

magazine traveling

TRAVEL AND GASTRONOMY MAGAZINE

ENGLISH EDITION

No. 74 Year 2026 Price: America \$ 9,50 - Europe 8,00 €



ZAMORA
Between the rocks
and the water

PATAGONIA

Land of wind
and silence



MONTILLA

Wine tourism,
history and wines

LUCCA

A journey from
the light of Tuscany

OULU

European Capital
of Culture 2026

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Welcome aboard

We begin a new year with the certainty that travel remains, above all, a way of looking calmly, of understanding places beyond the postcard, of listening to what their people have to say and learning to interpret the landscape, the architecture, the table and history. In times of excess and speed, Traveling reclaims conscious travel: journeys made with discernment, journeys that leave a lasting impression.

In this issue, we propose a broad and carefully considered itinerary. From Chilean Patagonia, a land of wind, silence and open horizons, to the mythical Route 66, celebrating one hundred years of asphalt and popular culture. We stroll through Lucca, elegant and serene under the light of Tuscany, and look north to Oulu, European Capital of Culture 2026, as an example of how creativity reshapes the urban narrative. There is also room for celebration, with the carnival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and for evocative nature in Germany's Black Forest.

Heritage and identity hold a central place. Burgos and the Montes Obarenes speak to us of landscape and the rural world; Zamora reveals itself between stone and water; Rocamadour appears as a city suspended between heaven and earth; and Guimarães confirms that a green future is built upon history. Added to this is the contemporary architecture of Usnisa Palace, where geometry enters into dialogue with the mountain.

Gastronomy once again becomes language and territory. From the kitchens of Zamora to the flavours of Jiangsu, with a stop in Rueda and at Diez Siglos winery, born from the union of 65 winegrowers who have succeeded in building a solid and coherent project around their wines. Proven restaurants such as Hutong, Materia Prima and Piantao—three very different proposals—share a common outlook: recognisable cuisines, rooted in product, origin and an honest way of understanding the table.

As always, thank you for accompanying us. May these pages inspire you, move you, and remind you that travel 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

DIRECTOR

Rosario Alonso
rosario@revistatraveling.com

ADVERTISING

Javier Martínez
javier@revistatraveling.com

MARKETING Y RR.SS

Emma Lázaro
emma@revistatraveling.com

EDITORIAL STAFF

redaccion@revistatraveling.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jose Antonio Muñoz
josemcoromina@gmail.com

WINE TOURISM

Alejandro and Luis Paadín
alejandro@paadin.es

Delegations

COSTA RICA:

José David Díaz Picado
jose.diaz@crmia.com

USA:

Larissa Rolley
Larissarolley@outlook.com

COLOMBIA:

Carlos Sanchez Urtiaga
carlos@revistatraveling.com

ARGENTINA:

Melany Pasquini
melany@revistatraveling.com

Collaborate

Kiara Hurtado

kiara.hurtado.prensa@gmail.com

Manena Munar

manena.munar@gmail.com

Julián Sacristán

comunicacion@wfm.es

Diego Ruiz-Gil

diegorg45@hotmail.es

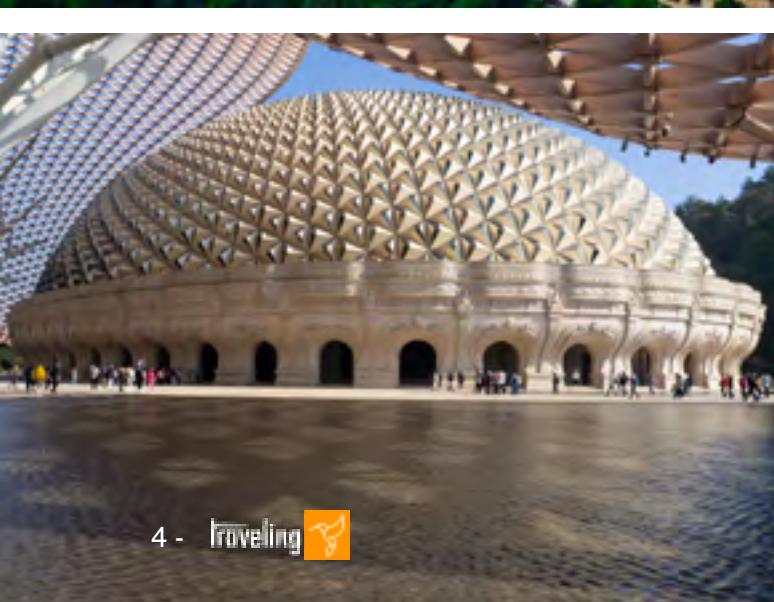
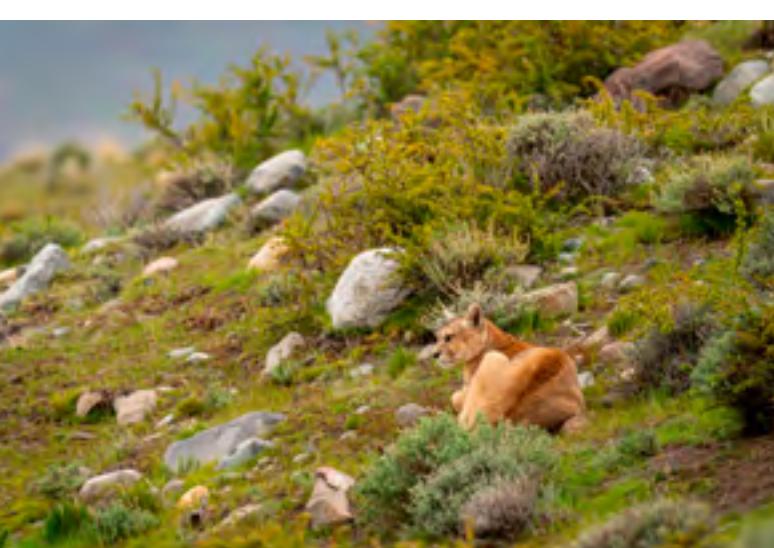
Clara Serrano Vega

claraserranovega@gmail.com

Legal Deposit: M-1097-2018

ISSN: 2660-8146





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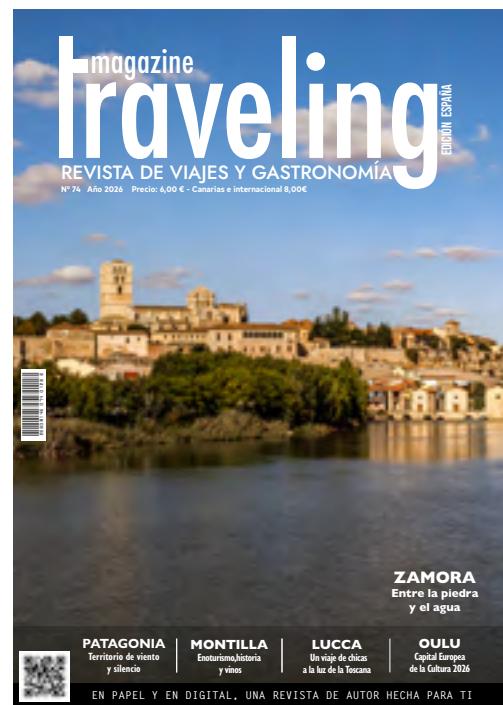
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Zamora from the Duero

© Turismo de Zamora



COVER

Pork wontons in Sichuan chilli oil

© Hutong Madrid



CHILEAN PATAGONIA

Land of wind and silence

Patagonia

chilean

Words and photos Jose A. Muñoz
Photo: Estepa patagónica

Arrival at the edge of the world

On the map, **Puerto Natales** appears as a tiny dot on the edge of a fjord called **Última Esperanza**. From the air, the town is drawn as a narrow strip between dark green water and a steppe that seems to stretch endlessly. Arriving here, in the south of Chile, means accepting that the landscape will set the pace of the journey. January brings long days, shifting skies and a wind that is not merely a detail in the weather forecast, but another character in the story.

Puerto Natales, capital of the province of **Última Esperanza**, was founded at the beginning of the twentieth century as a sheep-farming settlement driven by European immigrants. Today it has around twenty thousand inhabitants and retains something of a village and something of a port town: streets facing the water, repurposed sheds, cafés where trekking guides, locals and travellers share the same tables.

On clear days, the mountains to the north remind the traveller that very close by rise the peaks of **Parque Nacional Torres del Paine**. Puerto Natales is the usual gateway to that icon of Patagonia, but this journey chooses to leave the towers for another story. Simply sensing their distant silhouette is enough to grasp their power; the aim now is to listen to other voices: those of the wind sweeping across the pier, of the birds following the fishing boats, of the people who have made this far southern corner a place fit for living.



Patagonian guanaco, commonly found in southern landscapes

Lake Pehoé, in Torres del Paine National Park, with the Paine Towers in the background



Puerto Natales: daily life between fjord and steppe

The waterfront is the best place to start walking. On one side, the fjord; on the other, low houses, discreet hotels and industrial buildings that recall the region's sheep-farming past. At the pier, small boats set out at dawn towards the fishing grounds or to estancias hidden along the shoreline. Later on, the tourist catamarans appear, sailing across the waters of Última Esperanza Sound towards the Balmaceda and Serrano glaciers.

That contrast neatly captures the identity of Puerto Natales: a working port and a travellers' port, a town that lives by looking out to the sea in many different ways.

Nature nearby: accessible Patagonia

Far removed from clichés of extreme adventure, the immediate surroundings of Puerto Natales lend themselves to accessible nature walks. Just a few kilometres away, gentle hills offer viewpoints over the town and the fjord; following easy paths is enough to come across small lagoons where water birds nest, or shallow ravines where foxes appear and, with luck, the occasional guanaco.

As the walker moves on, it becomes clear that the colour palette which from a distance seemed uniform is in fact a subtle blend of low greens, yellow lichens and reddish shrubs shaped by the wind. On the nearby estancias, some of them open to visitors, life still revolves around livestock and the careful stewardship of the land.

Towards evening, as the wind eases, wood-fired kitchens come to life and the table fills with homemade bread, hot soups and Magellanic lamb. It is in these conversations — stories of harsh winters, of summers when the sun barely sets, of families who have remained on the same land for decades — that the traveller understands Patagonia is not only a striking landscape, but a way of life.

Heading for the ice: sailing through the Última Esperanza fjord

If the land teaches patience, the sea and the fjords teach a sense of scale. The day's navigation towards the Balmaceda and Serrano glaciers begins early, with lingering mist on the water. The boat makes its way into Última Esperanza Sound, heading towards Bernardo O'Higgins National Park, the largest protected area in Chile in this region, accessible only by sea.

View of Puerto Natales





Balmaceda Glacier and one of the waterfalls we encountered during the tour

As the journey continues, the town falls away and the landscape closes in, forming walls of rock, forest and waterfalls that plunge straight into the fjord. The rhythm of the voyage is set by what appears beyond the windows: colonies of cormorants, sea lions hauled out on the rocks, condors circling above the slopes. Passengers learn to move between the open deck and the heated interior, adjusting layers to the whims of the wind.

Glaciar Balmaceda: suspended ice

The first to come into view is Glaciar Balmaceda, hanging from the flank of a mountain. Its tongue of ice slides down between rocky walls until it almost reaches the water, fringed by patches of forest where coigües and fírrees still endure. It is not the intense blue glacier of the postcards, but its texture, its crevasses and the visible trace of its retreat speak more clearly than any speech about the passage of time.

Towards Glaciar Serrano: a path through wet forest

To approach Glaciar Serrano, the boat ties up at a small jetty from which a footpath begins. The walk is easy, yet the setting — aerial roots, moss-covered trunks, streams crossing the trail — turns it into a fully sensory experience. The air grows colder, denser, as if announcing the presence of ice before it is seen.





Serrano Glacier

At the end of the path, Glaciar Serrano rises like an uneven wall of white and blue hues above a lagoon scattered with small calved blocks. It is here that the traveller understands glaciers are not static: they move, they creak, they breathe.

Back on board, the crew often share a small toast with local ice. More than a curiosity, it is a reminder that here ice is part of everyday life in the fjord. The return journey allows time to watch how the light shifts across the rock faces and how the wind alters the colour of the water within minutes.

People of the south: voices that sustain the landscape

Just five kilometres from Puerto Natales lies Puerto Bories, a complex that preserves the industrial architecture of the former Bories cold-storage plant, built in the early decades of the twentieth century. From here, tonnes of meat and wool were shipped to Europe, shaping the regional economy for decades.

Brick chimneys, vast sheds and old engine rooms remain as witnesses to that formative period, now combined with tourism-related uses that have allowed the

site to be conserved and restored without erasing its identity. Walking among its buildings is a brief yet intense journey into the Patagonia that was built through the estancias and the hard labour demanded by an extreme territory.

Puerto Bories: industrial memory on the fjord

In Chilean Patagonia, the gaucho — also known as baqueano, arriero or ovejero — represents a way of life forged in one of the most demanding regions of southern Chile. His presence became established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, linked to the livestock-driven colonisation of Aysén and Magallanes. Life on horseback, the care of sheep and cattle, and long days on isolated estancias shaped daily existence. Extreme weather and vast distances gave rise to a character that is austere, resilient and self-reliant. Among the most enduring customs are the shared mate, cooking over an open fire and clothing designed to withstand wind and cold. A deep understanding of the land, the ability to read the weather and a respect for one's given word remain the core of this heritage.



Puerto Bories. In the lower image, Víctor, a Patagonian gaucho, conveys his bond with the land and the quiet ritual of mate — a daily practice and a symbol of a way of life shaped by the countryside, the cold and an unhurried sense of time.

In Patagonia, ice, wind and human labour coexist within the same landscape: glaciers that breathe, estancias that shaped the land, and gauchos whose austere lives sustain the deep memory of the south.



View of Torres del Paine
View of the Patagonian steppe

Beyond the trade itself, the Patagonian gaucho embodies a work ethic rooted in patience, restraint and respect for nature. Chilean Patagonia, seen from Puerto Natales and its surroundings, is a land shaped by lives of endurance, return and discovery.

Farewell: the wind as memory

When we leave the town behind, the fjord once again appears as a thin blue line on the map. Memory, however, no longer obeys distance, but the details that remain: the wind that strikes without pause, the smell of burning wood on cold mornings, the milky blue of the water beneath a shifting sky, the silence that settles in front of Glaciar Serrano, and the reddish presence of Puerto Bories cut against the horizon.

To the north rise the mountains of Parque Nacional Torres del Paine, a territory that will continue to draw eyes, cameras and travellers. It will have its own story in these pages, because its history deserves a space of its own, with time to walk its routes, circle its lagoons and understand the true scale of the landscape.



This journey, by contrast, comes to a halt before reaching those trails. It remains around Puerto Natales, among the fjords that advance towards the southern ice fields, the third largest in the world after Antarctica and Greenland. Ice here is part of everyday life, of accessible nature routes and of those who inhabit this far southern edge. Nature is not merely a backdrop: it dictates the rhythm of each day. Wind, solitude and the accumulated experience of the gauchos define a way of life that demands attention, patience and respect.

It is within this blend of harsh reality and shifting beauty that Patagonia reveals its character. And it is there, more than in any postcard, that the traveller understands this south is never entirely left behind: it endures, like the constant wind of the fjord, long after one has departed this far southern land.



Notes for the journey

How to get there

You can fly directly from Santiago de Chile to Puerto Natales during the high season; it is worth checking dates, as services are seasonal. If there are no direct flights, the usual alternative is to fly to Punta Arenas and continue by road to Puerto Natales.

From Puerto Natales airport to the town centre, the most convenient option is to book a transfer, a service that many hotels arrange or recommend. To get around Parque Nacional Torres del Paine, hiring a car is the most flexible choice, allowing you to stop at viewpoints and set your own schedule. It is advisable to leave Natales with a full tank and to drive unhurriedly, especially given the wind.

Where to sleep

Best Western Patagonia Puerto Natales

Hotel on the outskirts, on the road to Puerto Bories, comfortable and welcoming, ideal as a base



Estancia Cerro Guido

A rural Patagonian-style hotel and ranch, a great option for getting close to nature and livestock culture near Torres del Paine.



Hotel Las Torres (Torres del Paine)

Located in the heart of the park, it is a strategic point for exploring the most emblematic area on foot, with excursions and services designed to help you discover the surroundings in comfort and safety.



Where to eat

La Disquería (Puerto Natales)

A popular spot for its disc-grilled cuisine, offering hearty dishes that are ideal after a windy, cold Patagonian day, in a casual, very local atmosph-

re. Reservations are recommended during high seas



It is always a good idea to sample typical Patagonian cuisine based on barbecues and roasts in Puerto Natales. With a local guide, enjoy a Patagonian-style meal (roasts), Creole empanadas and local sausages to understand the product, fire and social ritual, the best option for eating like at home.

Las Torres Hotel Restaurant

In the park, the Torres del Paine hotel restaurant offers cuisine made with local produce and comforting dishes, designed to help you recharge your batteries after walks or excursions, accompanied by spectacular views.

More information



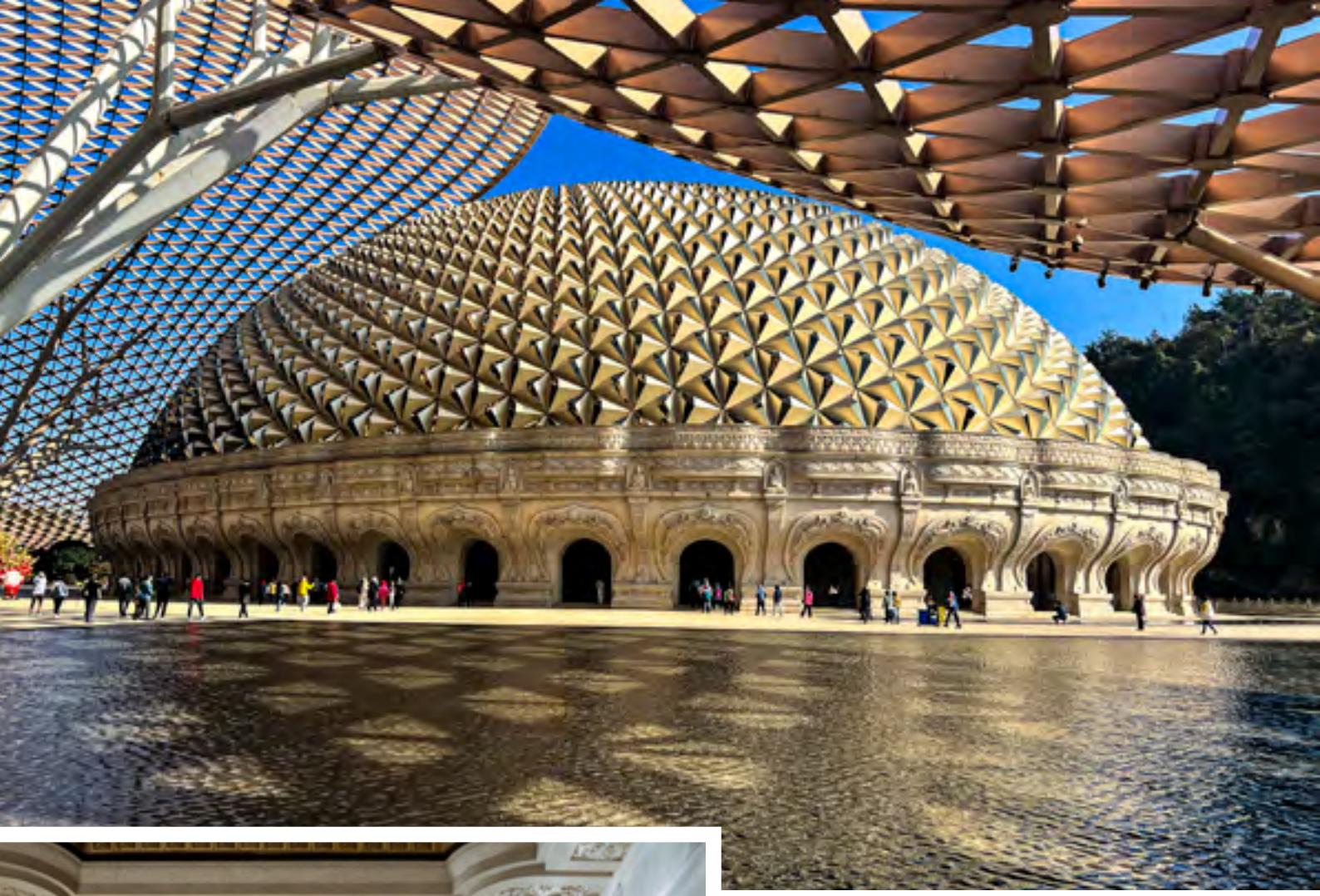


Usnisa Palace

Geometry and light on Niushou Mountain

Nanjing - Jiangsu - China

Text and photos: Jose A. Muñoz



1.- View of the temple with its lotus flower-shaped dome.
2.- Exterior corridor surrounding the large oval hall.



Unsisa Palace, Also known as Foding Palace — a term which in Mandarin means Palace of the Buddha's Summit — it is one of the most singular contemporary Buddhist complexes in China. Located on Niushou Mountain, in the province of Jiangsu, it safeguards one of Buddhism's most venerated relics: a fragment of the Buddha's cranial bone. For decades, this site was an open wound in the landscape, a deep crater left by iron ore extraction. Today, that geological void has been transformed into architecture. Within it unfolds a partially subterranean temple, organised across nine levels — six of them underground — which simultaneously serves as a reliquary, a ceremonial space and an architectural work designed to stir emotion in all who move through it.

Within this same landscape, Niushoushan establishes a calm dialogue between tradition and contemporaneity through its two pagodas. At the summit of the mountain stands the historic pagoda, linked to the ancient Niushou Temple, a Buddhist site documented since imperial times and associated with centuries of religious practice in the region. Facing it, the new pagoda — incorporated into the contemporary project of the cultural park — rises through several stacked levels and adopts a modern architectural language, defined by clean lines and symbolic clarity.

Rather than competing, the two structures complement one another: the old pagoda anchors the site's spiritual memory, while the new one interprets that heritage from a present-day perspective, reinforcing the continuity of the sanctuary within the landscape.



View of the modern nine-storey pagoda located in the complex



View of the ancient pagoda rebuilt during the Qing dynasty in the 19th century.

From abandoned mine to underground palace

The decision to build the sanctuary on the site of a former mine was far more than a practical use of the land. For decades, iron ore extraction profoundly altered the slopes of Niushoushan, leaving a vast void in the mountain — a visible scar in the landscape. When, in the twenty-first century, plans were set in motion to create a major Buddhist cultural park, that hollow became the very starting point of the project.

Before a single architectural element could be raised, the mountain itself had to be restored: the ground stabilised, the slopes secured and the topography reshaped to return continuity to the landscape. Only then could construction begin. The gesture is as clear as it is symbolic: where the earth was once excavated to extract material wealth, it is now carved with precision to safeguard a sacred relic and to structure a ceremonial route on a monumental scale.

USNISA PALACE

The complex is conceived as an operation that goes beyond the building itself. Architecture, engineering and landscape work together to transform an industrial void into an interior space that is protected and charged with meaning. The mountain ceases to be a mere support and becomes an active part of the narrative, integrating what has been built into a geography that can once again be read as a whole.

A project orchestrated by teams

Far removed from the model of the “single author”, **Usnisa Palace** is a collective work. The master plan of the park and the architecture of the palace were developed by the **East China Architectural Design & Research Institute**, one of Shanghai’s leading design institutes, while the interior design and lighting were entrusted to specialised teams. This collaborative structure makes it possible to address, at the same time, the territorial scale — the relationship with the hills, routes and views — and the intimate dimension of the interior spaces.

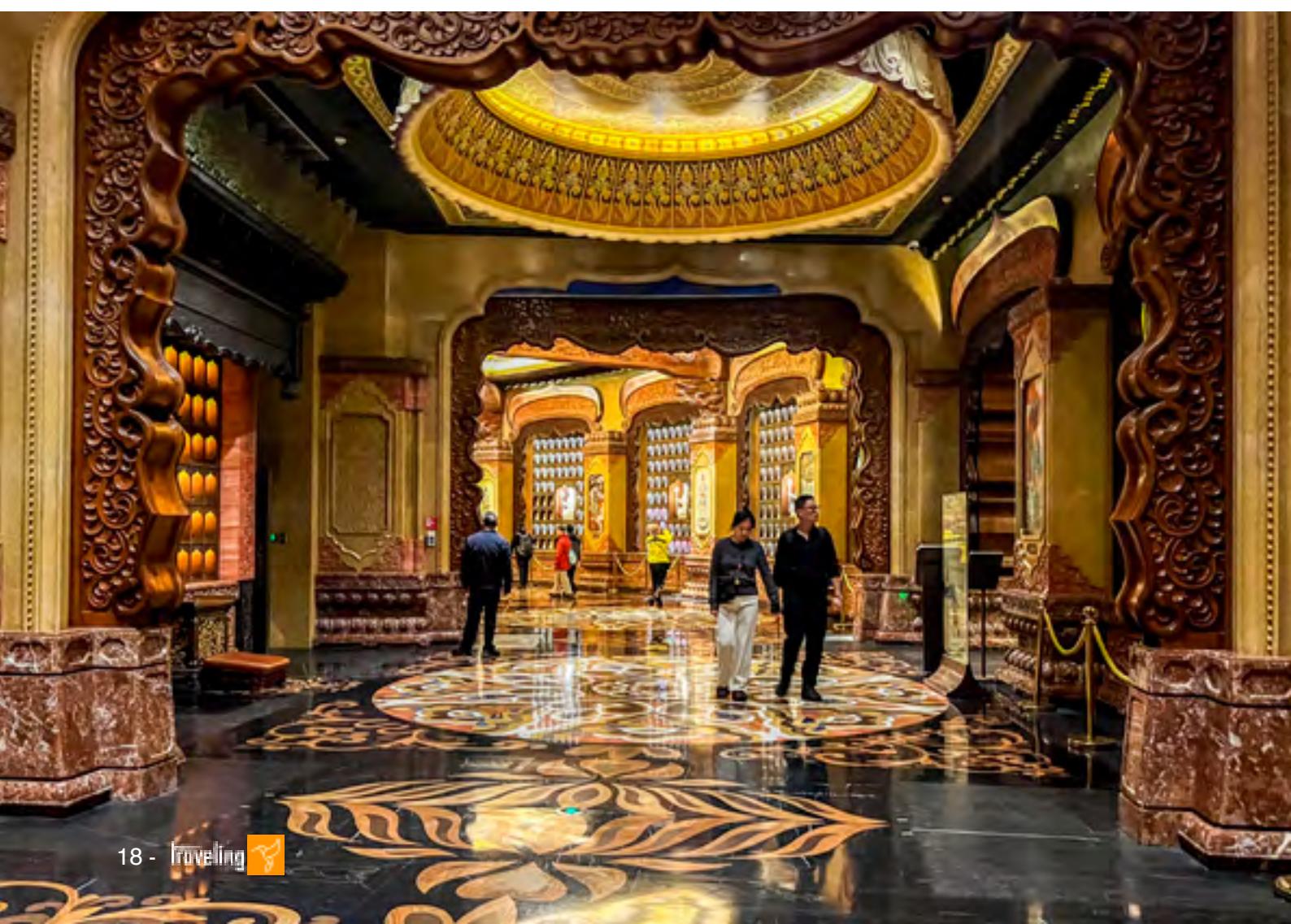
From the outside, the palace appears as a monumental volume embedded in the mountain, with several levels visible above the plaza and a far more extensive development underground, excavated within the former quarry. The gold-finished metallic surfaces capture natural light and turn the complex into a recognisable landmark, without imposing itself aggressively on the surrounding landscape.

The journey: from the surface to the heart of the mountain

Access to Usnisa Palace is gained through a vast oval hall dominated by the central sculpture of **Buddha Sakyamuni**, shown in the posture of Parinirvana, reclining on his right side in reference to the final passage towards enlightenment. The figure rests above a lotus-shaped pool, while visitors move around it in a circular flow, beneath a ceiling that evokes an artificial firmament.

The hall is symbolically flanked by the Bodhi tree and the Sala tree, references to the moment of enlightenment and the Buddha’s final transition, framing the spiritual journey of the complex. This first space acts as a prologue, where symmetry, devotion and scenography introduce the language of the project.

From here begins the descent into the levels carved into the mountain. The sensation is unmistakable: one leaves the surface behind to enter a separate, silent world, shaped from depth. In the lower levels, spaces unfold with increasing density of ornament and meaning — circular corridors lined with reliefs, offering halls where marble, lacquer and stone create a tactile landscape, and, as the culmination of the journey, **the Great Usnisa**





1.- Corridor of the 1,000 Buddhas
2.- The Bodhi Tree in the Great Hall
3.- Spiritual geometry
4.- View of the Great Oval Hall



USNISA PALACE

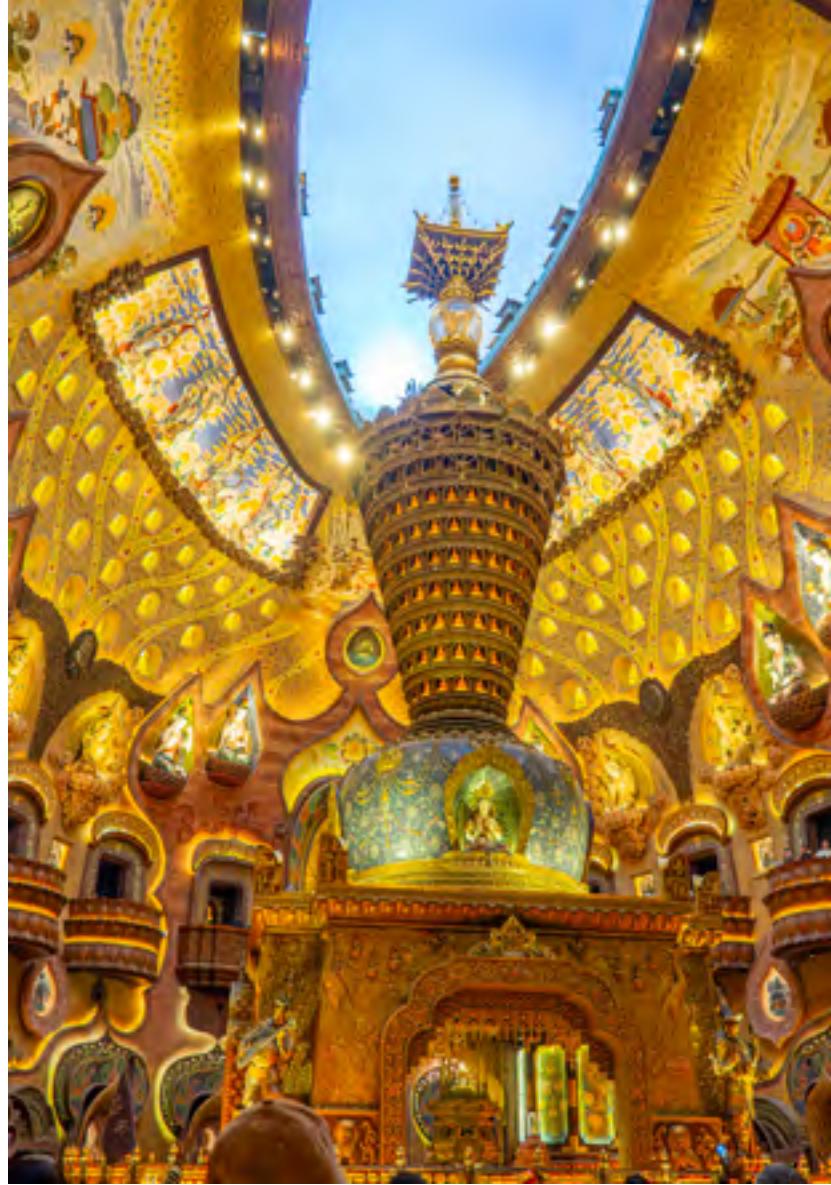
Hall. This monumental space, of almost cathedral-like scale, is dominated by a great vertical stupa rising through several levels, clad in golden surfaces that capture and reflect light in a carefully controlled manner. Around it, thousands of figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas are arranged as a continuous backdrop that envelops the visitor and dissolves any clear sense of architectural boundary. Along one side, a dedicated area draws attention towards the presence of the relic, discreetly integrated into the route without disrupting either the spatial balance or the atmosphere of contemplation.

The stupa acts as both visual and spiritual axis, while the rhythmic repetition of the figures introduces a sense of depth and permanence. The entire space is conceived to be experienced slowly, where light, scale and verticality shape an understanding that comes more through perception than through immediate observation.

In an even more intimate chamber, the cranial relic of the Buddha is safeguarded, originating from the ancient Bao'en Temple. Architecture both protects and emphasises this focal point through a precise sequence of filters: changes in level, controlled access and passages through dimly lit spaces that lead to an enclosure where light is focused exclusively on the relic.

This final area, with restricted access, transforms the entire route — from the exterior plaza to the deepest interior halls — into a physical and symbolic descent into the heart of the mountain and of Buddhism itself.

Central Buddha of the stupa



The stupa, shown in the upper photograph, houses at its core a central Buddha of transcendent character, surrounded by a constellation of devotional Buddhas arranged in niches around the entire perimeter of the hall (lower photograph).



Landscape, memory and contrast with Lingshan

Niushoushan cannot be understood as an isolated enclave. In the same province of Jiangsu, on the shores of Taihu Lake, the Lingshan complex and its Brahma Palace, with a more classical language and built in stone and marble, represent another form of Buddhist monumentality, grounded in vast ceremonial halls and an explicit sense of historical continuity. In contrast to that evocation of the past, Usnisa Palace offers a contemporary reading, capable of reshaping a mountain and transforming a former mining site into subterranean ceremonial architecture.

Here lies its greatest value, for both the traveller and the student of design. Beyond visual impact, the project brings together geology, engineering and architecture in a rare operation of territorial recovery. A wounded landscape is restored from within; the mountain gains density as built space; and Buddhist tradition is translated into an architectural language based on directed light, sequenced movement and precise structure. Niushoushan shows that when architecture enters into dialogue with place, even an abandoned quarry can become a space for contemplation, where territory, history and devotion find a renewed balance.



Detail of the Wall of a Thousand Buddhas at Usnisa Palace
View of Brahma Palace in the Lingshan complex (file photo)





The 100th anniversary of Route 66

Words and photos: Larissa Rolley - LarissaRolley@outlook.com

Photo: Detail of the Route 66 commemorative mural

A hundred years after its inauguration, Route 66 begins its journey on an urban corner of Chicago, steeped in history and rich with defining references of the last century.

All great adventures begin quietly. Route 66, the most celebrated road in the United States, starts without ceremony in the very heart of Chicago, opposite one of the world's most important museums. There is no monumental arch, no spectacular kilometre zero. Just a modest, almost shy plaque at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street, facing the Art Institute of Chicago. This is where one of the great stories of the twentieth century begins.

The small brown sign marking the official start of Route 66 is easily overlooked amid traffic, traffic lights and the architecture of the city centre. Nearby, a more recent marker — colourful and designed

for photographs — reminds the traveller that this is where a road begins that, for almost a century, has embodied ideas of movement, escape and promise.

Route 66 was officially designated in 1926 as part of the first national highway system in the United States. It linked Chicago with Los Angeles over nearly 4,000 kilometres, crossing eight states. Yet its significance went far beyond the practical. During the years of the Dust Bowl, the great agricultural crisis of the 1930s, it became a route of escape for thousands of families fleeing rural poverty towards California. After the Second World War, it set the scene for family road trips, motels,



The Berghoff Restaurant, with the Willis Tower in the background

petrol stations and diners that are now part of the collective imagination. On the eve of its centenary, returning to the starting point in Chicago is an invitation to rethink the route from its very origin.

Route 66 before it became a legend

From the corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street, Route 66 heads west through a thoroughly urban Chicago. Facing the starting point stands the Art Institute of Chicago, founded in 1879 and housed in its current building since 1893. When the road was created, the museum was already a cultural landmark. The first travellers set out surrounded by art, unaware that they were stepping into history.

A few metres on, Adams Street passes beneath the elevated tracks of the Chicago L, the city's urban train. The metallic roar of the carriages, the amplified echo beneath the steel structures and the constant flow of pedestrians and traffic create a scene far removed from the nostalgic postcard often associated with Route 66. Here, the road is city, routine and everyday movement.



A little further along stands The Berghoff Restaurant, at 17 West Adams Street. Opened in 1898, long before Route 66, this German-American restaurant is a reminder that Chicago was already a fully formed city before the age of the motor car. The route did not create urban culture; it passed through it.

The journey continues to LaSalle Street, where the historic Rookery Building marks one of the most notable corners of the city centre. From here, the Chicago Board of Trade Building comes into view, crowned by the statue of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture.

Plaque marking the start of the route on the corner of the Art Institute of Chicago





Staircase at Union Station (The Untouchables by Elliot Ness)



Lou Mitchell's Restaurant sign

It is no minor detail: Chicago grew as a commercial and agricultural hub, and Route 66 reinforced that role as a point of departure towards the west. Crossing beneath the tracks on Wells Street, the route leaves the Loop, the city's historic financial district. Ahead, the silhouette of the **Willis Tower** — known for decades as the Sears Tower — dominates the skyline from afar. Once the tallest building in the world, it remains the highest skyscraper located on the original alignment of Route 66. From its observation deck, it is easy to imagine the opening stretch of the road dissolving into the urban horizon.

Stations, rivers and cinema

Just west of the tower, Adams Street crosses the south branch of the Chicago River over the original Route 66 bridge. In the warmer months, water taxis recall the city's long-standing relationship with river transport, one that predates the motor car by decades. One block away rises **Union Station** Chicago, inaugurated in 1925, just a year before Route 66. Its Beaux-Arts architecture, monumental columns and vast concourse evoke an era when railways defined long-distance travel. The road, in truth, was born in a city already accustomed to movement.

Union Station is also a cinematic landmark. Film enthusiasts will recognise its grand staircase from *The Untouchables*, a scene that has become part of Chicago's collective imagery, as familiar as its skyscrapers.

From here, a short detour leads to Lou Mitchell's Restaurant, open since 1923. It was among the first establishments to cater to motorists and soon became an emblematic stop at the start of Route 66. The menu has barely changed: pancakes, waffles, omelettes, homemade bread and strong coffee. Small gestures — complimentary doughnut holes or Milk Duds — form part of an almost ritualised hospitality. Its 1949 neon sign still proclaims "Serving the World's Best Coffee". For many, this is where the journey truly begins.

Neighbourhoods, faith and trades

Back on Adams Street, the route continues to Old St. Patrick's Church Chicago, built in 1856 and one of the few buildings to survive the Great Fire of 1871. For decades, many motorists paused here before setting out on the long westward journey — a gesture that may seem anecdotal today, but once formed part of the ritual of travel.

Beyond this point, the road enters Greektown Chicago. Skyscrapers fall away, the city flattens out and the rhythm becomes more local. A brief diversion leads to the Athenian Candle Company, founded in 1920.



Chicago Board of Trade

Old St Patrick's Church



In Chicago, the beginning of Route 66 unfolds among bridges over the river, grand railway stations, historic neighbourhoods and traditional businesses that were already serving travellers long before the age of the motor car.



Route 66 Athenian Candle shop
Centennial Marker © Choose Chicago



It still makes candles in its back room, a rarity in the contemporary city and a striking example of urban continuity: trades that survive the passage of time, much like Route 66 itself.

The urban landscape gradually softens. Near the Epiphany Center for the Arts, a former church converted into a cultural venue, the city feels less vertical. Turning onto Ogden Avenue, the route reconnects with the historic alignment of Route 66 heading west.

Farewell to Chicago

A turn onto Taylor Street leads to one of the most expressive visual tributes to the route in Chicago: a mural dedicated to Route 66. Close by stand Lulu's Hot Dogs, open since 1968, and Ferrara Bakery, founded in 1908 and still run by the same family. Hot dogs, cannoli, espresso: Route 66 is also a tapestry of migratory stories.

As one continues west, the city does not end abruptly. It changes. Landmark buildings give way to neighbourhood shops and modest homes. Chicago does not bid Route 66 farewell with a clear boundary; it lets it drift away, slowly.

A beginning, one hundred years on

On the verge of its centenary, Route 66 remains relevant not for its practical usefulness, but for what it represents. Conceived as a road to connect, it became a symbol of freedom and movement. Beyond Chicago, it crosses plains, deserts and small towns before reaching the Pacific.

Yet its meaning is best understood here, at its point of origin. It does not begin with spectacle, but with intention. Before the landscape changes and the miles begin to add up, Route 66 proposes something simple: to set off.



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Lucca

A girls' trip to the Tuscan countryside

Words: Rosario Alonso- **Photography:** Archive

Photo: Entrance to Piazza dell'Anfiteatro



We arrived in Lucca on a mild spring morning, with that mix of excitement, energy and lightness that only comes when you travel with friends. We had talked so many times about taking a trip like this — unhurried, without strict itineraries, with time to walk and to laugh — that, as we crossed the Renaissance walls, we felt a small dream had been fulfilled. Lucca, discreet and welcoming, wrapped in shades of ochre and soft pink, greeted us without fuss. And perhaps that is precisely why it captivated us from the very first moment.

As soon as we arrived, we climbed up to the path that runs along the top of the sixteenth-century walls, one of the city's most beautiful symbols. Unlike other European fortifications, these walls are not perceived as a boundary, but as an elevated promenade that embraces Lucca in its entirety. From there, beneath the shade of the trees, we looked out over red-tiled roofs, medieval towers and hidden gardens. One of us remarked that it felt "like looking at a perfect model". It was: orderly, intimate, beautiful without excess.

We descended into the historic centre through one of its narrow streets, where another essential quality of Lucca immediately revealed itself: a gentle, reassuring quiet. There is no intrusive traffic, just the occasional bicycle gliding past at an unhurried pace. The stone paving holds centuries of footsteps, and the façades, in their terracotta tones, seem painted by the Tuscan light itself, always ready to look their best.

Basilica of St. Michael in Forum





Streets of the historic centre of Lucca



Via Fillungo, the city's best-known artery, captured us straight away. Here, shops are small and personal: Italian fashion boutiques, artisan jewellers, stationery shops that seem lifted from another era, perfumeries, leather workshops. Each of us found something: a linen scarf "for all the summers to come", a beautiful notebook we promised to fill with brilliant ideas, and a pair of sandals that sparked a chorus of "they look amazing on you", repeated for the rest of the day.

But Lucca is not just about shopping. It is living history. Walking towards Piazza San Michele, we heard the bells of the church of the same name. Its Romanesque façade, with richly decorated columns and a figure of Saint Michael crowning the top, feels like a sculpture open to the sky. We sat in the square for a while, watching everyday life unfold amid centuries of stone.

From there we made our way to the **Cathedral of San Martino**, home to the revered Volto Santo, a medieval crucifix deeply venerated by the faithful. Inside, cool and solemn, the space invites silence even from those who are not particularly religious. Outside, the blend of architectural styles reflects Lucca's long, patient building history, always respectful of its past.



Guinigi Tower

St Martin's Cathedral



By mid-afternoon we reached Piazza dell'Anfiteatro, perhaps the city's most recognisable space. Oval in shape, the square was created over the remains of a Roman amphitheatre, and its embracing curve gives a sense of architectural intimacy. We sat at a terrace, ordered gelato — creamy, authentic, impossible to replicate outside Italy — and talked about the simple good fortune of being there, in that precise moment, with no pressing tasks or obligations. Travelling with friends has that effect: it multiplies lightness.

As the sun began to drop, we decided to climb the Torre Guinigi, one of Lucca's icons. The holm oaks at its summit form a small garden suspended in the air. The ascent is narrow and steep, but at the top the city opens out like a calm atlas. We saw the walls, the bell towers, hidden gardens and the gently rolling horizon of Tuscany. It was one of those moments when no one speaks much: beauty does the work.



Museo de Giacomo Puccini



Arcades in the historic centre of Lucca



Terrace and ice cream parlour on a street in the historic quarter



The Maddalena Bridge

That evening we dined without hurry. Lucca offers a cuisine that is simple and honest: fresh pasta, cured meats, vegetables, sourdough bread, wines from the surrounding hills. We talked about the places we had seen that day, about how the city seemed made to measure for women seeking serenity without sacrificing charm. Walking back to the hotel, the city was wrapped in a golden silence. The streets seemed to whisper.

The following morning, the first coffee of the day tasted of continuity. We decided to explore the San Frediano Basilica district, where the basilica of the same name displays a golden mosaic that gleams even beneath clouded skies. Inside, the subdued light creates an intimate, almost domestic atmosphere that invites you to linger. Lucca is full of small discoveries: antique shops where shelves hold objects

that seem to carry their own stories; luthiers' workshops where work goes on as if nothing had changed since the Renaissance; or the birthplace of Giacomo Puccini, which we visited out of curiosity and left humming without quite realising it.

Our second day of shopping was calmer, yet just as enjoyable. We stepped into a paper shop where the notebooks looked like museum pieces. In another, specialising in Tuscan ceramics, one of us found a bowl she described as "proof that Lucca exists to make me happy". That is the nature of this city: it offers everything without imposing anything.

We hired bicycles near Porta Santa Maria and returned to the walls, this time almost in silence, letting ourselves be carried by the rhythm of pedalling. From above, everything seems to float: the trees, the façades, ourselves.

At one point we stopped simply to watch the evening settle over the city. There was something in that soft light that felt like a seal on the journey.

The final photo session — inevitable — was spontaneous: laughter, improvised poses, the wind messing our hair, the certainty that we were creating a mental album no camera could ever fully reproduce.

When we left Lucca, it was with the feeling that we were taking away more than a short break. The city has a quiet way of slipping into memory, without effort or pretence. It does not dazzle; it accompanies. It does not shout; it whispers. And that whisper, for us, became a reminder of what matters most: walking, laughing, sharing, looking slowly and enjoying being together.



Notes for the journey

HOW TO GET THERE

The fastest way is to fly to Pisa International Airport, with direct flights mainly from Madrid or Barcelona — the journey from Madrid takes about 2 hours and 10 minutes. From Pisa, a regional train connects to Lucca in about 30 minutes. You can also get there by train from Madrid or Barcelona, but this involves several changes and the journey can take over 18–20 hours, so it is not the most convenient option if you are looking for something simple.

WHERE TO SLEEP

In Lucca, large five-star hotels are few, but there are several charming and well-located four-star options worth considering:

Hotel Ilaria

Located within the city walls, just a few minutes from the main tower, it offers comfortable rooms, a breakfast featuring local producers, a terrace with a jacuzzi and, as a bonus, complimentary bicycles for exploring the city.



Palazzo Dipinto

Housed in a thirteenth-century historic building, with elegant rooms, pleasant views and valet parking for those arriving by car.



Grand Universe Lucca

A slightly more sophisticated option, close to Piazza Napoleone, designed for travellers seeking comfort and a central location.



Hotel Palazzo Alexander

A good quality, centrally located hotel with comfortable rooms and breakfast included. A good choice if you want comfort without excess, with easy access to Lucca's points of interest.



WHERE TO EAT

We suggest a few restaurants in Lucca recommended by locals, offering good value for money, traditional cooking and a relaxed atmosphere:

Osteria Da Pasquale

Traditional and unpretentious, with home-style Tuscan cooking. Highly regarded for its pasta dishes and simple, welcoming atmosphere — ideal for dinner after a day exploring the city.



Strabuono

An affordable, friendly spot serving informal fare: panini, fried dishes and simple plates. A good choice for a quick lunch or a casual supper.



Pizzeria da Felice

Perfect for an easy-going, satisfying meal: locally styled pizzas, reasonable prices and a relaxed setting. Ideal for dinner after a day of walking.



MORE INFORMATION



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OLU

Aerial view of Oulu at sunset, with the Oulujoki River

European Capital of Culture

Words: Editorial staff - Photography: Archive

2026



On the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, where Finland looks out onto the Baltic Sea through cold, clear light, Oulu is preparing to become European Capital of Culture in 2026. This is no improvised title: it marks the culmination of a story that begins in the seventeenth century and of a cultural vocation that has known how to reinvent itself, from the trade in tar to high technology and contemporary arts.

Officially founded in 1605, Oulu grew as a strategic northern port. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the city was granted foreign trade rights and became one of the Baltic's great centres for the export of tar and timber; by the nineteenth century it was the world's largest tar port, with a merchant fleet that carried its name across Europe and America. That maritime and commercial past intertwines with another decisive transformation in the second half of the twentieth century: a commitment to electronics and technology, marked by the presence of Nokia and the development of a technology park that placed Oulu firmly on the map of digital innovation.



Oulu Market Hall, the historic red brick covered market, with the Toripolliisi sculpture

Oulu Cathedral



This dual legacy — northern port and technology city — helps to explain its selection as European Capital of Culture. Oulu leads an extensive region, with 39 municipalities involved in the project, aiming to move northern Europe to the centre of the continent's cultural map. Under the banner of "cultural climate change", the programme is structured around three main themes: Brave Hinterland, Cool Contrasts and Wild City. The goal is clear: to show how a cold, open and seemingly peripheral territory can become a laboratory for new forms of coexistence, creativity and sustainability.

For the traveller, Oulu is best discovered on foot, along a route that can begin at the Oulu Cathedral, a neoclassical building that defines the city's skyline. From there, the streets of the centre lead to the market square by the sea. The old Oulu Market Hall, built of red brick, still retains the atmosphere of a northern port: fish stalls, local produce and the popular bronze figure of Toripolliisi, a good-natured policeman turned city symbol. Around it, wooden houses and former port warehouses survive, now transformed into cafés and creative spaces.

OULU, EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2026

Following the seafront promenade, the traveller reaches Pikisaari, a small enclave of workshops and wooden houses — a former artisans' quarter that today hosts studios, galleries and, in 2026, several installations from the cultural programme. Beyond it, paths trace the coastline, frozen in winter or edged by summer meadows, a reminder that nature is always close at hand: forests, marshlands, cycling routes and, in the colder months, ski trails and events staged on the ice.

The urban itinerary can be completed with a visit to the Northern Ostrobothnia Museum, which charts the city's story from its early origins through territorial conflicts and the great fires that once devastated it, to the age of tar and industrialisation. Nearby, other venues such as the contemporary art centre and concert halls reveal Oulu's most current face, particularly active in music, literature and digital arts.

Throughout 2026, this network of museums, theatres and open spaces will become the stage for a programme that, according to official forecasts, will exceed five hundred events and rise to well over a thousand across the year. There will be major shared moments

Pikisaari Island, Oulu, a former neighbourhood of carpenters and shipyards, now converted into a cultural and leisure area

— including the opening ceremony in January, when the city presents its narrative to the rest of Europe — alongside a continuous calendar unfolding across the wider Oulu Region.

Under the theme *Brave Hinterland*, projects will focus on northern rural communities, forest and ice cultures, and the small settlements surrounding Oulu. Local histories, oral traditions and ways of life shaped by extreme climate will be revisited and connected with contemporary European artists. *Cool Contrasts* will highlight the opposites that define Oulu: winter and summer, light and darkness, nature and technology, through open-air festivals, light-based celebrations, music in unexpected settings and projects exploring smart-city applications for culture. *Wild City*, meanwhile, will imagine a freer, more creative urban model, placing emphasis on citizen participation, urban art, youth cultures and the blending of disciplines.

Traditional wooden houses in Pikisaari, the former seafaring quarter of Oulu





Oulu City Council

The programme will include collaborations with artists and collectives from across Europe, initiatives aimed at children and young people, creative residencies and an extensive volunteer scheme that will allow residents and visitors to become directly involved in organising activities. From large-scale concerts to small neighbourhood interventions, alongside international exhibitions and Nordic literature encounters, Oulu aims to present a diverse cultural ecosystem, attentive both to digital innovation and to the memory of local communities.

For readers planning a journey in 2026, the city offers the chance to combine this agenda with distinctly Nordic experiences: walks across the frozen gulf in mid-winter, saunas followed by plunges into icy seawater, cycling routes along the coast during the short yet intense summer, or excursions into nearby forests, where the midnight light washes lakes and wetlands in shades of blue. Between one activity and the next, cafés, restaurants and creative spaces underline that Oulu is also a young, university city, with a strong community of students and researchers who bring vitality to everyday life.

In 2026, as arts and culture spread across squares, islands and forests, Oulu will look to Europe to reaffirm its identity: a northern city that has risen from fires and reinventions, that moved from tar to micro-

chips and now seeks to place culture at the centre of its future. For the traveller, it will be an opportunity to discover a less predictable north, where snow and technology coexist with an intense cultural life and a human scale that invites you to walk, to listen and to stay a little longer.

Oulu Castle Observatory





Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Fifty years of Carnival

Words: Editorial staff - Photography: Archive

There are celebrations that distil the pulse of a city, its memory and its way of looking at the world. The Carnival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which in 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of its modern era, belongs to that category: a festival that has shaped the identity of the Atlantic capital and has since become an international benchmark. Declared a Festival of International Tourist Interest, it is not merely a programme of events, but a full month of music, humour, satire, costumes and collective participation that turns the city itself into a living stage.

The 2026 edition will also carry a clear visual and symbolic theme: Las Vegas will serve as the allegory inspiring sets, costumes and the festive spirit that will envelop Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from 23 January to 1 March. A distinctly Canarian reinterpretation of the world's entertainment capital, conceived to celebrate half a century of creativity, freedom and a deep-rooted culture of the street.

A month to live the city

The scale of the programme gives a clear idea of the event's magnitude. More than forty activities will shape a calendar that fills nights, squares and avenues with comparsas, concerts, competitions and parades. As ever, the celebration belongs to the street: Latin-inspired choreography, costumes for all ages, themed nights and urban spaces transformed to host concerts and performances.

Here, carnival is understood as a dialogue between tradition and evolution. Satire remains central, as do fantasy costumes and make-up. At the same time, proposals that engage with new aesthetics continue to grow, such as the International Body Painting Competition, an event that attracts increasing attention each year for its visual impact and the technical level of its performances.

That blend lies at the heart of its appeal. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria projects a carnival that is both Atlantic and contemporary, fully aware that many visitors — particularly in winter — find in this celebration a compelling reason to travel.



LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA: CARNIVAL



The Drag Queen Gala: an international symbol

Since 1998, the Gala Drag Queen has marked a turning point. Initially conceived as a space for creative transgression, it has become one of the most influential shows in the country and a platform that has significantly contributed to the visibility and freedom of the LGTBIQ+ community. Its impact reaches far beyond the islands, and each edition is followed by thousands of spectators both locally and internationally.

In 2026, the gala will reclaim its central role on 28 February. The leading drag performers from across Spain will compete with tightly choreographed routines, complex costumes and stage productions that blend humour, technical virtuosity and a clear desire to surprise. The format remains true to its origins: act after act, the city celebrates a vision of performance that brings together risk, freedom and artistic excellence.



Murgas: criticism as popular art

One of the defining features of the Gran Canaria carnival are the murgas, vocal groups that for decades have been sharpening their ironic take on current affairs. Their lyrics are a form of collective satire in which political criticism, humour and observations on everyday life coexist. For many followers, the murgas represent the true pulse of local society: what is sung on stage, in some way, reflects the concerns of the year.

The final of the Concurso de Murgas, to be held on 7 February, is one of the most eagerly awaited moments of the programme. The groups compete with dozens of voices aiming to move, amuse or provoke reflection. Prizes are awarded for best lyrics, sharpest critique, performance and costume, but beyond the accolades, what is really at stake on stage is the recognition of a loyal audience that returns year after year to witness this collective display of wit and intelligence.

LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA: CARNIVAL



Las Viudas a la Carrera: humour as a farewell to the festival

Among the events with a distinctive character is Las Viudas a la Carrera, which in 2026 will celebrate its second edition on 1 March. The concept is as simple as it is effective: a 3.5-kilometre route in which dozens of participants — many dressed as widows or in dark clothing — symbolically bid farewell to Carnival in an ironic, festive tone.

It is a recent addition to the programme, yet it has quickly connected with the public thanks to its irreverent spirit and that blend of parody and tribute through which the city says goodbye to its most emblematic celebration.

A celebration lived as a community

The programme also includes costume competitions, comparsa parades and seven nights of concerts spread across different urban stages. There is even a Carnival Canino, a parade in which dogs take part in costume alongside their owners, underlining the inclusive dimension that Carnival has fostered for years.

Taken as a whole, the celebration maintains a structure that combines historical roots with new aesthetic trends. Tradition remains alive without renouncing proposals designed to attract new generations, thereby strengthening the bond between Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and its Carnival as a shared cultural heritage.



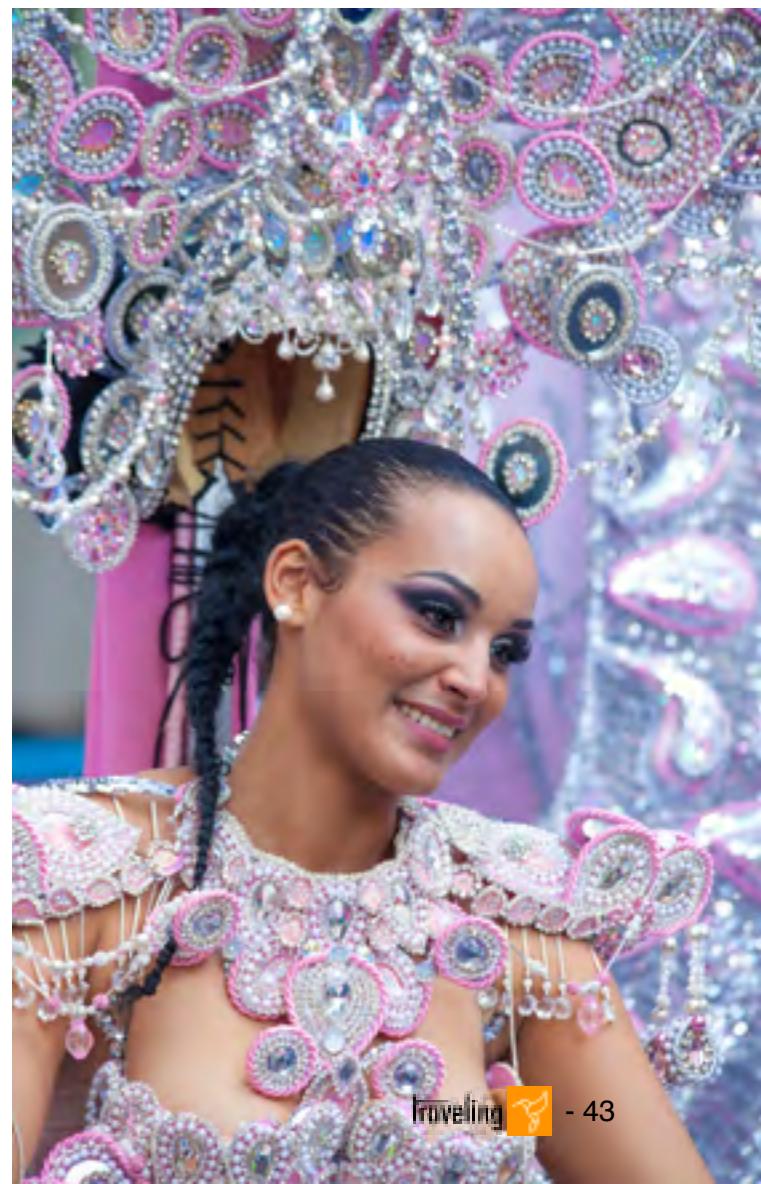


An anniversary to remember

With its 50th anniversary, the 2026 edition crowns a journey that has turned the Carnival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria into one of the most distinctive in Spain. The city prepares to look at itself through the mirror of Las Vegas, to reinterpret its festive iconography and to project a month of celebrations conceived, above all, as a tribute to five decades of collective creativity.

There will be satire, sparkle and rhythm, and a calendar packed with performances. There will be a social fabric that reactivates itself to take part, to parade, to sing and to dance. And there will be, as every year, a city that naturally transforms into a vast open-air stage.

Carnival 2026 promises to be a memorable edition, not only for the scale of its programme, but because it celebrates a history that has accompanied generations and continues to reinvent itself without losing its essence.



**Las Palmas de
Gran Canaria
carnival**



TERITORY OBARENES

Words: Rosario Alonso - Photography: country of Burgos and Rosario Alonso

BURGOS Living nature



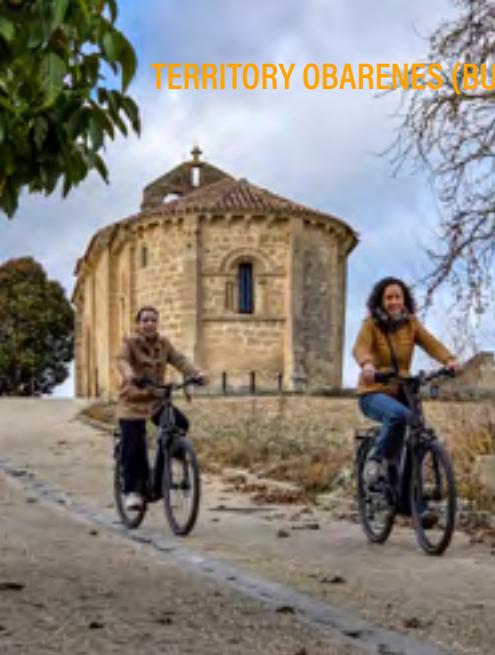
View of the lavender fields at Granero San Francisco

Between the plain of La Bureba and the first folds of the Cantabrian Mountains, the territory of the Montes Obarenes rises like a limestone wall that closes the horizon and channels the Ebro River eastwards. We are in the north-east of the province of Burgos, on the threshold of Las Merindades, where medieval districts once organised power and land ownership and where, even today, the names of comital towns, fortresses and monasteries still mark the map much as they did centuries ago.



This “Obarenes Territory” functions as a geographical hinge. To the north, the gorges of the Ebro look towards Álava; to the south, the cereal fields of La Bureba spread out like a sea of golden tones. To the west, the ranges of Oña and La Llana form a continuous chain; to the east, the Pancorbo Gorge opens a natural cleft on the way to La Rioja. Much of this landscape is integrated within the Montes Obarenes–San Zadornil Natural Park, declared in 2006 and now one of the major protected areas of Castile and León.

It is no coincidence that some of the key historic towns of Las Merindades are scattered around these mountains: Medina de Pomar, former head of the merindad; Frías, a tiny city perched above the Ebro; Oña, both comital and monastic; or Santa Gadea del Cid, a fortified gateway on the historic frontier between Castile and Navarre. All of them remind us that this territory, now sought out by nature-focused travellers, was for centuries a political, economic and defensive axis of the first order.



Cycling tourism in Santa Gadea del Cid
Bee tourism in Frias



Nature experienced: bees, rock and water

The landscape of the Montes Obarenes is a mosaic: limestone ridges, ravines, thermophilous holm oak woods, quejigales, mixed forests of Atlantic–Mediterranean transition and, on the valley floors, orchards, poplar groves and meadows where the Ebro River and its tributaries soften the climate. Upon this setting, an offer of active tourism has gradually taken shape with a clear virtue: it does not erase the traditional character of the territory, but makes use of it.

Apitourism is perhaps one of the best examples. On these slopes, the combination of woodland and pasture, heathland and crops encourages great floral diversity. Traditional apiaries are easy to find: beehives that have occupied the same plots for decades and are now open to visitors. The experience usually combines an explanation of the beekeeper's work, an introduction to local flowering cycles, a visit to the hives with all safety measures in place and, of course, a tasting of honeys — dark amber when woodland predominates, lighter when herbaceous flora and fruit trees take centre stage.

The broken topography of the Obarenes, with its limestone walls and sheer cliffs, has also favoured the development of via ferrata routes and easy climbing itineraries. In different parts of the territory, travellers can progress safely along the rock, following rungs and cables that climb the faces and open out onto natural viewpoints over the Ebro corridor or secondary gorges. This is not high mountain terrain, yet the sense of verticality and exposure is very real: below, the river or the valleys; above, vultures tracing slow circles in the sky.

For those who prefer constant movement, cycle tourism finds excellent ground here. Quiet local roads, forest tracks skirting the slopes, former mining or agricultural service routes converted into rideable paths... These itineraries link villages, monasteries and viewpoints without ever losing sight of the mountains. The bicycle becomes a thread between heritage and nature: you enter a village through an old medieval gate and, upon leaving, are already pedalling again alongside a river or a riverside wood.

Water, finally, completes the triangle. Beyond the Ebro itself, numerous streams descending from the ranges form pools, small cascades and falls that become especially striking in spring and after the thaw. Around the reservoir and along the Ebro's course, bathing areas, recreational spaces and riverside paths have been created, allowing for a gentle, water-based tourism: walking, birdwatching, listening to the murmur of falling water and, in summer, dipping one's feet in a quiet bend of the river.

Via Ferrata in Pancorbo



The Natural Park and the 'Burgos fjords'

The Montes Obarenes–San Zadornil Natural Park covers more than thirty thousand hectares straddling Burgos and Álava. It is a transitional territory where Atlantic, Mediterranean and Meseta influences intersect, and this blend is clearly reflected in its range of species: holm oaks and quejigos share space with beeches, oaks and maples; cliff-dwelling raptors nest on the limestone escarpments, while along the banks of the Ebro River riverside forests thrive, with alders, poplars and willows.

At the heart of this landscape one of the most recent icons of the Obarenes Territory has taken shape: the so-called Burgos fjords, a stretch of the Sobrón Reservoir where the Ebro narrows between limestone walls that drop almost vertically into the water. From the jetty at San Martín de Don, in the Valle de Tobalina, an electric solar-powered catamaran sets out to navigate this river canyon in near silence, with no sound beyond the water brushing the hull and the low murmur of the crew.

On board, the territory reveals itself differently. The sheet of water turns the rock faces into an inverted mirror and compels the gaze upwards: bands of limestone become visible, along with ledges where vultures and Egyptian vultures breed, and shelves dotted with twisted holm oaks clinging stubbornly to the rock. Between the branches, one may glimpse the flight of eagle owls, eagles and other birds of prey that find a privileged habitat here. Along the banks, riverside woods filter the light and shelter herons, kingfishers and small birds flitting among the reeds.

The navigation also carries a symbolic dimension. For decades, the valley was synonymous with the Santa María de Garoña Nuclear Power Plant, built in the nearby municipality of Santa María de Garoña and definitively shut down in the second decade of the twenty-first century after years of debate. Today, the presence of a vessel powered by solar energy, interpreting the landscape and presenting it as an example of sustainable tourism, works almost as a counter-image: the same territory once shaped by industry is now read as a setting for energy transition and as a laboratory for new forms of rural development.

Cruise on an electric-solar boat through the Burgos fjords



Different views of the Fiordos Burgaleses





Historical Museum of Las Merindades (Alcazar de los Condestables) in Medina de Pomar

Frías: the smallest city above the Ebro River

The “city” of Frías clings to a rocky outcrop overlooking the Valle de Tobalina and the Ebro River. The ensemble forms one of the most recognisable images of **Castile**: the rock-perched **Castillo de los Velasco** crowning the crag, the houses adapting to the slope’s profile, the hanging dwellings leaning out over the void, the **Church of San Vicente Mártir**, the town walls and, below, the medieval bridge spanning the river with its uneven arches and central defensive tower.

The historic centre, with its narrow and steep streets, retains the flavour of a frontier town. Timber-framed houses, small squares and viewpoints over the valley recall a time when control of this passage was strategic. Towards evening, as the sun slips behind the **Montes Obarenes** and the rock takes on golden and mauve tones, the town seems to rise from the relief itself, as if it had slowly grown from stone towards the sky. Frías is a member of the **Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España association**

View of Frías



Medina de Pomar: a stone district

At the western edge of the territory stands Medina de Pomar, the natural gateway to Las Merindades. Dominating the town is the Alcázar de los Condestables, a fortress of solid, austere volumes that today houses the Museo Histórico de Las Merindades. Stepping into its rooms is to read, through a carefully curated museographic narrative, the history of northern Burgos: from medieval organisation into merindades to rural ways of life, traditional architecture and historic trade routes.

The historic centre preserves the layout of the walled town, with streets that climb towards the fortress and open out, like viewpoints, over the river. In the upper part, set within the defensive enclosure, stands the **Church of Santa Cruz**, a parish church that combines transitional Gothic elements with Romanesque remains and a compact silhouette, with few openings, recalling the fortified character of the town. Walking through these narrow streets still reveals the medieval hierarchy: noble houses in the higher areas, artisan and commercial quarters closer to the gates, and beyond them the bridges that once connected with the outskirts.

Oña: monastery, garden and story

The comital town of Oña occupies a sheltered position at the foot of the mountains. Its great focal point is the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, a medieval foundation linked to Castilian counts and kings, which preserves an abbey church of almost cathedral scale, superimposed cloisters and spaces where a significant part of the political history of the kingdom was written. Within its walls lie key figures of medieval Castile, now integrated into a narrative that brings together art, liturgy and history.

In recent years, the monastery and the town have opened themselves to a contemporary reading of heritage. The Jardín Secreto programme — a cultural project by Burgos-born sculptor Carlos Armiño — uses courtyards, hidden corners and green spaces as settings for artistic interventions, concerts and cultural proposals that engage in dialogue with the historic architecture. This is not about disguising the past, but activating it: visitors move through Baroque cloisters, gardens and streets while encountering works, light or sound that subtly underline the history of the place.

Monastery of San Salvador



Main Square of Oña

Each summer, around mid-August, Oña also becomes the stage for the *Cronicón de Oña*, an open-air theatrical re-enactment in which around a hundred local residents bring to life the foundation of the monastery and key episodes from Castile in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Watching the performance, with the monastery itself as the backdrop, makes it clear that history here is not a closed chapter, but a story the community continues to tell, generation after generation.





Chapel of Our Lady of Las Eras



Main Square of Santa Gadea del Cid

Santa Gadea del Cid: border town and breadbasket

Santa Gadea del Cid rises on a gentle hill beside the Ebro River, surrounded by cultivated fields. Its historic centre, declared a Bien de Interés Cultural, preserves remains of walls, access gates and a compact urban fabric of traditional architecture, with arcades, timber framing and small squares seemingly designed for meeting and unhurried conversation. Climbing towards the castle and passing through the old gates — Encima de la Villa or Las Eras — allows one to mentally reconstruct its frontier past, first between Castile and Navarre, and later between Castile and Álava.

On the outskirts, set within an open landscape, stands the Monasterio del Espino, a fifteenth-century Franciscan foundation now adapted for celebrations and events, yet still retaining the dignity of its Gothic and Renaissance volumes, its church and its enclosed gardens. Closely linked to it is the Granero de San Francisco project, which revives the area's agricultural tradition and places it centre stage. Located on the site of the former Convento de San Bartolomé, the granary surprises with its architecture, unmistakably American in style, straight out of a film set. The finest tomatoes from Miranda, local honey, lavender and its wineries take pride of place as the main protagonists.

Castle of Santa Gadea del Cid



Pancorbo: gorge and birds

At the eastern edge of the territory, Pancorbo stands guard over the natural passage between the Castilian plateau and the lands of La Rioja. The Pancorbo Gorge is a striking gorge carved by the Oroncillo River, flanked by limestone needles and ramparts crowned with the remains of fortifications. From the viewpoints reached on foot from the village, the gaze drifts across folds of rock and sheer vertical cliffs.

For the patient observer, Pancorbo is above all a privileged site for birdwatching. Colonies of griffon vultures nest on the cliffs, and it is possible to spot Egyptian vultures, golden eagles, short-toed eagles and other birds of prey specialised in rocky, thermophilous environments. In the valley bottoms and nearby pastures appear Montagu's harriers, shrikes, buntings and a long list of small birds linked to traditional agricultural mosaics. Sitting beside a viewpoint, the sensation is that of being in a natural amphitheatre where the sky is the stage and the birds are the main actors.



Different views of Pancorbo, its mountain and its landscape



TERRITORY OBARENES (BURGOS)

Flavours of a region

The gastronomy of the Obarenes Territory draws on Burgos tradition and on the diversity of its landscapes. On local tables appear roast lamb and kid, morcilla and cured pork products from the traditional slaughter, but also foods shaped by mountain and river: autumn mushrooms, small game, trout — between dolmens and the gorges of the Ebro River and the Rudrón River — and other freshwater fish, garden vegetables and pulses. Honeys from the hives seen on the hillsides, cheeses (such as the much-loved Burgos cheese) from small producers, and traditional sweets complete a cuisine that needs no artifice: quality ingredients and simplicity set the tone.

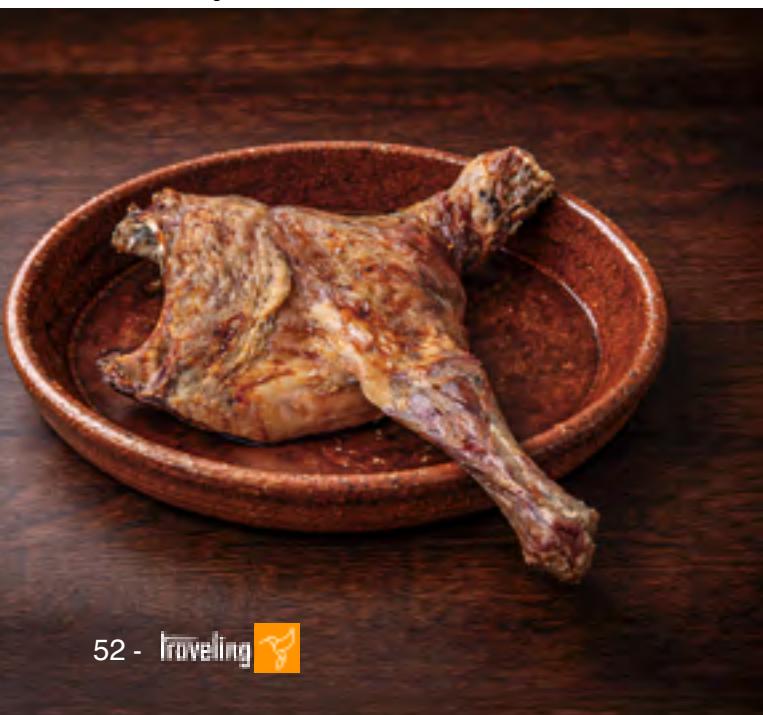
Hearty stews, essentially winter dishes, include **Olla Podrida** with red beans from Ibeas and every imaginable cut of pork, or Olla Ferroviaria, a tribute to meals cooked on site beside the tracks during the construction of the Bilbao–La Robla railway line; extreme cold and long working days gave rise to this hot, filling and highly nutritious dish.

This robust culinary offering has given rise to what are known as the GastroRutas de Burgos
www.burgosalimenta.com

Nearby wine-growing areas — Ribera del Duero and Arlanza — provide wines that pair naturally with these dishes, while projects such as the **Granero de San Francisco** or small local craft breweries like Gadea Cerveza Artesana show that innovation can grow from the deepest respect for the land.

Perhaps less well known, yet particularly interesting, is Burgos chacolí, also known as vino verde from La Bureba and the northern mountains. This area of the Obarenes Territory is one of the main producers of this distinctive and excellent wine.

Roast suckling lamb



Burgos black pudding PGI



Olla podrida (lower photograph). Vineyards of the Arlanza D.O.





Burgos cheese



The Obarenes Territory presents itself as a complete journey: medieval walls, monasteries and castles; mountain ranges that close the horizon like an ancient rampart; a river that narrows into gorges some have chosen to call “fjords”; villages that have preserved their memory without becoming trapped by it; and a natural landscape explored on foot, by bicycle, clipped into a via ferrata or from the silent deck of a solar-powered boat. For those who arrive with time and curiosity, it is a place where past and present do not compete: they meet, intertwine and accompany the traveller at every bend of the Ebro River.

Apuntes para el viaje

How to get there

As a border region in Castile and León, but on the border with the Basque Country (Álava) and La Rioja, there are many ways to get there, all of them preferably by road. It is rural Spain but very well connected to neighbouring regions.

Where to stay

The rural experience should be complete. El Priorato de Trespuentes, in Trespuentes, is an ideal choice. This restored seventeenth-century Castilian manor house was once the residence of the prior of the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, from where he collected tributes from the surrounding villages. With seven rooms and capacity for up to 19 guests, generous shared spaces and a careful restoration, it respects the rural setting while offering the highest levels of comfort.

Where to eat

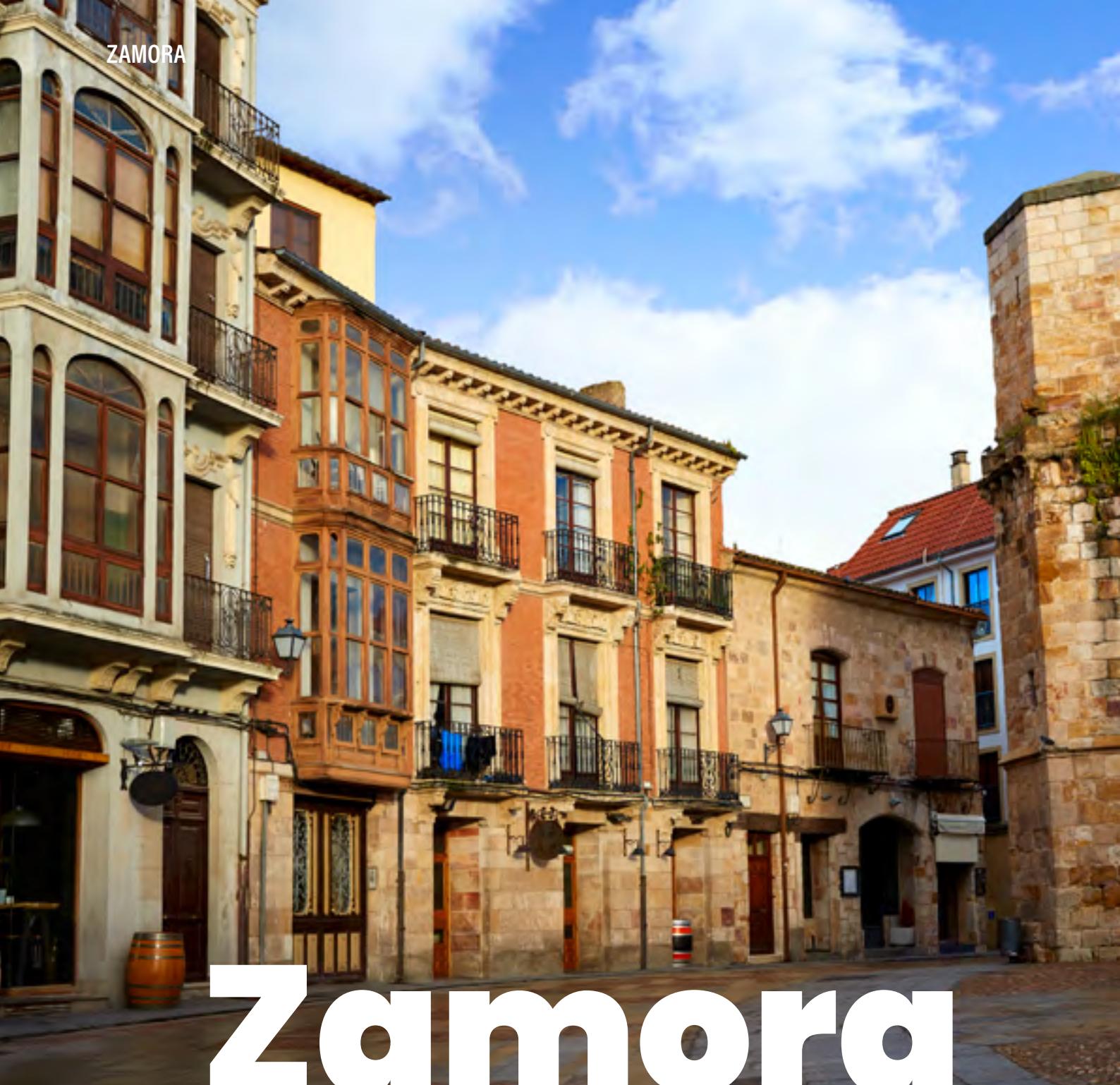
The offer is broad and of high quality. As choices have to be made, these are our recommendations:

If you plan to enjoy the river cruise through the so-called “Burgos fjords”, we suggest lunch at Restaurante El Embarcadero, in San Martín de Don. Set right by the reservoir, it offers spectacular views over the water and a sea-and-mountain menu that rarely disappoints.

If you are staying at El Priorato de Trespuentes, Restaurante José Luis, in the same village, will surprise you with its remarkably extensive menu and consistently high quality. Do not miss the soups and traditional spoon dishes.

A particularly striking gastronomic proposal, with a beautiful story behind it, is Restaurante Blanco y Negro, in Oña. Here, local tradition meets Senegalese cuisine in an unexpected and highly successful fusion. Chef Arouna Gassama (Repsol Solete) invites diners to explore a surprising menu of cultural blending, set in the heart of a rural environment. Not to be missed. Truly impressive.





zamora

Between Stone and Water

Words: Rosario Alonso - **Photography:** Jose A. Muñoz and Zamora Tourism board

Between medieval churches of austere golden stone, watermills that still converse with the current of the Duero, iron bridges born in the heat of modernity and historic markets where everyday life continues to set the urban rhythm, Zamora reveals a sober and coherent identity. A city built over time and through continuity, where Romanesque architecture appears at every corner, Modernism lends a discreet elegance, and the industrial legacy blends seamlessly into the landscape, shaping a serene narrative best understood on foot, unhurried, at the slow pace of the river and of history.



Church of San Juan in the Main Square

Z

amora is often explained through its Romanesque heritage. It is a logical approach: few cities preserve such a coherent and well-maintained concentration of medieval architecture. But to limit its interpretation to this period would be to remain on the surface. Zamora is also understood through water, labour and industry; through the Duero, which powered mills, lit factories and structured daily life for centuries. Between sacred stone and functional architecture, a complex, sober and authentic city has taken shape—one where heritage does not act as a backdrop, but as a living legacy integrated into the present.

The Romanesque as urban structure

Zamora is, above all, a Romanesque city. Not as a tourism slogan, but as a physical and cultural reality. More than twenty churches built between the 12th and 13th centuries form one of the most important and best-preserved Romanesque ensembles in Europe. It is, moreover, a late Romanesque style with diverse influences, shaped by repopulation processes, the political alliances of the former Kingdom of León, and the work of stonemasons arriving from other parts of the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean world.

Ramos Carrión Theatre



ZAMORA

The Cathedral of Zamora is the most recognisable image of this legacy. Built in the 12th century, its scaly dome (cimborrio)—unique of its kind—has become an icon of Spanish medieval architecture. Eastern influence can be perceived both in its structure and in certain formal elements of the original fabric, particularly visible in the eastern part of the building. The cathedral also rises over an earlier, most likely Visigothic, temple, adding yet another historical layer to its complex urban identity.

Beyond the cathedral, Zamora's Romanesque unfolds throughout the city. **San Pedro y San Ildefonso**, **San Juan Bautista** in the Plaza Mayor, and **Santiago del Burgo** are examples of a sober architecture, with thick walls and balanced proportions, conceived to withstand the passage of time and to serve a communal purpose. The pale stone from local quarries—the well-known *pudinga zamorana*—has contributed to the compact and luminous image of the historic centre, preserved thanks to low levels of pollution and a dry climate.

These churches are not merely religious buildings: they are key elements of the urban structure. They define routes, shape squares, organise neighbourhoods and establish a direct relationship between architecture and everyday life. They speak of a frontier city, marked by the Reconquista, political conflict and the consolidation of the former Kingdom of León, when Zamora was a strategic stronghold on the Iberian map.

Church of St. John the Baptist



Bishop's Gate



Old Town Hall



The evolution of a contained city

Over the centuries, Zamora incorporated new architectural languages without breaking away from its medieval foundations. Transformations occurred in a gradual and contained manner, through extensions, refurbishments and functional adaptations that respected the inherited structure. There were no abrupt ruptures, but rather a measured evolution that explains the visual and urban coherence of the historic ensemble.

The Renaissance introduced a new conception of space—more ordered and representative—particularly evident in civil architecture. The Palace of the Counts of Alba de Aliste, now a Parador, neatly encapsulates this moment: an elegant building with a columned courtyard and clear Italian influence, reflecting the cultural evolution of a city that embraced new models without relinquishing its sober and functional character.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Modernism added another essential layer to the urban narrative. Architects such as Francesc Ferriol, Gregorio Pérez-Arribas, Sánchez Blanco and Segundo Viloria introduced a new language, visible in buildings like the Mercado de Abastos of Zamora, the Instituto Claudio Moyano, and numerous residential buildings in Plaza de Sagasta and Santa Clara Street. Freer compositions announced the arrival of contemporary architecture and the desire to position Zamora within the European context of the Modern Movement. Works such as Viviendas Ramos (A. Bobo / L. Espinosa), Edificio Olmedo (A. de la Sota), the Provincial Museum of Zamora (Tuñón y Mansilla), the Bank of Spain Building, Zamora (R. Cañas / J.-L. Comonte), the Consultative Council of Castile and Leon, Zamora (A. Campo Baeza) and the Rei Afonso Henriques Foundation (M. de las Casas) testify to the city's forward-looking gaze.

Modernist building in Plaza de Sagasta



Palace of the Momos



The Palace of the Counts of Alba and Aliste, now the Parador



ZAMORA



Stone bridge over the River Duero. Photo below: old railway bridge



The Duero, the hub of life and work

Running parallel to this artistic evolution is another story, less monumental yet essential to understanding Zamora: that of labour and industry. The Duero has not been merely a scenic feature; for centuries it was the city's main economic engine. From medieval times onwards, its waters powered mills and aceñas that ensured the supply of flour, the basis of both daily sustenance and local trade.

The aceñas of the Duero today form one of the most distinctive ensembles of industrial heritage in Castile and León. Naturally integrated into the river landscape, some have been preserved as museum spaces that explain how these hydraulic industries worked and their economic and social importance. Others have been rehabilitated for new cultural or recreational uses, demonstrating that respectful reuse is an effective way of keeping heritage alive without distorting its meaning. Walking along the river allows this productive Zamora to be discovered. Pedestrian and cycling paths trace the urban course of the Duero, linking nature, architecture and the memory of work. It is a measured way of reading the city, far removed from hurried tourism and closer to its everyday rhythm, where the river continues to act as a structuring element.

Zamora Railway Station

The impact of industrialisation

Industrialisation left visible marks on infrastructure. The metal bridges spanning the Duero symbolise the leap towards modernity at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. **The Puente de Hierro**, Zamora and **the former railway bridge** speak of a connected city, open to trade, the transport of goods and the new economic dynamics of an age of accelerated change.

These structures did more than solve technical needs; they transformed Zamora's relationship with its territory and facilitated its integration into wider commercial networks. Although many have lost their original function, today they stand out for their landscape and testimonial value, as urban landmarks that explain how technical progress reshaped the city's appearance without breaking its visual balance.

Zamora is read in layers. Romanesque architecture shapes its profile with one of Europe's largest concentrations of medieval churches. Modernism and industrial tourism complete an urban narrative closely linked to the Duero.



Energy, markets and everyday life

The arrival of electricity brought about a decisive change in everyday life. Buildings linked to energy production and the agri-food industry marked a new phase of growth. Brick chimneys, functional warehouses and industrial volumes now form part of the urban landscape — sometimes discreet, but essential to understanding contemporary Zamora.

The Mercado de Abastos is a key element of this heritage. Conceived as a modern, functional space, it reflects a period when urban organisation and daily supply were priorities. Beyond its architecture, it remains a living place, where heritage continues to fulfil its original purpose and maintains a direct relationship with the city's everyday habits.

Tradition and continuity

This coexistence of art, industry and everyday life is completed by cultural traditions. Zamora's Holy Week, declared an Event of International Tourist Interest and a Site of Cultural Interest, is one of the clearest expressions of the city's character: sober, restrained and deeply rooted in its past. Seventeen brotherhoods and more than fifty sculptural groups process through a Romanesque setting that heightens the symbolic power of the ceremonies.

Around it, the calendar is shaped by

Rubio Flour Mill



The Silos of Zamora





Allegorical statue of El Merlú

other celebrations rooted in popular tradition, such as the festivities of San Pedro, with the Garlic Fair and the Pottery Fair, or the pilgrimage of La Hiniesta, which brings together devotion, landscape and community. Different traditions that reinforce the same idea of continuity and shared identity, passed down from generation to generation.

Zamora does not need grand gestures to assert itself. Its identity is recognised through continuity: in an architecture that still sets the city's rhythm and in the productive spaces that explain how people have lived and worked for centuries. Churches, aceñas, bridges, markets and industrial buildings form a coherent urban landscape, where each period has left its mark without erasing the one before it. Walking through Zamora means moving through a city where heritage is not observed from a distance, but forms part of everyday life—a city that has moved forward without losing the pulse of its history, and where the past remains a useful tool for understanding the present.



<https://turismo-zamora.com>

Balborraz Street





Ecodestinations Guimarães

The city that embraces a green future

Words: Redacción - **Photography:** Archivo

In the north of Portugal, where the Minho folds into gentle hills and medieval stone preserves the country's memory intact, Guimarães prepares to live a decisive year. In 2026 it will be European Green Capital, a distinction that comes not by chance, but through the determination of a city that has known how to protect its historic heritage while promoting a pioneering strategy of urban sustainability in Portugal. Travelling to Guimarães has always meant walking through the roots of a nation. This is where Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal, was born, and where, among castles, walls and palaces, some of the country's founding milestones were set. A city that grew around an early medieval monastery and expanded through narrow streets, arcaded squares and granite houses with timber frameworks. Its historic centre, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offers an open book for those who enjoy observing how centuries overlap without discord.

Yet this monumental character has not halted its transformation. For years, Guimarães has been developing environmental policies that have placed the city among the most advanced in Europe in waste management, air quality, biodiversity preservation and sustainable urban planning. Its 2026 candidacy was built on sustained citizen participation, the involvement of universities and research centres, and

close coordination with neighbouring municipalities. Being European Green Capital is therefore the consolidation of a project that brings identity and future together.

Travellers arriving in Guimarães in 2026 will encounter a city that looks inward to reaffirm itself, while at the same time opening a dialogue with Europe through sustainability. To understand it, there is no better starting point than its urban landscape. The medieval quarter is organised around Largo da Oliveira, where the church, arcades and former palace create a space of calm. From there, Rua de Santa Maria climbs towards the castle, flanked by façades that still breathe the rhythm of the 13th century. Everything invites a slow pace, to pause and observe how stone shapes the city's character.

At the upper end rises the Castle of Guimarães, irregular and robust, one of the great symbols of Portugal's birth. Just a few steps away stands the Palace of the Dukes of Braganza, built in the 15th century and recognised for its tall conical chimneys and for interiors that express the austerity and aesthetic strength of Portuguese noble architecture. This monumental axis is one of the city's defining references, yet its true value lies in being embedded within an urban fabric where the medieval and the contemporary coexist without losing authenticity.



Church of Our Lady of Oliveira, in Largo da Oliveira



Statue of Afonso Henriques in front of the Palace of the Dukes of Bragança
Rua de Santa Maria, one of the oldest streets in Guimarães



GUIMARÃES

Guimarães has succeeded in ensuring that its heritage is not a stage frozen in time. The city has promoted an urban renaturalisation plan that introduces ecological corridors, protects the quality of its rivers and creates new pedestrian spaces. Sustainable mobility—especially cycling and walking routes—has become part of daily life, while waste management and recycling have reached levels of efficiency rarely seen in historic cities of this scale. One of the key elements of this strategy has been the creation of shared environmental governance: institutions, residents, scientists and businesses work together on climate change adaptation and the reduction of the city's ecological footprint.

For the traveller, this commitment translates into a cleaner, quieter and more liveable experience. Guimarães encourages slow, conscious and close-to-home tourism, which finds a natural continuation on the hill of Monte da Penha. Just a few minutes from the centre—accessible even by cable car—this enclave offers forest trails, viewpoints overlooking the Ave Valley, and a sanctuary surrounded by granite outcrops. From here, the city's bond with its surroundings becomes clear: nature is not on the margins, but integrated into everyday life.

In 2026, this relationship between urban planning, environment and community will be reflected in a programme that goes beyond major events. Initiatives will focus on

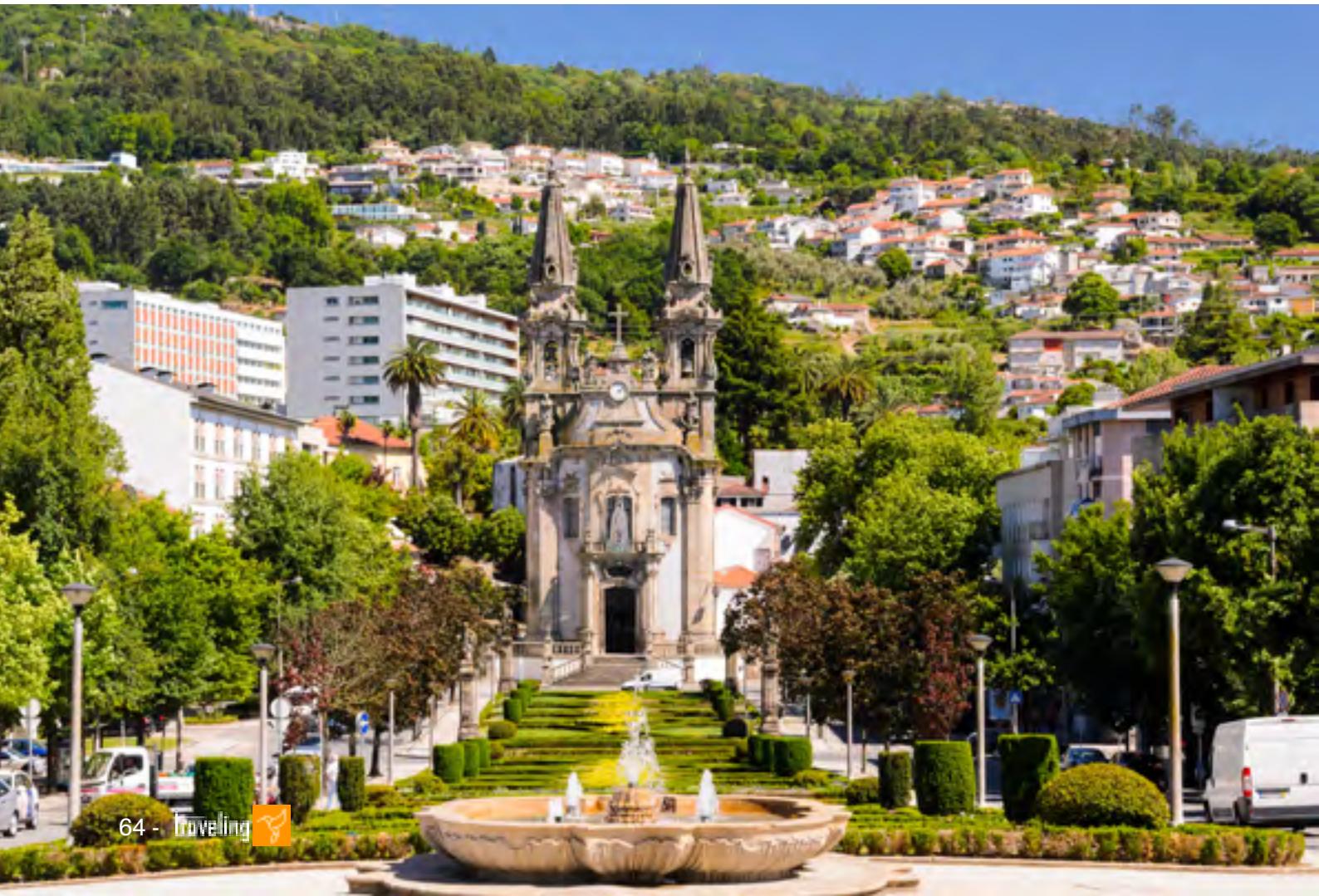


Guimarães castle

biodiversity, river and natural space restoration, environmental education, ecology-linked artistic creation and citizen participation in urban regeneration projects. The city will strengthen the role of the Guimarães Sustainability Centre, a structure that already operates as a laboratory for ecological transition policies and will become a core hub of the year's cultural and scientific programme.

The status of European Green Capital is not limited to celebrating what has already been achieved. It entails assuming future commitments, particularly in areas such as low-emission mobility, energy efficiency in buildings, the expansion of green areas and the protection of urban and peri-urban wildlife. Guimarães will use 2026 to demonstrate how a destination with such a strong heritage

Church of Our Lady of Consolation and Holy Steps





São Damaso Boulevard Gardens

base can also lead a model of environmental innovation. It will do so through a collective approach: schools, cultural associations, research centres and citizens will all play an active role throughout the year.

Visitors will also encounter a social atmosphere that reflects this transition. In its central cafés, in squares where families, students and travellers mingle, or in craft workshops that keep traditional techniques alive, the feeling is of a city in motion—aware of its historical value, but above all determined to build a more balanced future. In Guimarães, heritage does not weigh heavily: it accompanies.

For the Eco Destinations section, Guimarães stands out as a particularly eloquent case. It is a place where sustainability is not an imported discourse, but a daily prac-

tice unfolding at every level: from water management to education, from mobility to culture. A city committed to growing green without losing its essence, proving that history and ecology can be allies.

In 2026, Guimarães will be a privileged setting in which to observe how the concept of the cultural destination in Europe is being redefined. A city that looks to its roots in order to move forward, that invites visitors to slow their pace, to listen to history among the stones, and to discover how green—in all its forms—can become a shared project for the future.

 visit Portugal



Traditional houses in the historic centre of Guimarães, with granite façades and wooden balconies





48 hours in Linz

**The city that always
looked towards the
Danube**

Words: Editorial staff - **Photos:** Archive

Photo: Aerial view of Linz and the Danube



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ometimes, the cities that surprise most are those that have managed to reinvent themselves without breaking with their past. Linz, on the banks of the Danube, is one of them. A former industrial city, European Capital of Culture in 2009 and today an urban laboratory where digital art, Central European history and a serene rhythm coexist, inviting visitors to experience it without haste or excess.

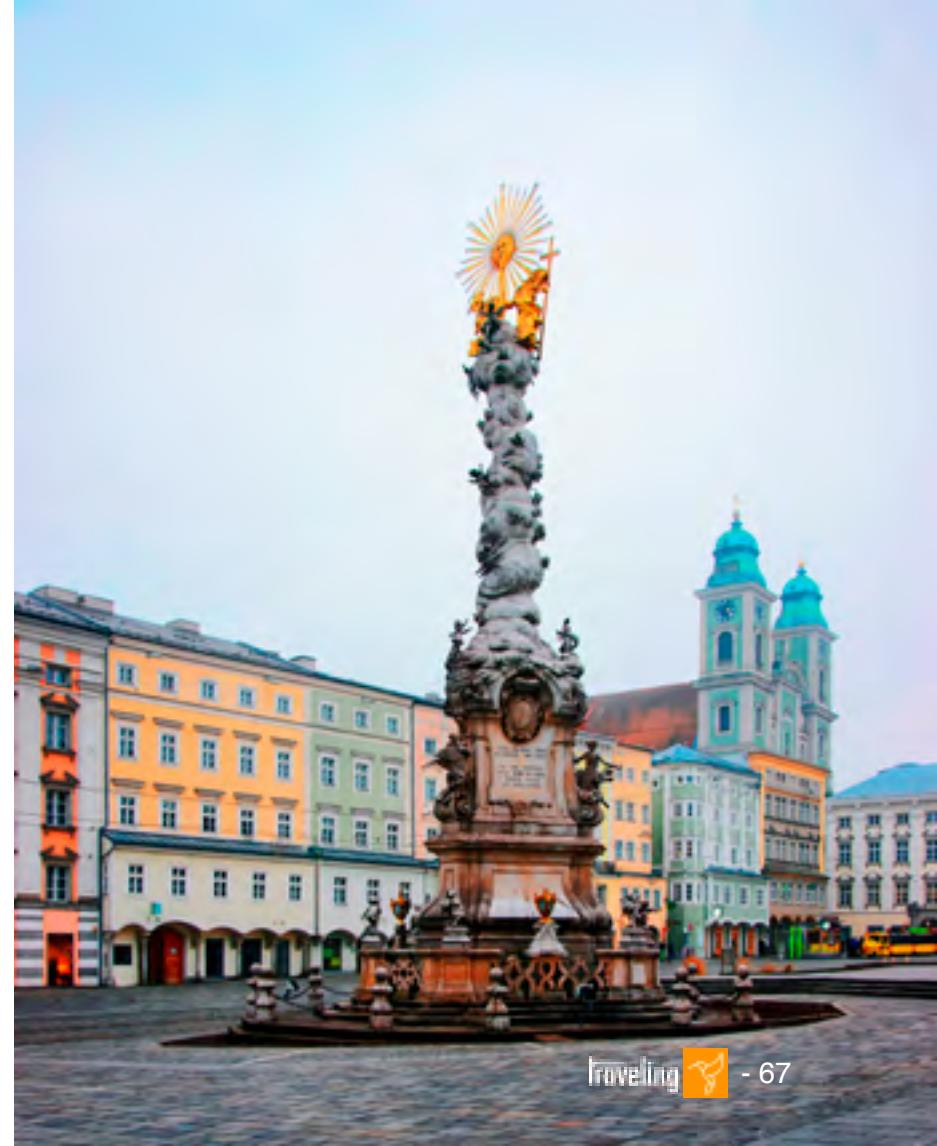
Two days are enough to begin to sense its character: orderly yet creative, Central European yet open to the future, urban yet always attentive to the river that runs through it like a backbone. The Danube sets the city's pace, organises its promenades, softens the landscape and reminds us that Linz has grown in close connection with trade, industry and, in recent decades, culture.

Here, modernity does not impose itself; it enters into a natural dialogue. Former industrial spaces coexist with avant-garde museums, historic squares retain their human scale, and everyday life unfolds with a calm rarely found in other cultural capitals. Linz does not seek to dazzle at first glance: it reveals itself gradually, on foot, through observation, allowing itself to be discovered as a city that has made serene transformation its defining hallmark.



Pfarrplatz in Linz, one of the oldest squares in the historic centre

Trinity Column on the Hauptplatz in Linz



Day 1 — The Danube, history and a new perspective

The best way to begin a visit to Linz is by heading to the Danube, that broad mirror in which the city reflects its transformation. The riverbank offers wide promenades, cycle paths and landscaped areas, ideal for understanding the relationship between Linz and the water. On the opposite side, the contemporary façades of the Ars Electronica Center make a decisive statement: here the city breaks with its industrial past and projects itself towards innovation.

Before crossing the bridge, it is worth exploring the historic centre, where Baroque architecture and light-filled squares create an inviting urban landscape. At its heart lies the Hauptplatz, Linz, one of the largest squares in Central Europe, surrounded by palaces and buildings with sloping roofs that still retain the austere air of the former duchy. At its centre rises the Trinity Column, Linz, a silent witness to the passing centuries and a natural point of reference for finding one's way around the city.



Landestheater Linz, the historic state theatre of Upper Austria

From the square, streets lead towards the Old Cathedral of Linz, a Baroque church that hosts concerts and sacred music, and further on to Linz Castle, whose terraces offer elevated views over the city, the river and the gentle hills that surround it. Its museum introduces visitors to the history of Upper Austria, from the earliest settlements to modern industry.

At midday, the historic centre invites a pause in one of its cafés, where the city's unhurried rhythm becomes apparent. Linz lacks the frenzy of Vienna and the solemnity of Salzburg; its charm lies in the blend of everyday life, contemporary culture and a practical spirit characteristic of northern Austria.

The afternoon is the perfect time to cross over to the Ars Electronica Center, one of Europe's most influential cultural institutions in art, technology and society. Its exhibitions change frequently, yet they consistently present pioneering perspectives on the relationship between humans, machines, nature and the future. It is a museum-laboratory where experimentation ranges from artificial intelligence and biotechnology to robotics, audiovisual



Ars Electronica Center of Linz

installations and immersive experiences. To grasp Linz's contemporary cultural pulse, there is no better starting point.

On leaving, it is worth taking advantage of the evening light along the riverbank. The Danube opens out as a serene corridor, shared naturally by cyclists, runners and families out for a stroll. In summer, life shifts to the riverside terraces; in winter, the cold air sharpens the silence and the city seems to draw inward, with metallic reflections rippling across the water.

Day 2 — Art, hills and a culture that never stops moving

The second day can begin at the Lentos Kunstmuseum, located on the southern riverbank and recognised for its clean-lined architecture and bluish tones. Its collection traces art from the 20th century to the present, with Austrian and European works, alongside temporary exhibitions that sustain the city's contemporary pulse. Opposite the museum, the Danube once again takes centre stage: the riverside parks help to illustrate the balance Linz has sought between culture and landscape.

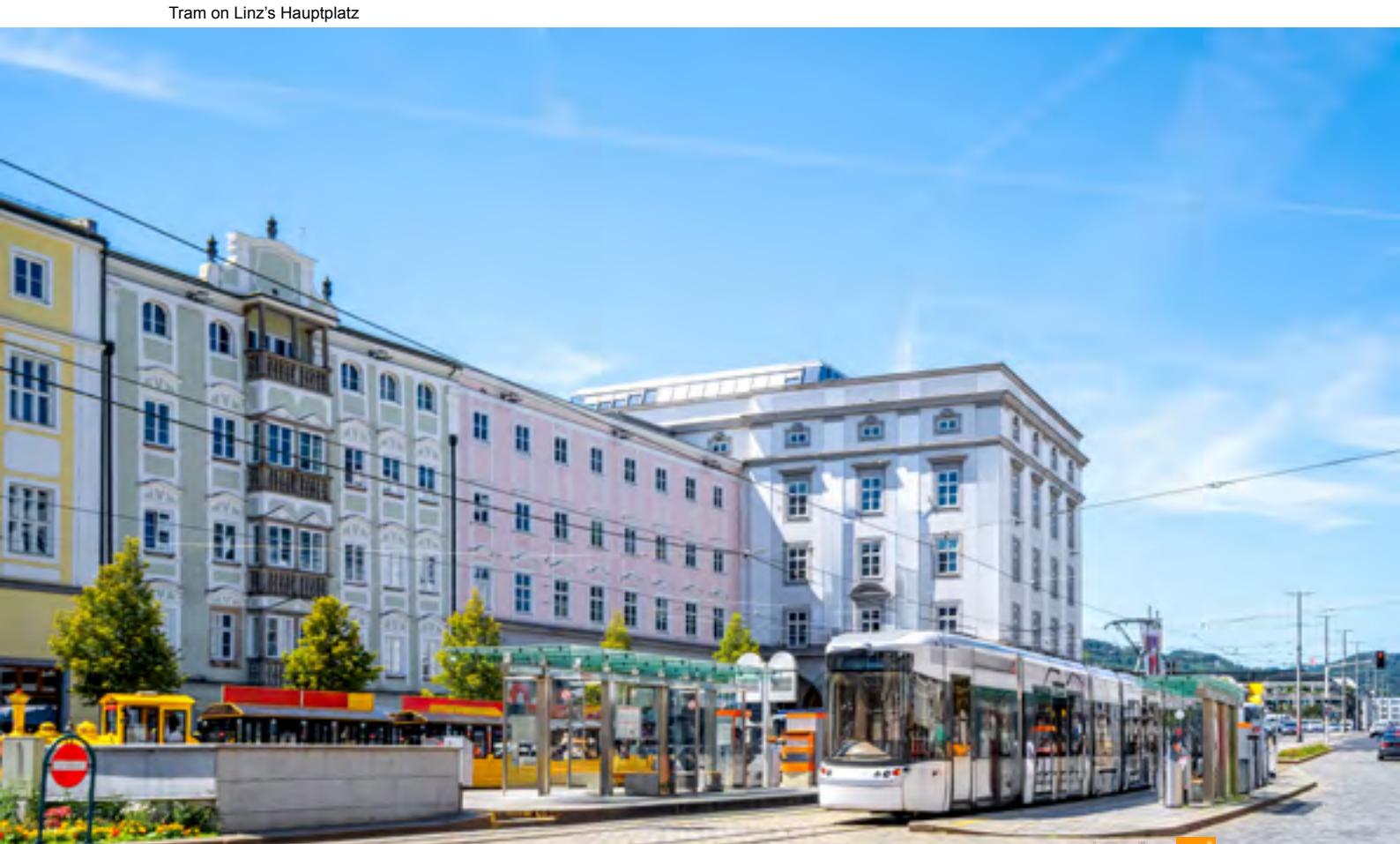
From there, a tram climbs towards Pöstlingberg, one of the city's finest viewpoints. The ascent is part of the experience in itself: scattered houses, sloping gardens and vegetation opening up glimpses towards the city. At the top stands the basilica, visible from across Linz, along with a network of walking routes extending into the surrounding area. On clear days, the panorama stretches from the Danube to the first foothills of the Bavarian Forest.

On the return journey, the city centre offers a different kind of discovery. Linz has revitalised former industrial spaces, transforming them into cultural venues, festival sites and creative workshops.

Tram on Linz's Hauptplatz



Monument to Johannes Kepler in Linz, astronomer and mathematician



The spirit of European Capital of Culture 2009 remains very much alive: theatre companies, experimental musicians, designers and multimedia artists form a vibrant community that reveals itself in galleries, small independent venues and events throughout the year.

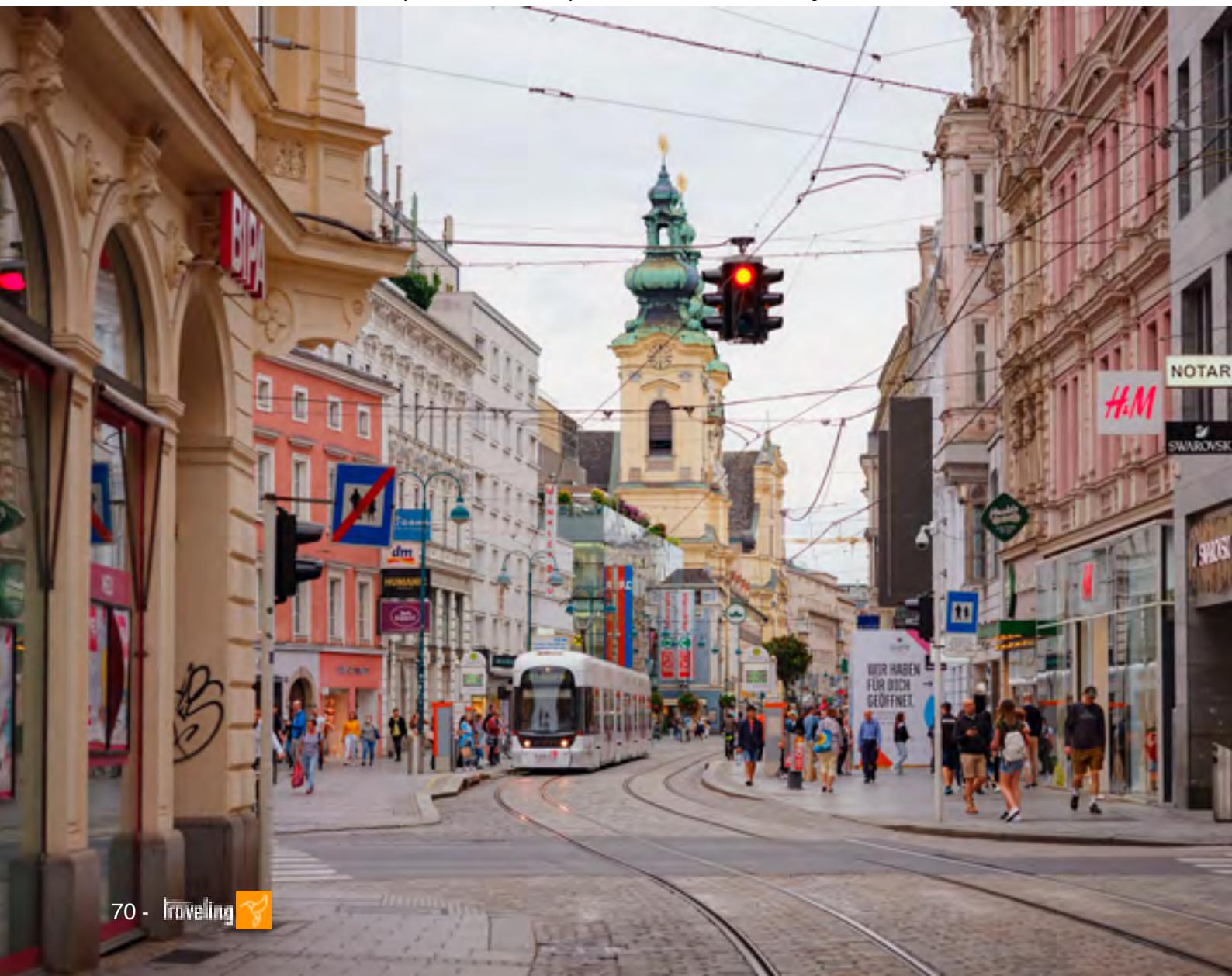
Visitors will also find the New Cathedral Museum, Linz, which preserves part of the region's religious and artistic heritage, and the New Cathedral (Mariendom), Linz, an imposing Neo-Gothic building whose nave—the largest in Austria—impresses with its height and the play of light filtering through its stained-glass windows.

In the afternoon, another side of Linz emerges in neighbourhoods linked to design and university life. Quiet cafés, bookshops, creative spaces and small independent stores reveal a city that is approachable and unpretentious, where tradition and openness coexist naturally. The pace is calm, almost domestic.

If the visit coincides with one of the major festivals—especially the Ars Electronica Festival, held between September and October—the experience takes on another dimension. The city becomes a stage for digital art, debates, performances and technological projects that attract creators from around the world. Linz then turns into an open-air laboratory, faithful to its most recent spirit.

To bring the stay to a close, there is nothing better than returning to the river. The last rays of the day illuminate the bridges and stretch the shadows of the museums. The Danube, a constant guide over these 48 hours, appears as the clearest metaphor for Linz: a place that flows, that transforms, that moves forward without forgetting what it has been.

Landstraße, Linz, the city's main commercial artery, with the Ursulinenkirche in the background





Linzer Augen, the classic Linz biscuits filled with jam

Gastronomy: a finale with a taste of Upper Austria

The cuisine of Linz reflects the character of the region: simple, substantial, rooted in local produce and in recipes well suited to the Central European climate. No traveller should leave without tasting Linzertorte, considered one of the oldest documented cakes in Europe. Its spiced pastry—made with ground almonds—and its distinctive lattice topping have made it an enduring emblem of the city.

Local gastronomy also includes traditional dishes from Upper Austria, such as hearty soups, slow-cooked meats, regional sausages and rural Austrian pork preparations, all based on recipes passed down from generation to generation. The region's historic breweries are another essential part of its culinary identity, offering artisanal beers that accompany the local cuisine in a natural and unpretentious way.

Added to this is the Viennese café tradition, naturally adopted in Linz: calm, welcoming spaces where one can pause without hurry, combine traditional pastries with a cup of coffee, and observe the city's unhurried rhythm from a table by the window.

In Linz, food is neither a spectacle nor a quest for extreme sophistication, but part of everyday life and of the urban landscape. A reflection of the city's open and straightforward character, and a serene conclusion to two days of art, history and Central European calm on the banks of the Danube, inviting a return without the need for grand promises.

Austria





charming villages Rocamadour

The sacred French city, between heaven and earth

Words: Jose A. Muñoz - Fotos: Archive



There are places that seem to have been drawn to remind the traveller that geography can shape a way of life. Rocamadour, suspended against the limestone wall of the Alzou Gorge, is one of them. Even before its sanctuaries come into view, the landscape already signals its character: gently rolling hills, forests repeating with an an-

cient cadence, and a deep valley that has channelled routes and gazes for centuries. The village appears suddenly, almost vertical, like an improbable gesture that the stone accepts without effort.



Central street in the medieval quarter

Rocamadour owes its origin and development to a precise blend of defensive architecture, medieval tradition and routes of passage. It was a prominent enclave on the French Way of St James and a reference point for travellers and merchants crossing this part of the Lot. The medieval discovery of the body of Saint Amadour helped to consolidate the site, but its urban evolution responds above all to the logic of the terrain: a stable rock, a natural ledge and a valley that offered visual control and protection.

The mystical ascent

The journey towards the heart of the complex always begins from below. There, along the main street, stone houses, workshops, small inns and shops line up, preserving the village's intimate scale. This horizontal stretch prepares the visitor for the ascent: the Grand Escalier, Rocamadour, nearly two hundred steps leading to the sanctuary esplanade. Those who climb do so with a perception that shifts step by step: façades seem compressed against the rock, balconies gain height, and the valley line sinks until it becomes a distant trace.

Heritage heart

The sanctuary esplanade, the historical and symbolic centre of Rocamadour, functions as a self-contained space. The Notre-Dame Chapel, Rocamadour, known for its Black Madonna, maintains a sober interior that preserves the intensity of places built to endure. Very close by, the Saint-Sauveur Basilica, Rocamadour and the Saint-Amadour Crypt, both World Heritage sites, reveal an architecture in transition: Romanesque walls, vaults that foreshadow the Gothic, and a constant dialogue between stone and light. The ensemble is not understood as isolated buildings, but as a sequence that adapts with millimetric precision to the limestone wall.

Black Virgin of Rocamadour





Crypt of Saint-Amadour

Living architecture

Those who walk at this level discover an architecture that does not merely occupy space, but interprets it. Rock emerges between walls and arcades; some stairways change direction to negotiate small natural folds; and several portals, modestly decorated, act as thresholds that connect interior and exterior without grand gestures. Rocamadour surprises through its coherence: a sanctuary clinging to the cliff, a village climbing upwards, and a castle crowning the summit as the logical conclusion of the whole.

Dominion from above

The final ascent leads to the castle, from where the landscape opens with impeccable clarity. The Alzou Valley unfolds in gentle curves, dotted with meadows and small wooded areas. From this height, the reason for the site becomes clear: broad visual command and a terrain capable of supporting a complex architecture without losing its natural reading. If the traveller continues along the Chemin de Croix, Rocamadour, the route winds between chapels, silent bends and points where the cliff asserts itself as a reminder of the geology that made the village possible.

Echoes of the valley

Beyond the urban core, the Alzou gorge offers a different image of the territory. In spring and autumn, the forests take on a dense green that contrasts with the pale tone of the stone. Paths allow walking along the valley floor, skirting the dry riverbed and crossing small pasture areas.

Château of Rocamadour



It is an interior France that retains an unhurried rhythm, where the gastronomy of the southwest—goat's cheeses, Cahors wines, artisan breads—maintains the tradition of a simple, robust cuisine. A human landscape that accompanies without imposing itself.

The timeless silhouette

Perhaps the best way to understand Rocamadour is from a distance. On the opposite side of the valley, several natural viewpoints offer a complete vision: the castle above, the sanctuaries in the middle, and the village below, like a column linking rock, architecture and everyday life. That image sums up its singularity: a settlement that rises without breaking the landscape and turns a cliff into urban support.

The lesson of time

Visiting Rocamadour is to understand that architecture can be read through territory. Here nothing is explained without the limestone wall that sustains it, and the visit is organised according to that constant verticality that shapes the route. More than a monumental destination, it is a place where the past is recognised in the continuity of stone, in the scale of

the village, and in how light travels, throughout the day, across each section of the cliff and its façades.

Back to the valley

On returning to the lower level, when the valley once again feels close and terraces set the unhurried pace of the afternoon, a clear sensation remains: here architecture does not impose itself, it rests upon the rock. Rocamadour needs neither effects nor grand gestures. Its character lies in verticality, in how stone adapts to relief, and in a balance with the territory that has been preserved for centuries without profound alteration. For this reason, on leaving, the visitor understands that it is not merely a village perched above the valley, but a precise and serene way of inhabiting the landscape over time.

Rocamadour cannot be explained solely by its buildings, but rather by the precise relationship between the stone, the height and the landscape that has supported them for centuries.

More Information



View of the village and the Basilica of Saint-Sauveur





Montilla under the sky © Miguel Ángel Espejo Rosal

Montilla

History and culture among vineyards

Words: Clara Serrano Vega - claraserranovega@gmail.com - **Photography:** Montilla Town Council

Montilla, tourism, wine and tradition
© Fco. Javier Fernández Pedraza



There are cities that are best understood when explored without haste, paying attention to detail and to the weight of lived history. Montilla is one of them. Its historic wineries, the lagares scattered across the hills and the taverns where wine accompanies conversation form part of a well-known identity, yet they do not explain it in full. To truly understand the city, it is worth climbing to the place where it all began.

On the hill that dominates the surrounding countryside, with open views over olive groves and vineyards, traces of occupation dating back to Iberian times remain. Here stood the castle where Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the Great Captain, was born—a key figure in the military history of Renaissance Europe. It is the highest point of the historic centre and also an excellent vantage point from which to read the landscape and understand Montilla's strategic importance over the centuries.

In this same area stands the former Alhorí of Montilla, an agro-industrial building whose upper floor now houses a museographic space dedicated to the city's most universal figure. The visit offers a sober, well-constructed account of his life and times: campaigns, alliances, conflicts and decisions that shaped an era. A narrative that helps to understand not only an exceptional soldier, but also the political and social context in which his legend was forged.

A museum that is also a narrative

Montilla thus invites a journey that goes beyond its vineyards. The visitor enters the life—and the myth—of a soldier whom many considered worthy of a crown, yet who chose a life defined by service and loyalty to the Crown. The exhibition brings together weaponry, paintings, costume, a detailed scale model of the castle and original documents that tell his story in a clear and accessible way. The route spans from his childhood in Montilla and his decisive role in the War of Granada, to the Italian campaigns that established him as a strategist and his time as Viceroy of Naples. The narrative also pauses at his more discreet end, in Loja, where institutional silence contrasted with a popular admiration that never truly faded.

Pieces that reveal the man behind the myth

The exhibition discourse is supported by a group of works that help to understand the figure beyond legend. Among the most notable are two paintings on loan from the Patronato del Alcázar de Segovia: The Great Captain at the Assault of Montefrío, by José de Madrazo y Agudo, and Hernán Pérez del Pulgar Presents Queen Isabella with the "Vow of Possession" of the Mosque of Granada, by José María Rodríguez Losada. These are joined by holdings from the municipal collection and a notable group of original manuscripts and documents from the 16th and 17th centuries belonging to the Fundación Biblioteca Manuel Ruiz Luque. Early editions recounting his campaigns, a deed for pawned jewels signed by Gonzalo himself shortly before his death, or a safe-conduct letter granted by Charles I of Spain to his widow provide a more intimate and human reading of the character.

The visit is completed with reproductions from the Museo del Ejército and the Museo del Prado, including the emblematic Sword of the Great Captain, The Battle of Cerignola by Federico de Madrazo, and The Will of Queen Isabella the Catholic by Eduardo Rosales, closing a narrative that weaves together history, art and documentation.

The historic quarter: literature, art and Andalusian tranquillity

A short distance away, Montilla offers another essential visit: the Casa Museo del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616). Considered the Father of American Letters, the humanist lived in this stately house for more than thirty years and wrote some of his most important works here. Quiet courtyards, whitewashed rooms and displays that converse with viceregal Peru bring visitors closer to a figure who knew how to unite two worlds through words.

Very nearby, the Museo Garnelo surprises even those familiar with Spanish art history. Dedicated to José Santiago Garnelo y Alda, a Montilla-born artist, teacher of Pablo Picasso and deputy director of the Prado Museum, the space brings together portraits, historical compositions and studies of light that reveal one of the great representatives of Spanish luminism, still awaiting full recognition.



Image at the Garnelo Museum © José Lara Cordobés

On the upper floor of the palatial Casa de las Aguas, Montilla is the Biblioteca Manuel Ruiz Luque, one of the most important private bibliographic collections in Spain, reinforcing Montilla's role as a cultural hub in the heart of the Córdoba countryside.

When it's time to eat

The cultural route sharpens the appetite, and Montilla's gastronomy responds with assurance. It is a cuisine rooted in tradition, where wine acts both as an ingredient and as a guiding thread. Dishes such as artichokes Montilla-style or a well-prepared oxtail stew find a natural ally in the local wines.

As evening falls, when the light fades among rolling vineyard-covered hills, Montilla confirms that its heritage cannot be exhausted in a single visit. Convents, historic houses and art collections continue to await the attentive traveller, ready to discover a city that offers far more than its wine-making fame might suggest.

Workers at the Montilla wine press © Antonio Redondo Pedraza



Ayuntamiento de
Montilla





Durbach Reben © Chris Keller Schwarzwald Tourismus

Glamping in Germany's Black Forest

Among fir trees, fairytale cabins and nights beneath the stars

Words: Rosario Alonso - **Photography:** Schwarzwald Tourismus



T

he Black Forest—Schwarzwald in German—is one of those corners of Europe where dense woodland, gentle hills, clear rivers and a thousand legends wrapped in moss and mist come together. Its name, which alludes to the deep darkness of its ancient forests, evokes a primeval land where nature sets the pace. This region in south-west Germany, within the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, unfolds a landscape of mountains and valleys shaped by centuries of history, rural traditions and coexistence with the natural world—and today by a clear commitment to slow, sustainable, rural tourism. A perfect setting for travellers in search of characterful accommodation: glamping sites, wooden cabins or country houses scattered deep within the forest.

Schluchsee Schwarzwaldcamp © Klaus Hansen Schwarzwald Tourismus

The Black Forest: origins, nature and tradition

The Black Forest stretches along a band of roughly 160 kilometres, from the Upper Rhine northwards, with a width that varies between 30 and 60 kilometres. Its forests, dominated by firs, spruces and beeches, form a deep green tapestry—a mantle that in many places conceals the sky.

Its relief is gentle in some areas, yet rocky and abrupt in others: red sandstone soils (Buntsandstein) and granite intrusions shape ravines, hills and rugged landscapes, under a humid climate that favours ferns, mosses and fungi, alongside wildlife that includes deer, martens and capercaillie.

Centuries ago, these forests marked the frontier of Germanic territory and later became the setting for trade routes, mining, rural crafts and artisanal traditions. Over time, the Black Forest filled with villages of steep-roofed houses, farming communities, chimney smoke and craftsmanship in glass, wood and clockmaking.

Today, this identity has been preserved and, at the same time, reinvented. The Black Forest is not only a natural paradise; it is a refuge for those seeking to reconnect with what is essential: silence, forest colours, tranquillity and breathing without haste.

Belchensteig © Klaus Hansen - Schwarzwald Tourismus



Bad Säckingen Blick auf Münster und Holzbrücke © Klaus Hansen - Schwarzwald Tourismus

Sleeping beneath the trees: characterful stays and glamping

In recent years, the idea of staying in nature without giving up comfort has flourished across the region. Its tourism offering promotes hideaways: special accommodation immersed in nature, away from mass tourism, aimed at travellers in search of calm, clean air, forests and rest. Wooden houses, rustic cabins, tipis, shepherd's wagons, small chalets in the heart of the woods, scattered cabins, campsites with soul—everything needed to disconnect.

Thanks to platforms that bring together popular glamping options in the Black Forest—from family-friendly spaces to intimate couples' retreats beneath the stars—it is now possible to book stays that combine nature, comfort and privacy.

Dense forests, ancient terrain and villages shaped by forest labour define a land where nature sets the pace and tradition remains alive, far from haste and mass tourism

Hängezelt Schenkenzell © Naturräume Wurft



THE BLACK FOREST

Ferienanlage Kirchzarten:

A popular glamping site located in Kirchzarten, ideal for both couples and families. It offers a peaceful experience in a natural setting that is accessible and well connected.



Mobilheim Aussenansicht Daemmerung © Camping-Kirchzarten



Campingplatz-Schwarzwaldhorn

Campingplatz Schwarzwaldhorn:

A family-friendly campsite immersed in nature, with fully equipped accommodation and direct access to trails that invite rest, contemplation and true disconnection.



Schwarzwald Romantikhütte:

Small wooden cabins, perfect for romantic escapes or for those who wish to sleep surrounded by forest, with a fireplace, tranquillity and a warm, homely feel.



Schwarzwald Romantikhütte

TrekkingCamp Himmelsterrassen:

Para quienes buscan naturaleza y aventura, este campamento-glamping resulta muy atractivo: inmerso en bosque, con acceso a senderos y contacto directo con la Selva Negra profunda.



TrekkinCamp, Elevated terraces for camping

Each place offers a different way of understanding the forest: from a warm cabin after a day of walking, to a night under canvas or in a shepherd's hut, with the stillness of the air and the whisper of the trees. This variety turns the Black Forest into a mosaic of experiences, ideal for curious travellers, families, couples or seekers of peace.

Living nature: forest, mountain, water and silence

Choosing a glamping site or cabin in the Black Forest is a commitment to nature in its truest sense. The region is home to a National Park that protects ancient woodland—one of the few places in Europe where forests have been growing without human intervention for decades. For those who venture onto its trails, there are gentle routes, moderate hikes and cycling paths; and for the more adventurous, mountains such as the Feldberg, whose panoramic views offer an unrivalled perspective.

Lakes, rivers, waterfalls and gorges shape a landscape that changes with the seasons: in summer, the deep green of the firs and their shade; in autumn, the murmur of dry leaves underfoot; in winter, snow that transforms the pine forests into a silent realm. In the morning, the

elusive call of a capercaillie; at night, a clear sky free from light pollution. This living nature—full and untamed—becomes an integral part of the stay.

Rural tourism, living tradition and heartfelt hospitality

The Black Forest is not only about woodland: it is also a land of villages with traditional timber houses, farms and hamlets where time seems to have stood still. Within its rural network coexist artisans, long-standing traditions—glassmaking, carpentry, clockmaking—and a measured way of life, far removed from the noise of major cities.

The region's famous cuckoo clocks originated here in the 18th century, when woodcarvers began making clocks with wooden mechanisms to supplement their income, creating the "cuckoo" sound with bellows to mark the hours, imitating the call of the bird.

Those who stay in a glamping site or cabin have the chance to immerse themselves in this rhythm. On waking, they can walk among the trees, visit local markets, follow forest paths, discover waterfalls, lakes and viewpoints... and return to their refuge carrying with them the simplicity of nature, still clinging to the skin.

Seelbach Schwarzwald Panoramic-view igloo © Nomady AG



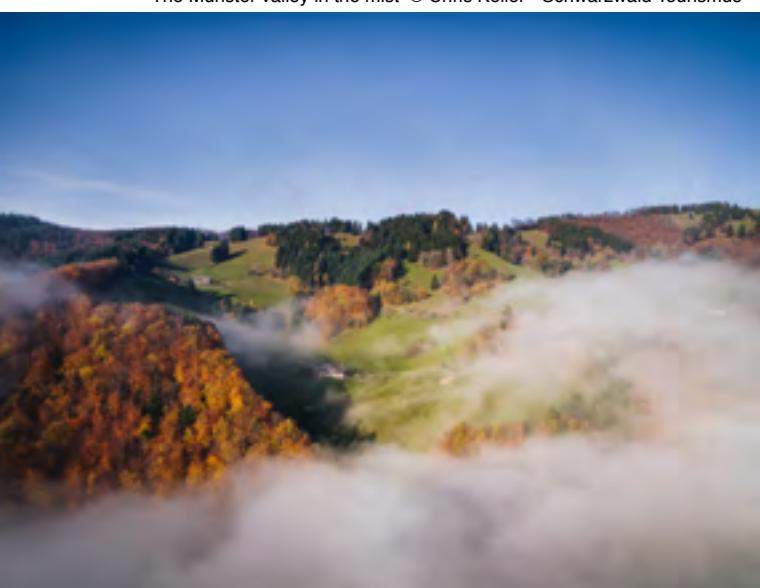
THE BLACK FOREST



The village of Bernau in the heart of the Black Forest © Klaus Hansen



The Münster valley in the mist © Chris Keller - Schwarzwald Tourismus



Feldsee Lake

In addition, most of these accommodations embrace a philosophy of sustainable tourism: respect for the environment, moderate use of resources, mobility through regional public transport—often accessible without the need for a car—outdoor living and direct contact with the forest. This combination makes it possible to experience the Black Forest consciously, listening to its ancient pulse.

Why does glamping in the Black Forest make sense today?

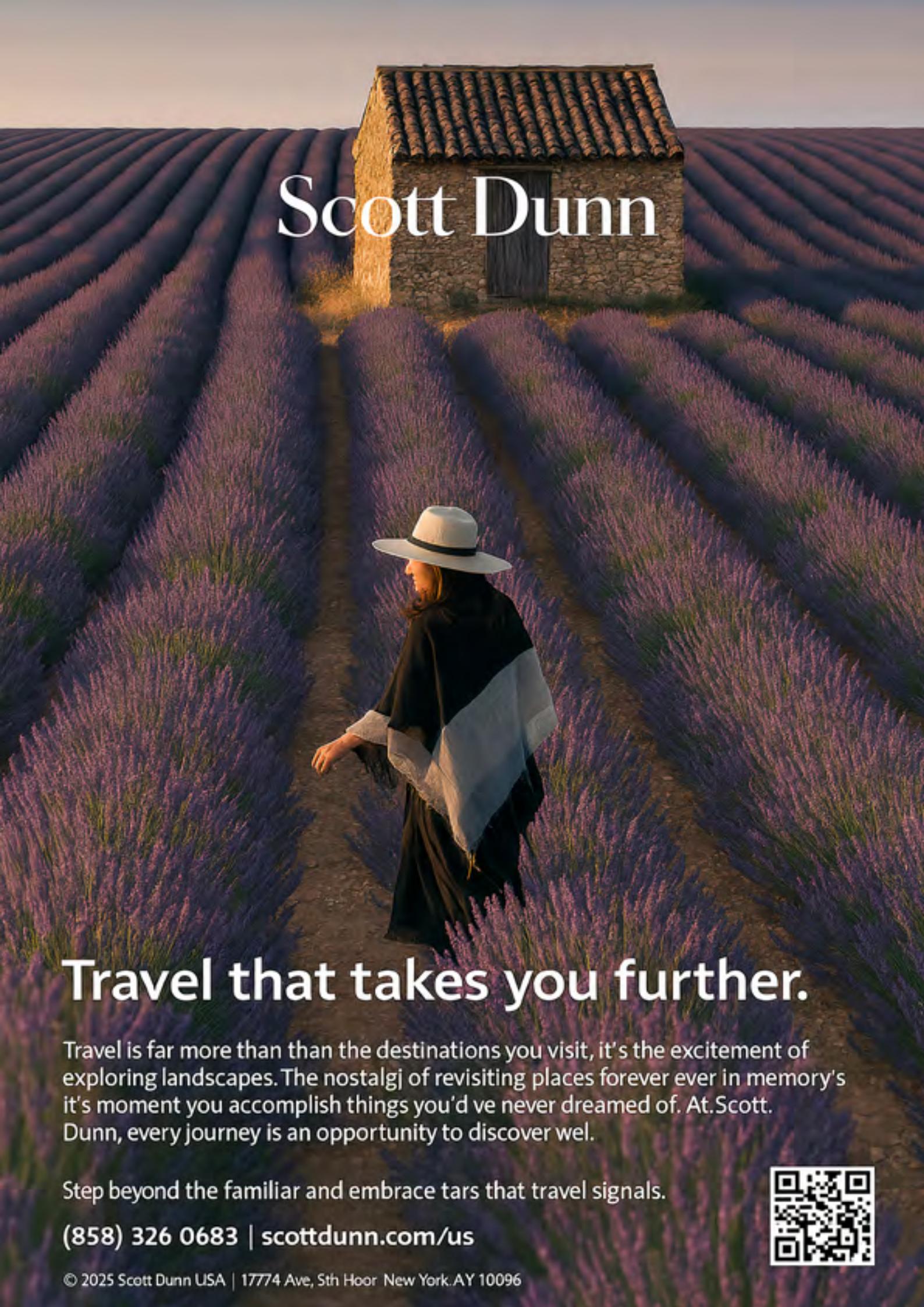
Because it responds to the contemporary desire for nature without giving up comfort. It allows travellers to connect with centuries-old forests, breathe clean air, walk without haste, listen to silence, and hear rain falling on wooden roofs. It is at once rural and intimate, wild yet comfortable, traditional and modern.

For Traveling magazine, drawn to destinations that combine authenticity, landscape and soul, the Black Forest offers a perfect setting: trails among fir trees, houses that tell stories, lakes reflecting mountain ridges, fireplaces lit at dusk, afternoons of walking, star-filled nights, forests that seem to speak.

And in the end, one realises that what was being sought was not merely a different kind of accommodation: it was the recovery of a certain pause, a certain simplicity, and—in some way—the chance to blend into the surrounding landscape.

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Granados 83 Hotel Barcelona

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

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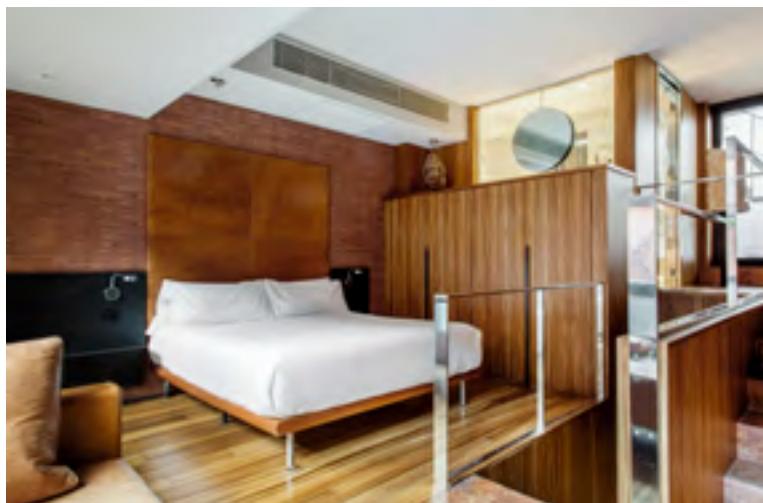
Staying in the heart of the city with every comfort, a zen-inspired atmosphere, a rooftop terrace, Asian art, Roman mosaics, and just five minutes from Rambla de Cataluña, are among the attractions this hotel offers.

At first glance, the hotel captivates for three reasons. The first is its excellent location, just steps from Paseo de Gracia and Avenida Diagonal, in the trendy heart of the Ensanche. Its exterior presents a handsome, classical building dating from the mid-19th century. The third, and most remarkable, surprise comes when crossing the threshold: amid the industrial architecture of Barcelona's former textile factories, Indian reliefs appear in both the lobby and the bar. The communal areas, as well as the seventy-seven rooms and two luxury suites with semi-private pools, are adorned with carved doors, latticework, Hindu altars and stone sculptures from the Hindu tradition, Khmer art from the 12th to the 14th centuries, and Hindu representations of Buda from the 8th century, all of which speak to the evolution of traditional Indian art. Particular emphasis should be placed, for their originality, on a collection of wooden sculptures that once formed the structural elements of ceremonial chariots used in religious festivals in southern India. But

Every corner of the hotel shines with its striking décor and art pieces



The rooftop swimming pool and the hotel's minimalist, welcoming rooms





Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia, in the heart of the Gothic Quarter

Barcelona's Gothic Quarter, very close to the hotel



Indian art is not the only presence within the hotel's walls. Its Granados 83 lounge houses a collection of Roman mosaics featuring traditional geometric and figurative art, evocative of the great Roman villas of the 5th century AD.

The city within easy reach

Once recovered from such beauty, it is advisable to head up to the cocktail bar on the seventh floor, where the hotel's pool is located, and, glass in hand, take in the urban scene framed by this intimate rooftop pool before stepping out to experience it firsthand. Hotel Granados 83 sits within easy reach of the city's main shopping and leisure district, a seductive array of restaurants, and serves as a meeting point for lovers of Barcelona's nightlife.

Not to mention its proximity to Casa Milà (La Pedrera) by Gaudí, and to the city's most notable monuments and points of interest, including the architectural jewels of Antoni Gaudí and the historic Gothic Quarter of Barcelona. It is no coincidence that Preferred Hotels & Resorts of the World has included it in its exclusive collection.

Lacking nothing, the hotel truly offers it all. It organises excellent visits to discover places of interest, including the Montjuïc cable car and the museums of Modernist Glass, Egyptian Art, Pre-Columbian Art, African Art, the museum dedicated to illustrator Ricard Opisso, and even FC Barcelona for those with a taste for sport.

Getting in shape

And if one returns tired and in need of a proper spa, the neighbouring Hotel Claris is home to the outstanding Mayan Secret Spa, which is included for hotel guests. Meanwhile, the hotel itself offers a pleasant fitness room, ideal for working out before enjoying the excellent breakfast: Iberian cured meats and artisan cheeses, healthy options such as fruit, cereals, dairy products and juices, a lovingly curated selection of pastries, and a menu of hot dishes designed to provide the energy needed before heading out to explore the city.



Beautiful buildings and delightful cafés next to Hotel Granados 83

Responsibility and sound practice

The hotel has been awarded BIOSPHERE CERTIFIED status, is adapted for guests with reduced mobility through ramps and lifts, and offers 100% accessible rooms (with the exception of duplex rooms).

One final, yet important, detail to bear in mind is that Hotel Granados 83 allows dogs weighing up to 33 lb.

Granados 83 Hotel

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HOTELS & RESORTS



Estancia Cerro Guido

More than a hotel, an experience rooted in gaucho life

Text and photography: Jose Antonio Muñoz

This extensive property is located in Chilean Patagonia, close to Torres del Paine National Park, within a territory of high scenic and ecological value. It currently operates as a hotel, while fully retaining its condition as a large, active livestock estancia, an activity that has shaped life on the estate for more than a century. The property covers an area of approximately 247,000 acres, traditionally dedicated to sheep farming and the extensive management of the land. The accommodation is integrated into a vast environment, little altered and with minimal intervention, where rural tasks, large-scale movements and the rhythms of the countryside continue to determine daily organisation and the visitor's experience.



Hotel lobby lounge with a telescope for observing wildlife and the Torres del Paine

The hotel has twelve rooms, distributed across historic buildings. All feature private bathrooms, heating and Wi-Fi, as well as open views over the landscape or the estancia's gardens. The décor is carefully considered, inspired by classic English style, with wooden furniture and elegant details that reinforce the character of the place without becoming ostentatious. The communal spaces — lounges and dining room — retain a domestic, highly comfortable atmosphere, in keeping with the rural origins of the property, yet with a

high level of comfort. Outside, Patagonia asserts itself with its ancient law: wind, steppe and distance. Cerro Guido was founded as a sheep estancia at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Explotadora de Tierra del Fuego organised these lands and built the first structures (1906) for shearing, storage and housing. Livestock activity continues to this day, and the hotel is understood as an extension of that working life. Its location, in the Torres del Paine commune and just a few miles from the park, offers a genuine sense of isolation: clear ni-



Old gaucho wagon used as living quarters during their journeys.

ghts, endless horizons and silence, beneath an immense sky that feels closer than anywhere else. The aim is not to turn the estancia into a design lodge, but to preserve its identity as a Patagonian country house.

The scale of the estate shapes the entire experience. Its vast size — around 247,000 acres — translates into a constant feeling of openness. From various points, there are direct views towards the Paine massif, a permanent reminder of the proximity to one of Chile's most emblematic national parks.

Farming and raising livestock in a demanding territory

The kitchen garden is one of the most meaningful spaces of the visit. In this setting, the cultivation of vegetables is shaped by wind, frost and a short growing season. For this reason, the greenhouse plays a fundamental role. Production is limited and variable, and depends directly on the climatic conditions of each season.

Some of the produce from the garden is incorporated into the hotel's kitchen. The gastronomic approach is based on traditional recipes and local ingredients, without seeking complex preparations.



View of the greenhouse, with the lower photograph showing one of the buildings of the current hotel



ESTANCIA CERRO GUIDO (CHILE)



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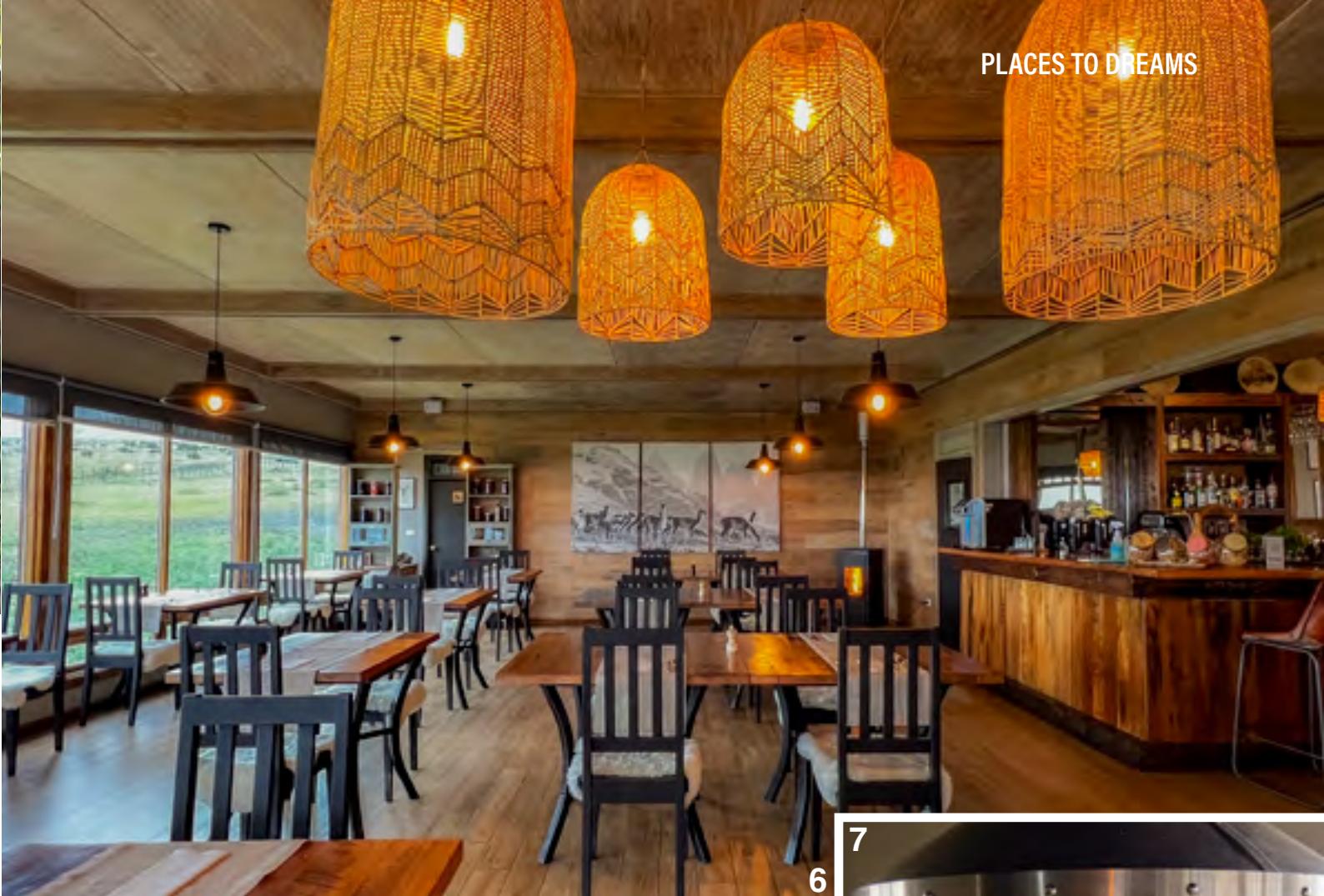


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The accommodation has twelve rooms, distributed across the historic buildings close to the lobby and the restaurant. They are spacious, quiet and well oriented, designed for rest after days spent on the estancia. All feature private bathrooms, heating and Wi-Fi, as well as open views over the landscape or the estancia's gardens. The décor is carefully considered, inspired by a classic style, with wooden furniture and elegant details that reinforce the character of the place without becoming ostentatious. The communal spaces — lounges and dining room — maintain a domestic, highly comfortable atmosphere, in keeping with the rural origins of the property, yet with a high level of comfort.



6

7



Gastronomy forms part of the same system as livestock farming and the kitchen garden, and follows a logic of use and proximity.

The main activity at Cerro Guido remains sheep farming. Livestock management structures the annual calendar and daily tasks. During guided visits, guests walk through corrals, sheds and working areas where the operation of the estancia is explained, along with the role of wool in the local economy.

Shearing, when it coincides with guests' stays, allows visitors to observe a key stage of production. It is carried out in a technical and efficient manner by specialised teams. It is not presented as a display, but as part of the everyday work of the land. This activity helps to understand both the historical importance of wool and the current challenges facing the livestock sector in Patagonia.



- 1.- Lounges for organising excursions.
- 2.- Entrance to one of the accommodation buildings.
- 3.- Access hall to the guest rooms.
- 4.- View of one of the estancia's rooms.
- 5.- One of the communal lounges.
- 6.- Lobby and restaurant of the estancia.
- 7.- Buffet featuring the traditional cordero al palo.
- 8.- Building used for shearing and wool handling.

ESTANCIA CERRO GUIDO (CHILE)



- 1.- Victor, a gaucho from the estancia and responsible for the horses.
- 2.- Crossbred horses, resilient to the Patagonian climate.
- 3.- Room with saddles, a stove and mate.



Horses, work and life on the land

The horse is a fundamental working tool at Cerro Guido. The stables form part of the visit and make it possible to understand how daily work with the animals is organised. The relationship between the horse, the gaucho and the territory is one of the central elements of life on the estancia. Horseback rides are one of the main activities offered to guests. There are routes adapted to different levels of experience, always accompanied by estancia staff. On horseback, guests cross open plains, gentle slopes and stretches of steppe, with the possibility of observing local wildlife such as guanacos, foxes or hares.

The unhurried pace encourages observation of the landscape and a deeper understanding of the environment.

Gaucho life is presented from a practical perspective. Working with sheepdogs, organising a day in the field or reading weather conditions are explained as part of a body of knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Visitors take part as observers, understanding the processes without turning them into a spectacle. The tour of the estancia follows a clear sequence: former dwellings, productive spaces such as the kitchen garden and greenhouse, stables and livestock working areas. These visits are complemented by walks and vehicle outings to more remote areas of the property, allowing a better understanding of the scale and diversity of the territory.



Wildlife, photographic safaris and the natural environment

Wildlife observation is one of the main attractions of the surrounding environment. From Cerro Guido, photographic safaris are organised focusing on species that live freely in the area. The estancia is located in a region known for the presence of pumas, whose observation is always carried out with specialised guides and under strict criteria of respect and conservation. In addition to pumas, sightings of guanacos and birds typical of the Patagonian steppe are common. Among them, the Andean condor stands out, regularly soaring over the vast open expanses of the property.

The proximity of Torres del Paine National Park further expands the possibilities offered by the estancia. Full-day excursions to the park are organised from the hotel, providing access to lakes, glaciers, trails and viewpoints. This closeness makes Cerro Guido a strategic base for exploring the park without giving up the tranquillity of the countryside. Cerro Guido offers an experience closely tied to the land and rural work. Sleeping in historic buildings, gaining first-hand insight into livestock farming, riding across the estate on horseback and observing wildlife in its natural habitat are all part of a coherent proposal. The aim is not to accumulate activities, but to understand how a Patagonian estancia operates and how production, landscape and nature coexist in balance.



Guanaco in the surroundings of Cerro Guido
Puma in the surroundings of Torres del Paine National Park





By: Julián Sacristán – comunicacion@wfm.es

Antonio Meléndez Peso portrays a mature and tormented Goya who, through one of his most peculiar and controversial works, *Los Disparates*, unfolds a dark period in the artist's life and, at the same time, one of exceptional creative brilliance.

In the words of Antonio Meléndez Peso himself, interpreting this mature Goya represents "a mixture of great excitement and much duende, which I express with my voice, my body and my soul".

The production is a musical performance that draws the audience into the mind of Francisco de Goya through an immersive experience, conceived as a blend of theatre, music, art, flamenco and visual creation. A proposal that builds an intimate and enveloping atmosphere, to the point of making us feel as if we were inside the engravings of *Los Disparates*.



The Los Disparates series offers a critical — and at times almost magical — vision of the human condition. In the performance, engraving number 11, *La cena de gitanos*, takes on a special prominence, serving as the symbolic and narrative axis of this staged reading of Francisco de Goya's work.

Marien Muñoz embodies the Duchess of Alba, a figure who represents Goya's conscience and, at the same time, all the women the painter portrayed throughout his life. A key character in the emotional and symbolic balance of the production.

Artistic direction is by Antonio Carbonell, who underscores the need, today more than ever, for new "Goyas" capable of reflecting on what is happening in the contemporary world. The flamenco cast accompanying the production is made up of top-level artists, recognised both in Spain and internationally. It is a performance to be experienced and felt, far removed from the usual flamenco circuit in Madrid, and it can be seen from Thursday to Sunday on the Paseo del Pintor Rosales.

In addition, Café Flamenco Goya Live Art collaborates with the United Nations on initiatives aimed at reducing social inequalities through art.





By: Julián Sacristán – comunicacion@wfm.es

Discover the cultural and historical heritage of the Canary Islands in the latest adventure of Tadeo Jones, The Legacy of the Sun of the West

In collaboration with the Government of the Canary Islands, they propose a new adventure starring Tadeo Jones: The Legacy of the Sun of the West. A journey through Canarian heritage designed to bring the history, legends and identity of the archipelago closer through Tadeo's adventures. Across nine levels, players travel through spectacular settings, from the Cueva de los Verdes to the Alto de Garajonay, while discovering stories, real treasures and ancestral legends.

In the Gammera Nest project, historians and Canarian museums have taken part, faithfully recreating each island of the archipelago and the 24 objects that must be found, as explained by CEO Daniel Sánchez.

Spain has an exceptional cultural heritage. Can video games become a form of tourism?

Without doubt, video games can act as a new gateway to cultural tourism, sparking interest in experiencing a place in person. In reality, we are talking about the “tourist of tomorrow”.

How do you strike a balance between education and entertainment?

The key to this balance lies in not lecturing; we do it by embedding knowledge within the adventure and by opting for emotional learning that endures, rather than an academic one.

How can a Spanish studio compete with Spanish cultural content in an industry dominated by major international studios?

We do not compete on budget, but on values. Committing to learning, education and stories set in familiar places generates a strong sense of belonging. The local approach becomes a distinctive asset. Moreover, younger audiences increasingly value what is authentic and close to home, and local developers are best placed to convey those feelings.

Why set Tadeo Jones's adventure in the Canary Islands?

Because what began as an idea to bring young people and tourists closer to the islands re-



Daniel Sánchez, CEO of Gammera Nest © Latrastienda

vealed an archipelago rich in history, legends such as San Borondón, and unique landscapes. Each island has its own identity, and we wanted to reflect that diversity, showing how culture and tourism can complement each other in the digital environment.

Which island was the most complex to recreate?

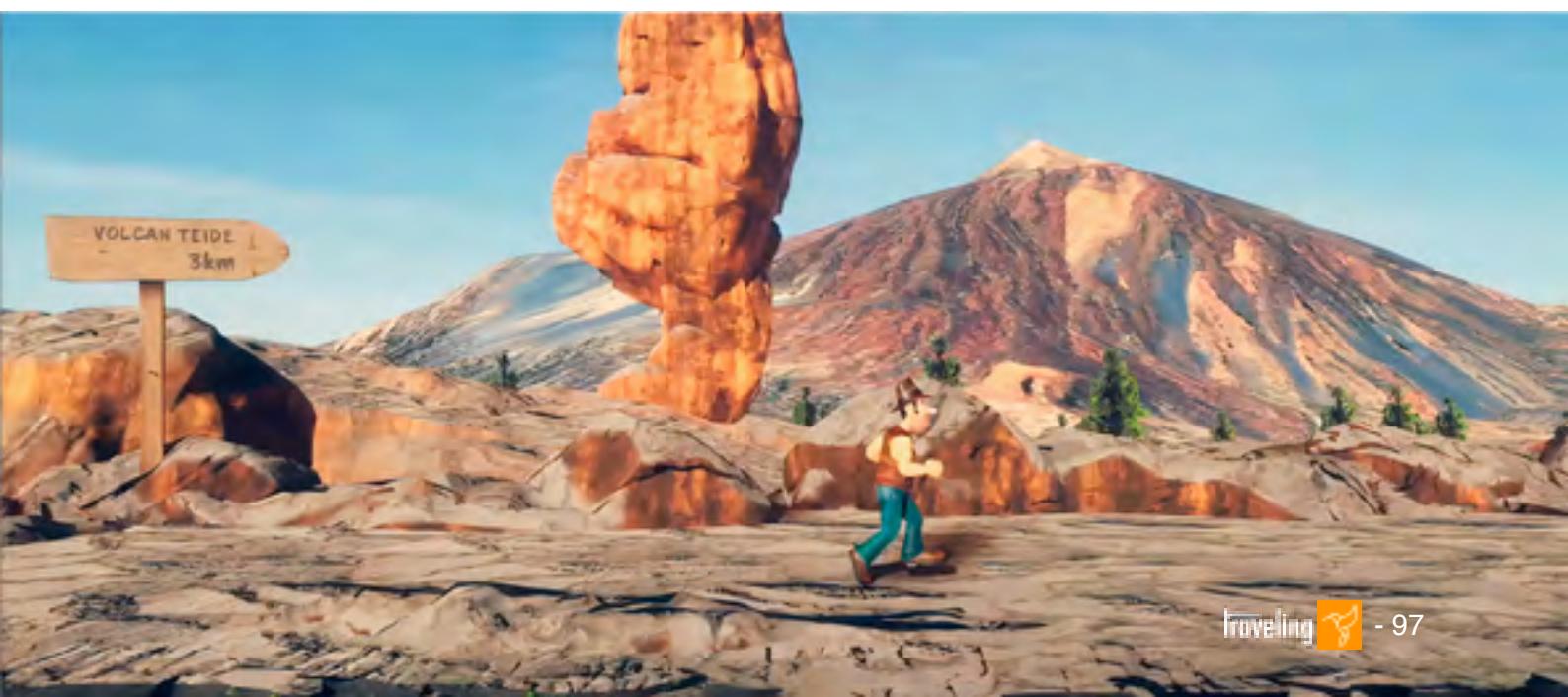
On La Palma, we decided to focus on one of its greatest assets: its night sky, recognised as a Starlight Reserve. We designed a night-time level with references to the Astronomical Observatory, which represented a significant creative challenge.

You have mentioned that your aim is to draw the attention of younger audiences to cultural richness. What is your real motivation?

We want children to discover that behind every stone or symbol there is a story, and to learn to value their surroundings. If we awaken that curiosity and respect for culture, the objective has been achieved.

Can these video games change perceptions?

A well-designed video game can be one of the most effective educational tools of the 21st century. The problem is not screens, but how they are used. I realised this when I saw a young child learning effortlessly while playing.





Manena's Window

Travel Anecdotes

Words and Photos: Manena Munar 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"

Celebrating the Chinese New Year in Toulouse, illuminated by the dazzling Zigong Lantern Festival.

The legendary deer of Fuzhu, the giant panda, and a distant roar rising from the throats of the dinosaurs that have made the Jurassic city of Zigong famous welcome us as we enter the Festival.



Night-time walk along the banks of the Garonne.

I have always been keenly aware that this profession of errant spectator that I have chosen is a path full of surprises, and a magnificent way of indulging curiosity here and there, discovering places and living experiences that would otherwise have been practically impossible. This prelude comes to mind because, on opening my window in the depths of winter, the icy air of the season carried images of a dreamlike, luminous world. Mythological animals, Chinese pagodas with sweeping four-sided roofs, and a flora that could only be discovered in dreams formed the setting for that winter night. And yet I was not on the Asian continent, but in the Pink City of Toulouse.

When my travelling companion and I arrived in Toulouse, it was pouring with rain, so stepping into Maison Soclo felt like coming home. Charming, very French in character, with delightful details scattered throughout the house, and a welcoming bed that I tested — and from which it was extremely hard to rise in order to head to the Lantern Festival.



Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Jacques

The umbrellas of the Garonne

Umbrellas in hand, the two of us set off on foot towards the Festival; we did not know each other well, but as so often happens when travelling, once conversation began we soon found ourselves sharing family details, exchanging tastes — whether common or not — and, most importantly, laughing at the smallest things that in “normal” life we would probably never even have noticed. I wanted to show my friend one of Toulouse’s open secrets, so we made a brief yet essential stop at N°5 Wine Bar. If it had already caught my attention on previous trips, my fondness for the bar only grew as I tasted once again some of its carefully selected wines, raising a toast and reaffirming the skill of its owners, Thomas Cabrol and Anne Cabrol, and their wonderful team, in running an establishment considered among the best in the world in its field.

During our winter night walk along the banks of the Garonne, whose arches and bridges doubled in the reflections of the water — as did the old hospital — the few leaves still clinging to the branches, in shades of ochre and sienna, fell to the ground, not before performing a graceful dance at the mercy of the wind. Silence reigned; the occasional passer-by crossed our path, wrapped beneath an umbrella. And suddenly, both of us at once, as if by silent agreement, we acknowledged the privilege of being there on that deliciously foul winter night, watching the leaves fall softly along the banks of the Garonne.



La Mucca Bookshop, a temple of paper



Thomas Cabrol at his N°5 Wine Bar

CHINESE NEW YEAR IN TOULOUSE



The pink-hued streets of Toulouse

Emerging from the Soyuz at Cité de l'Espace

Forever, Toulouse.

As I have already mentioned, I had been in Toulouse before; a cosmopolitan and varied city with much to offer. I had visited the Airbus factory, the Cité de l'Espace, and had even climbed into the Soyuz capsule, despite my claustrophobia, always keeping one hand gripping the porthole window, just in case it might close. I had even rummaged around La Mucca Bookshop, a paper lover's paradise where you would take everything home, and where fascinating posters from the pioneering days of Aéropostale in Toulouse can be found. I was captivated by the history of Aéropostale, especially that of one of its pilots, the celebrated writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who stayed in a room at Le Grand Balcon, preserved exactly as it was when its guest wrote *The Little Prince*. A book I have read time and again, and which I understand and enjoy more with each passing year. I languish over the flower for which the Little Prince gives himself so completely — fragile, beautiful, a symbol of love, and native, like its prince, to Asteroid B-612. Reflecting on the figure of Saint-Exupéry by the river's edge, it occurred to me — and I shared this curious thought with my companion — to imagine what it would be like if, in that dark, rainy, spellbound moment, we were to see the Minotaur appear out of the mist: a 47-tonne, 46-foot-high automaton of wood and steel, half machine, half animal, half monster, half angel, created by Halle de la Machine under the direction of François Delarozière. There is no doubt it would be a ghostly apparition, impossible to forget.



The famous Minotaur of Halle de la Machine





The Zigong Lantern



The Zigong Lantern



The Zigong Lantern



Tribute to Aéropostale of Toulouse

Seeing is believing

Returning to the many experiences our work leads us to, discovering the Zigong Lantern Festival was a dreamlike experience. As we entered Parc du Ritouret, in the town of Blagnac, where the festival was held, we had to pause before forming an opinion. All at once, the luminous spectacle of bridges, pagodas, giant pandas, serpents, dragons and references to the epic of Aéropostale in Toulouse left us breathless... and rightly so, for, as we were told, Zigong has been renowned since time immemorial for its mastery in the manufacture of the lanterns that illuminate Chinese New Year, earning it the reputation of Capital of the Lanterns. More than eighty Chinese artisans — heirs to generations of lantern-making craftsmen, welders, seamstresses and ceramists — from Zigong (in Sichuan), the city of lanterns, have created this spellbinding installation, comprising 180 tonnes of metal, 80,000 light bulbs, 1 tonne of porcelain, 50,000 square metres of silk and some 30,000 ceramic pieces.

We listened to this information in silence when Pearl S. Buck came to mind, whose books I read during my adolescence and which marked the beginning of my interest and curiosity about China — an interest that grew further when I came to know Shanghai. In fact, I am currently watching, utterly mesmerised, the magnificent series *Blossoms Shanghai* by Wong Kar-wai, with a pace as vibrant as the city in which it unfolds, when the madams of Huanghe Road called the shots in the business deals being cooked up in Shanghai — and rather than cod, they brought to their tables snakes, turtles, century eggs and other delicacies that left diners in their restaurants utterly at their mercy.

[The Zigong Lanterns offer a dreamlike representation of China's ancestral way of life](#)

Giant panda at the Zigong Lantern Festival



CHINESE NEW YEAR IN TOULOUSE



Subtlety, elegance, courtesy... and much more

But returning to the China of Toulouse, among its forty-five luminous tableaux there is the 2D and 3D installation measuring some 262 feet in length, depicting the Daguan Yuan garden in Beijing, inspired by the 18th-century novel Dream of the Red Chamber by Cao Xueqin. And then there is the one that envelops a nine-storey temple rising 49 feet high, while an enormous dragon bathes in the lake where the pagoda boat floats. Piercing traditional Chinese music accompanies the walk until one reaches an arch of blue trees sheltering a village where women, exquisitely dressed, stroll across a bridge or recline on a chaise longue. I could not help but notice my own attire — jeans, a warm jumper, nothing more, and my hair in complete disarray, if truth be told. I stopped looking at the dreamlike Chinese maidens of the spectacle and thought: “It probably takes them an entire morning to get dressed, and I throw myself together in five minutes.”

However, back at the hotel I made an effort to make the most of my suitcase and dressed as the occasion required to dine at the palatial Le Bibent, celebrating the Chinese New Year in style, with the luminous images of the Zigong Lantern Festival still dancing on my retina.

Images depicting ancestral Chinese life at the Zigong Lantern Festival



traveling gourmets



FLAVOURS OF JIANGSU

A journey through
its cuisine

WINERIES WITH SOUL

Grupo Diez Siglos
The triumph of unity

ZAMORA

The city told through its
kitchens

HUTONG MADRID

New decor and a stronger
taste of China

Zamora Gastronomic route

Text: Helena Carazo – helenacarazo@hotmail.es

Photography: archive

Product, wine and tradition come together in a walking route through markets, taverns and riverside promenades that explain the culinary identity of Zamora. Here, gastronomy is not a tourist attraction, but a way of life passed down through generations: a cuisine built on local produce, respect

Product, wine and tradition come together in a walking route through markets, taverns and riverside promenades that explain, without artifice or shortcuts, the culinary identity of Zamora. Here, gastronomy is not conceived as an experience designed for the visitor, but as a way of life passed down through generations, embedded in daily routines and sustained by produce, time and a constant relationship with the land. Eating in Zamora is, above all, the continuation of a custom.

The route begins where everyday life has always started: at the Mercado Municipal de Abastos. Beneath its historic structure, the local larder is gathered in its purest form, offering a faithful reflection of Zamoran cuisine. Butchers, delicatessens, stalls selling pulses, cheeses and bread encapsulate a culinary tradition rooted in the countryside, shaped by extensive livestock farming and an austere agriculture that has, for centuries, adapted to a demanding climate and a rhythm dictated by the seasons. Queso Zamorano, patiently

cured meats, pulses protected by geographical indications and local honey appear here without added narrative: they are everyday products, not relics or museum pieces.

The Abastos market is currently undergoing renovation works, but it will retain its original character as a market for local, fresh produce. A temporary market is presently operating in Plaza de la Marina. This is a gastronomy that begins long before the plate and is built on direct relationships with produ-

Abastos Market



GASTRONOMIC DESTINATIONS

cers and shopkeepers, within a logic of proximity that remains fully alive.

Just a few metres away, the smell of bread marks the next stop. Bakeries and pastry shops preserve recipes that form part of the city's daily breakfast and collective memory: aceitadas, rebojos, cañas zamoranas. Simple sweets, tied to the oven and the workshop, which seek neither sophistication nor surprise, yet explain better than any narrative the continuity of a living tradition. Here, sweet dishes are not an exceptional celebration, but an everyday accompaniment, linked to coffee, conversation and the unhurried rhythm of the morning.

From the market area, the route moves into the old town. Narrow streets, intimate squares and the constant presence of Romanesque stone provide the setting for one of the city's most recognisable gastronomic areas. Between the Plaza Mayor, the Rúa de los Francos and the surroundings of Los Herreros, Zamora reveals its most popular and familiar face: historic bars,

long-standing taverns and restaurants where traditional cooking continues to occupy the centre of the narrative.

Here, tapas are not an imported fashion nor a contemporary gesture, but a natural way of eating that forms part of the city's daily pulse. Small portions invite tasting, sharing and extending the conversation. On many bars appears bacalao a la tranca, an austere and robust dish, a direct heir to fasting-day cooking and to the historical importance of fish in an inland city. It coexists with garlic soups, tortillas, stews and specialities that have been repeated for decades without the need for adjustments or aesthetic reinterpretations. In restaurants, menus speak the language of the territory. Spoon dishes and pulses with protected origin — Garbanzos de Fuentesaúco or Lentejas de Tierra de Campos — take centre stage, giving substance to slow-cooked, hearty and recognisable stews. Garlic soup, simple and humble, occupies a central place: a Castilian dish of popular origin, with multiple versions throughout Spain, yet deeply



Terraces at the Duero watermills



ROUTE THROUGH ZAMORA



Codfish stew



Zamora-style rice



Roast suckling lamb

rooted in this province, where it was traditionally eaten early in the morning to face the day ahead.

Arroz a la zamorana, tripe, stews prepared with beef from Aliste, or bacalao a la tranca complete a cuisine designed to nourish rather than to put on display. Above them all stands the great gastronomic ritual of the region: lechazo from Castilla y León, slowly roasted, without artifice, with time and water as its only essential ingredients. A cuisine that allows no shortcuts or concessions, faithful to techniques passed down from generation to generation, where simplicity is the result of knowledge, not a renunciation.

All of this remains alive today in Zamora, from traditional inns to author-led restaurants, as well as bars and casas de comidas where this heritage is interpreted with respect, whether through classic stews, carefully measured contemporary readings or in tapas form, always accompanied by wine as an inseparable part of the table.

Wine finds its natural place at the table in Zamora. The reds and whites of the D.O. Tierra del Vino sit alongside the wines of Toro and the D.O. Arribes del Duero. Zamora has its own Wine Route, based on the D.O. Tierra del Vino. The Ruta del Vino de Zamora joined the Asociación Española de Rutas del Vino in September 2021. Along the Zamora route are wines made from red varieties such as Tempranillo, Garnacha and Cabernet Sauvignon, and from white varieties including moscatel de grano menudo, Malvasía, Verdejo, Albariño and Palomino.

After lunch, sobremesa invites a slower pace and further walking. The stroll continues through quiet streets where specialised shops selling local produce appear. Aged and mature cheeses, single-flower honeys, wines from small wineries and artisan preserves allow for a deeper understanding of the local larder. These are places where pro-

ducts are explained with knowledge and sold with both the traveller and the regular customer in mind, without turning them into souvenirs or losing their original function.

The route continues towards the river. The walk along the Duero introduces a necessary pause and changes the scale of the city. Among watermills, bridges and green areas, Zamora opens up and recalls the historical importance of the river as an agricultural boundary and vital axis.

Here, gastronomy is also understood through the landscape: the Duero has shaped crops, pastures and ways of life that remain present on the table. The natural surroundings help explain why this cuisine is sober, direct and rooted in produce. The day concludes in the urban woodland of Valorio, with terraces that allow outdoor dining when the weather permits. The cooking maintains its link to tradition, but is expressed with greater freedom: rice dishes, grilled meats, cod and stews reinterpreted with respect, always based on local produce. There is no rupture, nor any desire for rupture. There is continuity, adaptation and common sense.

Zamora is not explored through guidebooks or passing fashions. It is walked slowly, tasted without haste and understood little by little. This route does not seek to cover everything, but to trace a clear and coherent thread: market, produce, traditional cooking, wine and landscape.



Garlic soups



<https://rutavinozamora.com>



<https://turismo-zamora.com/>





Traditional private dining rooms in classic restaurants

Jiangsu

Tradition, method and elegance in Chinese cuisine

Text and photography: Jose A. Muñoz

Before speaking about Jiangsu, it is worth understanding the broader framework of Chinese gastronomy, one of the oldest and most structured culinary traditions in the world. For centuries, China did not conceive its cuisine as a collection of recipes, but as a cultural expression linked to territory, climate, agriculture and philosophical thought. In this context, tradition initially recognised five major historical cuisines, associated with the country's principal geographical and political axes: the cereal-based, courtly north; the riverine, rice-growing south; the coastal regions; the interior zones; and the mountainous territories. These were cuisines deeply connected to subsistence, trade and social life.

Over time, particularly from the Qing dynasty onwards, this culinary map became more refined, eventually crystallising into the canon of the eight great cuisines recognised today — a classification that remains valid and groups clearly defined styles: Sichuan, Guangdong (Cantonese), Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Hunan and Anhui. More than fixed labels, these cuisines represent different ways of understanding produce, technique and the balance of flavours. Within this group, Jiangsu occupies a singular place: it is perhaps the cuisine in which technique reaches its greatest subtlety and where elegance becomes the guiding principle.

The cuisine of Jiangsu

Invisible technique and cultural depth

The cuisine of Jiangsu cannot be separated from its history or its geography. Located in the fertile delta of the Yangtze River, this region has for centuries been one of the most prosperous in China, crossed by rivers, canals and lakes that ensured an abundant and steady larder. To this natural wealth was added an exceptional social context: Jiangsu was a land of imperial officials, enlightened merchants and scholars, an elite that turned the table into an extension of culture, protocol and education.

From this emerges a cuisine that deliberately avoids excess. Jiangsu gastronomy is one of precision, where technique is not displayed but concealed. Knife work reaches an almost academic level: exact, regular cuts designed to respect the texture of the ingredient and ensure even cooking. This obsession with detail explains why Jiangsu is considered one of the most difficult cuisines to execute properly. It allows no shortcuts.

Mastery of low heat is another of its pillars. Stewing, braising and slow cooking are common techniques, applied with patience and rigour. The aim is not to concentrate flavours aggressively, but to extract them gently, preserving the identity of each ingredient. The result is dishes with a silky texture, clean flavours and a continuous sense of balance on the palate.



Traditional lacquered duck served with its pancakes



Fish casserole in a delicate broth

Freshwater sea bass in five flavours





Stewed eel with chives, served in a casserole



Blanched okra with soy and sesame sauce. Lower photograph: sweet-and-sour fish shaped like a squirrel

Among the most representative dishes stands the celebrated Lion's Head (Shīzi Tóu), large pork meatballs made from meat chopped by hand, never minced, and slowly braised in a clear broth. The final texture is surprisingly light, almost airy. Alongside it appear classics such as Jiangsu-style braised pork, glossy and meltingly tender, or Yangzhou chicken, cooked with extreme delicacy.

Freshwater fish plays an absolute leading role. Sweet-and-sour mandarin fish (sweet-and-sour fish shaped like a squirrel) is one of the great technical exercises of this cuisine: the fish is cut into a fan shape before frying, achieving a perfect balance between a crisp exterior and a juicy interior. The sweet-and-sour sauce is subtle and carefully measured, never intrusive. Braised eel dishes, gently stir-fried prawns and clear soups made from river fish and shellfish are also common.

Vegetables do not play a secondary role. Lotus root, bamboo shoots, Chinese cabbage, mushrooms and seasonal greens are treated with the same respect as proteins, often served as standalone dishes designed to refresh and balance the meal as a whole.

Seasonality sets the rhythm of the repertoire

Autumn is particularly significant, with the arrival of the hairy crab from Yangcheng Lake, considered one of the great delicacies of the country.

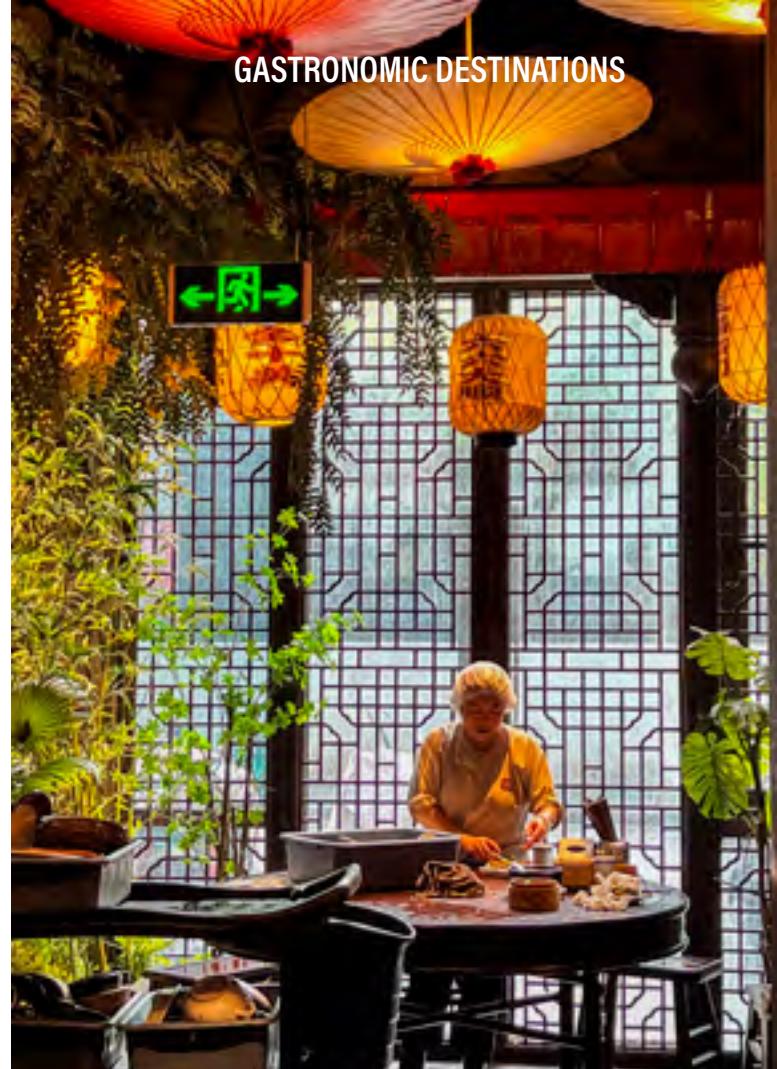


Its consumption follows a precise and almost ceremonial order, reflecting the importance of time and timing in Jiangsu cuisine.

At the table, there are also clear rituals. Tea is always served at the beginning of the meal, as a way of preparing the palate and aiding digestion. It may be green tea or jasmine tea, and it discreetly accompanies the first dishes.

Significantly, fried rice is never served at the start, but at the end of the meal, as a closing dish “in case there is still hunger”. It is a deeply rooted custom. There are countless versions, from the popular three-delicacies fried rice (Yangzhou Chǎofàn), with egg, prawns and ham, to much richer preparations known as eight-delicacies fried rice (Bā bǎo chǎofàn), or even imperial versions with multiple ingredients, designed to make use of the noble remnants of the banquet. Rice, far from being a simple accompaniment, acts as a comforting final note.

Today, Jiangsu cuisine is experiencing a calm and thoughtful reinterpretation. New generations of chefs are recovering classic recipes, refining techniques and engaging with modernity without betraying their essence. In an increasingly globalised Chinese gastronomic landscape, Jiangsu continues to defend values that are becoming ever rarer: patience, precision and depth. A cuisine that does not seek to dazzle, but to endure.



Traditional cuisine in a classic restaurant in Jiangsu

Warm vegetable salad with tofu skin (yuba)



Braised pork with steamed glutinous rice



Braised lotus root in soy sauce



Crispy stir-fried pork belly, Jiangsu style





Diez Siglos

When unity sustains the wine

Text: Editorial Team – Photography: Grupo Diez Siglos

Demijohns ageing in solera



In the Rueda Designation of Origin, where vineyards stretch across open horizons and the landscape sets the rhythm of rural life, there are projects that are not born out of a drive for growth or market urgency. Instead, they emerge from a shared decision. In 2009, a group of 65 wine-growers took an unusual step: setting aside individual work to build a shared winery that would protect their grapes, their craft and their way of understanding wine. Thus Grupo Diez Siglos was born, as a collective expression of a land and those who cultivate it.

The context was far from simple. Viticulture in Rueda was undergoing a period of transformation, with an increasingly demanding market and growing pressure on grape prices. Faced with this scenario, the response was not individual but collective. The objective was clear: to regain control over the destiny of the harvest and turn grapes into wine without losing the bond with their origin.



Verdejo as a living heritage

The history of this winery cannot be understood without Verdejo, the variety that has defined the character of Rueda Designation of Origin wines for centuries. Adapted to stony soils and an extreme continental climate, the vine has learned to withstand harsh winters and dry summers, producing wines that are fresh, aromatic and marked by pronounced acidity.

Here, Verdejo is not treated as a commercial label, but as agricultural heritage. It is the grape worked by entire generations and the one that continues to set the rhythm of the countryside. Each harvest condenses months of observation, discreet decisions and a direct relationship with the land that allows no shortcuts.

Alongside it, Sauvignon Blanc, authorised by the denomination, appears as a complementary variety that brings different registers and broadens the expressive range of the project, always without blurring the identity of Rueda.

Wines that speak in a quiet voice

The range of wines responds to a simple idea: clarity. There is no excess of labels and no desire to impress. Each line has its place and fulfils a specific role, from wines conceived for everyday drinking

to expressions that invite a more unhurried reading. The different labels share the same philosophy: loyalty to the land, freshness and balance. Wine is not conceived as an end in itself, but as a natural companion to the table and to conversation. In this project, style is not imposed; it is allowed to be felt.

The winery as a tool

The facilities are understood as a working space, not as a stage. Vinification relies on contemporary techniques that allow control at every phase of the process, ensuring precision and cleanliness in the wines. At the same time, practices rooted in the region's winemaking tradition are maintained. The occasional use of glass demijohns for certain wines connects with older ways of working wine in Castilla. It is neither a nostalgic nor a decorative gesture, but a reminder that innovation does not always mean adding something new; sometimes it means recovering what already existed. Here, the winery serves the grape — not the other way round.

The value of the vineyard and those who work it

The soul of this project lies in its human foundation. Behind each bottle are growers who know their plots, who unders-

Here, wine is not put on display: it is explained and shared, from its origin and with respect for time, as an honest and serene way of understanding its true identity

tand the soil and who know how to read the vineyard throughout the year. The diversity of vineyards spread across the Rueda Designation of Origin adds richness to the whole and makes it possible to work with different expressions of the territory. The collective structure does not dilute those identities; it brings them together. Sharing decisions, knowledge and responsibility is part of the model. The wine, in this case, is the visible result of quiet, constant work.

Opening the door with purpose

From this same logic, the winery has incorporated a visitor experience conceived as an exercise in transparency. The tour of the facilities makes it possible to understand the winemaking process and to place each wine in its proper context. The aim is not to showcase, but to explain. The guided tastings that accompany the visit are designed as a space for dialogue, where wine is interpreted through its origin rather than through posturing. A calm way of approaching the winemaking culture of the Rueda Designation of Origin, without noise or haste.

A project with deep roots

In a sector increasingly defined by speed and image, this collective project shows that wine retains its soul when it is built on respect for origin and for time. The union of winegrowers, the defence of Verdejo and coherence in every decision have made it possible to consolidate a winery that looks to the future without renouncing its memory. In a land where vineyards continue to shape the landscape, Grupo Diez Siglos stands as proof that the soul of wine is not manufactured: it is shared.

**Diez
Siglos**



Solera wine 1985



The 1985 wine revives the memory of the old solera wine of Serrada in a very limited edition of 900 bottles. It is born from old Verdejo vines planted in 1985 in the La Coma Alta area, a demanding setting that shapes its character from the outset. Its production combines 12 months of oxidative ageing in glass demijohns under the sun, following traditional practices that have almost disappeared, with 24 months of ageing in French oak barrels. The result is an author's wine, deep and complex, where time, sun and wood enter into dialogue with grape and land. More than a wine, 1985 is a tribute to winemaking tradition, to patience, and to the legacy of those who worked these vines.

Nékora

Nékora is a white wine designed to be enjoyed naturally, without technicalities or solemnity. Made exclusively from Verdejo grapes and protected by the Rueda Designation of Origin, it appears pale yellow with greenish highlights, clean and bright. On the nose, it offers fresh aromas of green apple, tropical fruit and herbaceous notes of fennel, very typical of the variety. On the palate it is balanced and refreshing, with well-integrated acidity, a light mouthfeel and a pleasant, lingering finish that invites another glass. With an alcohol content of around 12.5% ABV and presented in a 75 cl bottle, it is a young, versatile and easy-to-understand wine, ideal with fish, seafood, delicate rice dishes or simply enjoyed on its own, well chilled, as a faithful and accessible expression of the classic Rueda style.



X Siglos Verdejo barrel-fermented



It is a composed and precise interpretation of the emblematic variety of the Rueda Designation of Origin. Made exclusively from Verdejo, it comes from vineyards rooted in stony soils of alluvial origin, where the continental climate sets the pace of ripening. Fermentation takes place in French oak barrels, followed by ageing that brings structure, volume and well-integrated complexity, without diluting varietal identity. On the nose, it retains the herbaceous and fruit-driven character typical of Verdejo, accompanied by subtle creamy and spicy notes. On the palate it is balanced, persistent and serious, a white wine conceived for the table and for time.



Hutong Madrid

New décor and a stronger taste of China

Text: Jose A. Muñoz – Photography: Hutong Madrid



A

fter seven months of closure and a comprehensive refurbishment, Hutong Madrid reopens its doors in Madrid with a renewed proposal that strengthens its position as one of the city's leading references for high-end Chinese cuisine. Located in the Salamanca district, the restaurant enters a new phase in which space, technique and repertoire engage in a more coherent dialogue, without losing the essence that has defined it since its opening.

The reopening does not represent a break, but rather a refinement. Hutong remains faithful to Chinese gastronomic tradition, now framed within a more intimate and sophisticated setting. The new interior design favours sober lines, controlled lighting and a distinctly Oriental aesthetic: wallpapers brought from China, ornamental vases, natural wood and geometric patterns in dark tones create a serene atmosphere, conceived to accompany the culinary experience without distraction. This is complemented by two private dining rooms, one larger space designed for groups and celebrations, and another more discreet room, intended for gatherings that seek privacy and calm.

The ritual of Peking Duck

The heart of Hutong Madrid continues to beat around its most emblematic dish: Peking Duck, prepared using the traditional method. At the restaurant entrance, the wood-fired oven offers a glimpse of the process: the whole duck

is roasted for around 90 minutes over fruitwood, achieving skin that is thin, crisp and perfectly golden, and meat that is juicy and fragrant. Service unfolds as a gastronomic ritual. First, the crisp skin is served with caviar on glass bread; then the duck is carved and presented with fine pancakes, cucumber, spring onion, yellow radish, quince and the chef's homemade hoisin sauce. Diners take part, take their time and assemble each mouthful to their own taste. It is an experience that encourages unhurried eating and remains one of the great reasons to walk through Hutong's door.

Live dim sum and an expanded menu

One of the most visible additions of this new phase is the open dim sum counter, located just inside the entrance. Here, a specialised master prepares these fundamental pieces of Cantonese cuisine live, reaffirming craftsmanship and technical precision. Juicy pork xiaolongbao, beef xiumai with broth inside, or prawn hakao wrapped in a delicate rice dough — suitable for coeliacs — are made to order, bringing freshness and authenticity to the experience.

The menu expands with new recipes that enrich the journey without blurring its identity. Alongside classics such as gong bao chicken, Sichuan-style tripe or sea bass with sweet soy, new dishes appear, including squid in spicy sauce, intense yet well balanced, or a casserole of sea bass and prawns with pickled peppers, marked by strong regional character. One of the house's most beloved dishes also remains: pork belly cooked at low temperature, a traditional Shanghai recipe served with bao, directly connecting with Chinese home cooking.

An elegant China, without artifice

With this reopening, Hutong Madrid reaffirms its commitment to a rigorous, elegant and clearly defined Chinese cuisine, far removed from clichés. Everything in the restaurant — from the tableware to the music — is conceived to create an immersive, coherent experience without excess. A long-awaited return that consolidates Hutong as an essential address for understanding high-end Chinese cuisine in Madrid, now with a space worthy of its gastronomic ambition.



**Hutong
Madrid**

Squid in spicy sauce



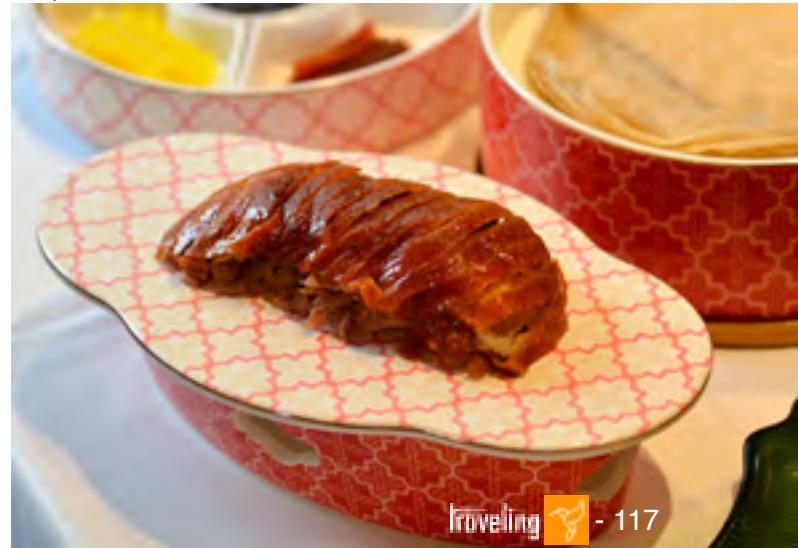
Stir-fried lamb with cumin



Arctic clams with special sauce



Lacquered duck





MATERIA PRIMA

Text: Jose A. Muñoz – Photography: Materia Prima



Ricardo Garrastazu

Opening a restaurant with a focus on product quality is not a new idea. What is truly complex is sustaining that approach day after day, making it understandable for the diner and, at the same time, accessible. Materia Prima, opened in September 2012, achieves this through a premise as simple as it is unusual: here, you come to choose the produce, not to interpret a menu.

The first impact does not come when you sit down at the table, but beforehand. The display counters act as a declaration of intent. Fish and seafood freshly arrived from the auctions of Isla Cristina and Ayamonte are presented naturally, as in a well-stocked market. In the adjacent display, meats from La Finca complete the narrative for those seeking prime, carefully handled cuts. The message is clear: what you see is what you eat.

Choose, measure, enjoy

One of Materia Prima's greatest strengths is restoring to the customer an essential decision that contemporary dining had gradually diluted over time: quantity. Here, there are no fixed portions or predefined formats. Diners are free to decide whether they want three boiled prawns or three dozen grilled langoustines, whether they prefer a brief gesture of pleasure or to build a long, unhurried meal around exceptional produce. The limit is set by appetite — and by the desire of the moment — never by a rigid menu or a kitchen that imposes its rules. This approach, far from making the experience more expensive, renders it more transparent and coherent. You pay exactly for what you consume, without artifice, without fillers and without unnecessary concessions. A philosophy that also extends to the takeaway service, allowing customers to take that same product home.



Fish and seafood displayed as in a market



Carabinero prawn on crisp toast, with guacamole and spiced sauce

Anchovy cachopos

A kitchen that never gets in the way

Behind the project is Ricardo Garrastazu, an entrepreneur with a very clear idea of what his restaurant should be. The founding anecdote — tired of oversized portions that did not work at home — neatly explains the spirit of the place: cooking for enjoyment, not to impress.

The menu follows that same direction. Clear, seasonal recipes, conceived to accompany the produce rather than overshadow it. Vegetables play a leading role from the outset: asparagus, artichokes, tomatoes with genuine flavour, treated with respect and just the right technique. These opening dishes prepare the palate and remind us that well-understood simplicity is a form of rigour.

When it comes to seafood, the selection varies according to the auction and the season, but always responds to the same criteria: freshness and precise cooking. Sea bass, monkfish, cod or prawns appear without disguise, prepared to highlight texture and flavour. On the land side, meats find the same balance: from a finely tuned steak tartare to mel-

tingly tender cheeks or a beef loin that needs no argument beyond its origin and maturation.

The experience is completed by a short yet carefully curated selection of homemade desserts. There are no fireworks, just recognisable recipes, well executed: a fine apple tart, cheesecake or torrija with coconut ice cream, adding freshness and contrast. A coherent ending to the meal, where flavour once again takes centre stage.

The wine list accompanies with intelligence, designed to add rather than impose, and the service maintains a warm, professional tone that reinforces the feeling of being in a place where everything fits.

Materia Prima does not chase fashions or grandiloquent discourse. Its strength lies in understanding that true luxury today is still eating good produce at the right moment, in the desired quantity and without interference. A concept that, more than a decade on, continues to work because it rests on something as solid as it is difficult to replicate: coherence.



MATERIA PRIMA



Piantao

Text: Rosario Alonso
Photography: Piantao



View of Piantao Sagasta
Lower photograph: Piantao Legazpi



In a city where the culinary offer is renewed at great speed, Piantao has managed to build something more difficult to achieve than immediate success: a solid, recognisable identity. Since opening in 2018, the restaurant has redefined the place of the Argentine grill within Madrid's high-end gastronomy, elevating asado to a technical, thoughtful and contemporary terrain without betraying its popular roots.

At Piantao, fire is neither a scenic device nor a passing trend. It is the backbone of an honest, direct cuisine, deeply respectful of the product.

Each dish is born of mastery over the embers, an understanding of time and temperature, and a perspective that sees tradition as a starting point, never as a limit. Behind the project is Javier Brichetto, an Argentine chef with a solid background in haute cuisine and a key role in disseminating the culture of fire. His contribution has been decisive in technicalising the grill without stripping it of its soul. At Piantao, Brichetto has shown that asado can engage in dialogue with contemporary gastronomy without losing its primitive, almost ritual character.

The restaurant's very name anticipates this spirit. Piantao is a word from Buenos Aires lunfardo that refers to a passionate, visceral, romantic kind of madness. That intensity defines the ethos of the project: a grill without make-up, where absolute protagonism rests with the raw material and technique applied with surgical precision. There are no artifices or concessions; there is product, fire and knowledge.

One of Piantao's great milestones has been reclaiming cuts traditionally considered secondary, granting them a new gastronomic dignity. Sweetbreads, skirt steak or picanha occupy a central place here, treated with a sensitivity that has made them essential for meat lovers. Piantao was the first Argentine restaurant in

Spain to technicalise the grill, exploring new accompaniments and contemporary readings without breaking its bond with tradition.

The menu is built around a carefully curated selection of meats from around the world and seasonal produce, always under the command of the embers. Among the most celebrated dishes are homemade empanadas, precisely golden sweetbreads, smoked asado croquettes, grilled vegetables and emblematic cuts such as ojo de bife or skirt steak. The sweet chapter deserves special mention: the cheesecake has become one of Madrid's most sought-after desserts, a perfect synthesis of technique and gustatory memory.

At Piantao Legazpi, one of its two Madrid locations, diners can opt for the Experience Menu, a set proposal designed to explore the Piantao universe in a coherent and balanced way. Available at €60 per person, it includes one drink and begins with iconic starters such as the empanada criolla or smoked picanha vitello tonnato. The journey continues with a selection of grilled cuts — picanha, bife de chorizo, ojo de bife or marinated chicken — and concludes with desserts that pay homage to Argentine tradition, from panqueque with dulce de leche to the now-famous cheesecake.

Piantao currently operates two restaurants in Madrid: Piantao Legazpi, located at Paseo de la Chopera, 69, with seating for 87 guests and its own parking, and Piantao Sagasta, at Calle Sagasta, 30, with capacity for 76 guests. Both spaces share the same aesthetic philosophy: an industrial, sober and contemporary design with a distinctly masculine character, where the grill always occupies a visible and central position.

View of the Piantao Sagasta



Roasted pumpkin and ribeye steak



Roasted pumpkin

The atmosphere at Piantao is urban and sophisticated, yet never distant. There is rhythm, there is energy, but also hospitality — that way of understanding the table so deeply rooted in Argentine culture. Eating at Piantao is a gastronomic experience, but also a social one, where fire acts as a point of encounter.

Since opening, the restaurant has taken part in numerous collaborations with renowned chefs in four-hands formats, as well as events organised alongside embassies and consulates, consolidating its role as a cultural bridge between Argentina and Spain. Its trajectory has not gone unnoticed by the main gastronomic guides: Piantao features in rankings such as 101 Best and holds the distinction of Recommended Restaurant by the Guía Repsol.

Beyond awards and recognition, Piantao has achieved something essential: turning the Argentine grill into a contemporary, solid and respected gastronomic discourse. A place where fire speaks with its own accent and where tradition, far from fossilising, remains alive and in constant evolution.

PIANTAO



View of the dining room at Piantao Legazpi



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