

# magazine traveling

ENGLISH EDITION

## TRAVEL AND GASTRONOMY MAGAZINE

No. 73 Year 2025 Price: America \$ 9,50 - Europe 8,00 €



**La Rioja**  
Wine, land  
and spirituality

**Tongli**  
La ciudad del agua,  
esencia de China

**Copenhagen**  
The magic of Christmas  
at Tivoli

**La Subbética  
Cordobesa**  
Liquid gold and baroque

**LETUR**  
In autumn, paths of  
water and silence



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# Welcome aboard

Each new edition of Traveling is an invitation to look at the world with calm, curiosity and that attentive spirit that accompanies every good traveller. In these pages we gather stories that connect territories, aromas, landscapes and memories; narratives that wish to accompany you on this flight and, at the same time, encourage you to plan the next one.

In this issue we travel to Japan through its cuisines, a privileged way to understand the essence of a country that transforms the everyday act of eating into an art in itself. We then cross our borders to pause in La Rioja, a land where wine converses with the earth and with a spirituality that has set its rhythm for centuries. We will also wander through villages that preserve the quiet of autumn, such as Letur or the Subbética Cordobesa, where the landscape becomes intimate and the paths echo with water and olive groves.

A journey to China also awaits us to discover Tongli, the city of water that preserves the cadence of another time, and an escape to the north to experience the Christmas magic of Tivoli in Copenhagen. In our nature pages, we look towards the Balearic Islands with their soul of sea and stone, and towards Madagascar, an enigmatic island where silence has its own sound.

In gastronomy, we explore the products that give La Rioja its character; we taste the Peruvian cuisine of Acholao in Madrid and delve into the young and vibrant proposal of Tribeca Bistro. We also travel to the heart of Puerto de Indias to discover a fruit gin with Andalusian identity.

As always, thank you for joining us. May these pages inspire you, move you and remind you that travelling remains a luminous way of being in the world.



Jose A. Muñoz  
CEO



Rosario Alonso  
Director

Members of::



**Editorial OMO DOMO SL**  
Pol. Ind. Sta. Ana Cl. Electrodo 70-72  
nave 49 28522 - Rivas Vaciamadrid  
Madrid - (Spain) Tel: (+34) 911 126 744

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## CEO

Jose Antonio Muñoz  
[joseantonio@revistatraveling.com](mailto:joseantonio@revistatraveling.com)

## DIRECTOR

Rosario Alonso  
[rosario@revistatraveling.com](mailto:rosario@revistatraveling.com)

## ADVERTISING

Javier Martínez  
[javier@revistatraveling.com](mailto:javier@revistatraveling.com)

## MARKETING Y RR.SS

Clara Serrano  
[claraserrano@revistatraveling.com](mailto:claraserrano@revistatraveling.com)

## EDITORIAL STAFF

[redaccion@revistatraveling.com](mailto:redaccion@revistatraveling.com)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Jose Antonio Muñoz  
[josemcoromina@gmail.com](mailto:josemcoromina@gmail.com)

## WINE TOURISM

Alejandro and Luis Paadín  
[alejandro@paadin.es](mailto:alejandro@paadin.es)

## Delegations

### COSTA RICA:

José David Díaz Picado  
[jose.diaz@crmia.com](mailto:jose.diaz@crmia.com)

### USA:

Larissa Rolley  
[Larissarolley@outlook.com](mailto:Larissarolley@outlook.com)

### COLOMBIA:

Carlos Sanchez Uriaga  
[carlos@revistatraveling.com](mailto:carlos@revistatraveling.com)

### ARGENTINA:

Melany Pasquini  
[melany@revistatraveling.com](mailto:melany@revistatraveling.com)

## Collaborate

Kiara Hurtado  
[kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com](mailto:kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com)

Manena Munar  
[manena.munar@gmail.com](mailto:manena.munar@gmail.com)

Julián Sacristán  
[comunicacion@wfm.es](mailto:comunicacion@wfm.es)

Diego Ruiz-Gil  
[diegorg45@hotmail.es](mailto:diegorg45@hotmail.es)

Clara Serrano Vega  
[claraserranovega@gmail.com](mailto:claraserranovega@gmail.com)

Legal Deposit: M-1097-2018

ISSN: 2660-8146





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Flying over La Rioja in a hot-air balloon  
© Jose A. Muñoz



## COVER

Tiradito © ACHOLAO





# Madagascar

The island that keeps silence

**Words:** Clara Serrano Vega - [claraserranovega@gmail.com](mailto:claraserranovega@gmail.com) **Photos:** Clara Serrano Vega y archivo



Isolated from the African continent for millions of years, Madagascar is a world of its own: an island where nature invented its own laws and time seems to move to a different rhythm. Travelling through it means entering a laboratory of life, but also a land of silences and contrasts. Among baobabs, lemurs and villages of red clay, the traveller discovers a country as fragile as it is fascinating.



Seen from the air, Madagascar appears as a vast green and ochre stain floating on the Indian Ocean. It resembles no other place. Unlike other tropical islands, one does not come here to rest: one comes to understand difference. The fourth largest island on the planet split from the ancient continent of Gondwana more than eighty million years ago, when humans did not yet exist. That geological isolation created an unrepeatable ecosystem: more than eighty per cent of its species cannot be found anywhere else on the planet.

Madagascar is, in a way, a continent within an island. Its humid forests, its savannahs, its mountains and its mangroves are like fragments of different worlds brought together by chance. Each region has its own climate, its own light and even its own language, its own rhythm of life and a different way of looking at the sky. In a single day of travel, one can move from the coolness of mist to the stifling heat of the coast, from bright green to red dust. That diversity is its strength and its fragility, its perfect balance between the wild and the human.

### Antananarivo, the city that breathes on the hills

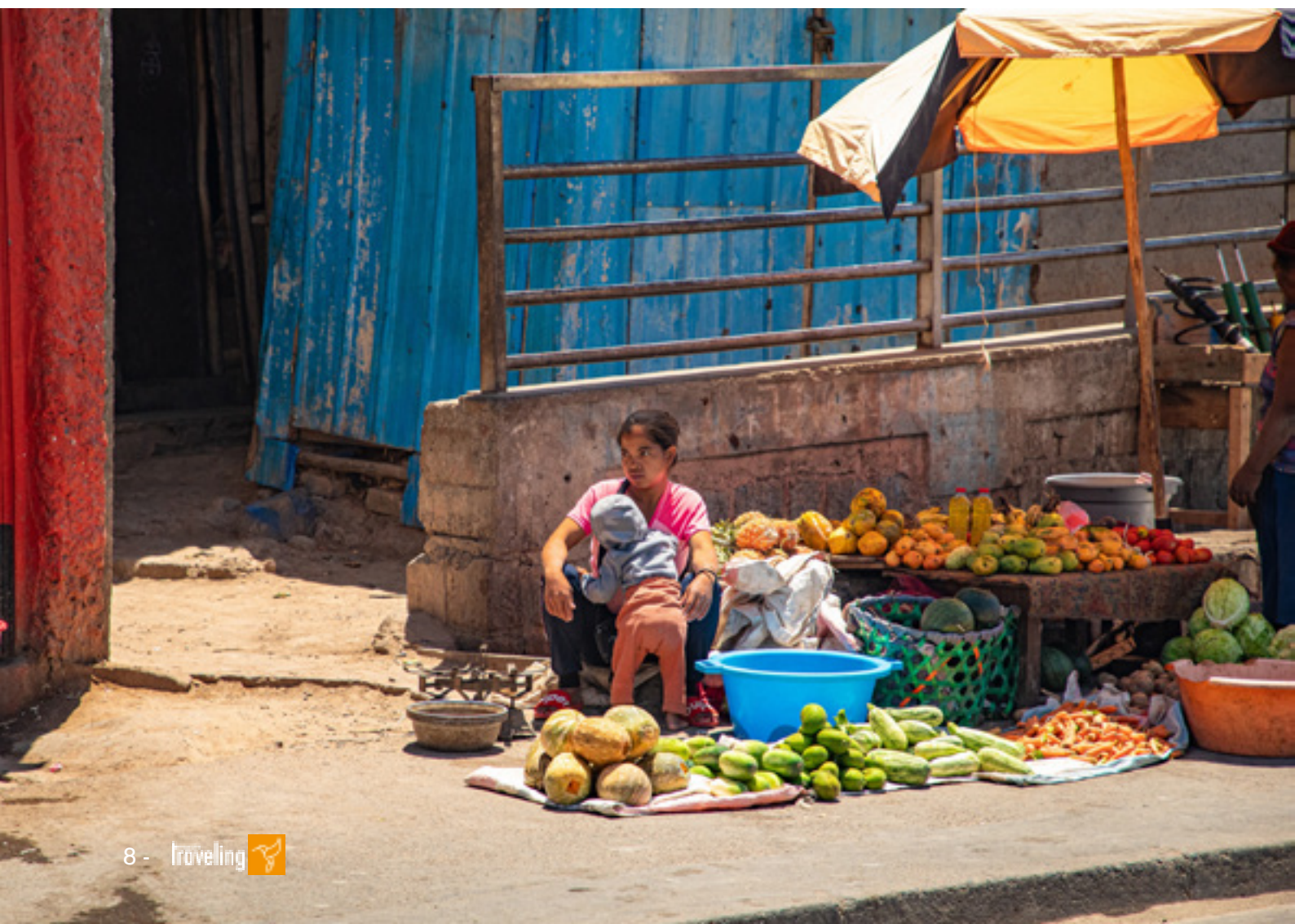
The capital, Antananarivo, is a charming chaos. It stretches over twelve hills and is made of slopes, tin roofs and red-brick houses that seem to hold one another up. The markets boil with voices, fruit, fabrics and smells. Taxis wheeze their way up impossible streets and the stairways seem endless. From above, the city looks like a mosaic of smoke, life and colour.

At dusk, children play football between puddles, women return with rice on their shoulders and the air fills with golden dust that softens the edges of the day. People stop to chat, to smile, to share. Chaotic and human, "Tana", as its inhabitants call it, is the beating heart of Madagascar: a place where poverty does not erase dignity or hope. Among the palaces, churches and remnants of colonial architecture, one senses the blending that defines the country: African, Austronesian and Arab roots living together in a single gesture. Madagascar is, from the beginning, a mixture that cannot be explained, only felt. **Red**





Antananarivo, its busy streets and below a street stall of fruit and vegetables





### Earth track

Leaving the capital and taking the RN7 road south is like travelling back in time. It is almost six hundred and twenty miles of dust and shifting landscapes: rice fields, eroded hills, adobe villages and women carrying water jars on their heads. The earth is red, the air warm, and the days are measured by the distance to the next village.

In Antsirabe, a city of thermal waters founded by Norwegian missionaries, the colourful rickshaws paint the scene with joy. Further on, the savannah replaces the mountains, and the first baobabs begin to appear: enormous trees that seem to grow upside down, with their roots pointing to the sky.

For the Malagasy, the baobab is a sacred tree. It represents resilience, the passing of time and the memory of the ancestors. Some reach more than ninety-eight feet in height and live for over a thousand years. Before them, the noise of the world falls silent. Travelling along this road requires patience. The journeys are slow, the tracks uneven, the dust constant. But in return, each stop offers something different: a greeting, a smile, an everyday scene.

### The forest that sings

In Ranomafana National Park, the humidity covers everything. It is a cloud forest where the air smells of wet earth and the trees seem to breathe. Among ferns and orchids, the golden bamboo lemur leaps — a small lemur discovered only a few decades ago. Its curious gaze and agility among the branches sum up well the spirit of this island: fragile, vital, unpredictable.

Here the fady rule, the ancestral taboos that shape the relationship between humans and nature. Each community has its own: not pointing at a grave, not fishing in a certain river, not eating a particular animal. They are unwritten rules that maintain an invisible balance, an ethics born from observation and respect.

To understand Madagascar is to understand that discreet spirituality, that way of living alongside the environment without trying to dominate it. In this forest that seems to sing under the rain, life has its own rhythm, and the visitor can only listen







Avenue of baobabs and below a Malagasy woman



### The trees of eternity

In the west, near **Morondava**, the **Avenue of the Baobabs** opens up, one of those places that leave you speechless. A dozen monumental trees rise above the red earth like the columns of a natural cathedral. At sunset, the light paints them gold and the shadows stretch into infinity.

The children from nearby villages run between the trunks, cyclists stop to look, and the elders watch in silence. The Malagasy believe that the baobabs hold the spirit of the ancestors, and perhaps for that reason the place conveys a peace that borders on the sacred.

### *Here the trees do not only grow, they accompany us and are part of local life.*

El aire se llena de polvo y de risas. Algunos niños se cuelgan de las raíces secas, otros corren descalzos detrás del sol que se apaga. Es una imagen simple y poderosa: la infancia jugando entre los árboles más viejos del mundo, como si nada pudiera romper esa armonía.



## Tsingy, the stone that cuts the sky

In **Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park**, the ground turns into a stone forest. “Tsingy” means “to walk on tiptoes” in Malagasy, and one only has to look at the terrain to understand why. They are thousands of limestone needles rising towards the sky like a motionless army.

Between them, deep fissures, walkways and hanging bridges defy vertigo. Light enters in bursts and the wind sounds like a distant song. It is an almost unreal place where nature has carved its own labyrinth.

The Tsingy is protected by UNESCO and by local beliefs. The inhabitants of the area consider it a sacred space. Where humans pause, nature follows its own path, wild and serene at the same time.







## The fishermen of the Indian Ocean

On the south-west coast, near Ifaty, the air smells of salt, seaweed and damp wood. At dawn, the Vezo fishermen push their canoes towards the sea. They are light vessels, carved from a single trunk, with sails that barely withstand the wind. They sail without compass or watch, guided by the colour of the water and the direction of the waves.

When they return, they bring the fish still trembling, clean it on the shore and dry it in the sun on braided mats. Around them, the women prepare the nets, the men mend the sail, and the children run barefoot building sand boats.

The Vezo call themselves “the people of the sea”, and their relationship with the ocean is almost spiritual. Each day of fishing is a conversation with the tides. They live in balance between the immensity of the water and the narrowness of the land, between necessity and calm.

Batavia, west of Madagascar, province of Toliara.  
Fishing village







### **An island, many souls**

Madagascar does not have a single face. In the coastal villages, the Vezo fishermen follow the rhythm of the sea; in the highlands, the Merina, an ethnic group, build brick houses and celebrate the famadihana, the “return of the dead”: an ancestral rite in which families unearth their ancestors to wrap them in new cloths and dance with them.

Life and death, the visible and the invisible, coexist here naturally. Nothing is extreme or exclusive: everything is intertwined. Madagascar is a frontier in itself, between Africa and Asia, between what is ancient and what is yet to come.

**Every gesture, every glance and every colour seem to remind us: in Madagascar, diversity is neither an exception nor an accident, but the very essence of its existence, the pulse that unites its peoples, its landscapes and its beliefs.**







Avenue of the Baobabs in Marofototra. Below, river in Ranomafana National Park





## The inner journey

At the end of the road, Madagascar leaves a mark that does not fade. It is not a destination to be conquered or fully understood. It is a place to be accepted. It teaches you to look slowly, to listen, to recognise life in what is simple.

Its red-earth tracks, its forests wrapped in mist and its upside-down trees are not just landscapes: they are metaphors. In them, one senses an ancient lesson about patience, silence and respect.

When the sun goes down on the Avenue of the Baobabs and the children run between the giant trunks laughing into the wind, one understands that life, here, follows another rhythm.

***Madagascar is not visited, it is crossed. And whoever crosses it never returns the same — one is always touched by the island.***



# Travel notes

## How to get there

Departure from Madrid or Barcelona to the Malagasy capital, Antananarivo (Tana). Normally with a stopover in Paris, Kuala Lumpur or Johannesburg. Arrival at Ivato Airport (near the city) to settle in for the first nights. It is advisable to book the flight in advance and plan transfers from the airport to the hotel (official taxi or pre-arranged transfer).

## Where to sleep

### Hotel Carlton Madagascar (Antananarivo)

A classic of the city — located in Anosy, with comfortable rooms, views of Lake Anosy and the royal palace. Ideal for settling in at the start of the journey

### Radisson Blu Antananarivo Waterfront (Antananarivo)

Modern hotel, good location by the water, rooftop restaurant with views. Perfect for a comfortable stay after the flight before heading inland.

If you want something more intimate and connected to the landscape (and you are travelling south or west) you could consider a lodge in the area of the baobabs or the Malagasy savannah (although it will require a transfer).

## Where to eat

To give your journey a local, gastronomic flavour with a touch of contemporary design, here are four recommendations in Antananarivo.

**La Varangue:** European-Malagasy style restaurant considered among the best in the city. Ideal for an elegant opening dinner.

**Marais Restaurant:** Fine dining in Madagascar with local products reinterpreted. Good for an auteur-style feature wishing to explore design, space and gastronomy.

**Cafe Du Musee:** A little more informal, good atmosphere, and well located for a relaxed meal after exploring the city.

**Restaurant Sakamanga:** For a more authentic experience, with a local atmosphere, where you can try traditional Malagasy dishes (such as ravitoto or trondro maina) and feel the pulse of the city.





The Oval, Hotel and Art Museum Benesse House

# Light and concrete

## The invisible Japan of **Tadao Ando**

Words: Jose A. Muñoz Photography: Archivo

From Osaka to Naoshima, a journey through the work of the Japanese architect **Tadao Ando** becomes a spiritual experience. His temples, museums and silent spaces reinterpret concrete, light and landscape as languages of the soul. Japan reveals itself, then, as a country where architecture is not only contemplated but also felt.



Tadao Ando

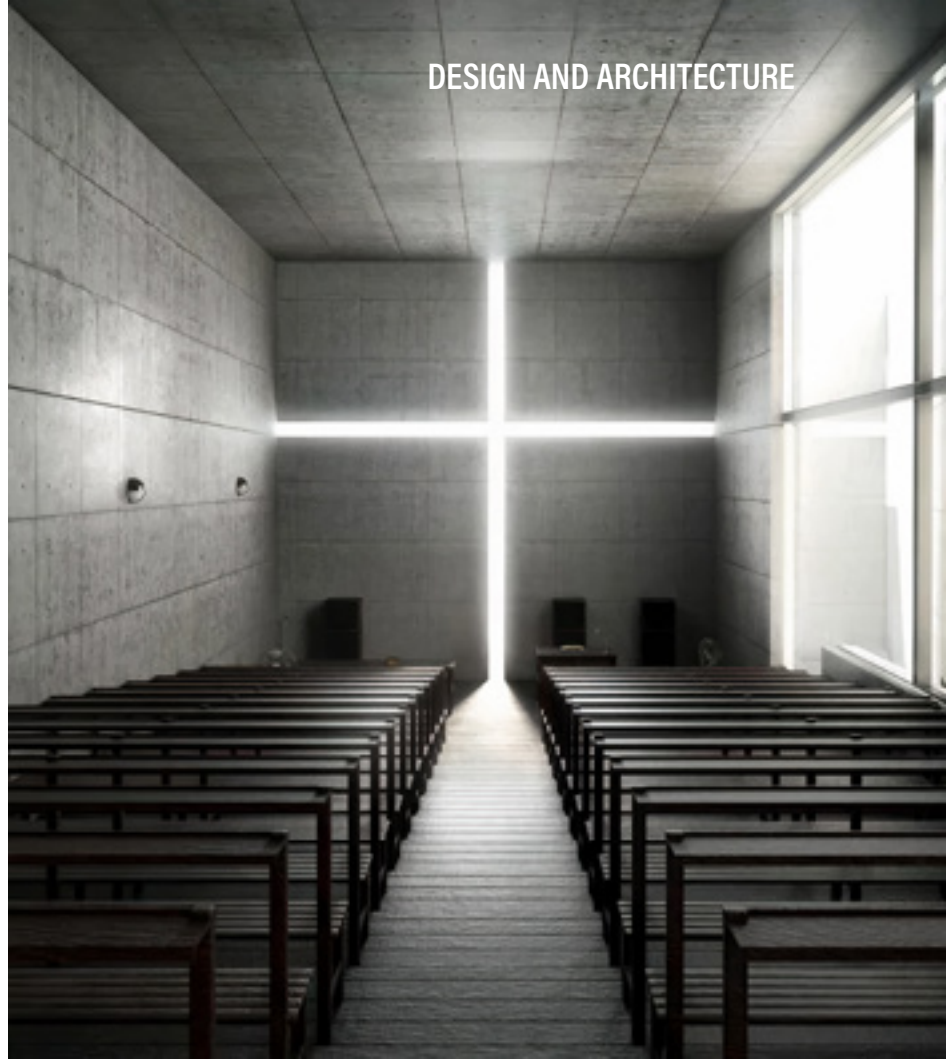


## Silence as material

I travelled to Japan in search of architecture and found silence. Not an empty silence, but one full of intention, as if every wall, every shadow and every glimmer of light spoke in a language without words. It is in that language that the work of Tadao Ando is written, the self-taught architect who transformed concrete into a spiritual material. His story begins in Osaka, where he was born in 1941. Before drawing lines, he was a boxer; before studying architecture, he travelled. He learned by observing temples, streets, churches, deserts. From each place he took an idea, and from each mistake, a lesson. Today, his name is inscribed in history as one of the great masters of contemporary space, a man who turned concrete, light and nature into the three pillars of a new spirituality.

## Osaka: faith in light

My journey began in Ibaraki, on the outskirts of Osaka. There stands the Church of the Light, probably his most recognisable work. From the outside, the building reveals almost nothing: a grey prism, without ornament, without concessions. But upon entering, the dimness is transformed. A cross of light opens in the front wall, cutting through the darkness with the precision of a scalpel.



The Church of the Light in Ibaraki

There are no images, no colour, no sound. Only that light which pierces the concrete and turns the space into an experience.

In that moment I understood what Ando seeks: for the building to disappear and only the emotion of the person within it to remain.

“Architecture should inspire courage to live.” — Tadao Ando

Aerial view of the Water Temple on Awaji Island





### Awaji: descending into silence

From Osaka I take the train south, to Awaji Island, where the **Water Temple** rises. The approach forces you to descend a circular staircase surrounded by a lotus-covered pond. The visitor goes down, quite literally, into silence. Beneath the surface, the temple reveals itself as a sanctuary of pure lines, of concrete and half-light.

The sound of the water and the echo of footsteps blend into an atmosphere that invites meditation. Here, architecture ceases to be an object and becomes a state of mind.

### Naoshima: art underground

My next destination is Naoshima, the island of art, in the Seto Inland Sea. It is a place where landscape and art blend, where Ando has designed some of his most poetic buildings: the **Benesse House Museum**, the **Chichu Art Museum** and the **Lee Ufan Museum**. Reaching Naoshima is an experience in itself: a boat journey between islands that seem to float suspended in time.



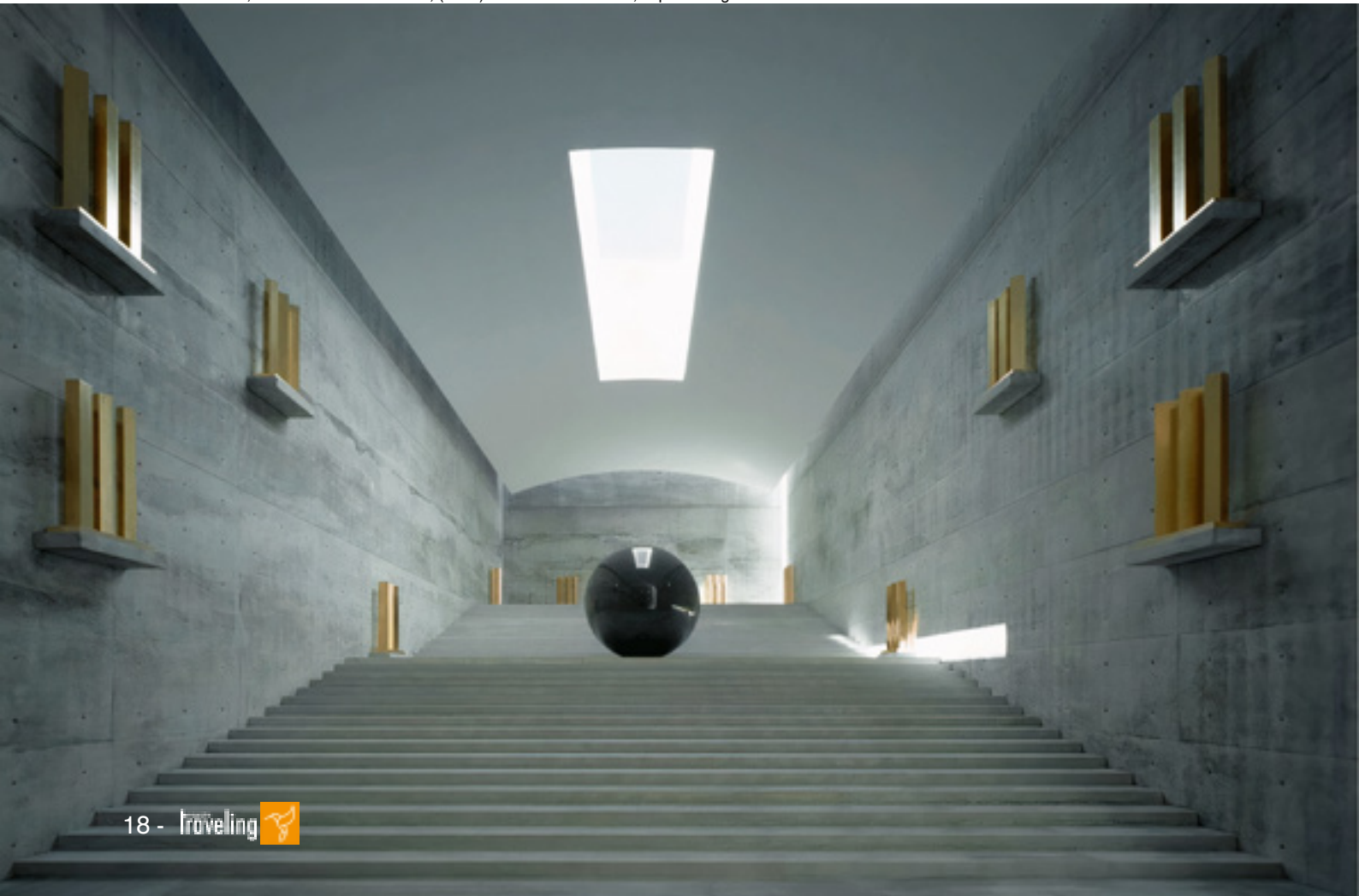
Entrance to the Water Temple

In the Chichu Art Museum, art is literally underground. Ando conceived it as a subterranean space to protect the beauty of the surroundings. There is no visible façade, only a garden and, beneath it, rooms open to the sky where the light changes with every hour. There rest the works of **Monet, James Turrell and Walter De Maria**, illuminated by the sun filtering through geometric cuts in the concrete. It is a building that breathes with the day, a gallery that needs neither white walls nor electric spotlights to move you.

### Tokyo: geometry and calm

In Tokyo, I visit **Omotesando Hills**, a commercial complex that Ando designed in the very heart of the capital's most elegant district. There, among boutiques and cafés, his architecture takes on an urban, almost experimental tone. The building descends in a spiral, with ramps that soften the route. Despite its commercial function, it maintains that characteristic serenity of his work: bare concrete, exact proportions, filtered light.

Walter De Maria, 'Time/Timeless/No Time', (2004). Chichu Art Museum, Japan. Image © Mitsuo Matsuoka







Top photo, Omotesando Hills shopping centre. Bottom photos, different views of the Chichu Art Museum in Tokyo







Shanghai Theatre

Tadao Ando's work transcends borders and cultures, extending his language of light and concrete across the world. The Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas, the Shanghai

Theatre, the Langen Foundation in Neuss and the Bourse de Commerce in Paris reveal his poetic vision: turning architecture into contained emotion, where light becomes thought, space becomes silence and each line builds a form of contemplation.

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas







Langen Foundation in Neuss in Germany

What impresses me most about Ando is not monumentality —because he does not seek it— but his way of making the invisible visible. Emptiness is not absence, but a space full of intention. His constructions do not shout; they whisper. He avoids ornament and trusts in the beauty of the material.

### The legacy of silence

Back in Osaka, I visit his studio, a small office where concrete and books coexist in rigorous order. There is no ostentation, only drawings, models and silence. Behind every wall, every perfect joint, there is an almost artisanal precision, an almost spiritual discipline.

I then understand that visiting Ando's work is not about touring buildings, but about entering a way of thinking. Each work is a dialogue between the built and the natural, between the body and the soul. In his temples, museums or private houses, one feels the same sensation: architecture as a refuge for consciousness, a place where time stops.

Interior of Tadao Ando's architecture studio







# Tongli

## The city of water and ancient tradition

Words and Photography: Jose A. Muñoz

**T**o reach Tongli you must leave behind the bustling rhythm of Suzhou and enter a territory where time seems to flow with the same calm as its canals. Located in the district of Wujiang, this ancient city is known as the “Venice of the East”, a nickname that, far from being a tourist invention, accurately describes its intimate geography: 15 canals divide the historic centre and form a network of 49 bridges, while the houses line the water’s edge as if they had found there their natural point of balance.

Tongli’s history dates back to the Song dynasty, and it still preserves structures and dwellings from the Ming and Qing periods. That legacy can be felt without embellishment: in the stone bridges softened by generations of footsteps, in the narrow alleys where the light falls differently at every hour of the day, and in the wooden façades darkened by the passing of time. Everything invites you to understand that this is a city built to live with the water, not to merely contemplate it.



## Bridges that explain a way of life

In Tongli, the bridges are more than an architectural solution. They are the clearest expression of how life was organised in the traditional China of the Yangtze Delta. The “Three Bridges”, a local symbol, represent marriage, prosperity and longevity, and they remain part of everyday memory. The traveller crosses them almost without realising it, but the history endures: each arch, each stone, each reflection tells something of the inhabitants who have passed through this place for centuries. Tongli is, in essence, an urban fabric that has managed to preserve its original structure. The neighbourhoods unfold like small islands connected by narrow passages, while the canals function as a network of arteries through which trade, domestic life and communication with neighbouring cities once flowed.

## The Tuisi Garden: retreat, study and measure of time

The Tuisi Garden, built by Ren Lansheng at the end of the Qing dynasty, is a refined example of the classical Jiangnan aesthetic. Its famous Taihu stones — taken from the lake of the same name, near Suzhou — are the soul of the ensemble: limestone rocks eroded by centuries of water and wind, valued for their natural cavities, irregular contours and their ability to evoke miniature mountains. In Chinese tradition they represent stability and contemplation, and Ren Lansheng arranged them as if they were a miniature landscape, a place where the gaze could travel without leaving the enclosure.



A multitude of restaurants and shops fill the streets

The different canals that serve as streets of the old town







Different views of Tongli and its canals







Latest trend in China: traditional clothing and taking selfies



Cormorants perched on one of the traditional boats



Stretching and airing sugar dough to make a traditional Chinese sweet





View of the main pond in the Tuisi Garden

Around them, the different spaces of the garden are laid out: the study hall, oriented towards the water to encourage calm; the resting pavilions, open to the ponds and the arched bridges; the covered gallery that allows the garden to be walked without breaking the unhurried rhythm of the stroll; and the secondary courtyards, where light filters through bamboo and stone mosaics. Each one is conceived for a different moment of the day and of the mood: to contemplate, to write, to converse or simply to listen to the murmur of the water that gives meaning to the whole ensemble

### Everyday life beside the canal

Tongli is not understood only through its monuments, but through the everyday life that still sustains its streets. Early in the morning, shopkeepers set out baskets of vegetables freshly brought from the nearby orchards, while some neighbours sweep their doorsteps with bamboo brooms they have been using for generations

The sound of water gently striking the walls, the greetings exchanged across bridges and the creaking of shutters as they open draw the routine of a city that, despite the constant arrival of visitors, maintains a domestic rhythm.





The old family residences, many of which can be visited today, reveal how life was organised in this environment of canals. The successive courtyards structured the house according to precise functions: the first for receiving guests, the second for daily tasks and the third as an intimate space. The dark wooden beams, the fired-brick floors and the inner ponds were not decorative elements, but practical solutions for ventilation, storage and water collection, essential in a city built beside the river. Details such as carved latticework, entrance stones polished by use or small household altars explain better than any museum what traditional life in the delta was like: sober, functional and attentive to the gestures that made an environment of water and narrow passage habitable

### A memory that remains

On leaving Tongli, the traveller carries with them the impression of having been in a place that does not seek to impress, but to accompany. Its beauty is born of its ancestral past: the relationship with the water, the continuity of the traditional houses, the serenity of the Tuisi Garden and the unhurried passage of the boatmen



View of the pond and some of the buildings in the Tuisi Garden

One of the rooms for receiving guests







# Guatemala

Ancestral heart of Central America

**Words:** Editorial staff - **Photography:** Guatemalan Tourism Institute





To speak of Guatemala is to speak of the soul of the Maya world, of a land that still preserves the pulse of its ancient civilisations among volcanoes, lakes and tropical forests. Its history goes back more than three thousand years, when cities such as Tikal, Yaxhá and Quiriguá flourished — sacred centres of astronomy, art and commerce. The arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century marked a profound mestizaje that gave rise to a unique cultural identity: a country where Mayan languages coexist with Spanish and indigenous markets colour colonial squares.

Today Guatemala opens itself to the world with a blend of tradition, nature and authenticity that is hard to match. Its archaeological heritage, its living towns and its lush landscapes place it among the most attractive destinations in Central America. In recent years, its tourism offer has grown, driven by visitors seeking genuine and sustainable experiences, with direct contact with the local community. Destinations such as Antigua Guatemala, a World Heritage Site, or Lake Atitlán, surrounded by volcanoes and artisan villages, have become international icons, while its Caribbean coast and the jungle routes of Petén gain prominence among travellers in search of authenticity. From the turquoise lakes of the highlands and the rivers hidden in the jungle, to the thermal waterfalls and the black-sand beaches of the Pacific, Guatemala offers aquatic experiences that combine nature, adventure and living culture.

### Waterfalls that enchant the senses

Guatemala is a country of living water. In its volcanic geography, where mountain and jungle merge, waterfalls are natural temples where the beauty and strength of water are expressed without artifice.

In the cloud forests of Alta Verapaz, the Salto de Chilasó plunges from almost four hundred and twenty-seven feet, among ferns, mosses and orchids. Considered one of the highest in Central America, it attracts hikers and birdwatchers. The flight of the quetzal — national symbol and emblem of freedom — rewards the patience of those who follow the humid trails. The nearby communities, guardians of the environment, offer guided routes and local products that promote responsible tourism.

Further east, the Los Amates waterfalls, known as the Guatemalan Niagaras, invite rest and contemplation. Their emerald-coloured pools, hidden among trees and moss-covered rocks, are an ideal refuge for a peaceful swim or a picnic day in the heart of nature.

In Izabal, **Finca El Paraíso** offers an unusual spectacle: a thermal waterfall that falls onto a river of cold water. The contrast creates a cloud of steam that envelops the visitor in a mystical atmosphere. Many travellers slip into the caves behind the veil of water or cover their skin with the mineral mud of the banks, evoking ancient Mayan rituals.



## GUATEMALA

Very close by, **Río Dulce National Park**, with its mangroves, canyons and the colonial fortress of **San Felipe de Lara**, completes a journey in which history and nature intertwine.

Each waterfall has its own character, but all share the same power: to stop time. In Guatemala, water does not only flow; it also tells stories of jungle, mountain and of communities that still know how to listen to it

### Rivers and lakes of dreams

No journey through the country would be complete without visiting **Semuc Champey**, a Natural Monument and emblem of Alta Verapaz. This limestone bridge hides the Cahabón River beneath it, forming a series of turquoise-blue pools that seem unreal. Despite its fame, it remains a place of peace where you can swim, jump from natural ledges or let yourself be carried by the murmur of the water between stone walls covered in vegetation. The more adventurous descend the river floating on tyres or venture into the **Kan'ba caves**, a labyrinth where the water guides the exploration.

**Lake Atitlán**, surrounded by the San Pedro, Atitlán and Tolimán volcanoes, offers a different calm. Its clear waters invite kayaking or paddleboarding at dawn, when the sun gilds the surface and silence wraps everything. On its shores, towns such as Santiago Atitlán and San Juan de La Laguna keep Mayan traditions alive. There, among workshops of natural textiles, high-altitude coffees and colourful markets, one discovers the essence of a Guatemala that lives to the rhythm of the lake.

Further north, in Huehuetenango, the **Candelaria cenotes** reveal a hidden world in the jungle. They are pools of

pure water where you can swim, snorkel or enjoy a bath surrounded by the song of tropical birds. Few places summarise so well the serenity of Guatemalan nature.

### Coastal treasures that conquer the Pacific

The Pacific coast of Guatemala is a world of its own. Faced with the constant murmur of the sea and the dark shimmer of volcanic sand, this shoreline reveals a warmer, freer side of the country.

The surf town of **El Paredón**, in **Escuintla**, has gone from being an anonymous fishing village to becoming an international surfing destination. Its consistent waves, bohemian atmosphere and sustainable tourism projects have placed it on the map for travellers seeking authenticity. Among wooden huts and palm trees, local instructors offer lessons for all levels. At sunset, the horizon ignites in copper tones and surfers gather by the bonfires, sharing stories by the sea.

Further south, **Monterrico** preserves the natural soul of the Pacific. Its wide, solitary beaches are a refuge for thousands of sea turtles that nest each year between July and December. Every Saturday night, travellers and locals gather under the moon to release newly hatched turtles into the ocean, in a ceremony as moving as it is educational. The **Tortugario Monterrico**, managed by local organisations, protects nests and promotes environmental education, strengthening ecological awareness among visitors. In addition, its mangroves can be explored by canoe at dawn, when herons and pelicans cross the sky in a landscape of liquid light.

Santa Rosa Mangroves







- 1.- Cenotes of Candelaria, Huehuetenango
- 2.- Waterfalls of Sololá
- 3.- Aerial view of Semuc Champey
- 4.- Waterfalls of los Amantes





Turtle release on the beach, Monterrico turtle sanctuary

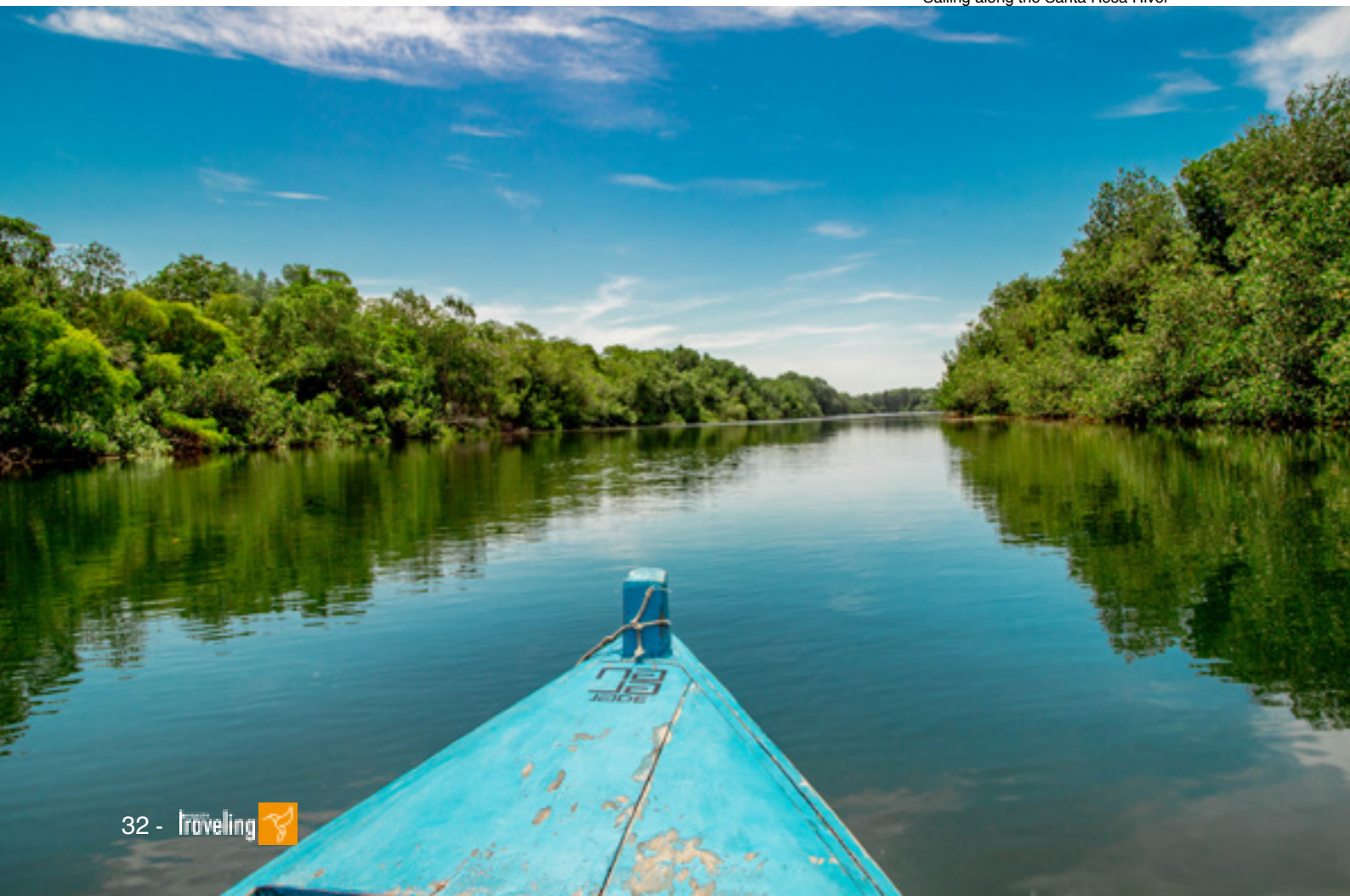
This coastline, still little explored, is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. Its volcanic beaches, its welcoming communities and its respect for nature offer an experience that connects the traveller with the very essence of Guatemala: a country that surprises, moves and always leaves you wanting to return.

### **Adventures among the mangroves**

The coastal ecosystems of Guatemala also hold one of their most underestimated treasures: the mangrove forests. These salt-tolerant trees create a labyrinth of roots that shelters fish, birds and reptiles, and also acts as a living barrier against storms and hurricanes. In their murky waters, life thrives, and on their branches herons, frigatebirds and ibises nest.

Exploring this environment is an experience that combines nature and environmental awareness. Boat or kayak excursions from El Paredón and Monterrico allow you to glide through channels where the light filters between the roots. The silence is broken only by the beating wings of a pelican or the splash of a fish. With luck, you may spot iguanas, raccoons or crocodiles sunning themselves.

Sailing along the Santa Rosa River







Mangroves on the Santa Rosa River

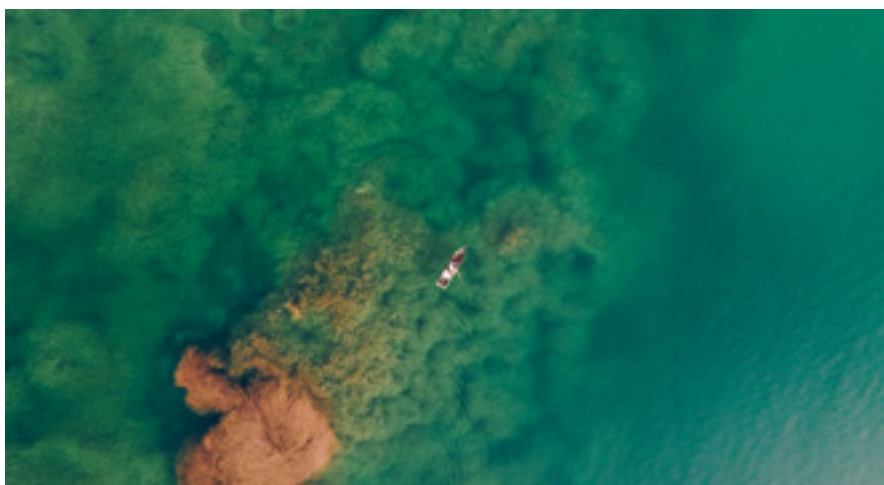
Many of these routes are managed by local communities that lead conservation projects. Some allow visitors to plant red or black mangrove seedlings; others support cooperatives that devote their income to environmental education and wildlife protection.

Visiting the Guatemalan mangroves is not just an excursion: it is a lesson in natural balance. It is understanding how the sea, the land and life intertwine in a silent dialogue that reminds the traveller that true adventure lies in caring for what astonishes us.

For those who wish to live this experience differently, CamOn Viajes, a collaborator of Traveling Magazine, offers carefully designed author journeys, with exclusive itineraries that combine nature, culture and encounters with local communities. These are proposals created to discover the country in a slow and personal way, accompanied by experts who interpret each place as a living tale of the Guatemalan soul.



Cenote of Candelaria



Santiago Atitlán, Sololá







One of the entrances to the Tivoli Gardens

# Christmas at the Tivoli

The glowing heart of Copenhagen

Words: Rosario Alonso Photography: Jose A. Muñoz

In Copenhagen, Christmas begins when the lights of Tivoli Gardens are switched on, that fantasy garden that for more than a century and a half has set the sentimental rhythm of the city. Each winter, when temperatures drop and the air fills with that scent of cinnamon, toasted almond and mulled wine that defines Scandinavia, the gates of Tivoli open as if from a fairy tale. Inside, among the lights that flicker over the frozen lake and the wooden stalls decorated with garlands, lies the very essence of Danish hygge: that intimate, warm and shared well-being that the Danes elevate to a way of life.

## A dream from the 19th century

Tivoli Gardens opened its doors in 1843 thanks to Georg Carstensen, a visionary who convinced King Christian VIII that if people had something to entertain them, they would forget about politics. He was right. What began as an amusement and strolling park for bourgeois families soon became the most beloved and enduring symbol of the Danish capital. Unlike modern parks, Tivoli was born with a soul. Behind its attractions and theatres there was a clear intention: to offer a refuge where joy, music and togetherness became a cherished habit.

Over the years, Tivoli expanded its territory among the buildings of the city centre. Today it occupies more than eight hectares and preserves an admirable balance between tradition and modernity. What is astonishing is that, despite its location —in the very heart of Copenhagen, next to the Town Hall and the Central Station— the park still seems like a world apart, protected from outside noise by its tall trees and its long history.

Among its most loyal visitors was Hans Christian Andersen, who found inspiration for his stories in its illuminated avenues.



Walt Disney himself walked along its paths in the 1950s and took careful note: the concept of Disneyland was born, to a great extent, after that visit to Tivoli. But the park has never needed to copy anyone; its charm lies precisely in the blend between the popular and the poetic, between the fairground and the romantic garden.

### Rides with a soul

Tivoli is a place that ages well. Its wooden roller coaster, built in 1914, is still operating and is one of the oldest in the world that continues to run with a manual brake, controlled by an operator in each carriage. Its gentle tremor and its rattle along the wooden rails are pure nostalgia.

The park combines those memories with new dizzying attractions, such as the Star Flyer, an 80-metre rotating tower offering panoramic views of the city, or the Daemonen, a modern roller coaster that blends speed with virtual reality. But the secret of Tivoli does

not lie in adrenaline, but in its atmosphere. The lakes, the oriental pavilions, the dancing fountains and the open-air stages create an urban landscape that seems outside of time.

The Pantomime Theatre, active since 1874, is one of the most singular spaces in the park. Traditional Danish pantomime is still performed there, with Pierrot as the protagonist, beneath a mechanical peacock-shaped curtain that slowly unfolds at the beginning of each performance. It is a wordless yet moving spectacle that embodies the original spirit of Tivoli: to entertain with simplicity and elegance.

### When Tivoli dresses for Christmas

If during the summer the park is a bustling green refuge, in winter it transforms into a fairy-tale setting. From mid-November, the gardeners and craftsmen of **Tivoli** work for weeks to decorate every corner with lights, artificial snow, fir trees

In Tivoli,  
Christmas takes  
on a serene and  
genuine meaning.  
Beauty arises  
from the light,  
from the murmur  
of the people and  
from the time that  
seems to stop  
in Copenhagen.  
There, everything  
invites you to  
believe that  
happiness can be  
as simple as a lit-  
up night.

Pantomime Theatre in Tivoli





## CHRISTMAS IN COPENHAGEN



Christmas kiosks and shops are found throughout Tivoli

and small details that seem taken from an old post-card. More than one million bulbs and around one thousand luminous figures are installed, changing the appearance of the park completely.

The **Christmas markets** unfold along its avenues. There, ornaments, wooden toys, gingerbread biscuits and gløgg, the spiced mulled wine typical of Denmark, are sold. Visitors stroll with gloves and scarves, cup in hand, while live music or a choir of carollers performs beneath the illuminated trees.

One of the most visited places is **the frozen lake**, where an **ice-skating rink** is set up surrounded by snow-covered fir trees. In the air, the smell of hot chocolate and caramelised almonds mixes with the sound of laughter. It is hard not to be carried away by the feeling: all of Copenhagen seems to gather there, in that small world where childhood and wonder have no age.

The grand façade of the **Nimb Hotel**, reminiscent of an oriental palace, is lit up entirely, and its terrace becomes a privileged viewpoint from which to contemplate the lights reflected on the water.

Inside, the restaurants offer special Christmas menus that include roast duck, caramelised potatoes and the classic risalamande, a rice pudding with almond and cherry sauce that hides a small surprise: whoever finds the whole almond receives a gift.

Nimb Hotel facade







One of the entrances to Tivoli

### Christmas in Copenhagen: a city wrapped in light

Beyond Tivoli, Christmas in Copenhagen is lived with a serene intensity. The Danes do not seek excess, but warmth. The streets of the centre, from **Strøget to Nyhavn**, fill with soft lights and garlands hanging between the colourful façades. In the windows, lit candles and paper stars create a sense of home even when simply walking past. The cafés smell of cardamom and the shop windows display wreaths of natural fir. Everything seems designed to celebrate winter rather than fight it.

The **Nyhavn market**, with its houses reflected in the canal, is another of the emblematic settings. There, wooden stalls offer herring, Danish cheese and mulled wine while the moored boats glow with garlands. A few steps away, in **City Hall Square**, stands a giant fir tree donated each year by Norway, symbol of the friendship between the Nordic countries.

But no place represents the Christmas spirit better than Tivoli Gardens. At dusk, when the sky turns dark blue and the lights begin to shine, the park becomes a perfect metaphor for Scandinavian Christmas: luminous yet understated, festive yet intimate, old and modern at once. Whole families gather to listen to open-air concerts, taste traditional sweets or simply stroll among the illuminated fir trees.

A tradition that renews itself each year, Tivoli achieves something difficult: maintaining its essence while continuing to reinvent itself. Decorations change, new shows are added, gastronomic areas expand, but the soul remains the same. There is no artifice in its magic: only the emotion of a city that celebrates light in the heart of winter.

The central lake presided over by a large boat









## A tradition that renews itself

Each year, Tivoli achieves something difficult: maintaining its essence while continuing to reinvent itself. Decorations change, new shows are added, gastronomic areas expand, but the soul remains the same. There is no artifice in its magic: only the emotion of a city that celebrates the light in the middle of winter.

Living Christmas in Tivoli is, ultimately, living the Christmas of Copenhagen. It is understanding that happiness does not depend on noise or excess, but on small gestures: a walk under the snow, a cup of gløgg among friends, a melody sounding in the distance.

It is, above all, remembering that the places that endure the longest are not those that change the world, but those that illuminate it a little more each night.

- 1.- City Hall Square
- 2.- Hotel D'Angleterre on the same square
- 3.- Strøget, one of the main shopping streets
- 4.- The old harbour, with the typical colourful houses







# La Rioja

## The perfect triangle of wine, land and spirituality

**Words:** Rosario Alonso - **Photography:** Jose A. Muñoz and Tourisme of La Rioja

In La Rioja, the landscape smells of vine shoots, freshly baked bread and ancient stone. It is a small land with an immense soul, one that has managed to make its history and its wine into a single word: identity. Here, the churches guard codices that shaped the Castilian language, the streets preserve the murmur of medieval pilgrims, and the wineries stretch underground like silent temples. La Rioja is not visited: it is travelled slowly, with attentive eyes and palate, letting yourself be enveloped by a culture that has fermented for centuries, like its wine.

**T**he wine is not an industry in La Rioja; it is its story, its root and its horizon. Since Roman times, the vine has shaped its landscape and its character. Medieval monks perfected its cultivation; 19th-century merchants elevated it to an art; and today's oenologists have turned it into a symbol of universal quality. The Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja, the first recognised in Spain, was born from the collective effort of winegrowers and winemakers who, since the late 19th century, sought to protect the identity of their wines and guarantee their quality. In 1925

it obtained official recognition and consolidated a pioneering system of control in Spain. Rioja Alta, with its Atlantic climate and the influence of the Sierra de Cantabria, contributes freshness and ageing potential. Rioja Oriental, broader and warmer, offers fuller-bodied wines with generous fruit, reflecting a diverse and fertile land.

Visiting a winery in La Rioja is an almost liturgical experience. Beneath stone floors or within the silent halls of century-old wineries, preserved by the passing of time, the wine sleeps in silence. The rows of barrels, the soft

lights and the scent of wood create an atmosphere of contemplation that invites you to pause. The oenologist speaks of wine as if speaking of a living being, with its stages, its maturity and its destiny, revealing a patient and almost devotional relationship.

Riojan wine has also shaped an aesthetic. Its deep ruby colour, its brightness in the glass, its balance between power and softness are also metaphors for a land that has learned to live with contrasts: the mountain and the plain, the monk and the farmer, the word and the wine — always united by a tradition that endures.





Santo Domingo de la Calzada Town Hall

## Santo Domingo de la Calzada

### The Way and the Miracle

Everything begins —as so often in the history of La Rioja— with the Camino de Santiago. Santo Domingo de la Calzada was born in the warmth of that age-old route and carries in its name the imprint of a holy and determined man. Domingo García, a humble 11th-century shepherd, decided to devote his life to easing the passage of the pilgrims who crossed these lands: he built bridges, levelled paths, raised a hospital and, above all, founded a town that would become a spiritual and human refuge for thousands of travellers.

The city preserves that spirit intact. Its cathedral, a 12th-century church-fortress built over the saint's tomb, is a jewel of late Romanesque and early Gothic, where faith blends with legend. Inside, beside the sepulchre of Santo Domingo, stands a surprising stone-and-wood henhouse where a white cockerel and hen live: a reminder of the famous miracle of the hanged pilgrim, in which the birds came back to life to prove the innocence of a young man unjustly condemned. Since then, the saying "Santo Domingo de la Calzada, where the hen sang after being roasted" has been part of the popular imagination of La Rioja.

Also notable in the cathedral are its High Altarpiece, Renaissance in style and the work of Damián Forment, and its Baroque Exempt Tower, one of the tallest in Spain, standing at more than two hundred and thirty feet in height, as well as several beautiful chapels such as the Chapel of the Sepulchre of Santo Domingo, the Magdalene Chapel, the Holy Christ Chapel, those of Saint Teresa and Saint Peter, and of course the Holy Christ of the Pilgrims Chapel. Fourteen are the side chapels of this magnificent cathedral. But if there is one space that surprises the traveller, it is its crypt, covered since 2019 by the illustrated mosaics of the Slovenian artist Marco Rupnik, which narrate the life of the saint while incorporating scenes typical of conventional religious iconography, interpreted through the artist's own sensibility.

The cobbled streets, the arcades and the noble houses of the town preserve that air of passage and hospitality. Every corner seems made to welcome the traveller, as if the centuries had not altered the essence of that initial gesture: extending a hand to the wayfarer.

View of the Cathedral and its Baroque exempt Tower







Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción



La Casona, considered the oldest civil building in La Rioja

## Briones

### Time standing still among the vineyards

A few kilometres from the Ebro, Briones rises on a hill overlooking the valley, surrounded by vineyards that change colour with the seasons: green in spring, golden in summer, reddish in autumn. It is one of the most beautiful villages in La Rioja and is included in the list of the “Most Beautiful Villages of Spain” — a place where time seems to have stopped in the Middle Ages. Its walls, narrow streets and stately houses tell the story of a town that was once a frontier, a stronghold, and a setting for alliances between kingdoms.

Perched on an eighty-metre-high hill and offering spectacular views of the vineyards, the Sierra de Toloño and the Ebro River, Briones unfolds, like the pages of a book, its history through its cultural and artistic heritage. The Plaza de España, around which stand four of its main monuments — the Palacio del Marqués de San Nicolás (now the Town Hall), La Casona (the oldest civil building in La Rioja), the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción or Santa María de Briones, and the old Abbey or House of the Arches. Just a few metres away are the Palace of the Quincoces and the beautiful Hermitage of San Juan or Santo Cristo, which houses inside a beautiful 19th-century apothecary.

View of Briones







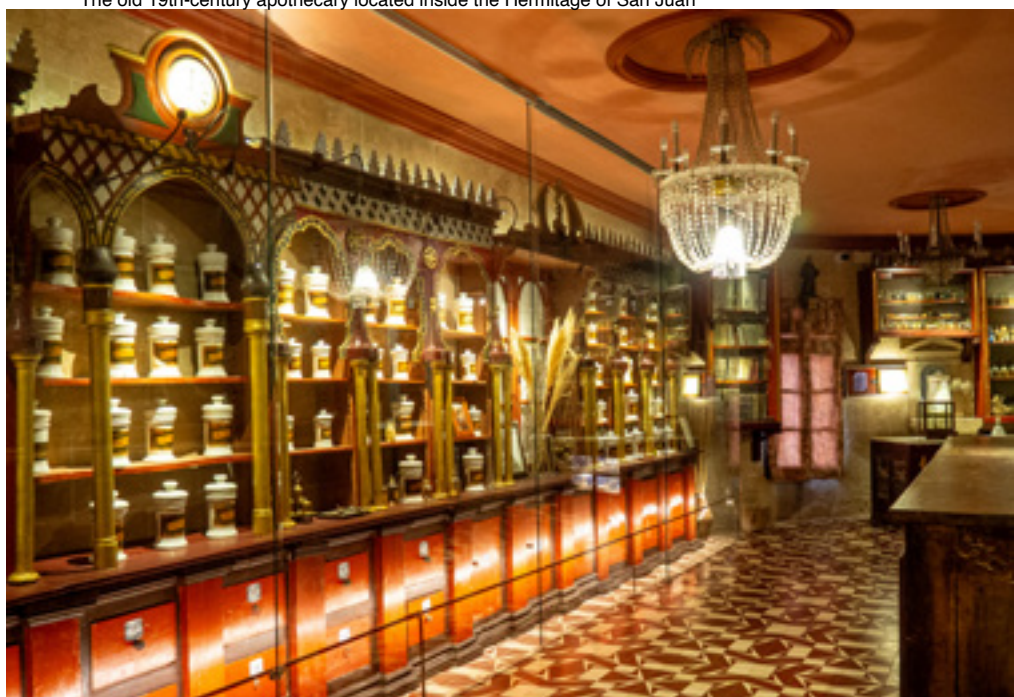
Vivanco Museum of Wine Culture

But Briones is not only a monument to the past: it is a symbol of what wine means in Riojan culture. Within its municipal boundaries stands the Museo Vivanco de la Cultura del Vino, probably the most complete museum of its kind in the world. A space where wine is told as what it truly is in this land: a form of art, a collective memory, a way of looking at life. In its rooms, Roman amphorae, 18th-century wine presses and works by Picasso or Sorolla coexist, all inspired by the same guiding thread: wine as an expression of humanity.

Walking through Briones means doing so among wine-presses carved into the rock and century-old wineries where silence smells of wood and history. In June, the village revives its past with the Briones Medieval Festival, when locals dress in period costume and recreate 14th-century life among flags, proclamations and ancient music. It is a way of paying tribute to an identity that has been preserved without becoming fossilised



The old 19th-century apothecary located inside the Hermitage of San Juan







Chest with the relics of San Millán  
Lower photo: a copy of the Glosas Emilianenses



## San Millán de la Cogolla

### Cradle of language and spirit

If there is one place where the soul of La Rioja becomes word, it is San Millán de la Cogolla. Nestled among mountains and beech forests, this small monastic enclave holds a treasure that goes beyond the religious: the first written testimonies of Spanish and Basque. In the monasteries of Suso and Yuso, declared World Heritage Sites, the copyist monks wrote, around the year 1000, in the margins of learned Latin texts, the famous Glosas Emilianenses — small clarifications or translations into the vulgar Latin or Romance spoken by the people which, unknowingly, gave birth to the language spoken today across half the world. Just 43 words with their own meaning and grammatical structure, contained mainly in Folio 72 and referring to a prayer to the Holy Trinity.

But San Millán is much more than a linguistic relic: it is a place of silence, stone and light. The monastery of Suso, the older one, preserves its pre-Romanesque atmosphere and austere beauty, while Yuso, built centuries later, displays Baroque magnificence, with cloisters, altarpieces and a library that smells of parchment and wisdom. Together, they embody the Riojan spirit: faith, culture and continuity.

Monastery of Yuso. © Rafael Lafuente







Monastery of Suso

The very name San Millán —Emilianus, the hermit who lived between caves and prayer for 40 years— evokes an intimate, earthly spirituality closely linked to nature and human labour. It is no surprise that, in the following centuries, the Benedictine monks of Yuso became major promoters of vine cultivation and wine production, helping consolidate the agricultural economy of the region. In a way, it can be said that wine and the written word were born together in San Millán, two different ways of expressing the same thing: the soul of a land that ferments with time.

From the Monastery we highlight its two churches, separated by the Choir by a door — the Parish Church and the Monastic Church, both from the early 16th century; its magnificent Library, whose access is very limited; the Sacristy, one of the most beautiful in Spain, whose ceilings display magnificent, richly coloured 18th-century paintings that have never been restored; an unfinished Lower Cloister from the 16th century and an Upper Cloister that preserves two of the great treasures of this Monastery: one of the finest collections of 18th-century Gregorian Chant Books, and the Relics Hall or Reliquaries (those of San Millán and those of San Felices de Haro) contained in beautiful silver chests covered with carved ivory plaques, some more than one thousand years old.

Lower choir of the Monastery of Yuso separating the parish church from the monastic church







View of the tower of the Church of Santo Tomás  
Haro Town Hall Square

## Haro

### The city of wine

To speak of Haro is to speak of wine. No other place captures with such precision the essence of La Rioja as this small city bathed by the Ebro and surrounded by century-old wineries. Here, wine is not a product: it is a way of life. Its cobbled streets, arcaded squares and winery districts exude that aroma of barrel wood that blends with the bustle of the taverns and the lively conversation of its people.

Since the late 19th century, Haro became the epicentre of wine modernisation. Its railway station made it possible to export wine to France during the phylloxera crisis, and around it arose wineries that today remain emblems of classic Rioja: López de Heredia, CVNE, La Rioja Alta S.A., Muga, Bilbaínas, Gómez Cruzado and RODA. The so-called “Estación Enológica” of Haro is, in itself, a living museum of industrial wine architecture, with stone, brick and iron warehouses where wine ages under the gaze of generations of winemakers.





Each June, the city celebrates the famous Batalla del Vino, a festival as popular as it is ancestral. Thousands of people, dressed in white with a red neckerchief, climb the hill of San Felices to recreate an old pilgrimage that has transformed into a pagan ritual of joy and camaraderie. Wine flows in torrents—literally: litres and litres are thrown among participants until everyone ends up soaked in deep red. It is wine turned into a symbol of union, celebration and life.



## Travel notes

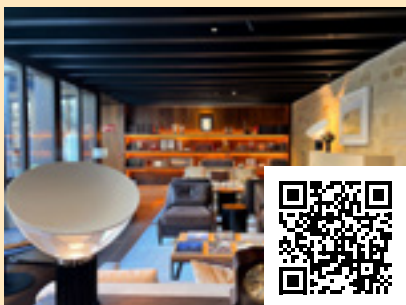
### How to get there

From Madrid, you can take the A-1 towards Logroño and continue along the LR-205 or the N-232 to reach the heart of La Rioja. From Bilbao or Victoria, the route crosses the Sierra de Cantabria through vineyards and time-honoured villages. A car is essential to move freely around La Rioja and discover all its corners and charming towns

### Where to Sleep

#### Hotel Santa María de Briones

In Briones, it occupies a 16th-century manor house next to the medieval walls. The hotel has a Michelin key and its restaurant has a Michelin mention.



#### Hotel Arrope

In Haro, it occupies a 19th-century palace in the heart of the historic center with a peaceful atmosphere, a garden with a terrace, and a privileged location.



### Where to eat

#### Venta Moncalvillo

In Daroca de Rioja, with two Michelin stars and a Green Star. The Echapresto brothers offer traditional Rioja cuisine with produce from their own biodynamic garden and a wine list featuring over two thousand wines.



#### Restaurante Allegar

Located inside the Hotel Santa María de Briones, it is recommended by the Michelin and Repsol guides. Chef Juan Cuesta blends traditional and avant-garde Riojan cuisine with local produce. The pairing of local wines is designed to enhance each dish.

#### Lumbre (Casalarreina)

Recommended by Michelin, it offers creative cuisine in a 17th-century wine cellar with three tasting menus.



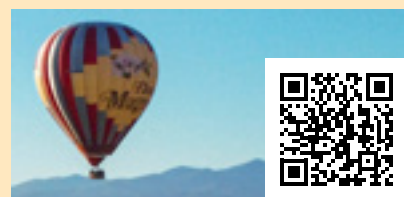
#### Restaurante Arrope (Haro)

Modern Riojan cuisine in the historic center. Local produce and wines from nearby wineries.



### Balloon flights

ARCO IRIS / Cuzcurrita del río Tirón



La Rioja





# Eco-destinations Mauritius

**Words and Photos:** Kiara Hurtado - [kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com](mailto:kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com)

**S**peaking of beautiful islands, we can mention many, but those that anchor themselves in the soul are very few. In recent years, Mauritius has grown in tourist fame around the world, and although for many it is still largely unknown, it is closer and more accessible than we imagine.

On the map, Mauritius is a small point off the African continent, set in the middle of the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar and very close to Réunion Island. From Spain, it is very easy to reach, whether with stopovers or on direct flights (eleven hours). Although there are many alternatives, a very accessible option is flying with World2Fly, which offers direct departures from Madrid, especially during the summer season. Once you land, the island works its magic.

While many of us might wish to let go and move to the island, a week is enough not only to discover the most beautiful corners of this exotic place, but also to learn about its history, its traditions and the reason behind its cultural diversity.





Mauritius is an example of sustainable tourism, where luxury coexists with nature. Eco-friendly hotels, clean beaches and community projects make the island a genuine eco-destination

## Coexistence between cultures as a way of life

Mauritius has approximately 2,040 square kilometres of surface area — around 788 square miles — in which it holds a fascinating and diverse history. Before gaining independence in 1968, it was first a French colony and later a British one, and there lie its earliest forms of cultural blending. Over the years, travellers from neighbouring regions also reached the island and put down roots, captivated by its beauty. Today, it is a society where ethnicities, cultures and religions from all over the world coexist, especially from the Eurasian sphere.

Because of this diversity, three official languages are spoken in Mauritius — English, French and Mauritian Creole — and for the same reason, its gastronomy reflects this fusion in its most popular snacks, such as filled rotis, dhol puri, chicken noodles or Creole-style dim sum

## Where to stay in Mauritius

Although there are many options for staying in the capital, Port Louis, the true charm of the island lies along its beaches, and without doubt some of the best choices are the hotels of the French group Sunlife, located in different corners of the island yet offering the same essence of hospitality and excellence. Some of the most famous and recognised are Long Beach (east coast) and Sugar Beach and La Pirogue (on the west coast, in Flic en Flac).

But what makes the brand special, beyond its dazzling seaside designs? The answer lies in its wellness philosophy and its mindful well-being concept, “slow life”, as the brand defines it. To complement this approach, Sunlife has created its own spa brand, named Glow — essentially a laboratory where every element contributes to caressing both mind and body. Each of its hotels has a different Glow Spa to provide absolute relaxation, but perhaps the most impressive is at Long Beach, with its garden of exotic herbs from around the world. Among the brand’s star ingredients is Peruvian balsam, present in most of its rituals and known for its restorative properties.

The journey towards well-being continues at “Santé”, the wellness bar located in Long Beach. Here, guests become alchemists of their own health as they prepare essential and purifying mocktails inspired by the secret recipe of a local staff member’s grandmother





Church in the village of Cap Malheureux  
Rochester Falls in Souilla



## Spaces to feel good and connect

For Sunlife, the concept of hospitality is intertwined with the connection between its guests, thanks to group activities. Those travelling as a couple, with friends or even alone find in these hotels perfect spaces for sharing. Games such as Crazy Croquet or pétanque spark laughter and camaraderie, while the perfumery workshops allow guests to create their own personalised fragrance and take home a unique keepsake. Likewise, the glass-blowing workshops, run by a charming British couple who found their home in Mauritius, connect visitors with local art and the living history of the island.

Gastronomy, for its part, completes this holistic proposal. The restaurants in all the hotels offer diverse and sophisticated international cuisine, incorporating local dishes as well as Mediterranean proposals and flavours from across Asia. At Sugar Beach, the experience reaches its highest point with the presence of Buddha-Bar Beach, one of the world's most iconic sushi-lounge brands. Here, guests enjoy not only exquisite dishes, but also vibrant evenings with live music, dance performances or even fire shows by the sea, beneath a star-filled sky..

Long Beach Hotel Mauritius







La Pirogue Beach Hotel

## More to discover on the island

And although the beaches of this Indian Ocean paradise are the protagonists of the experience, in the island's interior we find other gems that are well worth a visit.

No itinerary should miss an escape to Île aux Cerfs, a haven of private white-sand beaches and lush vegetation spread across 87 hectares (about 215 acres), where visitors can enjoy a wide range of water sports or dine at the beachfront restaurant.

In the capital, Port Louis, a guided tour allows you to immerse yourself in its vibrant local life: visits to the central market, the historic Aapravasi Ghat (UNESCO World Heritage), and colourful Hindu temples and Chinese pagodas.

Meanwhile, Le Morne Brabant, also a World Heritage Site, impresses not only with its silhouette but also with its history: it was a symbolic refuge for escaped slaves. Equally fascinating is the region of Chamarel, home to the famous Seven Coloured Earths, dunes tinted by minerals in vibrant shades, alongside the imposing Chamarel Waterfall.

And for those seeking a panoramic embrace of the island, the climb up Le Pouce—steep but accessible—offers unforgettable views over Port Louis and much of the Mauritian landscape. Lastly, a visit to Grand Bassin (Ganga Talao) is essential: a sacred lake surrounded by majestic Hindu temples and a palpable atmosphere of spirituality.

Aerial view of Port Louis



Reflections of Mauritian life in Port Louis







Northern coast of Ibiza

# Balearic Islands, a soul of sea and stone

Texto y fotos: Joaquín del Palacio - joaquinaeografo@gmail.com

Cala de San Vicente in Ibiza



The lush Ibizan pine forests —and those of its sister island, Formentera— inspired the Greeks to name them Pitiusas (pitys, pine in Greek). Meanwhile, Mallorca and Menorca were known to them as the Gymneasias (gymnós, naked) because their inhabitants, almost unclothed and without protection, used slings to defend themselves, thus avoiding hand-to-hand combat. And the name Balearic Islands comes from this Carthaginian expression: Ba'lé yaroh (masters of stone throwing).

The nature of the Balearic Islands is so powerful that those ancient seafarers would still recognise many landscapes and familiar silhouettes today, for they have barely changed since they arrived many centuries ago. The

outlines of mountains and coasts, or the appearance of forests and islets, remain much the same. Even the multitude of talayotic monuments they found everywhere back then continue to stand unmoved, watching time pass and almost in the same state in which the Romans saw them upon their arrival. Immutable landscapes that still endure.

## Mountains rising from the sea

Seen from the sea, it appears like a vast stone wall filled with whimsically shaped hills. The Sierra de la Tramontana rises up to 1,445 metres (about 4,740 feet) at Puig Mayor, forming a rugged landscape that preserves legendary corners. Stark white limestone landscapes stand defiantly against the sky and sea blues, preserving ancient yew forests that cling





Islet in the Ses Salines Natural Park

to the colder, damper north-facing slopes. They shelter places of infinite beauty, such as the Ariant Valley in Pollença, where Heidi Gildemeister created a marvellous botanical garden integrated into nature, using only species from Mediterranean climates around the world: California, Chile, South Africa, Australia, and the Mediterranean coasts.

The old farmhouse on this agricultural estate has been turned into a traditional lodging, where the journey into the past begins with the need to light candles for illumination, although it does have running water. The project to recover the population of the black vulture—unique in the world on an island territory—has managed to increase the number of breeding pairs. Now it is possible to see them gliding among the limestone peaks that surround and isolate this valley and, exceptionally, to see them soaring over the sea.

The Sierra de la Tramontana was declared a World Heritage Site as a cultural landscape due to the historic water management in the area, preserving irrigation channels, snow wells or water deposits, and mills. On the other hand, it is also recognised for its terraced walls, fences, and dry-stone paths. Stone upon stone, without mortar.



Crops in the Sierra de la Tramontana

In the Balearic Islands, time seems to have stood still between the murmur of the sea and the scent of the pine groves; a land where stone, light and history draw an immortal landscape that still breathes to the rhythm of the Mediterranean.





1



2



3



4

**La Finca Galatzó**, en el municipio de Calviá, necesitaba, para el aprovechamiento agropecuario, bancales para cultivar sus laderas, molinos para sus cosechas y un sistema de regadío, todo construido en época islámica. Los edificios de la finca agropecuaria destinados a almacenes, establos o a vivienda ahora están convertidos en refugio de montaña para alojar a senderistas que recorran los 170 km del sendero GR221, dividido en 8 etapas, denominado **Ruta de la Piedra Seca**.

### Walking to feel the landscape

Despite the beach-and-fun tourism that exists in the Balearic Islands, it is easy to find natural spots and footpaths that weave through forests and along cliffs overlooking film-worthy coves. Coastal paths on promontories above the sea become natural viewpoints. Balconies among pine trees reveal rocky outcrops breaking the deep blue and displaying a range of blues and greens that colour the waters of the Mediterranean.

In Menorca, the GR223 is a scenic 185-kilometre route (about 115 miles) for walking, cycling or horse riding

- 1.– Dry-stone walls
- 2.– Pine forests in the north of Ibiza
- 3.– Terraced crops integrated into the landscape
- 4.– Hills surrounding the Ariant Valley

that completely circles the island in 20 stages, offering a beautiful collection of coastal scenery, forests and Menorcan farmland — all worthy of the island's designation as a Biosphere Reserve.

In the north of Ibiza, several trails set off from Sant Joan de Labritja, some of them winding among pine trees. For example, the PR101 climbs a hillside, enters a pine forest and follows a series of ridges from which the coast can be seen; it then crosses vineyards, descends through carob and holm oak trees and continues along the riverbed until it finishes at the marvellous Cala de San Vicente. The walk ends perfectly with a relaxing swim in the sea. And from the beach, you can admire the distinctive silhouette of the little island of Tagomago, or, by looking down at your submerged feet, see the beautiful seabed covered in posidonia and the diverse multitude of fish and molluscs that inhabit it





South African lily in the Ariant Estate Botanical Garden

### Underwater meadows

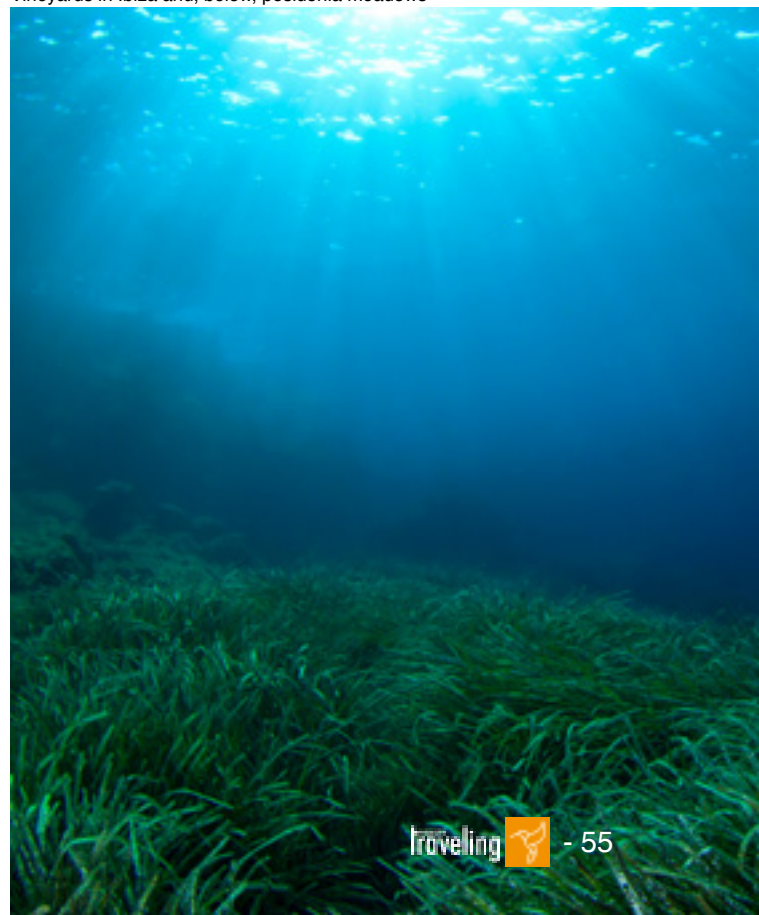
The transparency of the Mediterranean waters in the Balearic Islands allows us to enjoy underwater landscapes, whether seen from the cliffs or while snorkelling or diving. They are covered with plants, not algae, since *posidonia* has roots, leaves, flowers and fruits. These underwater meadows, known as *posidonia* seagrass beds, carpet the seabed, helping absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide, sheltering great biodiversity and mitigating the effects of coastal erosion.

When these leaves fall and are washed ashore, they accumulate and help protect the beach from erosion. Once out of the water, the plant is also used because it is deeply tied to island traditions: it has long been used as thermal insulation in the roofs of traditional houses — and is still used today — and it is also employed as fertiliser for crops thanks to its richness in minerals and organic matter.

These meadows enrich the seabed of the Ses Salines Natural Park, which covers parts of both Pitiusas. It is a marvellous place of islets, rocky outcrops and shallow waters, though sometimes treacherous for boats — as happened to the great vessel *Don Pedro*, which sank a few years ago and has since become a shipwreck adored by divers for having created a refuge for marine life. It is an area filled with the squawks and creaks of waterbirds stalking the colourful fish that inhabit the paradise of the *posidonia*.



Vineyards in Ibiza and, below, *posidonia* meadows







Panoramic View of Letur from El Calvario

# Letur in Autumn

## Paths of Water and Silence

**Words:** Jose Antonio Muñoz

**Photos:** Turismo de Letur and Jose A. Muñoz





Autumn in Letur passes without fuss. You feel the air descending from the mountains with a new scent — a mixture of damp earth, dry leaves and burning firewood. In this corner of southwestern Albacete, the landscape changes without losing its character. The terraces turn ochre and yellow, the murmur of water accompanies every step, and the paths, once used by shepherds and muleteers, now open as an invitation to walk unhurriedly.

**L**etur preserves an ancient soul. Its old town, declared a Historic-Artistic Site in 1983, maintains the medieval layout of Muslim origin that is the best preserved in the province. It takes only crossing the arch that marks the entrance to the old quarter to feel time slow down. The narrow streets, the whitewashed houses and the covered passageways lead travellers through a stone labyrinth that breathes calm. In autumn, the bougainvillea fade and the vines climb the walls, dropping their golden leaves. Water, which has shaped the character of the village for centuries, still flows through fountains and irrigation channels, reminding all who wander here that Letur was— and still is—an enclave of fertile orchards in the middle of the sierra.

From the viewpoints of the old town —the Molatica viewpoint and the San Sebastián viewpoint— the view drifts across ravines and hills. On clear October days, the light seems cleaner and the shadows longer. You can hear distant cowbells, the crowing of a rooster and the splash of water in the old washhouses. These are everyday sounds that urban travellers have almost forgotten, and here they are preserved as part of the landscape.

### **A network of paths with history**

The municipality covers more than 260 square kilometres of mountains, ravines and fertile riverbanks. It is a territory that rises from 560 metres at the bottom of the valley to 1,400 metres at the peaks, with views stretching across the Sierra del Segura. The rugged terrain, crossed by drovers' roads and dry riverbeds, has defined the lives of its inhabitants. The paths that hikers now explore were, for centuries, the arteries along which rural life flowed: livestock herds travelled them on their seasonal migrations, and along them oil, grain and firewood were transported, linking the scattered hamlets tucked between the hills.



### Routes for Discovering Autumn

Each route has its own character and its own rhythm. One of the most popular is the Ruta de los Chorreones, around 8.7 miles, which winds between pine forests, orchards and ravines until it reaches a viewpoint from which the waterfall that gives it its name is heard rather than seen. On the cool days of November, the sound of the stream and the scent of rockrose accompany the walk. The forest's moisture contrasts with the sun that still warms the hillsides. It is a medium-to-high-difficulty route, perfect for those seeking to feel the pulse of the mountain in the midst of seasonal change.

Another notable route is the Regalí trail, 8.1 miles long, which crosses one of the municipality's most authentic landscapes. Its name pays tribute to the hiking group that created the network, and it runs between olive gro-

ves and dry-stone walls. From certain stretches, the valley and the distant outline of the white, stepped hamlet can be seen, cut against the rock. Further ahead, the La Muela trail offers a slightly more demanding itinerary, with gentle but steady slopes that lead to natural viewpoints —La Muela Este and La Muela Oeste— where the horizon dissolves among holm oaks and low clouds.

Autumn is, without doubt, the best season to explore Letur. The mild temperatures, the softened light and the calm of the surroundings allow visitors to enjoy the details: the colour of the moss on the trunks, the sound of water in the springs —such as Fuen-santa or Las Morericas— and the slow flight of birds of prey over the ravines. Along the way appear abandoned farmhouses, old almond trees and the occasional shelter, such as the Regalí refuge, where silence can be heard with clarity.



El Regalí Hiking Association - Letur







Autumnal view of the historic town of Letur, with its terraced fields and centuries-old olive groves

## The silence of the mountain

Walking through Letur in autumn is also a way of understanding its history.

Each path preserves the imprint of generations who turned the mountainside into a habitable place. Today, those same trails offer visitors a different experience: walking without hurry, viewing the landscape with renewed eyes, feeling time at another pace. The Letur Network of Trails is not only a physical route, but also a network of memory, nature and future.

Anyone returning to the village after a day of hiking finds in Letur the unspoilt serenity of life's small things: the fountains, the shaded corners, the sound of the bells striking noon. In the bars of the old quarter, the air smells of freshly brewed coffee, oven-baked bread and woodsmoke. Neigh-

bours greet each other in the square, children run beneath the arches, and the traveller, without realising it, becomes part of that simple, genuine scene.

Sometimes, as evening falls, the sun ignites the rooftops and the mountains take on a reddish tone that seems unreal. From the La Molatica viewpoint, the cluster of houses blends into the landscape and the air fills with silence.

There is no finer farewell. Letur needs no embellishment: its beauty lies in authenticity, in that blend of water, stone and calm that defines mountain villages.

Autumn only heightens its character; it becomes more intimate, more serene, more truthful. Perhaps that is why those who know it return each year when the air smells of rain and the earth is covered with fallen leaves. Because in Letur, every path is also a way of returning to oneself.

Letur Stream







## The Church of Santa María de la Asunción and its new pipe organ

The Church of Santa María de la Asunción, built by the Order of Santiago at the end of the fifteenth century, is one of Letur's greatest heritage treasures. In a late Gothic style with Renaissance details, it consists of a single nave covered by ribbed vaults and an impressive choir crowned by a star-shaped vault. Declared a National Monument in 1982, it preserves six Renaissance panels from the sixteenth-century main altarpiece, reminders of its former splendour.

A new organ has recently been installed in the choir, replacing the vanished Baroque instrument and restoring to the temple its musical and liturgical soul. Its presence once again fills the stone vaults with a solemn sound that unites devotion, art and the living memory of Letur.



**Letur  
Tourism**

[www.turismoletur.com](http://www.turismoletur.com)

Church of Santa María de la AsunciónInterior of the church and view of the organ





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# Liquid gold, baroque, and autumn trails in the Subbética cordobesa

Words: Editorial Staff Photos: Tourism in the Subbética region of Córdoba

In the heart of Andalucía, where the sierras ripple between endless olive groves and whitewashed villages, the Subbética of Córdoba becomes an irresistible destination each autumn. As the air turns fresher and the fields release that deep green aroma of freshly harvested fruit, one of the most authentic moments of the year begins: the olive-picking season and the celebration of extra virgin olive oil, the region's true liquid gold.

## Three designations of origin, one shared passion

Few regions can boast of safeguarding three Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) devoted to extra virgin olive oil: **Priego de Córdoba, Baena and Lucena**. Each has its own character, landscape and history. In Priego de Córdoba, the oils stand out for their unmistakable aromatic elegance—intense, complex and fruity, with notes reminiscent of freshly cut grass, green apple or almond—among the most award-winning in the world. In Baena, the olive-growing tradition dates back to Roman times, and its balanced oils reflect centuries of rural culture. Lucena, meanwhile, brings a more southern profile, with smooth, enveloping oils that are perfect for everyday cooking and unhurried enjoyment.

This mosaic of flavours and landscapes has given rise to a flourishing form of tourism: oleotourism, a way of travelling that connects visitors with the essence of La Subbética, showcasing it through the region's deep-rooted know-how. At this time of year, the oil mills open their doors to reveal the process of cold extraction, allowing travellers to witness how the fruit becomes a bright, green juice.

In many cases, the millers themselves lead the tours, sharing with passion the secrets of an ancient, inherited craft.





There is no shortage of unique experiences: traditional millers' breakfasts with country bread, guided walks among thousand-year-old mountain olive trees, freshly pressed oil and seasoned olives; tasting sessions to learn how to distinguish a picual from a hojiblanca; or visits to oil museums, such as the one in Cabra, where history feels tangible. And of course, the local cuisine, where extra virgin olive oil becomes the star of every dish—from **salmorejo cordobés** to **rabo de toro**, and the refreshing **remojón de naranja**.

### Cordoban Baroque: patrimonial splendour

The journey through La Subbética is also an encounter with art. Cordoban Baroque, one of the finest in the peninsula, reaches its highest expression here. In Cabra, the Church of La Asunción y Ángeles and the Sanctuary of La Virgen de la Sierra are masterpieces that astonish with their decorative exuberance and refined balance. In Lucena, known as the "Perla de Sefarad", the Baroque blends with Jewish and

Renaissance heritage in temples such as San Mateo or in the Palacio de los Condes de Santa Ana, a magnificent example of 18th-century Lucentine architecture.

And in Priego de Córdoba, spiritual capital of Andalusian Baroque, visitors cannot fail to marvel at the Church of La Asunción, with its awe-inspiring Capilla del Sagrario, or at the twisted, gilded façades that give the historic quarter its unmistakable character.

### Paths among olive groves and mountains

Autumn, with its scent of damp earth, is also the perfect time to lace up your boots and discover, step by step, the trails of La Subbética. The Vía Verde del Aceite, which follows the old railway line between Jaén and Puente Genil, is a classic: a gentle, panoramic route ideal for walking or cycling across viaducts, tunnels and endless seas of olive trees, skirting part of our UNESCO Global Geopark and Natural Park of the Sierras Subbéticas, where

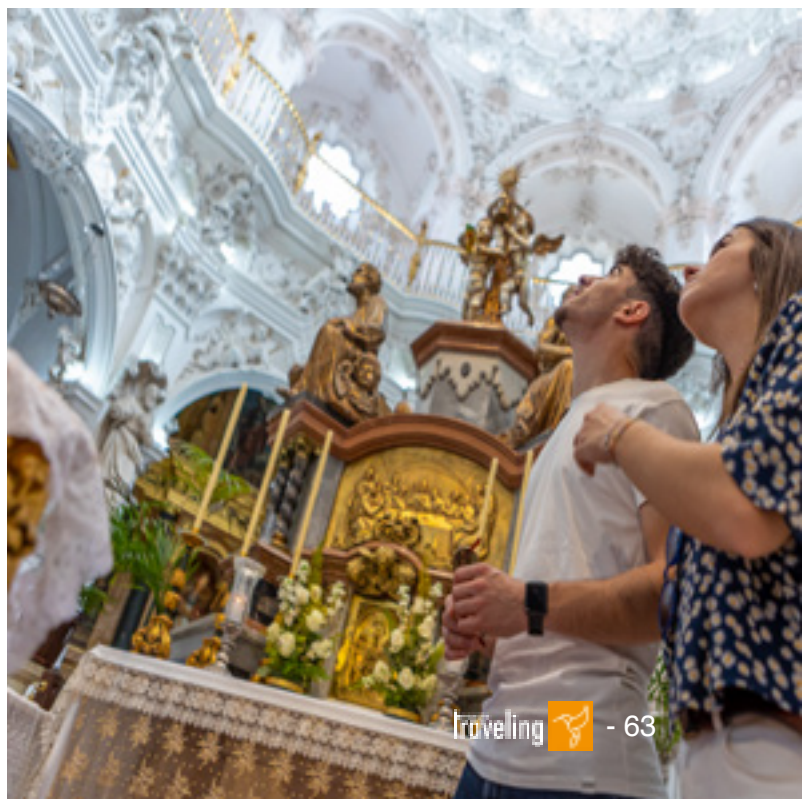
mountains and olive groves blend into a harmonious landscape.

Within the Natural Park, routes stand out such as the ascent to the Picacho de la Virgen de la Sierra, with breathtaking views over Cabra and the olive sea; the Río Bailón Trail, in Zuheros, which crosses a spectacular limestone gorge between holm oaks and junipers; or the Zagrilla-Esparragal-Fuente de las Majadas Trail, a hidden gem of springs and waterfalls waiting to be explored calmly.

Outside the park, the Buitreras Trail, between Luque and Carcabuey, offers the chance to observe the flight of these majestic birds, while in Doña Mencía, urban paths connect heritage, wine and olive oil in a route full of history and local character. Further south, the trails of Benamejí, Palenciana and Encinas Reales unfold in an enviable landscape nourished by the Genil River.



**Subbética**  
Centro de Andalucía







View of the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial © Hugo Fernández – Comunidad de Madrid

# San Lorenzo de El Escorial

World Heritage  
and living nature  
of Madrid

**Words:** Editorial Staff

**Photography:** Comunidad de Madrid

Casita del Infante © Mercedes Blanco



**A**t just forty-five minutes from Madrid's bustle, San Lorenzo de El Escorial rises among the mountains like a refuge of stone and silence. From afar, the great mass of the Royal Monastery seems to guard the Sierra de Guadarrama, a symbol of a Spain where art, history and landscape still converse. It was considered in its time the eighth wonder of the world, and one only needs to pause before its granite façade to understand why. Its architecture —solid, austere, dazzling— embodies the grandeur of an empire that found its style in restraint.

But El Escorial is not only monumental heritage. It is also a green lung, a destination where nature blends effortlessly with culture. Around the monastery stretches the Bosque de La Herrería, declared a Picturesque Landscape. Its centuries-old holm oaks and ash trees accompany the walker along a route that ends at the Silla de Felipe II, the viewpoint from which the monarch watched the progress of the works. From there, the horizon opens into a mosaic of hills and valleys that shift their colours with the seasons: from ochre to green, from the clear winter blue to the golden tones of summer sunsets.





CiclaMadrid Route @ELEQUIPO / Community of Madrid

## Living nature in the mountains

The curious visitor soon discovers that the municipality's natural heritage goes far beyond this emblematic woodland. In the Pinar de Abantos, the air smells of resin and highland forest. Here stands the Luis Ceballos Arboretum, an environmental education centre home to more than two hundred species of Iberian trees and shrubs. A visit becomes a botanical journey across the peninsula, a reminder of the extraordinary plant diversity sheltered by the Sierra de Guadarrama.

Those seeking a more family-friendly experience can head to InsectPark Nature Centre, in the recreational area of El Tomillar. This living museum surprises with collections of butterflies, beetles and other tiny creatures that, under the magnifying glass, reveal the hidden beauty of the natural world.

Every spring, San Lorenzo de El Escorial hosts the Travesía de las Cumbres Escorialenses, declared a Festival of Regional Tourist Interest. The event, which covers 22 kilometres across the peaks surrounding the municipality, brings together athletes and hiking enthusiasts in a day that blends effort, landscape and camaraderie. For cyclists, two **CiclaMadrid** routes link the town with Moralzarzal and **Robledo de Chavela**, inviting riders to pedal along secondary roads framed by pine woods, pastures and mountain villages

## Illustrated heritage and cultural life

However, the charm of the destination does not end with its natural surround-

ings. The historic and artistic ensemble of San Lorenzo de El Escorial preserves an urban heritage of remarkable coherence. La Lonja, the Jardín de los Frailes, the Casita del Príncipe and the Casita del Infante evoke the enlightened taste of the Bourbons; the Real Coliseo Carlos III, an eighteenth-century theatrical gem, recalls that the performing arts also flourished here. Strolling through the Casa de los Oficios, the Casa de los Infantes or the Casa de la Reina is to walk through the living history of a place where stone still carries the echo of its golden ages.

In the surrounding area, the Club de Golf La Herrería offers another way to discover the landscape: playing among centuries-old oaks and holm oaks, with the imposing silhouette of the monastery rising in the background. It is an image that captures the essence of the place: nature and heritage in harmony, a perfect balance between the human and the natural.

## Flavours of the Sierra

As in every memorable journey, the experience is completed at the table. The local gastronomy honours the products of the sierra: the tender, flavourful meat from Guadarrama, or the seasonal mushrooms, which local chefs turn into mountain recipes full of aroma and simplicity.

On the terraces and in the restaurants of the historic centre, visitors find that balance between the authentic and the refined that defines highland hospitality. After the meal, a gentle stroll through the cobbled streets, with the sound of the bells as a backdrop, prolongs the feeling of being in a place where time has stood still.

## A Journey Through Time

Access, moreover, could not be easier. From Madrid, you can arrive by Cercanías commuter train or aboard the nostalgic Tren de Felipe II, 'a 1940s convoy that winds through holm oak groves and meadows until stopping in front of the Monastery'. The journey, slow and panoramic, is a way of returning to another era, when travelling also meant looking and pausing.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial is, ultimately, a destination where stone and forest join hands. A UNESCO World Heritage Site and the natural heart of Madrid, it blends spirituality, art and pure mountain air, inviting travellers to rediscover unhurried time and the beauty that lives in what is essential.



San Lorenzo  
del Escorial

[www.visitmadrid.es](http://www.visitmadrid.es)

Detail of the architecture of the Royal Monastery







# Pamplona

## The Privilege of the Union A city that never forgets its origin

Words: Rosario Alonso Photos: Pamplona Tourisme

**T**here are dates that shape entire communities and pacts that endure far beyond the passing of centuries. In the heart of **Pamplona**, the city preserves one of those milestones that not only transformed its urban layout but also its way of understanding itself as a community: the Privilegio de la Unión. That decree, signed on 8 September 1423 by **King Charles III the Noble**, brought an end to nearly three centuries of conflict between the three boroughs that once made up the city. Today, more than six hundred years later, that gesture of concord is commemorated each year with pride and with a celebration that returns to the streets the spirit of unity, craftsmanship and shared identity that shaped modern Pamplona

### Three Boroughs, One Divided City

During the Middle Ages, Pamplona was not a single city, but three. The borough of **San Cernin**, of French origin; that of **San Nicolás**, made up of local traders and craftsmen; and the Navarrería, the oldest quarter, home to the clergy and much of the native population. Between them existed rivalries that were not only economic or cultural, but true disputes over political control and commercial privileges, deeply rooted tensions that shaped entire generations.

Often, the walls served not only to defend against external enemies but also to mark the boundary between neighbouring factions.

The conflict reached its most critical point in 1276, with the so-called “War of the Navarrería”, a devastating episode that destroyed much of the city. That confrontation, which left both physical and social scars, remained alive for almost a century and a half, until Carlos III decided to end the divisions with an exemplary solution: the unification of the three boroughs under a single council, one shared flag and a common bell.

### The Seal of Carlos III the Noble

The Privilege of the Union was not merely a political document; it was a symbol of reconciliation. The monarch granted Pamplona its current coat of arms —the chains of Navarre crowned with



an emerald— and ordered the construction of the Town Hall at the precise point where the three former **boroughs converged**. That building, which still presides over the council square today, is an emblem of balance and co-existence: on its Baroque façade, each 8 September, the echo of that gesture that transformed the destiny of the city can still be felt.

The original text of the Privilege, written on parchment and sealed with red wax, is preserved as a historical treasure. It stipulates the abolition of internal customs, equal rights for all inhabitants, and the creation of a unified body of jurors and officers. In essence, it marks the birth of a modern, open and cohesive city, which would soon begin to grow around the **Way of St James**

### The Festival of the Union: a living memory

Each year, Pamplona celebrates this event with the so-called Fiesta del Privilegio de la Unión, a day that goes far beyond a simple historical commemoration. It is a meeting of identities, a reclaiming of roots and a tribute to the communal spirit.

At the official ceremony, the municipal authorities lay a wreath before the monu-

ment to King Carlos III, and the mayor presents a replica of the Privilege to the cathedral chapter, recalling the foundational act of 1423.

But what truly brings the festival to life are its streets. In the Casco Antiguo, the squares fill with medieval music, dancing, street theatre and demonstrations of traditional crafts. The artisans of Pamplona, heirs to a tradition that was the economic engine of the old boroughs, play a leading role. Goldsmiths, ceramicists, wood-carvers, leatherworkers and embroiderers display their trades to the public with the same skill their forebears showed in the markets of the fifteenth century.

The artisan associations, many of which maintain family workshops passed down through generations, see in this celebration an opportunity to highlight their role in Navarre's identity. Plaza de San José and calle de la Estafeta are transformed into small living museums of manual craftsmanship: there you hear the hammer striking copper, the crackling of blown glass and the smell of freshly tanned leather. It is a way of remembering that the unity of Pamplona was not only sealed with ink and parchment, but also with the hands that shaped its history.







Magdalena Bridge

### The Way of St. James: the path that shaped the city

If there is one element that explains the rise and open character of Pamplona, it is the Camino de Santiago. Since the Middle Ages, the city has been one of the first major stages of the French Way after crossing the Pyrenees. Through its streets passed merchants, pilgrims, nobles and clerics from all over Europe. That blend of people and cultures turned Pamplona into a strategic commercial hub and a crossroads of languages and customs.

The flow of pilgrims brought with it the expansion of trades, the flourishing of hospitals and guesthouses, and the consolidation of its urban life. In fact, many historians agree that the very spirit of tolerance that made the Privilegio de la Unión possible has its roots in the coexistence forged during those centuries of Jacobean transit.

Today, the Camino de Santiago remains a living thread connecting Pamplona's past and present. Every year, thousands of walkers enter the city through the Portal de Francia, rest in its hostels and wander the cobbled streets of the Navarrería before continuing on towards Puente la Reina. For them, Pamplona is far more than a stage: it is a place where hospitality has become culture. The sound of bagpipes and the smell of freshly baked bread in the ovens of the Old Town accompany their departure, as if the city itself wished to bless their journey.

Interior of Pamplona Cathedral





### Gastronomic societies: the shared soul of the table

Pamplona, like all of Navarre, has made the dining table a true space of encounter. The gastronomic societies, so deeply rooted in the north, are heirs to the same spirit of community that inspired the Privilegio de la Unión. They were born as clubs of friends who gathered to cook, talk and keep culinary tradition alive, but also to strengthen neighbourhood ties. Initially formed by men, today women are full members in their own right. In their wood-fired kitchens and simple dining rooms, fraternity is celebrated alongside conversation and a shared appreciation for things done well.

Pamplona is home to dozens of these societies, some with more than a century of history. Here, the dishes that define Navarrese cuisine are prepared: chistorra, ajoarriero, piquillo peppers, pochas or vegetable stew. Gastronomy is not understood as a matter of luxury, but as an act of identity. It is no coincidence that during the festivities of the Privilegio, many of these societies open their doors or prepare communal meals, strengthening the bond between celebration and the shared love of good food.

These societies are also places of cultural transmission: parents and children cook together, elders teach ancient recipes, and after-dinner conversations stretch on over red wine and traditional songs. The union of Pamplona is also celebrated in its cooking pots

**The strength of the pelotari and the fire of popular cookery are the noblest reflection of the Navarrese spirit: firm, generous and enduring**

### Pelotarís: strength, nobility, and Navarrese pride

Few figures embody the identity of Navarre better than that of the pelotari. Basque pelota, played since ancient times in the village frontones, is more than a sport: it is a symbol of character, discipline and elegance. In Pamplona, where every neighbourhood has its own frontón, pelotarís are familiar heroes, admired for their skill and their humility.

During the Fiestas del Privilegio, pelota championships are never missing, held in honour of tradition. The sharp blows of the ball against the frontis echo above the bustle of the city, reminding everyone that this game is an essential part of the Navarrese soul. Great names of the sport, such as Retegi, Urrutikoetxea or Eugi, have turned this discipline

into an art that blends precision, strength and respect for one's opponent.

The pelotari represents, in a way, the same philosophy as the Privilegio de la Unión: the harmony between strength and restraint, between competition and respect. And, just like artisans or cooks, he is part of a chain of knowledge passed down from generation to generation. If the walls of Labrit could speak, how many stories they would tell. Today, new generations keep this legacy alive with unwavering dedication, ensuring that the sound of the pelota continues to mark the rhythm of local life. In this sport, as in the city itself, tradition and the future walk hand in hand.

Labrit Pavilion







Detail of the traditional costume worn by the participants in the parade  
Privilege of the Unión parade

### A city that does not forget its origin

Pamplona has changed greatly since that year of 1423, when three rival burgos decided to unite under a single banner. Today it is a modern, university city, open to the world, yet in its medieval layout —those streets that still bear the names of the old neighbourhoods— it preserves the memory of its birth. Walking through the Navarrería, crossing San Nicolás or looking up at the towers of San Cernin is to wander through a living history lesson.

The Privilegio de la Unión is not confined to archives or official ceremonies; it is a way of being in the world. It reflects a city that learnt that coexistence is built day by day, in markets, in workshops, in frontones and in shared kitchens. It is a lesson that Pamplona, with its steadfast character and quiet hospitality, continues to teach to any traveller who pauses to listen.

And perhaps that is why, when in September the ringing of bells announces the Fiesta de la Unión and the artisans set out their stalls, one feels the city return to its origins. The hands that carve, knead or strike the pelota repeat, unknowingly, the same gesture made six hundred years ago: to unite, to create, to share

***Isn't it true that you can speak about Pamplona without mentioning San Fermín and its bull runs?***







The dantzaris, dressed in their traditional costumes, pay tribute to the Privilege of the Union in front of the Pamplona City Hall

## Travel notes

Navarre is a crossroads. To the north lies Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France), to the east Aragón, to the south La Rioja, and to the west the Basque Country. Its accessibility and connections with the rest of Spain are excellent. From Madrid (396 km), you can arrive either by road or by train—with the high-speed AVE taking just three hours—and flying is also a convenient option, with a flight time of around one hour.

### Accommodation

For a city that hosts one of Spain's most popular festivities (San Fermín), Pamplona has only about 52 hotels of varying categories. Among them, **Hotel Maisonnave** and **Hotel Pompae-lo**, both located in the heart of the old town, are perfect bases for discovering every corner and the true soul of the city, as well as experiencing the Privilege of the Union from the front row.

### Where to eat, dine or enjoy some pintxos

One of Pamplona's most remarkable gastronomic experiences is offered

by Restaurant **VERDUARTE**, located inside the Baluarte Conference Centre and Auditorium of Navarra. Under the direction of Nacho Gómarra, this restaurant places the spotlight on the essence of Navarre: its vegetables. Blending tradition with a generous dose of creativity, Nacho delights diners with the best of the local orchard, complemented by superb river and Basque coastal fish, as well as some of the finest Navarrese meats.

But if Pamplona is known for anything, it is for its pintxos—small bites, sometimes not so small, shared in the city's most emblematic spots with your cuadrilla or family, always accompanied by excellent Navarrese wines. It's hard to choose favourites, but here are a few: Chez Belagua, **La Vieja Iruña**, **El Bosquecillo**, **Terraza Baluarte...** And at weekends, don't miss the local ritual of “echar el frito” during the aperitif hour (to understand what it involves, the best advice is simply to go and try it).

No visit to Pamplona is complete without tasting the legendary “**Ga-rroticos de Beatriz**”, perhaps the city's most iconic pastry. Lourdes, its owner and a sweet soul in every sense—not merely a literary metaphor— transports you through her stories into the world of Pamplona's artisans, who remain an essential part of the city's identity.

I would also like to express my gratitude for two exclusive experiences without which this article would have been far more difficult to write: enjoying a traditional meal at the **GURE-LEKU gastronomic society** and experiencing, first-hand, a session with a pelotari—**Mikel Idoati—at Labrit**.

Reyno de  
**Navarra**  **Nafarroa**  
Erresuma







# Czech Republic

Where wine shines in beer country

**Words:** Alejandro and Luis Paadín - [alejandro@paadin.es](mailto:alejandro@paadin.es)

**Photos:** Concours Mondial de Bruxelles and Alejandro Paadín





Beyond its strong and prolific beer industry, the Czech Republic also holds a deep historical and cultural connection to wine. To put its winemaking landscape into context, vineyards in the country are currently spread across 1,313 wine-growing sites, with more than 850 wineries and almost 18,300 growers, concentrated in two main regions: Moravia — which accounts for 96% of the country's vineyards, with over 17,000 ha— and Bohemia, which represents the remaining 4%.

### **Brief history of its viticulture**

As in most of Central Europe, the development of viticulture in the Czech Republic arrived with the Romans from the 3rd century CE, after the Roman emperor Probus repealed the law imposed by Domitian, which had forbidden vineyard planting across much of the Empire since the 1st century CE — a very protectionist measure, though perhaps not the most far-sighted for an expanding empire.

In any case, it was not until the Middle Ages that we find substantial evidence of a stable, deeply rooted winegrowing culture: from farming tools and seeds dating to the Great Moravian Empire (833–906), to vineyard donations (1057 in Bohemia by Prince Spytihněv II), and extensive ecclesiastical records (\*\*1195 in Znojmo; 1202 with the Cistercians in Velehrad).

A particularly meaningful date in Czech wine history is 892, when the Moravian prince Svatopluk gifted a barrel of Moravian wine to the Czech prince Bořivoj and his wife Ludmila, to celebrate the birth of their son Spytihněv. It is the first recorded instance of wine taking on a symbolic and prestigious role within Czech nobility.

The earliest legislative document to include vineyards and wine appears in the Bergregal of 1281, the historic mining rights code. This text ensured that the king, the feudal lord, the vineyard owner, the vineyard worker, and the wine consumer all had clearly defined rights and obligations.

But undoubtedly, one of the greatest patrons of Czech wine was Charles IV, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Germanic Emperor between 1355 and 1378,





Bunker; and, below, old barrels in a vineyard

he established laws and regulations such as the planting of the hills surrounding Prague, tax exemptions for winegrowers, and a ban on wine imports. In the following centuries, dozens of local and state regulations were added, shaping the different styles and wine-growing regions.

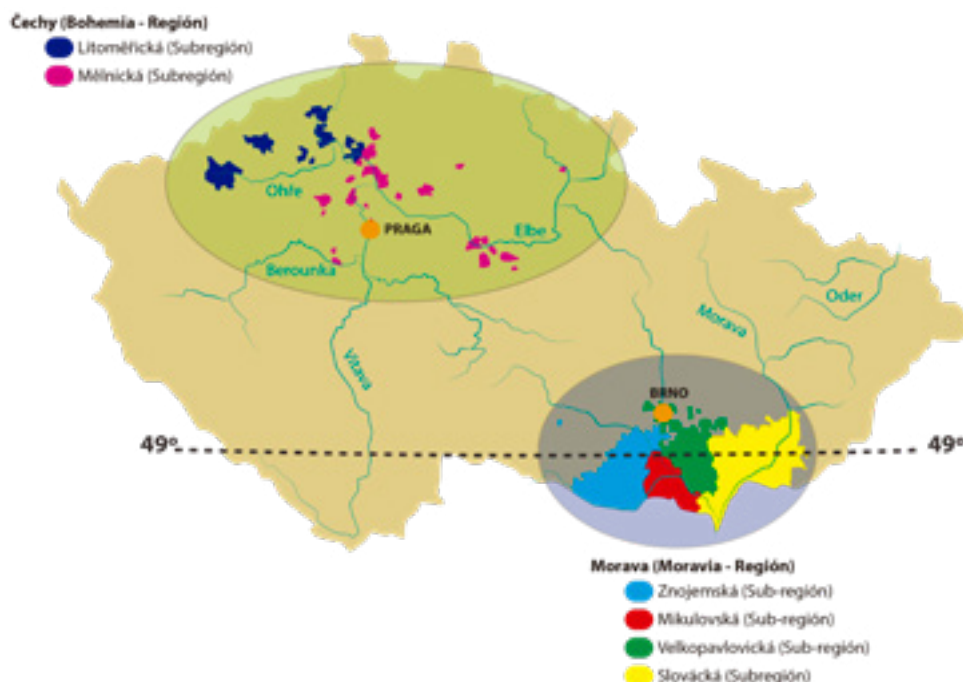
Unfortunately, from the 19th century onwards, the gradual abandonment of rural life and the shift in consumption habits towards beer and other spirits displaced wine. As a result, vineyards survived only in those villages where the high quality of the grapes justified the care and labour required. Until the arrival of phylloxera, it was common to name wines after the village they came from, since vineyards were planted with a wide assortment of varieties adapted to the land. After the Révokaz (phylloxera), most vineyards were replanted with single varieties, losing part of their identity and genetic heritage.

In 1930, the Moravian region hit rock bottom with only 3,870 hectares of planted vineyard, and after the outbreak of the Second World War —from which abandoned bunkers still remain, guarding the vines— its growth and development came to a halt. However, in the 1960s, the Austrian oenologist Lenze Moser modernised vineyard work and laid the foundations for the first cooperatives and state-run farms.

With the entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union in 2004, its wine law was harmonised with European legislation, giving rise to the current *Zákon o vinařství* (Viticulture and Winemaking Act).







## Wine Classification

In the Czech Republic, wine is far more than a beverage: it is an expression of territory, climate and tradition. Its classification system combines criteria of origin and quality, following a structure similar to that of other European countries, yet with its own nuances that reflect its Central European character.

Two major categories can be distinguished: wines without indication of origin, equivalent to the former table wines, and wines with indication of origin, which represent the most interesting and highest-quality production, always linked to specific growing areas.

Because the country lies at a northern latitude, grape ripening is crucial. For this reason, the amount of sugar present in the must—that is, in the grape juice before fermentation—is decisive for its classification. The Czechs use their own measurement system, the Normalizovaný Moštoměr (°NM), where each degree indicates one kilogram of sugar per 100 litres of must. It is a method similar to those used in Germany (Oechsle scale) or Austria (Klosterneuburger Mostwaage), but adapted to local conditions.

Within wines with indication of origin, Czech legislation distinguishes two main levels:

PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), requiring a minimum of 14 °NM, which includes the so-called country wines:

Moravské zemské víno (Land Wine of Moravia) and České zemské víno (Land Wine of Bohemia).

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), requiring at least 15 °NM, divided between the country's two major wine regions:

Moravia, with the sub-regions of Znojenská, Mikulovská, Velkopavlovická and Slovácká; and Bohemia, comprising Litoměřická and Mělnická.

From there, the classification becomes more detailed. Quality wines (Jakostní Víno) generally correspond to dry wines with more than 15 °NM.

Above them are quality wines with predicate (Jakostní Víno s Přívlastkem), which do not allow sugar to be added to the must and are distinguished according to the natural sugar level at harvest.

### Among them, the following stand out:

**Kabinovní víno** (dry wines with at least 19 °NM).

**Pozdní sběr** (late harvest, dry or semi-dry, starting from 21 °NM).

**Výběr z hroznů** (selection of grapes, with higher sugar concentration, from 24 °NM).

**Výběr z bobulí** (selection of berries, semi-sweet or sweet, from 27 °NM).

**Ledové víno** (ice wine, very sweet, made from frozen grapes).

**Slámové víno** (straw wine, from bunches dried on mats for months).

**Výběr z cibéb** (wine from botrytised berries, extremely sweet and complex).





Finally, within the designations of origin, a classification has emerged in recent years that is gaining significant prominence: Víno Originální Certifikace (VOC).

These seals identify wines made from native varieties and from specific areas, with full traceability and a distinctive aromatic profile. The first was VOC Znojmo, created in 2009. Today there are 16 active certifications, all overseen by local associations of oenologists, who ensure that the authenticity and style of each territory are upheld.

Before reaching the market, bottles are marked with the symbol of the corresponding VOC, a guarantee of authenticity certifying that the wine faithfully reflects its origin, grape variety and method of production. In many cases, producers strive to maintain a consistent identity, beyond the variations of each vintage, so that consumers can always recognise the region's style.

The Czech Republic has thus succeeded in consolidating a robust wine-growing system, combining tradition, technical rigour and respect for the terroir. It is a model that offers consumers a clear reference regarding the quality and provenance of each wine, and one that reinforces the prestige of a country that has steadily earned its place among Europe's great wine-producing nations.

## Wine styles and grapes

Although 71% of the country's vineyards are planted with white varieties, there is no shortage of red or rosé wines. The latter, together with the Sekt (sparkling wines) and the Svatomartinská vína (the first wines of the year), are those that have shown the greatest growth in recent years.

The Svatomartinská vína are the earliest wines of the season, and their consumption has multiplied more than ten-fold over the past twenty years. These white, rosé and red wines are released on the market from 11 November (traditionally uncorked at 11:11), and are made exclusively from early-ripening varieties (Blauer Portugieser and St. Laurent for reds; Müller Thurgau, Frühroter Veltliner and Muškát moravský for whites; Blauer Portugieser, Zweigeltrebe and St. Laurent for rosés).

Their sweet wines are also highly noteworthy, offering exceptional value for money, with wonderfully aromatic varieties such as Muškát moravský (native to the Czech Republic), Hibernál (German) or Pálava (created in 1953, also in the Czech Republic) as outstanding ambassadors. In the case of these varieties, we recommend their sweeter versions over the drier ones, as the high terpene content can make low-sugar wines markedly bitter and somewhat rough.





Vineyard in Mikulovská

Regardless of the use intended in its subsequent vinification, the most widely planted varieties in the Czech Republic are Veltlínské zelené (Grüner Veltliner – 9.2%), Müller Thurgau (8.3%), Ryzlink rýnský (Riesling – 7.4%), Ryzlink vlašský (Welschriesling – 6.5%) among the whites, and Frankovka (Blafränkisch – 6%), Svatovavřínecké (Saint Laurent – 5.8%) and Rulandské modré (Pinot Noir) among the reds. Even so, there are 35 white varieties and 26 red ones officially registered in the State Variety Book, although many others can be found either in experimental plots or as residual plantings.

The style of their wines is highly diverse, yet undeniably full of personality. The case of Ryzlink rýnský (Riesling) is particularly revealing, as its profile differs notably from the German style: generally lower in acidity, but with a firm bitterness and a more floral and herbal register than a fruity one. Even so, after a few years in bottle it continues to develop those much-appreciated hydrocarbon notes. Depending on the variety and the region, one can find wines with very distinctive extremes — from a Tramín červený (Gewürztraminer) from Velkopavlovická to a Ryzlink rýnský (Riesling) from Mikulovská.

One of the best ways to understand the wines of the country is by visiting the Wine Salon of the Czech Republic in Valtice. There, for 695 CZK (around £24), you have two hours to taste the nearly 150 wines presented each season. In addition to the best-known varieties already mentioned, you can also sample some more unusual ones such as Medina (of Spanish origin), Cabernet Cortis and Cabernet Dorsa (German), or the local white varieties Savilon and Aurelius.

Without a doubt, the Czech Republic is a country worth losing oneself in among its vineyards and wines, although a few jugs of Pilsen must be alternated to keep the machinery well oiled. In variety lies pleasure.







The farmhouse that now houses the Hotel Nafarrola

# Hotel Nafarrola

Hospitality in the Natural Heart of Urdaibai

Words and photos: Manena Munar [manena.munar@gmail.com](mailto:manena.munar@gmail.com)





**T**o begin writing about the Hotel Nafarrola, the first thing to mention is how deeply it is immersed in Euskadi, where an exceptional natural environment —shaped by marine waters, estuaries, beaches, marshes, rivers, valleys and forests— has achieved a harmonious balance with the privileged few who inhabit it. Fully aware of that privilege are brothers Josu and Gaizka Goikoetxea, who fulfilled their dream when they purchased a 13th-century farmhouse in the Artiko district, named after the river that runs through it. This rural quarter, with its agricultural and livestock activity, lies at the foot of Sollube, one of the five montes bocineros of Biscay.

The name Nafarrola derives from the combination of Nafar or Navarra —a reference to the many Navarrese shepherds who settled in the area— and ola, alluding to the wooden construction that characterises the property. The hotel opened its doors in 2021, the Rola restaurant followed in 2023, and 2024 marks the planting of its own vineyard.

### A gastronomic ritual

Its views unfold over Bermeo, the sea, the forest and the mountain.

Its soundtrack is made of silence and birdsong, and its flavours are those crafted in the kitchen of Rola. In fact, the gastronomic concept of the restaurant invites guests on a culinary journey through the landscapes of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, following a map inspired by the Route of the Urdaibai Ecosystems, which begins right in the restaurant's dining room.

Josu Goikoetxea explains —with the passion of someone who truly loves what he does— how each dish created by the chef, his brother Gaizka, evokes a specific place within the reserve, interpreted through its produce and seasonal ingredients.

One of the finest Txakolís







The loving rooms



The Rola Restaurant



Anchovy on talo and txakoli butter

From the vegetable garden, dishes emerge such as lemon thyme foam with lemon gelée and cauliflower cream, or artichoke with Iberian pork jowl and truffle emulsion; the waters of the Artika bring to the table an anchovy served on talo with exquisite txakoli butter, while the farmhouse delights diners with a foie royale paired with late-harvest txakoli, and the forest offers an organic egg with confit mushroom, crisps and foie emulsion. The ice creams are also inspired by the woodland and, under the curious name ‘Three Falls in the Forests’, capture its arboreal essence.

From the estuary comes a baked scallop with crustacean cream and fennel emulsion; and from the coast, a roasted sea bass with its collagen and a viganado sauce. The port of Bermeo, one of the most outstanding—if not the most—when it comes to tuna fishing, contributes a spectacular bonito cooked a la marinera, simmered in seawater. It is difficult to convey the skill and mastery of Gaizka—for whom his time at Zuberoa under Hilario Arbelaitz was decisive, revealing to him the world of haute cuisine—when preparing roast pigeon with turnip stuffed with its livers, pine nuts and potato cream. An exclusive selection of cheeses from Urdaibai and Navarre, titled ‘The Hypothesis of Our Name’, together with pineapple marinated and served with lemon verbena ice cream and fermented coconut milk, brings the culinary interpretation of the Urdaibai Reserve to a close.

A brief aside must be made to highlight the beauty and uniqueness of the crockery that holds the flavours of Urdaibai. Its shape—perfectly suited to each bite—its texture and its colour are extraordinary. When asked about its origin, Josu explains that the potter responsible for these exceptional pieces is Vicente Alcaide, who works in his workshop barely a kilometre from Nafarroa. And, says Josu, given the success of his work, they are considering offering some pieces for sale at the hotel.



## Let me pour you a txikito

The txakoli has accompanied the meal; it could not be otherwise, for the quintessential wine of Biscay embodies a way of life. When a traveller stopped at the caserío to rest along the way, a txikito of txakoli was offered, accompanied by walnuts and cheese and, if time allowed, a game of skittles in the yard. Josu explains how its bond with the landscape and its distinctive identity make it unique.

The Nafarrola cellar holds around thirty txakoli references; most come from within the reserve itself, though there are also bottles from other parts of Bizkaia. The Goikoetxea brothers pride themselves on researching and enriching this treasured wine. That does not prevent their cellar from housing a wide range of wines, without overlooking cider, so essential in these lands.

## Outdoors

The large windows of the communal areas and of the eight rooms at Nafarrola, some with a jacuzzi, are designed to give centre stage to the sublime landscape that surrounds the hotel. A minimalist and welcoming interior, where wood, stone and glass take precedence, ensures that from the moment the guest walks in, they feel at home.

Excursions from the hotel are each more beautiful than the last: the quintessential fishing town of Bermeo, historic Gernika, the charming Ea, the magnificent Laga beach, or the Oma Forest, with its painted trees by Agustín Ibarrola. And of course, the unmissable sanctuary of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe and the city of Bilbao.

PLACES TO DREAM



Rola invites you to a txikito  
Oyster with caviar



**Urdaibai**  
Biological and  
geological diversity



**Hotel  
Nafarrola**





# Emblem Hotel

Emblem Hotel, just a stone's throw from the Old Town

**Words and photos:** Manena Munar  
[manena.munar@gmail.com](mailto:manena.munar@gmail.com)

## Prague

The rich Czech heritage and its avant-garde contemporary design come together in the Emblem Hotel, located in the very centre of Prague. And when we say “centre”, we mean Old Town Square, the Astronomical Clock, the Church of Our Lady before Týn, and the famous Charles Bridge that crosses the Vltava River

**T**he rich Czech heritage and its forward-thinking contemporary design come together at the Hotel Emblem, located in the very centre of Prague. When we say centre, we mean the Old Town Square, the Astronomical Clock, the Church of Our Lady before Týn, and the famous Charles Bridge that crosses the Vltava River.

Its façade once formed part of the series of Art Deco buildings that marked one of the many architecturally golden eras Prague has enjoyed. Meanwhile, its 59 rooms, including two Premium Suites, have been designed with meticulous attention to detail, just like the George Prime Steak Restaurant & Bar and the M Spa, located on the hotel's top floor.

The purpose of the Hotel Emblem has been to create a bridge between travellers and locals through hospitality and contemporary design that honours and continues the rich Czech cultural heritage. The intention is for guests to feel at home even when far from it: a seductive, welcoming residence.



## Notes on the Hotel Emblem

You may wonder where the name Mahara! which gives its title to M Lounge, comes from. This private space, equipped with a kitchen, dining room, games area and smoking lounge, takes its name from Mahara! (also known as Rabbi Loew), a man of many talents and the creator of the legendary Jewish figure Golem during Prague's golden age under Rudolf II, a period when art, science and religion flourished in extraordinary harmony and intellectual freedom prevailed. The Emblem pays tribute to Mahara!'s legacy as a remarkable era in Prague's history and, keeping pace with the times, collaborates with renowned international artists. Their works are displayed throughout the hotel, achieving a perfect fusion between Prague's heritage and contemporary design.



The sublime architecture of Prague

The Emblem Hotel Lounge



## More than a place to stay

The Emblem is not a hotel for merely sleeping, having breakfast and heading out to explore the city. This small museum deserves time: to wander slowly and discover its details, such as the copper bathroom fixtures by William Holland, or the way each design element has been carefully selected to create comfort and beauty, in collaboration with international designers and artists who contribute their own unique vision of life. Among them are the "Bubble Square Elbow Sconces" by the studio Siemon & Salazar, which illuminate the George Prime Steak restaurant, as well as the iconic furniture in the lounge, including the Swan Sofa by Vladimir Kagan.

The comfortable and spectacular Oslo armchairs on the rooftop terrace, created by Paola Navone, are ideal for enjoying a delightful moment while taking in the urban landscape of Prague's courtyards and the spires of the Old Town at sunset. Guests may also enjoy an enticing soak in the M Spa jacuzzi or, why not, sit in the M Lounge on the Baxter armchairs with a good book.







Detail of the monument to Jan Hus. Below, the Church of Our Lady before Týn

Contemporary art, illustrations... can be found in every corner of the hotel. For example, the 5 x 1.3-metre piece “Monument”, consisting of a series of illustrations displayed across each of the hotel’s five floors, created by illustrators Tomski & Polanski on a floating island full of fantasy that evokes the magical city of Prague.

### Prague brushstrokes

Just a few steps from the hotel lies Old Town Square, presided over by the monument to Jan Hus, a key figure in the Bohemian Reformation. The Gothic Town Hall in the same square houses, on its southern wall, one of the most complete and beautiful astronomical clocks in Europe, whose most impressive feature may well be its astronomical dial, shaped like an astrolabe with a zodiac ring, a rotation ring, and the moon and the sun prevailing over earth and sky, as if to suggest that they hold sway over everything.

And just a few steps further, you reach the romantic, stately, mysterious Charles Bridge, the oldest of the 18 bridges that cross the Vltava River, dating back to 1380. From here, you

Prague Astronomical Clock







can lean over to enjoy a spectacular panorama on both banks of the Vltava: the Old Town, the Castle, the Malá Strana district, and Kampa Island.

Before ending your stroll, don't forget to take a look at Pařížská Street, which links the Vltava River with Old Town Square and where the latest fashion brands, the finest jewellers, chocolatiers and galleries line the street. Among them, the shops of Bohemian crystal stand out, with the most notable representation in Prague being the house of Moser.

Time to return to the Hotel Emblem with your notebook full of memories, and enjoy one of the hotel's signature cocktails.



Cistal de Bohemia. Bottom photo, Charles Bridge at sunset

Restaurant & Bar George Prime Steak



## Emblem Hotel







Pablo Puyol

# Houdini

The only magical musical  
featuring magic and escapism

By: Julián Sacristán - comunicacion@wfm.es



**H**arry Houdini is a timeless figure, ahead of his era and endowed with a magnetism that has survived to this day. The creators of the musical reveal the life of Harry Houdini through his final performance, with perfectly structured flashbacks. The show is staged at the Teatro Calderón, a temple of the performing arts, which—with objects belonging to Houdini and his world—creates an atmosphere of magic and time-travel, transporting the audience to 31 October 1926 in Detroit.

Pablo Puyol Ledesma (Málaga, 26 December 1975) is a Spanish actor, singer and dancer. He studied Dramatic Arts at the Higher School of Málaga and began his career in musical theatre with *Grease* and *Rent*. He rose to fame with *Un paso adelante* (2002–2005), playing Pedro Salvador, a role that opened the doors to cinema and television. He has appeared in films such as *20 Centímetros* and in numerous series and stage productions. In addition, he has developed a solid career in musicals and entertainment programmes. Committed to social causes, he is vegan and actively collaborates in initiatives for animal protection and environmental conservation.



**Pablo, I imagine you were already familiar with the figure of Houdini?**

*Yes, I knew who he was and many of his achievements, although of course, after reading several of his biographies I now know much more about the man and the artist behind them. He was undoubtedly a genius, with his lights and shadows, but above all with a talent and an obsession with being the best that made him the most famous person of his time.*

**To portray Houdini, the preparation is perhaps more demanding than for other characters: you sing, dance, act and also perform illusion and escapology numbers. How did you prepare physically for the role?**

*From the moment I knew I would be playing Houdini, I started a specific exercise routine to be able to perform this character in all his facets. I had to be very strong, because many of the numbers require quite a good physical condition to execute them, but at the same time I had to stay flexible for some of the tricks, so I needed to balance my training routines very carefully.*

*And of course, I had to learn to perform the tricks like a professional magician, which required many hours of rehearsal to try to do them with the same ease as someone who has spent their whole life at it.*

**And regarding the acting side, did you do anything special to prepare?**

*Well, I read and studied several of his biographies and watched some films and documentaries about Houdini. I also talked a lot with Federico Bellone (director and author of the show) to be very clear about the approach we wanted to take, since ultimately it is a fictional piece about a man who really existed.*

**You tap dance with such elegance that it seems effortless. Where did you learn it?**

*PWell, I had never tap danced in my life, except for a small number in A Chorus Line, and it has been one of the things I found hardest in the end, because it is very difficult—especially when you also have to sing at the same time. In fact, there was a moment during rehearsals when*

*I thought I wouldn't be able to do it, and I even suggested not doing it at all—letting the others dance while I just sang the song. But little by little I started feeling better, and after dedicating many hours to it, it seems I've finally managed to pull it off.*

**What is there of Houdini in you? He was fearless, unstoppable, nothing stood in his way.**

*Well, if there is anything of Houdini in me, it's that madness when it comes to facing new challenges, because saying yes to this character, with everything it entails, was an act of temporary insanity, hahahaha... It is very risky in every sense, and although now I'm happier than ever with one of my jobs, the path to get here has been anything but easy.*

**What would you highlight about your castmates Julia Möller and Christian Escuredo?**

*Well, apart from the obvious—that they are two extraordinary performers, incredibly talented, with amazing voices and enormous truth when*

*acting—I'd say that as people, they are just as wonderful. And the same goes for Juan dos Santos, who has been a great discovery.*

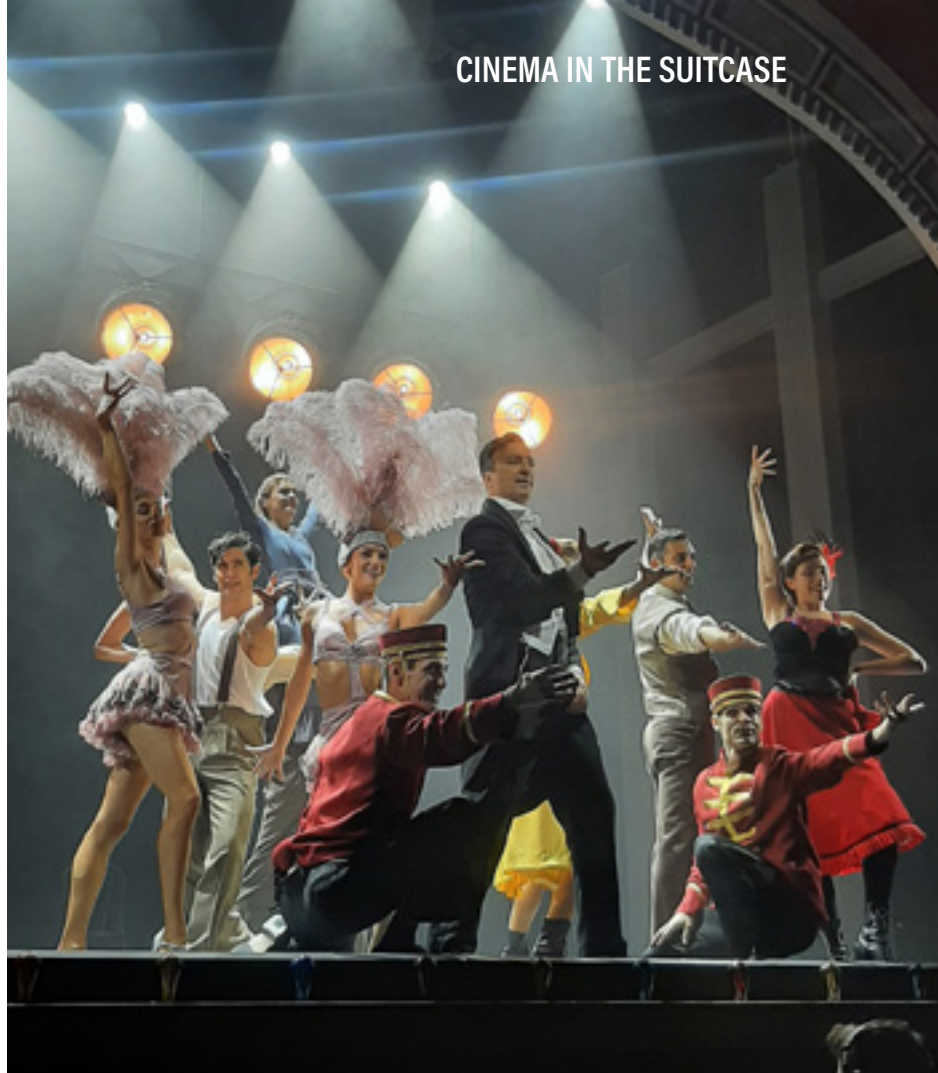
**You had already worked with Julia. How was the reunion?**

*Well, as it could only be: magnificent. In fact, I agreed to this project when I learned she was going to be my partner on stage. For me, she is the finest female musical theatre performer in Spain, and being able to work with her again is a privilege.*

**What would you like the audience to say when they leave the theatre?**

*I'd love for them to leave having enjoyed themselves, having laughed, having been moved—and above all, having been blown away by the tricks.*

**I believe Houdini is a total show—if you let yourself go, you enjoy a great story, with very careful staging and an amount of surprises that has no equal in Madrid right now.**







# Manena's Window

## Travel Anecdotes

Words and Photos: Manena Munar [manena.munar@gmail.com](mailto:manena.munar@gmail.com)

Those little things..." as Joan Manuel Serrat would sing, are what remain in the memory after a journey —the ones that, when recalled, bring back a smile, a tear, or even bursts of laughter. I would like to take a few of them from the chest of my memories and share them with you"

## Görliewood

Görliewood, they call it the European Hollywood, for in the palatial setting of the Saxon city of Görlitz, renowned films have been shot.

Goerliewood Tour



I have travelled to Germany many times, a beautiful country with an extraordinary wealth of cultural and natural attractions. Yet, as happens with everything in life, there is suddenly a person, a work of art, a piece of music or a place that settles in the chest of memories. For me, the city of Görlitz has always possessed something special. Perhaps it is the fact that its bridge over the River Neisse was chosen as the border between Poland and Germany; perhaps because it has more small palaces than inhabitants; an impressive architecture —around 4,000 protected buildings— or perhaps because others, long before me, liked it so much that they decided to turn Görlitz (or Zgorzelec in Polish, such a different way of naming the same place; that is what languages do, especially when they are so devilish...) into a vast film set.

### Growing up hand in hand with the cinema.

I, like many of my generation —I will spare you the details of which one— grew up dreaming thanks to the cinema. We were explorers, missionaries, doctors, police officers, thieves, villains and heroes in those films that accompanied our childhood. Expressions such as "it feels like a film" or "you could make a film about this" have echoed throughout our daily lives. That is why, when I arrived in Görlitz, seeing the trams still gliding along its elegant streets, I turned into Kate Winslet and "drove" the tram, eagerly awaiting the moment to meet "The Reader", who would teach me that life did not end on the tracks of Görlitz, and that there was a vast world out there. And if not, ask Jules Verne, whose *Around the World in Eighty Days* became a celebrated film which, among earlier versions, starred Jackie Chan, choosing Görlitz's Market Square for one of his descents from the hot-air balloon.



Barely sparing Görlitz, with so much fire and so many explosions, are the soldiers from Quentin Tarantino's ingenious *Inglourious Basterds*, with its brilliant ending. I have seen it more than a couple of times, and on each viewing I notice a new detail —and I find it better and better! So much so that when I first visited Görlitz, I was amazed the city was still standing, and I even toyed with the idea of running into Brad Pitt around a corner, or catching sight of the endearing "Book Thief", to whom I would gladly lend a hand in completing her stolen library.

### The cinematic architecture of Görlitz.

Speaking of libraries: the Harry-Potter-style library of Görlitz is none other than the Upper Lusatian Library of Sciences, located in the centre of the city. I have never visited the fictional library imagined for Harry Potter, but I have been in the real one in Görlitz, and I must say it is a marvel —a place where one learns simply by breathing, and from which one emerges knowing more than when one entered.

The buildings of Baroque, Renaissance, Gothic or Wilhelmine styles that are scattered across the easternmost city in Germany are truly astonishing. And seeing many of them empty —for people, especially the young, tend to move west for work— I caught myself imagining which one I would buy. From what I hear, the prices are not too high, and one could acquire a small palace for what, in other places, would barely buy you a tent.

The problem is what to do afterwards, because once you have seen, lived and boasted about the palace, you must find a daily occupation, which might



The Silesian Museum  
Spring in Görlitz





## GÖRLIEWOOD

well be filming a movie about the cinematic city of Görlitz. I would film its history, shaped by various influences, one of them —and an important one— being that of Silesia, which has its own fascinating museum. I would highlight how well, apparently, the Polish residents of Zgorzelec and the Germans of Görlitz get along, crossing the Neisse bridge constantly: off to Poland for dinner, off to Germany for breakfast. In Poland shopping is cheaper, but in Germany there are fewer people in the supermarket... and so it goes, day after day.

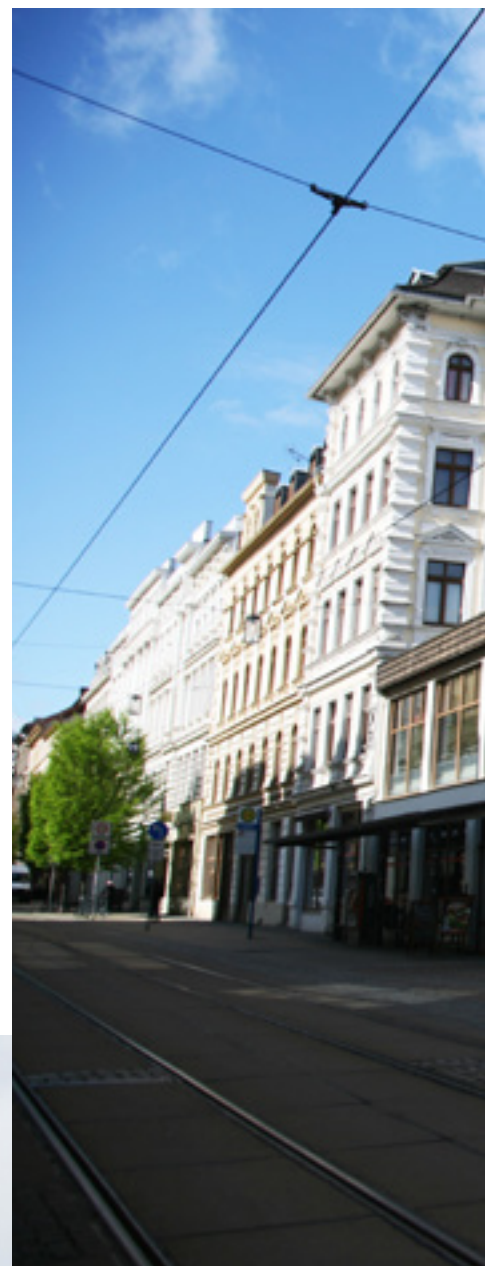
### If I were a film director...

I would film the changing seasons. With a setting as remarkable as that of Görlitz, it seems essential to capture the best of its spring, when it dresses itself in flowers; the lush green of summer; the spectacular multicoloured attire of its autumn leaves; and the snowy mantle of winter. And also, why not, I would film a period piece set in the High

Middle Ages, when in this Saxon city —once part of Silesia— the two great Renaissance routes intersected: the Via Regia, running from Kiev to Santiago de Compostela, offering commercial and pilgrimage passages, and the route linking the northern German ports with the Balkans. I would write a script telling the story of the constant commercial, religious and cultural movement that made Görlitz a prosperous city, specialised in the textile industry and in the highly coveted indigo from the Indies used for blue dyeing in Europe, over which it held a monopoly. Given the demand for indigo, all kinds of intrigues, romances and murders would simmer in the pursuit of the precious dye.

I must think about the cast; one of them would undoubtedly be Timothée Chalamet, and for the female lead I might lean towards Dakota Fanning. Neither of them went unnoticed to me in their performances; on the contrary, I thought they were truly exceptional.

Görlitz has more than 4,000 listed buildings







The tracks from the movie "The Reader"

Neisse Bridge with St. Peter and St. Paul's Church in the background







Sun Organ of the Church of San Pedro and San Pablo

## A glass of fiction, or a real and fresh cocktail?

At nightfall, I went to listen to a spectacular concert from the Sun Organ in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. From its sublime sound, the Spanish trumpets stood out, and I felt a sense of pride, reflecting on how, just as we Spaniards speak in a raised tone of voice, so too do our trumpets. Afterwards, I fancied dining on roast duck in Poland, barely 20 metres from the church, just across the river. And I couldn't help but muse that only a few years ago, it was impossible to cross from one country to the other, and now, with a simple craving for Polish duck, one only had to cross the bridge over the Neisse.

While savouring the aforementioned duck with apple, I pondered that I was having a glass of fiction in the halls of the Hotel Budapest – a film which was also shot in Görlitz, inside the Art Nouveau Görlitzer Warenhaus department store, where a curious route begins. Following the numerical trail of the red stars, one finds information about the filming in Görlitz. However, I opted to make that dreamlike drink a reality, and to my delight, the cocktail I savoured in my hotel, the Borse, tasted glorious, before I went to sleep in one of its palatial rooms. There, enveloped in linen sheets, I consulted with my sincere and soft pillow about my improbable film, shot in Görliewood.

From Poland to Germany and vice versa, with merely a crossing of the Neisse





# Traveling

gourmets



## FLAVOURS OF LA RIOJA

A journey through  
its products

## PUERTO DE INDIAS

Fruit Gin with an  
Andalusian Soul

## JAPAN

A Country Told Through  
Its Kitchens

## ACHOLAO

Peruvian Cuisine  
in the Heart of Madrid





# Flavours of La Rioja

Words and photos: Jose A. Muñoz

In La Rioja, one does not only drink from a wine glass; one also savours it in every roasted pepper, in the slow curing of a good chorizo, or in the aroma of meat grilling over vine-shoot embers. Here, the taste for the authentic is breathed in the valleys, in the market gardens overlooking the Ebro, and in the cellars where time and patience are part of the recipe. In this article, we explore the gastronomic wealth of La Rioja with a measured gaze, first touring the products born from its own larder – the fruit of a fertile and generous land – and then four dishes that tell stories of tradition, passed down from grandparents to grandchildren. We will conclude our journey in some of the finest places where this culinary heritage is honoured today; temples of flavour where cooking is done with respect and toasts are made with pride, because in La Rioja, as in few other regions, every bite has a sediment of wine and memory.

Riojan cuisine has its roots in a rural and hard-working culture, shaped by the rhythm of the seasons. In winter, the matanzas (slaughtering festivals) filled villages with smoke and festivity; chorizo, morcillas and embutidos were hung in the lofts as a promise of sustenance. In spring, the market gardens of the Ebro offered up their asparagus, artichokes and tender chard; in summer, tomatoes and peppers were roasted in wood-fired ovens or preserved in glass jars, following family rituals that still survive today.

Gatherings around the fire, snacks in the vineyard, or lunches after the harvest are an essential part of the Riojan soul. Here, gastronomy cannot be understood without that shared dimension, without the wine that accompanies and the conversation that prolongs the pleasure. Every recipe, from a plate of patatas a la riojana to chuletillas al sarmiento, contains centuries of peasant wisdom. Eating in La Rioja remains an act of identity, a way of celebrating the land, time, and memory.



In La Rioja, gastronomy is a way of narrating the land. Each dish – from a plate of patatas a la riojana to a salt cod that smells of home – tells a story passed from parents to children, from taverns to kitchens where the slow fire still reigns. It is a cuisine that respects seasonality and celebrates the product: pears, peppers, cheeses, cured meats, walnuts, wild mushrooms, or meats that speak of the landscape as much as the vineyards do. Around the table, the region champions a way of doing things that maintains its essence in the pintxos of its bars and in the Michelin-recognised restaurants, where tradition is updated without losing its roots. Here, wine and gastronomy are not an end, but the beginning of a journey that invites one to pause, to share, and to remember the art of the small things.



## Flavours of the Matanza

Riojan chorizo, with its paprika, garlic and pork, is perhaps the best-known of the region's cured meats. It is slowly air-dried, hung in cellars or attics, until it acquires that unmistakable aroma which makes it unique. Even more singular is the embuchado de cordero: a coiled and roasted lamb intestine, with a potent flavour that forms part of the classic tapas scene in Logroño and the surrounding towns. Both products tell the story of a land where cuisine is craftsmanship, patience, and respect for inherited knowledge.

## Flavours Born of the Ebro

The Riojan huerta is one of the most generous in northern Spain. Along the Ebro and its valleys grow products of a clean and direct flavour: the roasted red peppers, sweet and fragrant; the tender artichokes from Calahorra; the borage, humble and delicate; or the tomatoes that ripen slowly in the sun, laden with sweetness. And if there is one jewel amongst the fruit trees, it is the Pear of Rincón de Soto, with its Protected Designation of Origin, a symbol of an agriculture that still respects nature's timing.







## Wine, the liquid soul of La Rioja

To speak of La Rioja is to speak of wine. In each bottle, a landscape is enclosed: the clay, limestone, or stony soils, the contrast between the Atlantic and Mediterranean climates, and the wise hand of those who work the vines. Here, wine is not just a drink: it is culture, memory, and collective pride.

In the Qualified Designation of Origin Rioja (DOCa Rioja), authorised red and white varieties are cultivated in the sub-zones of Rioja Alta and Rioja Oriental. In this winemaking territory, the vineyard sets the rhythm of daily life and defines a heritage that has grown; wineries, landscapes, and age-old knowledge form a shared identity that continues to evolve without losing its essence.

The winemaking wealth of Rioja is sustained by this heritage of varieties that define its identity and diversity. The red grapes, with Tempranillo as their emblem, yield balanced, elegant wines with great ageing potential, while the white grapes, increasingly recognised, bring freshness, aromatic complexity, and new possibilities for expression. This balance between tradition and renewal keeps the prestige of Rioja alive and reinforces its role as a global benchmark for Spanish wine.

Viña Tondonia Winery in the station neighborhood of Haro





# From earth to fire

In La Rioja, cuisine is understood as a homage to the land. Stews are born from simple products that time has turned into symbols: patatas a la riojana, caparrones from Anguiano, lamb al chilindrón or chuletillas al sarmiento that smell of festivity and countryside. At every table, one recognises the hand of the market gardener and the flavour of the accompanying wine. To sweeten the after-dinner moment, there is no lack of fardelejos from Arnedo, marzipan from Soto, pears in red wine or hojuelas with honey, recipes that keep the sweetness of tradition alive. For here, in every dish and every dessert, beats the memory of a land that is cooked over a slow fire.

## Riojan-style potatoes

Few recipes define the popular soul of this land so well. Potatoes, chorizo, pimiento choricero, onion, garlic, bay leaf, and paprika. Humble ingredients that, together, create a stew that is deep, warm, and full of character. It was born in peasant kitchens and remains the dish that best represents simplicity transformed into flavour.



## Lamb chops cooked over vine cuttings

The quintessential festive dish. They are grilled outdoors over vine-shoot embers, and the smoke infuses the meat with an unmistakable aroma. The chops are eaten amongst friends, with good wine and conversation. It is the flavour of fiestas, of the countryside, and of friendship.

## More information

[www.lariojaturismo.com](http://www.lariojaturismo.com)

[www.productoriojano.com](http://www.productoriojano.com)





# From fire to plate

## Venta Moncalvillo (Daroca de Rioja)

It is one of the great gastronomic temples of northern Spain. With two Michelin stars and a Green Star, the Echapresto siblings have turned their restaurant into a model of sustainability and respect for the environment. Their cuisine originates from the family's biodynamic kitchen garden, where each vegetable is cultivated with patience and transformed into dishes that reflect the Riojan landscape. The "Mirada Raíz" and "Entorno" tasting menus are a journey through the season, with combinations that unite simplicity, technique, and emotion. Everything at Venta Moncalvillo breathes authenticity: the land, the wine, and the delicacy of those who cook with the most exquisite finesse.

Confit leek, laminated boletus mushrooms, wild mushroom cream, and vegetable crisps.



Stewed mountain elvers with egg yolk and potato crisp



## Restaurante Lumbre (Casalareina)

Lumbre, in Casalarreina, is one of the standout destinations of the new Riojan cuisine. Recommended by the Michelin Guide, the restaurant lives up to its name: fire is at the heart of everything. From the embers, dishes are born that smell of the countryside and taste of truth. Vegetables from the garden, such as asparagus, artichokes, or leeks, are grilled with care and accompanied by meats and fish treated with precision and respect for their natural flavour.

Its proposal revolves around a sincere and direct cuisine, with a focus on local produce. The "Raíces" and "Origen" tasting menus offer a journey through the region, from toasted broths to charcoal stews. Each dish seeks a balance between the rustic and the elegant, with careful presentations and an honest foundation.



## Restaurante Allegar (Briones)

Allegar, in the Hotel Santa María Briones, is an obligatory stop for those seeking the Riojan essence reinterpreted with elegance. Recommended by the Michelin Guide, it offers a seasonal cuisine that looks to the past without losing sight of modernity. Vegetables from the riverbank, traditional stews, and local wines are integrated into menus that celebrate their origin with sensitivity and balance. Each dish is a conversation between land, cellar, and memory, served in a setting that combines history, architecture, and contemporary hospitality.



Warm langoustine with pumpkin cream, osmotised cucumber, and flowers

Smoked fish and anchovy salad with fresh shoots, flowers, and Rioja pepper cream.



## Restaurante Arrope (Haro)

Arrope combines Riojan tradition and contemporary cuisine in a welcoming setting within a 17th-century stone building. Recommended by the Michelin Guide, it stands out for its respect for local produce and the elegance of its presentations. Its menu draws from the region's market gardens, meats, and wines, with balanced menus that link flavour and simplicity. At Arrope, every dish preserves the Riojan identity, reinterpreted with subtlety and good taste.







# JAPAN

## A country told through its kitchens

**Words:** Editorial staff **Photography:** Japan Tourisme and archive

Japanese cuisine, recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, forms one of the greatest bridges between Japan and the foreign visitor. In autumn – *shukuyu no aki*, ‘the season of appetite’ – this connection becomes especially visible. It is the time for mushrooms, roasted sweet potatoes, nuts, oily fish, and newly harvested rice; ingredients that not only fill the table but also return to the traveller the sensation of entering the intimate essence of the country. In Japan, eating is not an isolated act: it is a way of understanding the landscape, the seasons, and daily life

### **Ichiba: Seasonality as a language.**

To enter a Japanese market, an *ichi-ba*, is to step into the true rhythm of the country. There is no better way to understand its gastronomy than to follow the movement of the fishmongers at dawn, as they unload crates of tuna, silver sardines, and turbot gleaming on crushed ice. The auctions set the morning's tempo, and the first buyers move with a disciplined silence, as if participating in a ritual repeated every day.

Beyond the famous Toyosu market in Tokyo, Japan preserves spaces where tradition and local produce are expressed without artifice. In Shio-gama, in Miyagi prefecture, the fish markets sustain a city with one of the highest number of sushi restaurants in the country. Kanazawa boasts the Omicho market, with three centuries of history, where the *nodoguro* – the delicate ‘black-throated perch’ – is presented as a jewel of the Sea of Japan. In Yamaguchi, the Karato market offers the chance to buy sushi by the piece, sample a pufferfish miso broth,

or simply sit and observe the artisans of the sea at work.

The traveller who pauses at these markets discovers more than just fresh produce: they find the culture of seasonality, that sensitivity which turns each season into its own vocabulary. Here, autumn tastes of chestnuts, of matsutake mushrooms, of hot sweet potatoes freshly taken from a stone oven. And whoever tastes it immediately understands that Japanese gastronomy is, above all, an intimate conversation with nature.





Street food at Japanese ichiba or markets

## GASTRONOMICS DESTINATION

Entering an ichiba is like stepping into the authentic rhythm of Japan.

### Yatai: The life that ignites as evening falls

When the sun sets, Japan changes its rhythm.

In Fukuoka, especially in the Nakasu and Tenjin districts, the yatai – small mobile food stalls – begin to unfurl their awnings and light their stoves. They are tiny kitchens, often run by a single person, where the steam from ramen mingles with the cheer of those who sit shoulder-to-shoulder to share al culinary spirit awakens.

In the Nakasu and Tenjin districts, the yatai – small, iconic mobile food stalls – begin to unfurl their awnings and light their stoves. These are tiny, intimate kitchens, often run by a single proprietor, where the fragrant steam from rich ramen broths mingles with the cheerful conversation of strangers who sit shoulder-to-shoulder, sharing their evening meal.

The yatai represent Japanese food culture at its most accessible and spontaneous. They deliberately forgo formal restaurant etiquette, inviting diners to converse with the cook whilst sampling sizzling skewers, feather-light tempura, or deeply comforting bowls of broth. Although found across Japan, in Fukuoka they are a cherished symbol of local identity. For any traveller, the simple act of sitting down at a yatai is to access a version of Japan that is uniquely warm, immediate, and profoundly human.



Hot Pot, a typical dish of autumn cuisine



The yatai represent the most accessible and spontaneous face of Japanese cuisine



## FLAVOURS OF JAPAN

### Izakaya: where the night becomes conversation

Along the coasts of Japan, an ancient tradition endures: the ama, divers who plunge into the sea without tanks to gather shellfish. Their way of life, passed from mothers to daughters, persists in corners of Toba and Shima, in Mie prefecture. There, one finds the amagoya, wooden huts where the divers gather to warm themselves by the fire and where today, in a controlled manner, they receive travellers.

Those who enter an amagoya can sample oysters, abalone, or scallops grilled over embers while the ama tell stories of storms, times of plenty, and the changes they have witnessed in the sea. Their tales speak of discipline, of sunrises that mark the working day, and of a trade that demands understanding the ocean as both companion and frontier.

The experience transcends the gastronomic: it is an encounter with a vulnerable human heritage, where the sea ceases to be a landscape and becomes memory. In that atmosphere of embers, wood, and sea salt, the visitor discovers an intimate Japan, protective of its ancient vintages.



A Japanese izakaya, a sort of tavern



Yakitori

Ekiben of masu sushi - Toyama



### Ekiben: the journey transformed into a mouthful

No country has elevated train food boxes to iconic status quite like Japan. Ekiben are not mere containers: they are small works of culinary craftsmanship designed to accompany journeys on shinkansen and regional trains.

Each station offers its own interpretation, based on local produce. In some places, technology allows the food to be heated without stoves; in others, tradition has remained intact for generations. One of the most famous examples is Toyama's Masu No Sushi: layers of trout over rice, wrapped in bamboo leaves within a cedarwood box. For the traveller, opening an ekiben means discovering the gastronomy of the region they're passing through without ever lea

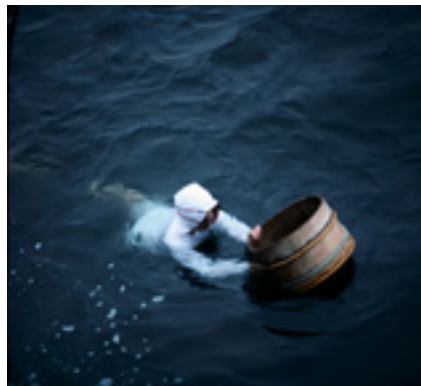


## Amagoya: a kitchen on the ocean's edge

Along the coasts of Japan, a millennia-old tradition endures: the ama, divers who plunge into the sea without the aid of tanks to gather shellfish. Their way of life, passed from mothers to daughters, persists in the corners of Toba and Shima, in Mie prefecture. There, one finds the amagoya, wooden huts where the divers gather to warm themselves by the fire and where today, in a controlled manner, they receive travellers.

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these women do not dive merely to live, but to preserve a bond with the ocean that, despite the passage of time, remains profoundly authentic.

## The country discovered dish by dish

Exploring Japanese gastronomy is a form of travel that requires no grand gestures. From the markets stirring at dawn to the ama huts by the sea, each setting speaks of the profound bond between nature, tradition, and community. Japan teaches that eating is also a way to understand a country. For the traveller, this discovery is etched into every autumn dish, every bite of fresh produce, and every conversation shared around a fire or a counter.

Woman preparing shellfish in the amagoya

Shellfish Gatherer, the Japanese Sirens



**JNTO**







**Puerto  
DE Indias**

## Fruit Gin with an Andalusian Soul

Words and photography: Jose A. Muñoz

The history of this distillery begins in 1880, when an emigrant from northern Spain – fleeing the Carlist Wars – utilised an underground spring to establish a factory for aniseed liqueurs at the Brenes estate in Carmona. The building was constructed upon the remains of ancient Roman baths and the structure of an old Andalusian mill. For decades, the small-scale industry produced anise and traditional liqueurs, becoming one of the first distilleries in the province of Seville and an economic pillar of the area.

In 2001, this history nearly faded away. The factory, by then in decline, was acquired by the brothers José Antonio and Francisco Rodríguez, who wanted to prevent its closure and keep the legacy of ‘Los Hermanos’ anise alive. They came from the construction sector, but they bet on preserving the craft. That decision would, in time, mark the beginning of an unexpected transformation that would put Carmona on the international gin map.

Today, the whitewashed, sun-bleached compound, filled with fruit trees, functions as a visitor centre. It is a blend of industrial heritage, liqueur-making tradition, and gastronomic tourism. For those familiar with wineries and olive oil mills, the narrative feels familiar: it speaks of origin, raw materials, botanicals, mineral water, and a craft passed down through generations.

### The “Mistake” That Changed Gin Forever

Understanding Puerto de Indias requires pausing at the accident that led to its most famous gin. In the early 2010s, the Rodríguez family sought to diversify their activity by producing fruit macerations in alcohol. Among these fruits were strawberries, which arrived fresh from the province of Huelva. During the winter, everything worked fine, but when temperatures rose, the strawberries began to break down: what remained in the tanks was an alcoholic purée impossible to sell.

Concurrently, they had recovered the recipe for a dry gin that was produced at the distillery in the mid-20th century. Before discarding the fruit, they decided to mix and distil it together with the juniper. From that improvised experiment, a pink gin was born – aromatic and smooth, with a character unprecedented for its time.

In 2013, they launched a first run of just two thousand bottles. The success surpassed all expectations. The pink gin from Puerto de Indias not only created a new category in the market; it propelled the distillery to produce millions of bottles and establish itself as an international phenomenon.





## GASTRONOMIC PRODUCTS

The spring that gave life to Puerto de Indias. A garden created for memorable occasions

### Natural Strawberry vs. Flavours: The Kitchen of Distillation

The visitor who comes to Carmona with a gastronomic eye soon discovers that the secret of Puerto de Indias lies in its raw materials. The brand was a pioneer in working with natural strawberries, not with flavourings or colourings. The strawberries arrive fresh at the distillery and are macerated to extract their real juices and aromas, much like a chef works with seasonal produce to obtain its purest flavours.

The difference is perceived in the glass: a clear aroma of ripe strawberry, the presence of juniper, a light citrus background, and a sweet-acidic balance that has brought gin closer to an audience previously unfamiliar with this spirit. For the gastronomic traveller, it's easy to understand the process as a form of silent cooking: long macerations, controlled rest, slow distillations, and a scrupulous respect for the ingredient.

In this sense, Puerto de Indias functions as a liquid winery of the south: water from a Roman spring, Mediterranean botanicals, Andalusian citrus, and fresh fruit that defines the character of the product.

### An Alternative to Wine and Olive Oil Tourism

The concept is simple: what the traveller experiences in wineries and olive oil mills can also be experienced in a distillery, transferring the model of gastronomic tourism to the world of gin.

The standard guided tour, ninety minutes long, goes through the historic rooms, explains the origin of the gin, shows the copper pot stills, and concludes with a tasting of several varieties.

The premium tour adds a walk through the gardens, the fruit trees, and the ancient Roman water spring, plus an extended tasting accompanied by the final "perfect serve."

In both cases, the experience is built upon technique and tradition. They talk about botanicals, temperature, base alcohol, copper distillation, and how each nuance is perceived in the glass. For those who have already visited many wineries and olive oil mills, this approach offers a suggestive variation within the same gastronomic universe.





### Workshop: Distil Your Own Gin

The most surprising activity is the distillation workshop, where the visitor creates their own gin using individual miniature stills. Botanicals are selected – coriander, juniper, citrus peels, flowers, spices – and a personal recipe is designed. During the process, key concepts are explained: how to separate the phases of distillation, how to adjust the aromatic intensity, and how to balance the fruit without eclipsing the juniper.

The final result is a unique bottle, labelled with the visitor's personal formula: a liquid souvenir of the journey and, in a way, the distilled version of a signature gin.

For those planning a trip around Seville, Puerto de Indias offers a different and complementary proposition. It is half an hour from Seville, can easily be combined with lunch in Carmona, and adds a new layer to the classic triangle of fortified wines, olive oils, and traditional cuisine.

After the visit, a clear sensation remains: a new way to explore a territory. The distillery does not compete with the winery or the olive oil mill: it enriches them. And for the gastronomic traveller, this trilogy – wine, oil, and spirits – turns the Sevillian countryside into an even more complete and suggestive destination.

- 1.- Modern Pot Still
- 2.- Gin Distillation Workshop







**Strawberry**



**Exotic**



**Melon**



**Mango**



**Premium Dry**







# ACHOLAO

Words: Editorial staff Photography: Acholao



**O**n Almirante st., in the heart of the Salesas neighbourhood, Acholao opens its doors, the new venture from the Quispe Group. It is not just a restaurant nor solely a cocktail bar: it is a space designed for drinking and eating well, for celebrating and letting go, for those seeking an afternoon with character or a post-dinner drink in an atmosphere that blends sophistication and approachability. In Madrid, where the gastronomic and the social intertwine naturally, Acholao arrives to occupy that territory which exists between the encounter, the flavour, and the shared experience.

The name is no accident. Acholao draws inspiration from the Peruvian term *acholado*, which designates a pisco made from the blend of two or more strains of *pisquera* grape. From this idea – fusion, cross-cultural mixing, the encounter – a project is born that aims to bring together cultures, accents, influences, and emotions. The owners of the group, César Figari and Constanza Rey, partners in both their personal and professional lives, thus continue the path they set with Quispe, their flagship since 2018,

and with Ponja Nikkei, where Peruvian and Japanese cuisines converse fluidly. With Acholao, they add a third perspective: that of the contemporary pisco bar, with a strong Andean identity and a fully Madrilenian vocation.

The liquid menu is the heart of the establishment. Acholao presents a creative cocktail menu built upon twenty artisanal pisco macerations, infused for twenty days with fruits, herbs, roots, and spices from the Andean world. The bases come from prestigious houses – Sarcay, 1615, Huamaní – and allow for the creation of cocktails ranging from traditional Pisco Sours to Chilcanos, Mojitos, Spritz, or Pisco Tonics with their own personality. The offering also incorporates a reinterpretation of classic mixed drinks and an author's line where textures, aromas, and contemporary techniques are explored. Everything revolves around pisco, treated here as a versatile, noble spirit deeply connected to Peruvian memory.



The gastronomic side accompanies this philosophy with a short menu designed for sharing. The foundation is Creole cuisine, recognisable and accessible, presented in the form of small plates and easy-to-eat finger foods. Among the essentials are the ceviches – offered in a trio that allows one to explore different nuances – and the ají de gallina croquettes, already established as one of the group's most in-demand dishes. Each recipe seeks naturalness, direct flavour, and maintains a balance between tradition and modernity that characterises the work of César and Constanza: Peruvian roots, a contemporary outlook, and absolute respect for the product. The flexible hours allow these dishes to be enjoyed at any time of day, without rigidity.

The space reflects this same idea of welcome. Designed by Constanza Rey herself, an architect and interior designer, Acholao combines textures and organic materials to create a warm atmosphere reminiscent of old Peruvian taverns. Earthy colours, aged wood, soft lighting, natural fabrics, and comfortable furniture configure an intimate setting where one can feel as if in a Lima bar or a modern refuge in central Madrid. The room, with a capacity for sixty people, alternates counters and high tables with a presidential table intended for groups or celebrations, reinforcing that idea of community that runs through the entire project. The open kitchen adds a touch of transparency and dynamism: seeing the dishes being prepared is part of the experience.



Trio of ceviches

In summary, Acholao is a further step in the consolidation of the Quispe Group as one of the most solid Peruvian offerings in the capital. Since 2018, César and Constanza have built a project that combines authenticity and sophistication, where Andean gastronomy is presented in its different facets: the Creole style of Quispe, the Nikkei style of Ponja Nikkei, and now the Chifa and mestizo vision that inspires this pisco bar. In their establishments, you don't just eat: you travel through a cuisine that embraces Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, and Latin American influences without losing its roots.

In a city that increasingly appreciates the nuances of Peruvian gastronomy, Acholao arrives to add its own space, designed to enjoy pisco in all its forms and a cuisine that invites people to gather. A place for afternoon drinks, for spontaneous celebration, or for the leisurely nightcap. A modern refuge where Madrid and Peru finally find a natural blend.



# ACHOLAO





# DOLCE POSITANO

Words: Redacción - Photography: Dolce Positano

**O**n the gentle slope of Pintor Rosales, where Madrid looks out towards the Parque del Oeste, Dolce Positano has just opened its doors – a restaurant that offers more than just an Italian meal: a short, emotional journey to the Mediterranean. With its soft lighting, artisanal details, and a cuisine that breathes both tradition and modernity, this new venture transforms a corner of the capital into a direct passage to the Amalfi Coast.

The idea was born from a shared dream. Roberto Castellano, Neapolitan by birth and a chef trained in iconic Neapolitan establishments, had been nurturing the possibility of creating his own space for years. In places like Vincenzo Bellavia and Sorbillo, he learned the rhythm of traditional pastry and pizza; already in Madrid, he was part of the launch of Bel Mondo and, later, one of the key figures at the pizzeria Baldoria, where his work as head pizzaiolo helped the team achieve international awards that elevated the restaurant's name among the best in Europe. It was there he met Alessandro Giovannelli, a Roman, talented and meticulous, his comrade in the kitchen for years. Together they have now taken the leap to open their first personal project.

Dolce Positano takes its name not only from one of Italy's most iconic villages, but from a lifestyle: that blend of Mediterranean elegance, luminous calm, and a desire for enjoyment that defines the Italian coast. In Madrid, they have found the ideal place to bring that spirit to the table. Their menu is based on deeply Italian recipes but avoids clichés. The chefs work with one foot in tradition and the other in innovation, updating flavours without losing their roots.





Amalfi lemons, in various preparations, define the character of several dishes. It is not a decorative gesture: it is their own language. From the aroma perfuming doughs and sauces to cold textures that accentuate freshness, the lemon is a statement of intent. This approach is complemented by almost secret recipes from Neapolitan and Roman cuisine that the chefs have recovered, reinterpreted, and brought into a more contemporary realm. Among the essentials are the Facc o ricottar – a offering linked to traditional pastry –, rabbit all'ischitana, bella mbriana, or a surprising babà pie that combines heritage and daring.

To accompany the menu, the restaurant's cellar focuses on a selection of Italian wines, which make up over eighty percent of the references. Reds from the south, mineral whites from the north, well-balanced Lambruscos, and delicate sparkling wines form part of a journey that expands the culinary experience. The cocktails, meanwhile, maintain this Mediterranean spirit with combinations designed to start the dinner, accompany it, or prolong it, always with nods to fresh ingredients and citrus accents.

The space contributes decisively to the restaurant's narrative. Conceived as a Mediterranean refuge in the heart of Madrid, Dolce Positano combines the warmth of wood with the freshness of artisanal elements, decorative frescoes, and a bar reminiscent of the small beach bars dotting the Italian coast. The atmosphere aims to convey the feeling of an eternal summer by the sea, a balance between sophistication and familiarity that invites you to stay. With a capacity of just over a hundred diners distributed between the terrace, bar, and dining room, the venue offers different settings for every moment: from an informal aperitivo with views of the greenery to a special dinner under a serene light.

Dolce Positano is not just the sum of two cooks' talent. It is the story of a gesture: bringing an intimate part of Italy to Madrid through flavours, memories, and a very particular way of understanding hospitality. Roberto and Alessandro have built here a place where affection is expressed plate by plate, where perseverance and discipline mix with emotion and memory. Ultimately, the restaurant proposes a cuisine that tells stories, a Mediterranean interpreted from Madrid with respect, boldness, and a style that aspires to last.



## DOLCE POSITANO





# Tribeca Bistró

Cocina clásica con alma joven y acento neoyorquino

Words: Editorial staff - Photography: Tribeca Bistró

In a prime corner of central Madrid, a short walk from Cibeles and the Puerta de Alcalá, Tribeca Bistró has emerged with a defined personality and a clear purpose: to rescue classic European cuisine and present it with a youthful, relaxed, and accessible air. A proposal that combines technique, flavour, and a cosmopolitan spirit that looks to New York without renouncing its roots. In just a few months, the restaurant has earned its place on the Madrid gastronomic scene thanks to a formula simple in appearance – good food, a dynamic atmosphere, and reasonable prices – but difficult to execute with such coherence.

## A Project Born from a Dream

The story of the restaurant is, above all, a story of passion. And it has a name: Diego Santa Rosa. Mexican by origin and Madrilenian by choice, Diego grew up with the conviction that his life would be linked to gastronomy. After training in Mexico City, he decided to cross the Atlantic to study at the prestigious Luis Irizar school in the Basque Country.

His time in restaurants like 887, Casa Urola, and Aitana gave him a solid foundation that today translates into a respectful, well-executed repertoire. That dream took shape by joining forces with Diego Amigo, a hospitality professional, entrepreneur, and founder of a canned wine brand aimed at a young audience. His vision complements that of the chef: strategy, sensitivity towards the client, and a clear bet on projects with soul.

The team is completed by chef Gerardo Méndez, who joined after his time at Her and in the kitchens of Rosetta in Mexico City, adding his own style marked by product and an eye for detail.

## A Place Designed for Every Day

From its name, Tribeca Bistró sets a roadmap: to reinterpret European bourgeois cuisine with approachability and naturalness. Its menu recovers traditional recipes, executed with technical rigour and presented in the dining room with a touch of freshness. The venue breathes this duality: elegance without solemnity, a cared-for aesthetic without pretension, tables that invite conversation, and an at-

mosphere where the murmur is part of the charm. The restaurant has bet from day one on a contained average bill and a surprisingly competitive daily menu for the area. The menu is designed for sharing, with balanced portions and suggestions that work just as well for a quick weekday lunch as for a special dinner. Diego sums it up simply: “For two, the ideal is about five dishes. Something to nibble on, two starters, and a main. From there, whatever you fancy.”

## The European Recipe Book as a Compass

Tribeca Bistró has sought to champion a repertoire that, amidst the whirlwind of culinary trends, seemed forgotten. Its philosophy is clear: return to the classics, but without falling into nostalgia. Thus, the sole meunière is finished tableside with hazelnut butter and parsley; the steak tartare is chopped to order and aromatised with a light touch of chipotle; and the marinière mussels are served Belgian-style, accompanied by fries. The roast beef, with a silky parmentier and three sauces, and the grand breaded pork chop, inspired by the milanese, also shine.



With the arrival of chef Gerardo Méndez, the menu has gained new nuances: a hamachi crudo refined with citrus flavours, an SFO Clam Chowder that looks to San Francisco, and a poussin that reinterprets family stews. Many dishes are finished in front of the customer, adding rhythm and character to the experience. Among the desserts, a memorable chocolate mousse stands out: light, delicate, crowned with EVOO and salt flakes.

### Product as the Starting Point

Gerardo's cooking is based on one premise: flavour rules. His larder is fundamentally national, with Galician fish sent by a trusted goose barnacle supplier, meats from Los Norteños, and fresh vegetables from the market gardens of Aranjuez. The dishes, though simple in appearance, hide worked-on bases and refined techniques. Among his essentials are the shrimp tartare with sauce américaine, the reinterpreted Oysters Rockefeller, the Café de Paris burger bathed in its legendary butter and spice sauce, and the glazed rib with demi-glace and celeriac purée.

Seasonal offerings provide lightness: Tudela tomato dressed simply, sea bass as sashimi with blood orange and grapefruit vinaigrette, and leeks with romesco that pay homage to his Catalan heritage. There's also sea bass a la vasca, a nod to the connection with the north shared with Diego himself.

### A Young Team That Makes the Difference

The third pillar of Tribeca Bistró is its front-of-house team. Led by Javier Utrera, a 27-year-old Venezuelan, the dining room operates with a clear philosophy: to make the customer feel good. "If they leave happy, we've succeeded," he summarises. Their youth doesn't detract from professionalism: the service is friendly, attentive, agile, and without rigidities, with an explicit desire to recover the personal treatment that is so lacking in contemporary hospitality. Knowing the customer's name, remembering their favourite table, understanding what they're looking for: that is the aspiration.







Caesar salad  
Spaghetti marinara



Garden tomato

## A Rhythm That Evokes New York

The restaurant occupies two floors designed for different times of the day: downstairs, the gentle bustle of high tables and banquettes; upstairs, a calmer atmosphere with round tables for groups and families. The décor, designed by Néstor Marcos, opts for natural light, noble materials, and details that provide warmth without overloading. It is a contemporary, flexible, and comfortable space where music accompanies the day and intensifies as night falls, reinforcing that New York spirit that inspires the project.

Classic cocktails at any hour, a dynamic rhythm that invites you to stay, and a menu that adapts to all types of clientele have made Tribeca Bistró one of the most consistent surprises of the Madrid season.



Tribeca  
Bistró





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