's old town. Its strategic location allows guests to easily explore the main tourist attractions, such as Mount Igeldo, accessible by funicular, and enjoy romantic sunset strolls with panoramic views that stay etched in the memory.



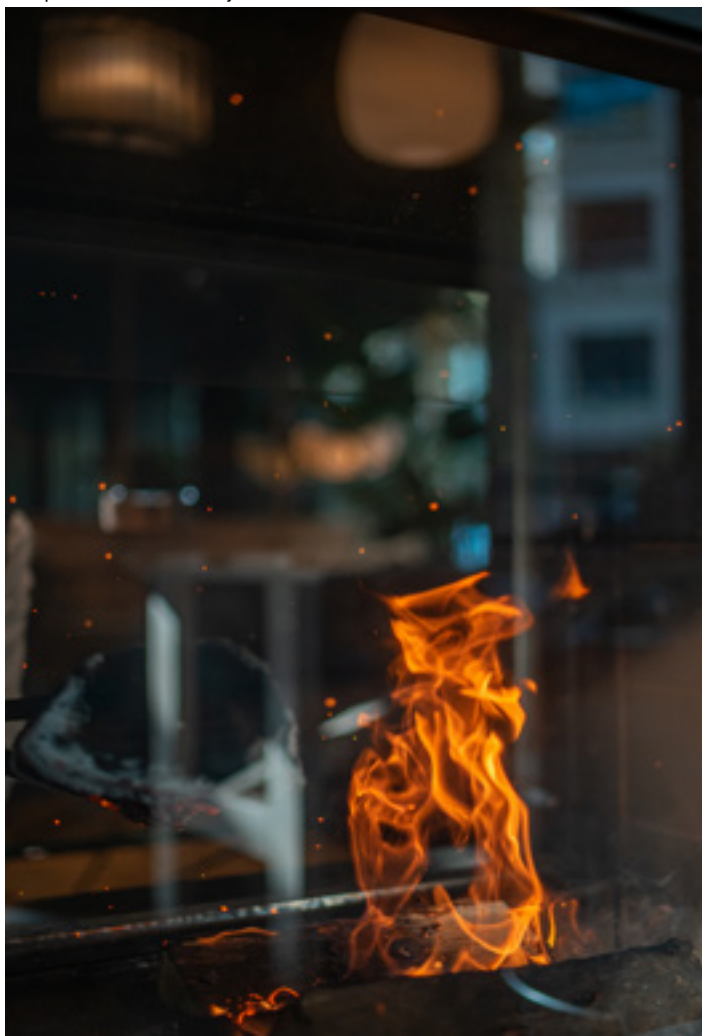
Room n° 207 © javier Echepare

Detail of the hotel reception





Fireplace in the hotel lobby



Hotel Arbaso embodies the serene elegance of contemporary Basque design, with meticulous attention to detail and an unbeatable location in the heart of San Sebastián

A tribute to Basque culture

The name Arbaso, which means “ancestor” in Basque, reflects the hotel’s philosophy: to pay tribute to Basque culture and traditions. This commitment is evident in details such as the staff uniforms, inspired by traditional Basque attire and designed by Irati Guarretxena. From the gerriko belt of the pelotari to the vest of the harrijasotzaile, each piece has been carefully chosen to offer an authentic experience.

Arbaso is much more than a hotel: it is a space where history, design, and culture intertwine in the very heart of San Sebastián. The respect for Basque roots is also present in the hotel’s activities, such as dance workshops, tastings of local products, or exhibitions by artists who reinterpret Basque identity. It also offers electric bicycles and guided tours to discover the city through a local lens. Here, every gesture, every object, and every corner tells a story.

HOTEL
ARBASO





Amanda Digon

Cabaret is a musical that will soon be playing at the Teatro Albéniz. It first came to the big screen in 1972, directed by Bob Fosse, and was based on a 1939 book by Christopher Isherwood titled Goodbye to Berlin, which was first adapted for the stage in 1951.

This time, it's a major production by the producers of The Phantom of the Opera. A new version where the audience will interact with the actors and live the Kit Kat Klub experience from the inside, starting the moment they step into the UMusic Hotel, where the theatre is located. An immersive musical where guests will also enjoy a culinary offering by chef David Correa, enhancing the Kit Kat Klub experience even further. But for now, let's meet its protagonists.

CABARET

Live the Kit Kat Klub from the inside

By: Julián Sacristán - comunicación@wfm.es

Pepe Nufrió

Nufrió, widely known for *La Moderna*, where he discovered the demanding nature of filming a daily series and explored new facets as an actor. He has also taken on iconic roles in productions such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Where Words Die*, and *Into the Woods*.

What does this project mean to you?

*Being part of something bigger than yourself, like *Cabaret*, is something truly special, exciting, and complex. I have to play Cliff, who is present in almost every scene.*

What is this *Cabaret* of the year 2025 like?

*In today's context, *Cabaret* holds a very important place, because if time has taught us anything, it's that history repeats itself. It's good for people to see the reality that was lived in the past and how much it resembles the present. That's why I'm preparing by revisiting Germany's history from that period.*

Amanda Digon and Pepe Nufrió



Pepe Nufrió

Amanda Digon

Did you ever imagine yourself playing Sally Bowles?

"Art is, should be, and will always be resistance."

It came to me at a moment when this role means a lot.

For my career, I face this character from a place of professional maturity. For Sally, I have to build strong vocal stamina. She is a character who lives in a constant contradiction, she is very vulnerable, and wears a mask to protect herself from the world. The challenge is making people realise when I'm pretending so I don't fall apart.

How are you experiencing this project?

The Kit Kat Klub we are going to create is both a form of resistance and a warning, in relation to the current situation.

Pepa Lucas

She is an actress, singer, and vocal coach; we've seen her in Vota Juan, La chica de las curvas, Les Misérables, Billy Elliot, and now, once again, shining in Cabaret.

What does Cabaret represent for you?

"Cabaret is one of the most important musicals in the industry."

It's a musical like life—cyclical. It's important for it to remain on stage, because it reminds us of what must never happen again, and what, in some places, is returning. Let's hope it raises awareness.

It's a musical that reflects that era, its lowest passions, and the looming shadow.

How do you feel about playing the same character again?

It's a challenge to play the same character 10 years later, with the maturity I've gained. What stands out most is exploring the new perspective the director brings to Fraulein Kost, who represents the decadence of the era, the support for the Nazi rise, and the lack of awareness of what she truly stood for.

Tony River

With a long career in film, theatre, and television behind him, we've seen him in films such as Todos a la cárcel, Tranvía a la Malvarrosa, and A quién le importa, among others.

What is it like for you to be part of this new Cabaret?

The call was a rush of adrenaline; Heer Schultz is very interesting.

What would you highlight?

Let's interact with the audience, and it's a reminder that serves as a parallel between two eras — the era of the musical and the present day, mind you.

"Cabaret is culture and history to be properly learned."

Carmen Conesa

The girl of today has been seen in Merlí: Sapere Aude, Barrios Altos, The Longest Night, with a spectacular career in film, theatre and television.

Is being part of the Kit Kat Klub a challenge you've overcome?

Every character in my life has been a challenge; perhaps this one is about dancing on the table and having the audience so close. The parallel between the past and the present makes art the open door.

Iñigo Sanchez-Prieto, Iñaki Fernández, Silvia Montesinos and another actors ©Asnerp



Has Cabaret been a musical you've had in mind?

Yes, I've seen several versions of Cabaret, even in New York, and I'm not going to rewatch the film — I'd rather let myself be guided by the director.

Abril Zamora

What's it like for you to be the Master of Ceremonies in Cabaret?

I'm going back to my roots. I started in theatre, moved into the audiovisual world, and now I return for Cabaret, which means unlearning what I've learned. I don't want to draw inspiration from other versions, and although I've sung on other occasions, here I sing more and I'm thoroughly preparing with dance lessons.

What do you think of this version?

Cabaret is a "highly relevant" piece, unfortunately. Performing in a cabaret where everyone can be who they want to be and express themselves artistically however they please is something necessary right now. The production speaks to the soul — it's important that people empathise and don't see it as someone else's story.



Abril Zamora



Cabaret, the opportunity to travel to Berlin in 1931 without leaving the Kit Kat Klub in Madrid. An immersive, vibrant and provocative experience that brings back all the glamour of Broadway's most iconic musical. 'Life is a cabaret, old friend, come to the cabaret' resounds loudly in this version that invites you to forget the outside world for a couple of hours



Manena's window

Traveling Anecdotes

Photos and words: Manena Munar manena.munar@gmail.com

'It is those little things... as Joan Manuel Serrat would sing, which after a trip remain in the memory and when you remember them you smile, cry or laugh out loud. I would like to take some of them out of the boot of my memories and share them with you.

Jordan, at the mercy of the Habbob

When the Haboob blows, the world vanishes in its wake. The desert storm is an experience that leaves no one unmoved, revealing a very particular side of the journey.

We are about to land at Queen Alia Airport in Amman, and through the airplane window, all that can be seen is a dense yellowish dust that hides the world from view.

The capital of Jordan is shut down by a desert storm that has swallowed it mercilessly. There is no school, no work, no one in the streets. Just a few bewildered tourists—us—unable to believe such a vision, or rather, the lack of one. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a pair of almond-shaped blue eyes appears, emerging through the fog and the niqab, as if to prove that life in Amman goes on.

The sand has swallowed buildings, trees—everything. Which is, admittedly, somewhat frustrating for our group, weighed down with cameras and dreaming of photographing the clear blue skies Jordan is said to enjoy. And yet, within moments, realising we are witnessing an unusual phenomenon, we seize the opportunity and the strange light revealed by a weakened sun, and capture a different kind of landscape.





Amman bajo el Haboob

Omar's Jordan

Omar is the name of our guide—a burly man bursting with vitality and a great sense of humour. From the moment we meet, he calls us *habibis*, a term of endearment that stays with us throughout the journey. I find Omar's way of explaining his world quite peculiar, his vision of the Maghreb shaped less by the borders of countries and more by ancestral tribes that continue to trace their lineage through a primordial family tree. In fact, Omar tells us that his wife belongs to a tribe from the country we know as Tunisia...

He leads us to the Citadel, perched atop Jabal al-Qal'a, just as the monotonous call of the muezzin begins to echo—a sound that, under this strange light, makes our visit to the spectacular Roman Theatre feel even more ghostly. Omar says that children often play among the ruins of this ancient site, and that he spent part of his own childhood playing hide and seek, or football... between the Temple of Hercules, the Umayyad Palace, the Byzantine Church, or the incredible Archaeological Museum. And really, where better to unleash childhood imagination?

Apocalyptic setting

From Amman, we travel toward the Rift Valley, heading for the Dead Sea. Its very name evokes mysterious, biblical chapters. A strange and alluring place we've all thought about at some point—after all, who hasn't wondered whether it's really possible to sit and read the newspaper while floating?

Because of the Haboob, the Dead Sea looks deadlier than ever, under the dim light of a sun struggling to pierce through the sandy veil. The day oscillates between eerie and terrifying. Yet still, it delivers the thrill of a new experience, one that releases a good dose of adrenaline. Part of the group sits in the soothing waters of the Dead Sea to read the newspaper, as tradition dictates: "Careful not to fall in—you might not make it out."

Others of us cover ourselves in mud—healthy and exfoliating—perfectly matching the gloomy setting, since we end up looking like those zombies that are so trendy these days.



Walking through the Siq of Petra
The Al-Khazneh Treasury: a dream come true

Swimming against the current

La siguiente etapa no está exenta de asombro cuando, todavía a media luz, nos sumergimos en el río de Wadi Al Mujib y, cual escolares de excursión, nos agarramos a una cuerda y, de esta guisa, nadamos contra corriente hasta alcanzar una enorme y resbaladiza roca que parece cerrar el paso del río. Es esa roca la que hay que escalar para llegar al punto álgido de la aventura: la catarata que espera al otro lado como una ducha generosa.

Los más avezados trepan por la roca. Yo, por supuesto, ante la perspectiva de escalar esa pared resbaladiza, opto por quedarme donde estoy, soñando con el baño de espuma y sales que me aguarda en el hotel.

Tears of sand

Al-Khazneh, the Treasury, must be earned little by little. It's a thought that leads me to walk with reverence through the 1.2 km gorge — the Siq — that leads to the Treasury, its ochre walls shifting in tone with the hour and the day's shadows.

The Nabataeans, the Three Wise Men, Indiana Jones and I all march together through the Siq, inside my feverish imagination — partly due to the 40°C in the shade, and partly due to the flood of scenes created by my overheated, ignition-prone mind.



I gaze in awe at the tombs of the great lords, at the niches and carvings, accompanied by a Japanese convoy dutifully following the guide's flag with Nipponese order, their curious chatter pulling me momentarily out of my "budding explorer" moment — as I stroll alongside Indy (Harrison Ford) and his charming father, Sean Connery, in *The Last Crusade*, while Queen Noor and her children, Ali, Hamzah and Hashim, watch us from the set. Or why not? Playing the role of a spy with the Swiss Johann Ludwig, posing as Bedouins and rediscovering the Nabataean kingdom in 1812.

And then we enter Petra by candlelight. Silence and solemnity accompany a few spiritual moments in which you feel very small, part of something so vast. I, overwhelmed, remain silent, moved as I see one of my companions shed tears — fulfilling the childhood dream of seeing Petra. Perhaps he weeps for the dreamlike beauty before him, I think, or perhaps because, having achieved that dream, a void opens where a new one must now be found.

The truth is, if it was spectacular by night, then by the light of the next morning, the appearance of the Treasury is no less breathtaking — despite the joyful singing of the Japanese tourists and the horse carts and mules weaving through the crowds.

From dream to nightmare

The little climb up to the Monastery is no joke. I'm fully aware of how my face changes when I look up and see the nine hundred ascending steps, as my companions earnestly suggest I go up on a mule. "What are you saying?" I respond to the brilliant idea of seeing myself swaying on the animal's back, on the verge of falling into the abyss at every curve of those steps — which vary in size, height, and texture — or collapsing from dehydration under the infernal sun. I start climbing, quietly, so as not to waste energy, measuring each step, and finally relying on the camaraderie of my friends, who pull me up the last rocky stretch until we reach the façade of Al Deir, the Monastery. Truth be told, it's not quite the same as that first vision of the Treasury. I don't even glance at the Monastery — I march straight over to buy a bottle of water and pour it over my head, while my friends film the unusual spectacle. Once I'm watered both inside and out, I take a moment to admire the admirable Al Deir of Petra.

MANENA'S WINDOW



From Japón to Petra



Small amid the grandeur of the climb to the monastery



Resting at the Monastery



The Wadi Rum desert where Lawrence of Arabia, Red Planet, Mission to Mars, Star Wars and Dune were filmed



Drinking coffee in Wadi Rum

Between Peter O'Toole and Omar Shariff

Upon arriving in the Wadi Rum desert, I can't help but recall that moment when Peter O'Toole, dressed entirely in white, blue eyes, blond hair, stands beside Omar Sharif, all in black, with jet-black hair and eyes, watching from the top of a dune as their men on camels prepare for battle. That scene from Lawrence of Arabia left me smitten — with both of them — during my teenage years.

A young man with warm eyes shows us the face of the real Lawrence of Arabia, carved into the rock; far less attractive than Peter O'Toole, let's be honest. He then offers us a coffee — apparently, it's very rude to refuse — and there's no reason to: it's sweet and delicious.

Wadi Rum, the Valley of the Moon, is the grand finale of a one-of-a-kind journey. Its multicoloured hues, rock formations shaped like curious sculptures, and the murmur of the wind on the sand make us leap, play, and feel the privilege of standing on the set of Lawrence of Arabia, Red Planet, Mission to Mars, Star Wars, or Dune.



SAN SEBASTIÁN

A journey through
its flavours

SALÓN GOURMETS

New products
for foodies

BODEGAS BUCRANA

Passion for the land,
respect for wine

LA MADREÑA

Love for the product
and respect for tradition



San Sebastián

From pintxo to pintxo... all the way to the stars

Words: Clara Serrano Vega - claraserranovega@gmail.com - **Photos:** Archive



San Sebastián is a city where gastronomy is not just a pleasure, but a way of life. With one of the highest concentrations of Michelin-starred restaurants per square metre, legendary pintxo bars and traditional cider houses in the surrounding area, the capital of Gipuzkoa has established itself as a world-class gastronomic destination.

Pintxos: a miniature gastronomic culture

To speak of San Sebastián is to speak of its pintxos — those small bites that combine quality ingredients with creativity and exquisite presentation. Far from being a mere appetiser, pintxos are an essential part of Donostia's culinary identity. Their origin dates back to the early 20th century, when bars began offering small slices of bread topped with simple ingredients such as anchovies, ham or Spanish omelette.

Over time, the offering became more sophisticated, giving way to true gastronomic masterpieces. Wandering through San Sebastián's Old Town is like diving into a festival of flavours. Among the most iconic bars is La Cuchara de San Telmo, famous for its red wine-braised beef cheek and seared foie gras. Ganbara stands out with its spider crab puff pastry and wild mushrooms with egg. At Borda Berri, the Idiazábal cheese risotto and grilled octopus are must-tries.

If pintxos represent the essence of Basque-style bar dining, Michelin-starred restaurants are the ultimate expression of culinary excellence. San Sebastián is home to several of the world's top restaurants, led by Arzak, pioneer of the New Basque Cuisine, where Elena Arzak has masterfully modernised traditional recipes without losing their soul.

Another gastronomic temple is Akelarre, where Pedro Subijana blends local products with cutting-edge techniques in tasting menus that challenge the perception of flavour. Mugaritz, helmed by Andoni Luis Aduriz, goes a step further, offering a sensorial experience that transcends gastronomy, fusing art and cuisine in every dish.

The markets: the soul of Basque cuisine

To understand Donostia's gastronomy, one must visit its markets. They are the meeting point between the finest local products and the creativity of chefs and home cooks who turn them into exquisite dishes. San Sebastián is home to several major markets, each with its own history and speciality

La Bretxa Market

Located in the heart of the city, La Bretxa is San Sebastián's most iconic market. Its history dates back to the 19th century and over time it has become a hub of Donostia's gastronomic life. Its stalls offer the finest local products: ultra-fresh fish brought directly from the coast, top-quality seafood, artisanal cheeses like Idiazábal, and Ibarra chillies—perfect for pairing with a good dish of cod. It also features butcher shops specialising in award-winning beef, and bakeries that serve traditional Basque sweets such as pantxina and pastel vasco.

San Martín Market

The San Martín Market, located near the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, is another gastronomic landmark in the city.



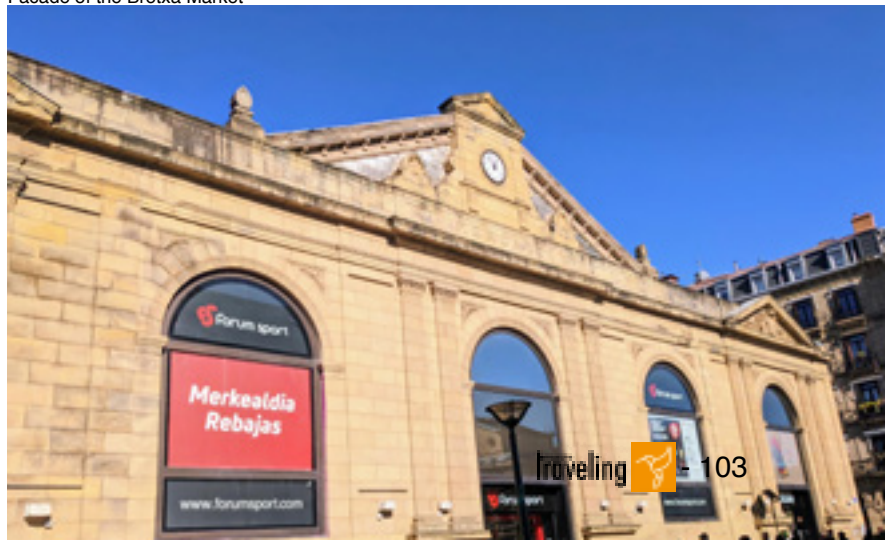
Bar Casa Alcalde in the old town



31 de Agosto Street in the old town



Arzak restaurant dining room with Elena Arzak
Facade of the Bretxa Market



FLAVOURS OF SAN SEBASTIÁN



San Martín Market



Celebration of Txotx Day



Sidrería Petritegi, one of the most famous located in Astigarraga

Recently renovated, it combines the best of a traditional market with gourmet shops and modern gastronomic spaces. Here, visitors can find local products such as Basque cured meats, artisanal preserves, seasonal mushrooms, and limited-production olive oils. It's also an excellent place to enjoy fresh oysters and hand-carved Iberian ham.

The cider houses: the ritual of the txotx

Just a few kilometres from San Sebastián, in Astigarraga, lies the cradle of Basque cider. In traditional cider houses, the gastronomic experience blends with a festive atmosphere where the "txotx"—the act of opening the kupela and pouring cider directly from the barrel—sets the pace of the meal.

The classic cider house menu is a true celebration: cod omelette, cod with peppers, grilled chuletón (bone-in rib steak), and to finish, cheese with quince jelly and walnuts. Among the most recommended cider houses are Petritegi, which offers guided tours and tastings; Zelaia, famous for its excellent chuletón; and Sidrería Rosario, a benchmark in cider-making tradition with an authentic setting and classic menu.

The star products of Basque cuisine

San Sebastián and its surroundings produce some of the most iconic ingredients in Spanish gastronomy. In addition to Idiazábal cheese, another essential product is cod, the base for dishes such as bacalao al pil-pil or a la vizcaína. Also noteworthy is txangurro (spider crab), often served au gratin in its shell, and merluza a la koskera, a traditional recipe combining hake with asparagus, peas, and hard-boiled egg. Desserts also play a starring role, with delights such as pantxineta, a puff pastry filled with pastry cream and topped with almonds and pastel vasco, a specialty filled with cream or black cherry jam.

Bacalao a la vizcaína



San Sebastián consolidates its gastronomic leadership with a unique blend of tradition, innovation and culinary excellence

A must-visit destination for gastronomy lovers

San Sebastián is a destination where every meal is a celebration. From the pintxos of the Old Town to Michelin-starred restaurants, through traditional cider houses and local markets, the city offers an unparalleled gastronomic experience. Whether you are a lover of haute cuisine or prefer authentic, down-to-earth food, in San Sebastián every bite tells a story of tradition, quality, and passion for good food.

As the grand finale to this culinary journey through San Sebastián, the Basque Culinary Center embodies the innovative spirit and excellence that define the city. More than an academic institution, it is a laboratory of ideas where the future of global gastronomy is being shaped, always with a deep respect for ingredients, tradition, and the land. From its classrooms and kitchens, San Sebastián continues to inspire the world.

Txangurro Donostia-Style ©Academia de Gastronomía de San Sebastián



Cod pil pil



Facade of Basque Culinary Center



San Sebastián is not just a destination it's a declaration of love for cuisine. In its bars, markets, and internationally renowned restaurants, every dish tells a story of tradition, innovation, and respect for ingredients. A culinary journey where each bite speaks to the soul of a city that has made fine dining its greatest ambassador



Typical Basque cheesecake



Facade of the winery

Bucrana winery

Bucrana is the most honest expression of Tinta de Toro: wines with soul, power and elegance that are born from respect for the land and tradition

Words: Redacción

Photography: Bodegas Bucrana

In the southeast of Zamora, where the landscape unfolds in reddish plains dotted with vineyards that seem to defy time, Bodega Bucrana has been writing its own legacy since 1997 within the Toro Designation of Origin. Its story is interwoven with that of Tinta de Toro, a native grape variety that here is more than just a grape—it is identity. But what makes this grape unique, and how does it differ from its more famous relative, Tempranillo? The answer lies in the land, the climate, and its adaptation.

Tinta de Toro: a clone with character

Tinta de Toro is, in fact, a local biotype of Tempranillo, Spain's flagship grape. Genetic studies confirm the connection, but centuries of adaptation to Toro's extreme conditions have shaped key differences. While Tempranillo from regions like Rioja or Ribera del Duero develops thinner skins and ripens early—hence its name—Tinta de Toro has evolved to thrive in poor soils, enduring freezing winters and summers that surpass 40°C. Its berries are smaller, with thicker skins that accumulate a higher concentration of polyphenols and sugars, resulting in naturally high-alcohol wines (up to 15%) with powerful yet surprisingly elegant tannins.

This character is heightened in Bucrana's old vineyards, where some vines are over a century old and plunge their

roots as deep as seven metres into clay, sandstone, and limestone soils. These roots not only seek water—they extract minerality and a sense of place that translates into wines with ferrous notes and a vertical profile, far removed from the fruity roundness usually associated with Tempranillo from other regions.

Tradition and technology

A visit to Bucrana begins in its production hall, where pneumatic presses and stainless-steel tanks equipped with automated climate control coexist. But the soul of its wines beats underground: eight metres below, a wine cellar carved into the rock houses 500 French and American oak barrels. Here, a constant temperature (14–16°C) and natural humidity allow for slow ageing, without artificial cooling systems. This environment, reminiscent of medieval monastic cellars, is key to taming the power of Tinta de Toro, integrating its tannins without dulling its vibrant minerality.

Two wines embody this philosophy

Bucrana Crianza (aged 12 months in barrel) displays aromas of black cherry, liquorice, and pink pepper, with a spicy finish that pairs perfectly with lamb stews. In contrast, Tau—sourced from vines over 90 years old—is a cult wine. After 18 months in oak, it reveals layers of tobacco, leather, and dried plum, with a texture as dense as it is silky. It's no coincidence that Tau 2018 received 92 Parker points: in this wine, the essence of a grape that, despite its kinship with Tempranillo, speaks the unique dialect of Toro.

Rooted wine tourism

Bucrana has turned terroir education into a sensory experience. Guided tours include a workshop where wines still in the making are tasted, each from a different soil type: clay brings volume, sandstone elegance, and limestone a crisp acidity. For detail enthusiasts, the self-guided geological trail—with QR codes explaining everything from soil formation to the aromatic herbs growing among the vines—reveals how every centimetre of earth impacts what ends up in the glass.

In December, the winery offers a bush vine pruning workshop, an ancestral technique recognised as Agricultural Heritage by the FAO. “It's a way of understanding the vine as a living being that adapts, not as a machine to produce grapes,” explains winemaker Javier Pérez.

A cuisine in tune with the land

The gastronomy of Toro, deeply rooted in the agricultural and winemaking traditions of the region, offers a sincere, robust, and land-based cuisine. Among its most emblematic dishes is bacalao a la tranca—salt cod prepared with garlic, paprika, and olive oil—a dish that perfectly captures the intensity of Castilian flavours.

Another local classic is dos y pingada, a simple yet delicious combination of fried eggs and crispy pork belly, traditionally eaten for breakfast on Easter Sunday. The region also boasts superb roasts like lechazo (suckling lamb) and tostón (roast suckling pig), both as succulent as they are celebrated. Traditional stews such as chic-peas with tripe or garlic soup—humble dishes—bring

Old barrels in the barrel room of the winery





comfort to both body and soul. The traditional pig slaughter brings with it high-quality homemade cured meats, and Zamorano cheese—aged and made from sheep’s milk—is a staple on every Toresan table.

All of this is best enjoyed with one of the region’s greatest treasures: wine with the Toro Designation of Origin—bold, intense, and full of character—perfect for rounding out a deeply Castilian culinary experience.

Bucrana, with an annual production of 120,000 bottles (45% of which are exported), symbolizes the renaissance of Toro. They use drones to monitor grape ripening and solar panels that supply 40% of their energy needs, yet their essence remains rooted in the old vines that once saved Bordeaux from phylloxera in the 19th century. Today, as the world discovers these wines, this winery reminds us that the greatness of wine lies not in the grape itself, but in how it tells the story of its land.

Bucrana



Tinta de Toro grape



BUCRANA TAU 2019

100% Tinta de Toro, sourced from 20-year-old bush-trained vines grown in sandy, stony soils. Manual harvest with grape selection at the winery.

Colour: Bright, clean cherry red with a ruby rim and high density.

Nose: Expressive, fresh, complex and elegant. Dominated by aromas of black fruits like plums and blackberries, accompanied by spicy notes, toasted nuances, and hints of coffee caramel and cigar box.

Palate: Structured and full-bodied, yet silky, velvety, and pleasant. It shows good acidity and polished tannins, with a long aftertaste echoing the aromas detected on the nose.

Pairing and Serving

Bucrana TAU is ideal with red meats, aged cheeses, stews and casseroles, spiced dishes, and chocolate-based desserts. Best served at 15–16 °C, allowing it to breathe in the glass for a few minutes to express its full complexity.



BUCRANA CRIANZA

Bucrana Crianza embodies the most approachable and seductive side of the Toro D.O. This wine is made from 100% Tinta de Toro grapes sourced from 20 hectares of estate vineyards, with bush-trained vines over 20 years old grown in clay-sandy soils.

The harvest is manual and carefully selected to ensure grape quality. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks at controlled temperatures for 10 to 12 days, preserving the fruit and freshness. The wine is then aged for 12 months in French and American oak barrels, followed by at least 12 months in bottle.

In the glass, it shows a deep cherry red with ruby highlights. **On the nose,** it is clean and expressive, offering aromas of ripe black fruit, liquorice, spices, and subtle toasted and balsamic notes. **On the palate,** it is juicy, rounded and well-balanced, with sweet tannins and a long, silky finish.

Perfect for any occasion, Bucrana Crianza should be served between 16 and 18 °C. It pairs beautifully with meats, stews, game or richly flavoured rice dishes. A wine that elegantly conveys the authenticity and confidence of Toro.



NEWS FROM THE 38TH SALÓN GOURMETS

By: Clara Serrano Vega - claraserranovega@gmail.com

Each spring, Madrid transforms into the world capital of flavour with the celebration of Salón Gourmets, Europe's most important international trade fair for high-quality food and beverages. In its 38th edition, held from 7 to 10 April 2025 at IFEMA Madrid, the event once again brought together the very best of Spanish and international gastronomy, consolidating its status as a must-attend event for industry professionals.

With over 2,100 exhibitors and more than 55,000 products on offer—including 2,000 new items, of which over 900 were organic—Salón Gourmets became a true showcase for trends, innovation, and culinary excellence. Over four days, more than 110,000 trade visitors toured the six pavilions of the exhibition centre, taking part in over 1,000 activities ranging from tastings and showcooks to championships. Among the most notable were: the Spanish Sommelier Championship; the Best Cheeses of Spain competition; the Burger Combat; the ham carving contest; the gourmet pizza championship; the oyster shucking challenge; and the beer tapping competition. These contests, blending technique, passion, and creativity, turned IFEMA into the culinary epicentre of the year.

This event stands out not only for its scale but also for its capacity to connect producers, distributors, chefs, and buyers from all over the world. The participation of 30 countries and all the Spanish autonomous communities—with special highlights including Andalusian extra virgin olive oil, wines from Rioja and Ribera del Duero, artisan cheeses from Castilla-La Mancha, Galician seafood, León cured meats, Balearic sobrasada, Extremaduran Iberian ham, Canarian gofio, and Catalan cava—reflects its global character and its role as a key platform for the promotion of the agri-food sector. Visitors also discovered the latest developments in plant-based foods, functional ingredients, preservation techniques, sustainable packaging solutions, as well as emerging trends in alcohol-free beverages, premium spirits, and gourmet preserves.

Salón Gourmets is, ultimately, a celebration of gastronomic culture, where tradition and innovation come together to offer a unique, diverse, and transformative experience.

In this article, we'll explore some of the standout new products presented at this edition, which are set to shape trends in the coming months.

Ancestral Spring Salt

From the Navarrese lands at the foot of the Urbasa and An-día mountain ranges, Sal de Manantial Ancestral presents at Salón Gourmets a selection of products that fuse fossil origin, pre-Pyrenean altitude, and a 100% artisanal process. Sourced from a fossilised sea dating back 220 million years, the brand surprises with smoked paprika almonds from La Vera, Manchego cheese-flavoured cashews, and wasabi peanuts — all artisanally roasted and enriched with their natural salt — along with an innovative liquid salt, perfect for precise and balanced seasoning.



Conservas Zallo

A family-run company with nearly a century of history in Bermeo (Bizkaia) presents its innovative Bonito del Norte Japanese-style. This product blends Basque canning tradition with ingredients from Japanese cuisine, such as wakame seaweed, soy sauce, and teriyaki sauce, achieving a delicate texture and a pronounced umami flavour. With this launch, Zallo responds to the growing demand for Asian-inspired flavours while remaining true to the quality of the Cantabrian Sea. This new addition expands its range of premium preserves and reaffirms the brand's commitment to merging tradition with culinary innovation.

Caviaroli

Olive lovers won't want to miss the new creamy pickled green olive paste from Caviaroli, a product designed to enhance sauces, stews, marinades and garnishes with a bold Mediterranean flavour and the characteristic salty touch of classic snack olives. Caviaroli, a family-run company founded in 2011 in Catalonia, has established itself as a leader in culinary innovation. In addition to this paste and its acclaimed olive oil caviar, the brand also produces the remarkable spherical olives Caviaroli Drops by Albert Adrià and a line of green olive-based sauces, perfect for adding a creative and sophisticated twist to any recipe.



Cabo de San Agustín

An Asturian company founded in 2018, it stands out at Salón Gourmets with its baby squid stuffed with prawns and shrimp — a dish that combines tradition, authentic flavour, and fresh products from the Cantabrian Sea. With a team boasting over 30 years of experience and a careful daily selection from fish markets such as Avilés, the company has established itself as a benchmark in ready-to-eat seafood preparations. Its catalogue also includes monkfish and prawn skewers, fillets of Cantabrian bonito, and soup and paella mixes, all bearing the hallmark of quality and convenience that defines the brand.



Señoríos de Rellou

The Alicante-based olive mill has unveiled a special edition extra virgin olive oil in collaboration with Agatha Ruiz de la Prada — a coupage of native Valencian varieties (Genovesa, Changlot Real, Manzanilla Villalonga, Alfafara) and Picual from Andalusia. Made from early-harvest green olives, it stands out for its medium-high green fruitiness, with notes of tomato plant and freshly cut grass, and a flavour profile marked by medium bitterness and a persistent, intense spiciness. It comes in a striking magenta and silver aluminium bottle designed by the renowned creator, blending design, Mediterranean identity, and olive oil excellence.

Doctor Salsas

Potato chips with Trinidad Moruga Scorpion chilli. The Granada-based brand specialises in spicy sauces, snacks and seasonings — a world it is redefining through its own crops and natural ingredients: jalapeños, chillies, cayenne, spices... For daring palates, the Monkey Face sriracha sauce features organic PGI Canary Island banana and offers a medium spice level.



Castillo de Canena

A historic family business from Jaén with roots dating back to 1780, surprises at Salón Gourmets with its innovative "21st Century Oils" line—a collection that reimagines extra virgin olive oil through creativity and gastronomic fusion. Among its most groundbreaking offerings are the arbequina infused with marine phytoplankton—developed in collaboration with three-Michelin-starred chef Ángel León—and the arbequina with Harissa sauce, a Moroccan recipe made with dried red pepper, cayenne, garlic, coriander, and caraway, adding intensity and exotic flair to the oil.



Bonvallis

Bonvallis, a company specialising in cheese products, presents an original and delicious creation: large dried fig chocolates covered in crunchy dark chocolate with a surprising cheese filling. Available in varieties such as blue, Manchego, and goat cheese, these bite-sized treats combine sweetness, intensity, and texture, offering a gourmet experience designed for curious palates and lovers of contrasts.

Grupo Los Norteños

Level Cook is the new range developed by Michelin-starred chef Aurelio Morales for this prestigious brand. The line features high-quality pre-cooked meat cuts, vacuum-packed and ready to heat and serve, with recipes such as confit beef cheek, Spanish milk-fed lamb shoulder, beef rib rack, stewed oxtail, tenderloin pastrami, and ribeye roast beef. A proposal designed for professionals seeking excellence, convenience, and flavour without compromising on haute cuisine.





Asturias served at La Madreña

Words: Jose A. Muñoz **Photography:** Restaurante La Madreña

There are stories that aren't born in an office or a business plan, but rather from the deep conviction that cooking can be a way of life. La Madreña is one of them. In the year 2000, after eight years working in the hospitality industry in Madrid, José Luis Rodríguez and Margarita Rodríguez, a couple from Cangas del Narcea (Asturias), opened their first restaurant on Calle Áncora. They wanted to bring the flavours of their homeland to the capital, but above all, they wanted to do it authentically: excellent products, honest cooking, and service that made every customer feel at home.

Success wasn't immediate, but it was steady. In 2003, they opened a second location on Calle Santa Lucrecia and, in 2011, made the difficult but consistent decision to close the original restaurant and begin a new chapter on Calle del Bronce, in the Arganzuela district. A move aligned with their philosophy: to move forward, to adapt, to grow—without betraying the principles that had brought them that far.

In 2018, they made a bold leap by opening a new restaurant at Paseo de la Castellana 78. In the very heart of Madrid's business district, La Madreña presented a contemporary Asturian offering while staying true to its identity. The location was strategic, but the message was clear: the family project had matured and was ready to stand among the greats.

A proposal rooted in product and tradition

La Madreña's cuisine is rooted in Asturian tradition, but it's not anchored in the past. Over the past 25 years, it has evolved by incorporating techniques, formats, and combinations while maintaining its essence. The product is at the heart of everything. They work with trusted suppliers, many of whom prepare exclusive items for the house: from anchovies selected by a small Cantabrian company under José Luis's criteria, to cheeses specially aged in an Asturian creamery for their acclaimed cheesecake.

La Madreña's menu is a journey through the most flavourful and recognisable Asturian cuisine, with dishes that appeal both to memory and immediate enjoyment. From cabracho pâté with black garlic gratin to fabes with prawns and boletus, every dish is designed to enhance the product and honour its original flavour. Homemade croquettes, freshly baked empanadas, pot-caught squid or black-bellied monkfish (pixín) round out a menu with more modern touches too, such as the shiitake and prawn ssam with kimchi. But if there is one dish that encapsulates the soul of the restaurant, it is the cachopo, which has become their hallmark, with a dozen variations from the classic to more daring combinations. At La Madreña, every bite conveys a purpose: cooking with roots, without artifice, but with sensitivity and respect for the ingredient.

This specialisation led them in 2022 to launch **Cachopo & Go**, a more casual line that started in the Mercado de Chamberí and already has a second outlet on San Francisco de Sales. There, they offer variations like the Cachopín — a smaller format— or the Italian Cachopo, which blends burrata, truffled mortadella, rocket, and kimchi sauce in focaccia bread. A way to bring this Asturian emblem to new audiences without compromising on flavour or quality.

Cachopo of La Madreña



Cachopines of Cahopo & Go



An anniversary with a taste of the future

To celebrate their 25-year journey, La Madreña has created a special tasting menu —€55— available throughout 2025 in its three main locations. The gastronomic experience begins with cabracho pâté with black garlic and fried plantain, followed by partridge and truffle ravioli, fabes with prawns and boletus, oven-baked pixín, and as the main course, an Asturian veal cachopo stuffed with ham and artisan cheese. The meal ends with their signature Asturian cheesecake, all paired with three national wines.

This menu is not only a tribute to their cuisine but also to everything they've built over a quarter of a century: five restaurants operating with the same warmth as in the beginning, a team that has grown with the project, loyal customers who return for the authenticity, and a menu that has evolved without losing its soul.



Garlic shrimp casserole

View of the Castellana room



La Madreña has never chased media hype. It has preferred to build through consistency, attention to detail, and a deep-rooted culinary philosophy—closer to memory than to trend. And that is where its strength lies: in a loyalty to itself that is felt in every dish.

Today, 25 years later, La Madreña is a respected name in Madrid's culinary scene. An example of how it's possible to grow without abandoning one's roots. Of how hard work, coherence, and commitment to flavour can build something more than a restaurant: a brand with soul.



Tragaluz Madrid

A new gastronomic benchmark that fuses design and Mediterranean flavour

Texto: Rosario Alonso . Photography: Grupo Tragaluz



Jardín del restaurante © Lekuonastudio

In February 2025, the Tragaluz Group opened its eponymous restaurant in Madrid, consolidating its presence in the capital after the success of establishments such as Bar Tomate, Bosco de Lobos and Luzi Bombón. Located at Calle Gil de Santivañes, 6, in the exclusive Salamanca neighbourhood and just a few steps from the Puerta de Alcalá, Tragaluz Madrid stands as a space where Mediterranean cuisine with an Italian accent meets an interior design that invites contemplation and enjoyment. This opening is a symbolic milestone for the group, as it recovers the name that gave rise to its history, paying tribute to its philosophy of fusion between cuisine, aesthetics and sensory experience, now with a contemporary look adapted to the pulse of Madrid.

A design that captivates the senses

The restaurant's interior design was conceived by Eduardo Arruga, from Estudio Lucca, who has created an at-

mosphere that balances elegance and warmth. The space is centred around a large skylight that floods the main room with natural light during the day, transforming it into a cosy corner at nightfall. The central bar with an open kitchen allows diners to watch the culinary art in action, while strategically placed mirrors amplify the feeling of spaciousness.

The indoor bar evokes the intimacy of a home, with elements such as 18th-century bookcases, a wardrobe with antique doors and a velvet sofa that invite you to relax with a cocktail and good music. Outside, a greenhouse surrounded by greenery and wooden and slate furniture offers an oasis of tranquility in the middle of the city..



Maccheroncini with fennel, kalamata olives, semi-dried tomatoes, burrata cheese and lemon © Lekuonastudio

A menu that celebrates the Mediterranean

The culinary offering, led by Calabrian chef Matteo Spinelli, pays homage to the flavours of the Mediterranean with dishes that stand out for their freshness and authenticity. Among the starters, the San Marzano tomatoes with roasted aubergine and sunflower seed pesto and the skordalia, a potato and garlic dip served with pan-fried bread, are particularly noteworthy. Artisanal pasta is the star of the show, with options such as maccheroncini with fennel, kalamata olives, semi-dried tomato, burrata and lemon, and pappardelle with oxtail ragù. On the fish menu, sea bass with white asparagus purée, oyster leaf and radishes offers a combination of delicate and sophisticated flavours. For meat lovers, highlights include grilled entrecôte from the Sierra de Guadarrama, Iberian pork cheeks in red wine and oven-baked oxtail lasagne in a clay pot. Desserts such as baked cheesecake with homemade raspberry jam and Oreo crumble put the sweet finishing touch to a complete culinary experience.

A space to savour without haste

Tragaluz Madrid offers more than just high-quality gastronomy—it provides an environment where design and comfort come together to create a unique sensory experience. The restaurant seats 80 diners and offers excellent value for money in one of the capital's most exclusive areas. Every corner is designed to stimulate the senses, from the warmth of the materials to the carefully curated lighting that transforms the space throughout the day. Whether you're seeking a casual weekday lunch or a special dinner, the restaurant naturally adapts to the city's rhythm.

With this opening, Grupo Tragaluz reaffirms its commitment to culinary excellence and to designing spaces that invite relaxation and enjoyment. Tragaluz Madrid positions itself as a must-visit destination for lovers of good food and good taste, as well as for those who value the balance between aesthetics, flavour, and contemporary hospitality.

Paccheri with red mullet, cherry tomatoes and garlic shoots © Lekuonastudio





Detail of the restaurant dining room © Lekuonastudio

Grupo Tragaluz: a vision that set the trend

Founded in Barcelona in 1987 by Rosa María Esteva and her son Tomás Tarruella with the restaurant Mordisco, Grupo Tragaluz was born with the intention of breaking the mould in the Spanish culinary scene. From the outset, their concept stood out: a space in Barcelona's Eixample where eating well was just as important as being part of a curated, aesthetically pleasing, and stimulating environment. It was one of the first groups to understand the restaurant as a holistic experience, in which design, lighting, atmosphere, music, architecture, and cuisine formed an inseparable whole.

That approach—radically innovative in the 1980s—made the group a pioneer of the “gastronomic lifestyle” in Spain. With iconic establishments like Tragaluz, El Japonés, Cuines Santa Caterina, Bestial, or Bar Lobo, they created recognisable, vibrant venues open to both locals and international visitors. These spaces exuded a coherent identity: Mediterranean, modern, unpretentious, and with an instinctive sense of good taste.

With the involvement of new generations and a measured expansion to destinations like Madrid, Mallorca, and the Costa Brava, Tragaluz has evolved with the times without losing its essence. Under Tomás Tarruella's leadership, the company has embraced creative talent—architects, interior designers, chefs, and musicians—to reinforce its sensory-driven philosophy. Today, with more than a dozen restaurants, Tragaluz represents a model of integrated, cross-cutting, and emotional hospitality that has deeply influenced the contemporary Spanish dining scene and continues to set the trend with every new opening.

Tragaluz
Madrid



TOMÁS TARRUELLA © Paula Ospina.



Kököchin

A trip to the Far East where you can enjoy traditional cuisine

Words: Jose A. Muñoz - **Photography:** Kököchin

A gastronomic journey through Asia, with flavours from traditional cuisine, signature sushi and Thai flavours inspired by the route taken by Kokochin and Marco Polo.

The finishing touch is provided by the cocktails, which chart a course of good taste.

In Madrid's Aravaca neighbourhood, where exclusivity coexists with discretion, a restaurant has opened that looks to the East with ambition and respect. Its name is Kököchin, after the Mongolian princess who travelled the Silk Road accompanied by Marco Polo, and its offering is not just another addition to Madrid's Asian cuisine scene: it is a true gastronomic journey, with historical roots, quality produce and meticulous execution in every dish.

Kököchin is the latest venture from the Mandarin Group, known for restaurants such as El Bund and Casa Lafu. On this occasion, the group goes one step further and creates a narrative that combines ancestral Chinese cuisine with influences from Japan, Thailand and India, and an interior design that transports diners from the first drink to the last mochi. There is no artifice: there is cuisine, there is technique and there is concept.



A recipe book that crosses borders

Kōkōchin's menu is rooted in Chinese tradition, but it doesn't stop there. It is enriched with Thai dishes, Indian culinary touches and Japanese influences, in a coherent and well-balanced journey. Each dish is a stop on this map of Far Eastern flavours, always prepared according to the chef's criteria and using ingredients that make all the difference.

Among the essentials: the ceremonial Peking duck, served with the elegance it deserves; the crispy and tasty Hong Kong-style fried crab; and the intense Cantonese-style seafood casserole. Other dishes that surprise the palate include Sichuan-style fried sirloin, Thai curry prawns, Yuxiang aubergines with minced meat and ox-tail samosas, which add a fusion touch without disrupting the harmony of the menu.

The art of dim sum

If there is one area where Kōkōchin truly shines, it is on its dim sum menu. More than twenty varieties are prepared daily by expert hands, with absolute mastery of timing, texture and filling. They are steamed, grilled or fried, all delicately presented to reveal the restaurant's high standards.

The Xiaolongbao Combo—five versions of pork, from traditional to one with elver—is a perfect example of how to reinterpret without betraying the original. Also noteworthy are the Spring Jiaozi with prawn and Iberian pork, and the mushroom Jiaozi, with a trio of varieties (white and brown shimeji and cardoon mushrooms) that will seduce even those who are not particularly fond of vegetables.

Different types of dim sum



Sushi with Japanese precision

Although not a traditional Japanese restaurant, Kōkōchin offers a selection of high-quality sushi. Nigiri, sashimi and rolls made to order with fresh ingredients and precision cuts are designed for purists of raw fish. The quality of the bluefin tuna, butterfish, eel and scallops is evident from the very first bite. There is no excess or gratuitous fusion: there is respect for technique and ingredients.

Some rolls include fruits such as mango or raspberry, without detracting from the overall experience. This is sushi that does not seek to surprise, but rather to achieve balance.

Sweet finish and oriental teas

The finishing touch is a short but well-thought-out dessert menu. The passion fruit, mango, coconut and yuzu mochis are light, fresh and have a perfectly balanced texture. For those with a sweet tooth, the homemade chocolate cake is more than enough: it's creamy, tasty and comforting. Add to that a careful selection of oriental teas—green, jasmine, oolong—that invite you to linger over your meal with good conversation.

And if you fancy something stronger, the cocktail and spirits menu, inspired by the landscapes of the Silk Road, is another of the venue's great attractions. Each cocktail is named after a city or region on the journey, with spicy, citrus or floral notes, depending on the section it represents. Among the most popular are:

Lychee: a refreshing blend of gin, purple shiso and jasmine; Tomato: a bold combination of mezcal, green shiso, tomato water and chipotle; and Pear: a non-alcoholic option made with lacto-fermented pear and Sichuan pepper.



Sichuan-style sirloin steak

Shanghai-style duck
Selection of mochis

A space designed to tell stories

The interior design at Kököchin is not decorative: it is narrative. Every room, every corner, every material has a meaning. The visual journey begins in Mongolia, passes through Chinese temples, touches Ceylon and Persia, and ends on a spectacular terrace with a hundred-year-old olive tree, the true emblem of the place. The soft lighting, screens, oriental lamps and handcrafted details create a welcoming atmosphere that never feels caricatured.

The restaurant has private spaces, a central bar, modular rooms and a versatile layout that can be adapted to both intimate dinners and celebrations. An elegant yet intimate setting where you can talk without raising your voice and eat without distractions.

A complete experience

Kököchin does not aim to be a themed restaurant or a gastronomic fireworks display. Its offering is more honest: good Asian cuisine, well executed, with personality and a consistent atmosphere. Each dish has a story, but also flavour, technique and balance. There are no concessions to artifice.

Kököchin offers a well-told and even better served journey. And like any good journey, it leaves you wanting to return.

A woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a poncho with a black and white geometric pattern is walking away from the camera down a dirt path that winds through a vast field of purple lavender. In the background, a small, rustic stone house with a tiled roof sits at the end of the path. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of late afternoon or early morning.

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