

Green SPAIN



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Cantabrian Sea



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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Way of Saint James	4
Sports lovers paradise	7
Unspoiled nature	10
Cities	12
Towns and villages with a special charm	17
Art and culture	19
Gastronomy	22
Green Spain in four seasons	25
Practical information	30



INTRODUCTION

Green Spain is synonymous of with sea and home cooking.

Discover the secrets of **Green Spain**. An unforgettable journey to unspoiled beaches, charming villages and extraordinary nature reserves all across the north of Spain: Euskadi, Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia.

You'll just love the delicious **cuisine** served in taverns in small fishing villages, Michelin-star restaurants or designer wine-cellars. Then enjoy an evening's shopping and an unforgettable sunset by the sea.

This is a real paradise for lovers of unspoiled nature. Everything from a relaxing ride on horseback to rafting in canyons. You can go **surfing** on the spectacular waves in the Cantabrian sea and enjoy a life-changing experience

on the renowned **Northern Route** to Santiago de Compostela.

You'll be captivated by the pace of life in **incredible cities** like **San Sebastián, Santander, Gijón** and **Santiago de Compostela**. There is an endless selection of **cultural attractions**, from **cathedrals with centuries of history** to really surprising **avant-garde museums**. At the end of the day there's great night life to be enjoyed in university cities like **Bilbao** and **Oviedo**.

You'll find all this and so much more in Green Spain. Your senses will be tested to the limit with the beauty and magic of the incredible natural surroundings.

THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES

Leave your routine behind you and travel across the north of Spain on foot or by bike or train along historic pathways. A journey which has transformed the lives of so many people and where you'll enjoy all kinds of unforgettable experiences.



▲ THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES BY BIKE

THE NORTHERN ROUTE

One of the possible routes for the Way of Saint James takes you all along the delightful north coast of Spain from **Irún** to **Santiago de Compostela**.

Your journey starts in **Irún** (Euskadi) on the border between France and Spain. There you'll find the **Jaizkibel** cliffs and the seafaring town of **Pasai Donibane**. On your arrival in **San Sebastián** it'll be

time to enjoy some of their renowned aperitifs called *pintxos* and, weather permitting, you can go for a swim at the Playa de la Concha beach.

The Northern Route takes you along the Basque coast to Bilbao through delightful little towns like **Orio**, where we can recommend the grilled fish, and **Zarautz**, which has an incredible beach



▲ EUROPEAN PEOPLES PARK
GERNIKA, BIZKAIA

where you'll see surfers from all over the world. You'll also pass through **Getaria**, the birthplace of the famous fashion designer Balenciaga, where you can visit his museum. And finally **Gernika**, a symbolic town for all Basque people, bombed on the orders of Hitler by the German Airforce during the Spanish Civil War. This event inspired the iconic painting by **Pablo Picasso** that carries the town's name. The route also passes through less well-known areas and solitary valleys dotted with small villages where you'll be able to appreciate the friendliness of the local people.

You'll arrive in **Cantabria** along an old Roman road. There you can visit picturesque little fishing villages and sample their traditional fish and seafood dishes. You shouldn't miss this opportunity to

take the 70-kilometre Camino Lebaniego route which starts in **San Vicente de la Barquera** and ends at the Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana (**Potes**), which is home to the largest fragment of Christ's Cross, the *Lignum Crucis*.

The Northern Route enters **Asturias** through Ribadedeva and takes you through Llanes and Ribadesella to **Gijón**, with its beautiful San Lorenzo beach. Continue your journey among the picturesque *hórreos*, which are traditional constructions for storing grain and other food products.

You'll hear extraordinary waling legends in ancient ports such as **Luarca**, and then you'll reach Galicia when you cross over the Eo River from **Castropol** to the beautiful seaside town of **Ribadeo**.

SANTIAGO CATHEDRAL
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

This route also takes you to the **Cathedral of Mondoñedo**. You'll follow the medieval pathways through the little villages of **Sobrado dos Monxes**, with its famous monastery, and see natural treasures like the **Sobrado lagoon**. In the **Monte do Gozo** you can stay in the largest hostel in Spain and you can catch a glimpse of the towers of the **Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela** in the distance. You've reached the end of your journey!

THE PRIMITIVE ROUTE

This is the oldest of all the Ways that lead to Santiago. Follow a path trodden by pilgrims since the 9th century through the western interior of Asturias. Start in **Oviedo**, the capital of the **Principality of Asturias**. It is a lively city with an immense heritage. Travelling through the heart of Asturias, you will feel part of nature in the company of large rivers, steep gorges, waterfalls and ancient oak groves. Along the way you will come across towns like **Salas**, declared a Historic Site. You then pass through the municipalities of **Allande** and **Grandas de Salime**, where you'll find the Protected Landscape of the **Sierras de Carondio and Valledor** absolutely breathtaking. Now close to Galicia, you will have wonderful views of the **Salime reservoir**. Before joining the French Route, in **Palas de Rei** (Lugo Province), you will reach the top of the beautiful **Alto del Acebo** mountain, standing at over 1100 metres above sea level, and visit the imposing city of **Lugo** and its **Roman Wall**, which has been designated a World Heritage site. The route is studded with beautiful Galician villages for you to discover, such as **Melide** and **Arzúa**.

PALAS DE REI
LUGO

SPORTS LOVERS PARADISE

The blend of sea and mountains in the north of Spain makes it ideal for those looking for adventure.

Each year, travellers from all over the world come to **Mundaka** (Euskadi), a favourite destination for surfers. There you can ride on the famous "left wave", said to be one of the best in Europe. It can be up to 4 metres high and 400 metres wide!



If you want to be able to surf all year round, you should visit **Zarautz** (Euskadi) and **Rodiles**, on the Asturian coast. You can also enjoy the special atmosphere surrounding international competitions like the Pantin Classic in **Ferrolterra**, Galicia.

In Cantabria, head for **Ribamontán al Mar**, the first district declared as a “natural surfing reserve” (2012). This qualification, which has since been awarded to the districts of **Suances**, **San Vicente de la Barquera** and **Noja**, acknowledges the unique character of the inshore waves ideal for this sport.

The golf courses in Green Spain will give you fantastic views of the coastline

and delicious gastronomy for you to get your strength back. Play on the courses of **Mataleñas** (Santander) and at the **Ría de Vigo** and **Meis** clubs in the Galician province of **Pontevedra**. You could also relax playing your favourite sport at **Izki Golf** up in the mountains of Alava or at **Llanes Municipal Golf** (Asturias).

Sailing the **Cantabrian Sea** and the **Atlantic** in a small yacht is a unique way of discovering the coastline of the north of Spain. You can access small, deserted coves, delightful fishing villages and lively yacht marinas like **Vigo** (Galicia) and **Castro Urdiales** (Cantabria). There are incredible places to go diving in the **Rías Baixas** in Galicia.



The Way of Saint James is one of the great bicycle-touring routes you can enjoy in Spain, and a healthy and different way of getting to know the variety of landscapes in Green Spain.



PARADISE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE SPORT

Then there is marvellous monumental heritage, like the Roman walls in **Lugo**, where you'll get to meet travellers from all over the world.

The **Picos de Europa National Park** is a paradise of high-mountain trails and footpaths for all the family. Stroll through the forests in the **Áliva mountain passes**, or climb one of the most renowned peaks in Spain, the **Naranjo de Bulnes** in Asturias. You could hike the amazing **Cares Gorge**, or enjoy spectacular views from the



▲ PICOS DE EUROPA NATIONAL PARK
CANTABRIA

Ordiales lookout point (Asturias). Spend the night in a mountain refuge and wonder at the starry sky.

On a visit to **Cantabria** you can also discover a spectacular underground world with thousands of caves and potholes. One worth mentioning is **El Soplao**, a unique wonder with incredible rock and crystal formations.

UNSPOILED NATURE



The abundance, preservation and biodiversity of the natural areas in Green Spain will bowl you over. Enjoy the beauty and the delights of the national parks, biosphere reserves and other areas of exceptional natural wealth and biodiversity.

▲ CÍES ISLANDS
PONTEVEDRA

NATIONAL PARKS

Visit the National Parks in Green Spain and enjoy protected natural areas with an incredible ecological and cultural heritage. Adventure awaits you in the **Picos de Europa National Park** in Asturias, Cantabria and León. It is the largest in mainland Spain and one with the most visitors. Hike through the deep **gorge of the Cares River** or around the renowned **Covadonga Lakes**. Take the cable car up from **Fuente Dé** and admire the snowy peaks. The whole

area is perfect for those who love hiking, adventure sports and watching wild animals.

In Galicia you have the **Atlantic Islands national park**, an incredibly beautiful sea and land ecosystem. It consists of the Cíes, Ons, Cortegada and Sálvora Islands in the Rías Baixas region. It is a wonderful natural paradise with sheer cliffs and seabeds with an incredible natural wealth. Here you'll find one of the largest flocks of seagulls in Europe.

NATURE RESERVES AND PROTECTED AREAS

When you arrive in **Cantabria** you should stretch out on the beautiful white sands of the **Lienres Dunes nature reserve**. The beautiful sunsets can be enjoyed from the sandy dunes which are well-known by surfers. Or you can discover the limestone landscapes of **Collados de Asón**, with its rock formations and plunging cliffs.

In **Asturias** a number of ecological treasures await you. If you love bird watching, then you really should visit the **Redes Nature Reserve**, home to the golden eagle and other birds in danger of extinction like the wood grouse. The **Somiedo Nature Reserve** is one of the largest refuges for brown bears in Europe. A treat for all five senses, the **Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña and Ibias nature reserve** includes the most protected area in Asturias: the forest of Muniellos. There you'll see how the inhabitants lived and worked centuries ago in their traditional houses. Or take a walk in the beech forests of the **Ponga nature reserve** and along the old Roman roads in the **Las Ubiñas-La Mesa nature reserve**.

And there's still more to do in **Galicia**. You can visit the **ACapelada mountains**, home to the highest cliffs in Europe. Then there's the **route of the Flysh** with its impressive cliffs in the **Basque Coast geopark**, where you'll find the chapel of **San Juan de Gaztelugatxe**, a location you'll recognise from the *Game of Thrones* television series. The **Basque Country** is also home to the **Urdaibai biosphere reserve**, with its spectacular marshes teeming with life.



LIENRES DUNES NATURE RESERVE
CANTABRIA



SOMIEDO NATURE RESERVE
ASTURIAS

CITIES

Here are some of the cities in Green Spain: surrounded by nature, full of spectacular monuments and with a vibrant cultural life.



▲ PINTXOS
SAN SEBASTIÁN

SAN SEBASTIÁN (EUSKADI)

Once you've seen the sunset over the bay in San Sebastian and discovered the town's vibrant cultural life and delicious cuisine, you'll want to stay here forever. If you're looking for a real gastronomic treat then this is the place for you. Why not stroll through the **Parte Vieja**, or Old Town, and enjoy the famous snacks known as *pintxos*.

If you're travelling with your family, then spend a day at the **Aquarium**, one of the most modern oceanographic museums in Europe. You can visit the **Kursaal** and the **Peine del viento** sculptures by **Chillida**, or stroll along

the promenade overlooking the **La Concha** and **Ondarreta** beaches.

VITORIA (EUSKADI)

This quiet, inland city is an example of respect for the environment. There are numerous parks and gardens to explore by bicycle and you'll discover why Vitoria was nominated the 2012 Green Capital of Europe.

Take a stroll through the lively medieval **old town**. Then you'll enjoy the silence in the **Santa María Cathedral**. From this impressive 13th century fortress church you can continue on to the **Palace of Ajuria-Enea**, a beautiful example of traditional Basque architecture.

BILBAO (EUSKADI)

This city combines the perfect blend of a rich industrial past and surprising avant-garde artistic trends. The **Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao**, designed by the architect Frank Gehry, is a symbol of the city. You'll be amazed by the colour transitions as the natural light falls on the titanium cladding and is reflected in the estuary. You'll find the **Fine Arts Museum** nearby.



▲ BIZKAIA BRIDGE
GETXO, VIZCAYA

Then you could take a bicycle and ride along the estuary to the old town. The route crosses the Nervión River over the **Bizkaia Bridge**, the first metal transporter bridge in the world, which has been designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Once in the old town you can have a bite to eat in one of the lively restaurants and bars in the **Siete Calles** neighbourhood.

SANTANDER (CANTABRIA)

The sea and the mountains meet in the bay of **Santander**. Cross over to the Playa de **Somo** beach by boat

and enjoy the characteristic green mountains from the sea. Here you'll also be able to see how the silhouette of the **Botín Cultural Centre** "flies" over the bay.

A short stroll along the seafront promenade leads to the **La Magdalena Palace**. You can visit what was once the summer residence of King Alfonso XIII and relax on the **Playa de Bikinis** beach. If you're travelling with your family, the children will just love the seals and penguins in the enclosure. Play a game of traditional "palas" (a version of paddle tennis) on the **Playa del Sardinero** beach and enjoy a delicious seafood dinner in the **fishing quarter**.

GIJÓN (ASTURIAS)

This is a young and lively city facing the Cantabrian Sea where its past has become a gift for travellers. You'll find this out when you visit the **Cimadevilla** neighbourhood, the oldest in the city. There you'll find the **Campo Valdés Roman Baths**, with incredible views over the **Playa de San Lorenzo** beach.

A stroll through the old town will take you past delightful fishermen's cottages and on to the **Plaza del Marqués**. There you can admire the incredible medieval towers of the **Palace of Revillagigedo** which houses the **International Art Centre**.

OVIEDO (ASTURIAS)

At the weekend a mixture of students and travellers fill the medieval streets of Oviedo, the seat of the prestigious **Princess of Asturias Awards**. You should visit the renowned Gothic **cathedral** and discover the lively university atmosphere. You could also visit the **Fine Arts Museum** and go on a tour that will take you from the Middle Ages to the 21st century.

If you're interested in history and architecture, there are some stunning palaces in Oviedo. From the **Velarde Palace** itself, which houses the museum, to the **Palace of Camposagrado**, an impressive 18th century mansion and the **Palace of El Conde de Toreno**, a Baroque gem.



▲ PLAYA DE SAN LORENZO BEACH
GIJÓN

AVILÉS (ASTURIAS)

The **Niemeyer Centre** has put the old fishing town of Avilés on the European cultural map. You'll find this incredible venue after passing through the amazing monuments and historic buildings of the **old town**, such as the **Plaza de España** and the old church of **Sabugo**.

LUGO (GALICIA)

The impressive **Roman Wall** in Lugo has been designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. It will transport you back 17 centuries.

And you'll be able to discover the secrets of life under the Empire when visiting the extraordinary remains in the surrounding area, like the **spa** and the **Roman bridge**.

OURENSE (GALICIA)

An ideal way to relax is to take the **Miño Spa Route**. Close your eyes and sink into hot water under an incredible starry sky. There are a number of amazing spa centres to visit, from the springs at Chavasqueira to those at Burgas de Canedo, Muiño da Veiga and Outariz.



Photo: Luciano de la Rosa/123rf.com

▲ NIEMEYER CULTURE CENTRE
AVILÉS



▲ CATHEDRAL AND ROMAN WALL
LUGO



SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (GALICIA)

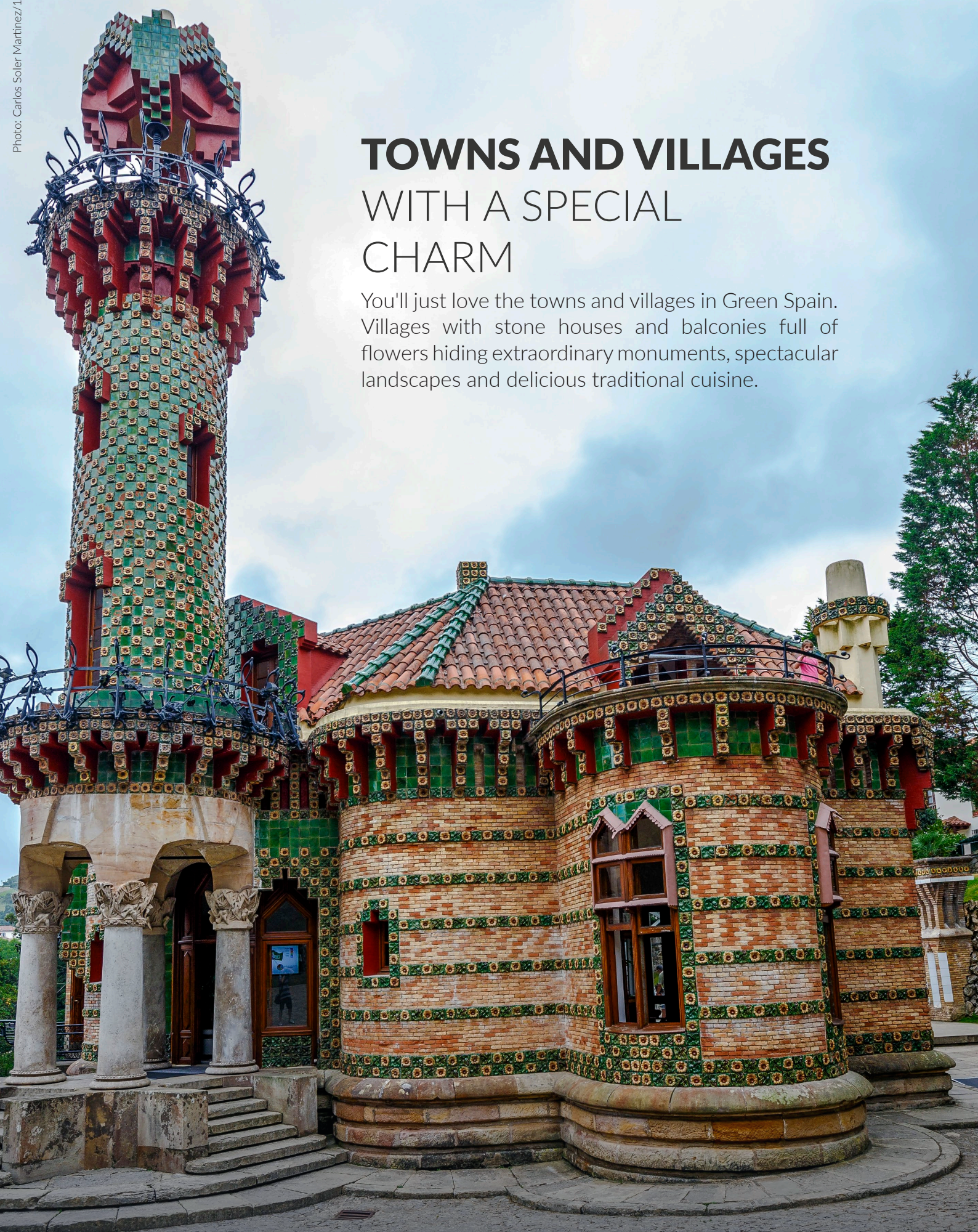
This holy city, the destination for pilgrims from all over the world, has an air of magic about it. Because of its famous university it is also young in spirit and full of life.

You can just feel the spirituality as you walk through the naves and chapels of the **cathedral**. It is a Romanesque gem and holds treasures of incalculable artistic and religious value, such as the **La Gloria Gateway**. You'll get an unforgettable view by climbing up to the roof and looking out over the **Plaza del Obradoiro**.

Experience Santiago just like the local residents and go shopping in the **Mercado de Abastos** market. It houses several "market Kitchen" stalls cooking the best greens, cheeses and seafood for anyone to try.

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA CAKE





TOWNS AND VILLAGES WITH A SPECIAL CHARM

You'll just love the towns and villages in Green Spain. Villages with stone houses and balconies full of flowers hiding extraordinary monuments, spectacular landscapes and delicious traditional cuisine.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

▲ SANTILLANA DEL MAR
CANTABRIA

SANTILLANA DEL MAR

Try the **Coastal Route**, on the Way to Santiago, which will take you to this medieval town in Cantabria. Visit the town centre which is a National Monument and climb up the steps to the beautiful **Collegiate Church of Santa Juliana**. Travel back to pre-history in the **Altamira Cave Museum**, famous for exhibiting cave art which is 18,000 years old.

COMILLAS

In this delightful little fishing town in Cantabria you'll find a charming oriental-looking building called **Gaudi's Caprice**, designed by one of Spain's most illustrious architects. After admiring the architecture you can take a rest on the fine sandy **beach in the Oyambre Nature Reserve**.

COMBARRO

You will love strolling around this beautiful Galician town with its unique landscape of more than 30 **ancient hórreos** - traditional grain stores - which are mainly to be found nestling among sailors' houses along the Pontevedra estuary. Its stone streets are studded with traditional stone crosses on columns, restaurants serving delicious local food and sites such as the **church of San Roque**. And you can't miss the **Padrón beach** or the port area, with its traditional boats bobbing gently on the waves.

RIBADESELLA

Take a canoe on the **Descent of the Sella River** (Asturias), one of Spain's most famous festivities which is held each year on the first Saturday in August. If you prefer something more relaxing you can take a dip at the beach in this pretty little coastal town, stroll through the historic old town or visit the **Cave of Tito Bustillo**, one of the finest examples of cave art in Europe.

CUDILLERO

Breathe the sea air in this traditional port in Asturias and listen to stories about its fishermen. You could go to one of the famous **fish taverns** and try one of their seafood dishes before climbing up to the lookout route. There you'll have incredible views of the colourful hanging houses leaning out over the sea



▲ CUDILLERO
ASTURIAS



▲ LEKEITIO
BIZKAIA

LEKEITIO

This picturesque little Basque town has special charm. The old town has some of the gems of the Gothic period like the **Basilica of La Asunción de Santa María de Lekeitio**, as well as a number of palaces. There you can enjoy a stroll through the port, along the quayside and up to the **Santa Catalina lighthouse** with views out over the Cantabrian sea. If you go in summer you can always take a dip at the **Playas de Isuntza** beaches or those on the **Isla de Garrantz**, which can only be reached at low tide.

ART AND CULTURE

Visit hidden Spain, full of mysterious places with abandoned chapels and medieval monasteries. You'll not only find extraordinary remains from the past, but also some of the most up-to-date artistic attractions.



Photo: Konstantin Kallishko/123rf.com

MONASTERY OF SANTO ESTEVO
RIBAS DE SIL, OURENSE

RIBEIRA SACRA

The trails through the heart of Galicia will lead you to the **Ribeira Sacra**. This is the area with the greatest number of Romanesque religious buildings in Europe. This route will take you from the incredible **Monastery of San Pedro de Rocas**, carved out of the mountainside, to the **Monastery of Santo Estevo**, which has been converted into a Parador hotel.

Leave the hustle and bustle behind you and enjoy the peace and tranquility which reigns in the Ribeira Sacra. Enjoy the incredible views from the **Balcones de Madrid** over the deep **Sil River canyon**.

Legend has it that the emperors of ancient Rome were delighted with the wines from this region. Here they still grow Mencía grapes traditionally on the hillsides. This is how they produce such excellent wines, renowned the world over.



▲ SANTA MARÍA DEL NARANCO
OVIEDO

ASTURIAN PRE-ROMANESQUE

You're bound to love the simple, clean lines of the Pre-Romanesque buildings. Located amongst impressive valleys and mountains, this monumental complex comprising 14 buildings has been designated as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO, the most famous is **Santa María del Naranco**. The beautiful silhouette of this monument rises majestically from **Mount Naranco**, which offers wonderful views.

The **Oviedo** cathedral complex includes the **Cámara Santa**, another outstanding example of the Asturian Pre-Romanesque. Here you can admire a treasure trove of jewels and precious stones. Why not take an exciting trip back to the Middle Ages?

NEW CULTURAL CENTRES

Take a cultural tour to **Tabakalera** in **San Sebastián** where you can take part in digital culture laboratories and visit the studios of local artists, or the **Botín Centre** in **Santander**. There you can take part in a training programme based on the arts, emotions and creativity.

Gijón (Asturias) has the **Laboral City of Culture**, a centre with all kinds of

avant-garde offerings, including the **LABoral Centre of Art and Industrial Creation**.

Designed as a real metropolis, the **Cidade da Cultura de Galicia** in **Santiago de Compostela** will surprise you with its avant-garde architecture. Take a stroll through the **Jardín Literario** gardens or discover new artists at the huge **Gaiás Museum Centre**.





▲ MARQUÉS DE RISCAL WINE-CELLARS
ELCIEGO, ÁLAVA

GASTRONOMY

In Green Spain the cuisine is excellent everywhere you turn. Recharge your batteries with exquisite seafood and fish from the Cantabrian Sea and the Atlantic accompanied by some of the best wines in Spain. You could try the food of some of its star chefs, who are renowned throughout the world.

PALACES AND WINE-CELLARS

Culture, history and haute cuisine await you on a route through the palaces and wineries of Green Spain. A spectacular tour that will take you from the palace houses of the little Basque town of **Hondarribia** to the impressive castle of **Soutomaio** in Galicia. Try the “txakoli” in **Getaria** (Guipzcoa), a refreshing bubbly wine, before you carry on towards the region of **Álava**. There, in the district of **Elciego** you’ll find the avant-garde hotel in a winery designed by Frank Gehry, with amazing gentle curves covered with titanium.

Visit the beautiful palaces, which the emigrants from Asturias and Galicia, named "**indianos**", built on their return from the Americas, and the spectacular Galician stately homes known as "**pazos**".

In **Asturias**, you'll enjoy visiting its "**llagares**", where they make Asturian cider, with its unique "escanciado" tasting method. You'll also love discovering **Vigo** (Galicia) and visiting its "calle de las ostras" (Oyster Street) to watch oysters being shucked.

EATING AND DRINKING IN GREEN SPAIN

Green Spain offers a comprehensive menu to suit all tastes. Try a traditional **fabada asturiana**, a casserole made from white beans, chorizo sausage, black pudding and other ingredients simmered slowly. Or you could choose a **pastel de cabracho**, an exquisite fish paté.

They say the best seafood comes from the seas around Galicia. See if this is true by sampling a delicious **seafood grill** with spider crab, scallops, langoustines and rock fish: straight from the sea to the table.

If you prefer **meat**, then you'll love the intense flavours in the Cantabrian recipes with venison, roe deer, wild boar or the top-quality beef from Galicia.

Leave room for dessert because the best often waits till the end of the meal: try some **quesada pasiega**, a dense, creamy pudding typical in Cantabía, or **tarta de Santiago**, a traditional dessert from Galicia made with almonds, sugar and eggs.

Meat is best accompanied by strong red wines from the **Rioja Alavesa** region while seafood is best with the famous



▲ "FABADA ASTURIANA" (BEAN AND PORK STEW)

albariño from Galicia: a smooth, fresh, white wine just like **txacoli** from Euskadi and **ribeiro**, also from Galicia. Discover a new, sharp and refreshing drink with Asturian **cider**, made from apples. Thousands of people come together in **Gijon** at the end of August for the **Natural Cider Festival**. The second weekend in November is the time for the **Orujo Festival** (grape pomace) held in Potes, in Cantabria. You not only get to try local liqueurs and witness the traditional way in which this liqueur is prepared, you can also try some of the local culinary delights like "Lebaniego" stew and handmade cheeses. And to finish off you should ask for a **queimada**, moonshine liquor from Galicia to which you add sugar, orange and lemon peel and coffee beans before setting it on fire.

To give yourself a treat, why not enjoy some of the finest haute cuisine in restaurants with **Michelin stars**. Green Spain is one of the Spanish regions with the highest number of restaurants holding these coveted awards

GREEN SPAIN



PLAYA DE POO BEACH
LLANES, ASTURIAS

From Euskadi to Galicia, Green Spain is a succession of spectacular beaches.

PLAYA DE SAMIL BEACH
VIGO, PONTEVEDRA



GREEN SPAIN

IN FOUR SEASONS

You can enjoy an incredible journey at any time of the year. Here are a few options for you to choose from.



SUMMER

Relax in delightful, deserted coves or take your family to enjoy comfortable town beaches like the one in **Samil** in **Galicia**. From **Vigo** you can take a boat to a paradise of dunes and cliffs in the **Cíes Islands** (Vigo), where you'll find the **Playa de Rodas**, the best beach in the world according to the famous British newspaper, *The Guardian*.

Enjoy the summer in Galicia with events such as the International Festival of the Celtic World and the original Viking Festival.

Then there are the emerald waters of the **Playa de Poo** beach in **Asturias**, surrounded by verdant pastures. Go diving in **Muros de Nalón** and forget your daily routine on

the beach under the cliffs of **El Silencio**. In **Cantabria** you can take long walks along the huge **Playa del Sardinero** beach. From the Playa de **La Concha** beach you'll have incredible views over the bay of **San Sebastián**. If you visit this beautiful city in **Euskadi** in mid-August you'll be able to enjoy what they call the *Semana Grande*, one of the year's most spectacular festivals. The programme includes concerts, firework displays and a pirate incursion from the port on the Playa de La Concha. The San Sebastián-Zinemaldia International Film Festival, which takes place at the end of the summer is another good reason to visit this city.

AUTUMN

In Green Spain there are so many places where you can enjoy the beautiful colours of the autumn canvas. One of those is the **Forest of Muniellos**, in Asturias, the largest oak forest in Spain and one of the best preserved in the country. This season is ideal for hiking and photography through landscapes tinged with ochre, yellow and red. Walk amongst trees which are over six metres in diameter and remember to

book your trip early as the number of visitors is limited.

The autumn is also the time to gather in and celebrate the harvest. In the **Rioja Alavesa** Region they really do it in style during the **Grape Harvest Festival**. Enjoy a real wine festival with firework displays and popular music while witnessing a unique ritual, **treading the grapes** which have just been picked.

▼ RIOJA ALAVESA





▲ RESTAURANT IN AXPE, GUIPUZCOA, EUSKADI

WINTER

Is quite a treat to see the spectacular **camellias** in bloom in the gardens of stately homes in Galicia, locally known as **pazos**. Here, legend has it that Marco Polo brought tea camellias as a souvenir of the Silk Road. Today, you can enjoy these delicate flowers in places such as the **Pazo de Oca** (Pontevedra) where you'll find some of the oldest examples in Europe.

January is the start of the cider season in Euskadi. It's now the turn of the *txotx* when the cider makers open their doors to offer the season's cider accompanied by traditional menus. You can drink all the cider you want, poured directly from the *kupela* (barrel) into your glass, and try traditional Basque dishes like cod omelette, fried cod with peppers, *txuleta* or barbecued meat and for dessert, Idiazabal cheese, quince jam and walnuts.



CAMELLIAS
GALICIA

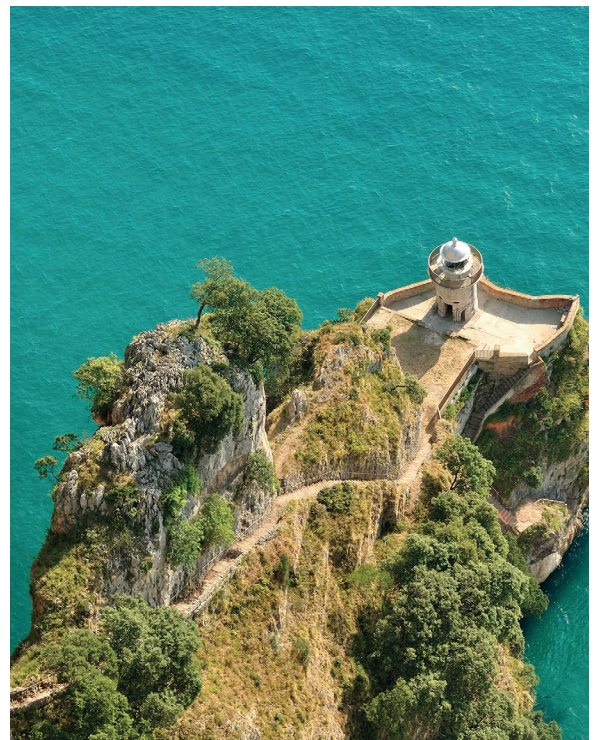


▲ SANTOÑA ANCHOVIES
CANTABRIA

SPRING

Spring in **Cantabria** is mild. It's the ideal time to take the **route of the Santoña Anchovies**, a port which is famous for its exquisite tinned tuna fish and anchovies in olive oil. If you have a passion for bird-watching, here you'll find an ecological paradise in the **Marismas de Santoña Nature Reserve**, one of the most important wetlands in the north of Spain.

At this time of year nature awakes after a long winter. It can be a real adventure following the tracks left by **brown bears** and other wild animals in the nature reserves in **Asturias**. You'll find them amongst the spectacular landscapes of **Somiedo** or the **Fuentes de Narcea nature reserve** and enjoy an unforgettable experience.



▲ CABALLO LIGHTHOUSE
SANTOÑA, CANTABRIA

GREEN SPAIN
IN FOUR SEASONS





CLASSICAL TRASCANTABRIAN TRAIN

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE

An extensive network of infrastructures for air, overland and sea travel will give you fast and comfortable access to the main cities in Green Spain.

Bilbao airport and **Santiago-Rosalía de Castro airport** are the most important in the north of Spain. They both have a large number of international connections. You can also fly to the airports of **Vitoria, San Sebastian, Seve Ballesteros-Santander, Vigo, A Coruña** and **Asturias**.

The main cities and towns in the north of Spain are connected by

long-distance, middle-distance and suburban **trains**. A **Renfe Spain Pass** lets you choose how many relaxed journeys you want to make (4, 6, 8 or 10).

You can also discover Green Spain on board some of the world's best tourist trains: the **Transcantabrian** and the **Costa Verde Express**. It's an incredible experience.

Travelling by car will make it easy for you to visit small towns and enjoy spectacular landscapes. There are a large number of car-hire firms where you can book online.

INCREDIBLE PARADOR HOTELS

Palaces, monasteries, convents, castles and avant-garde buildings. Stay at a **Parador Hotel** and you'll enjoy a well-deserved rest in unique accommodation in extraordinary natural or historic locations of great beauty.

If you're taking the Way of Saint James you can choose to stay in one of the Parador Hotels in Galicia like the **Vilalba** (Lugo), an impressive fortified tower located right on the Northern Route or the **Santiago de Compostela**, in the Plaza del Obradoiro itself. To rest surrounded by green and with sea views you would do well to choose the **Ribadeo Parador Hotel** at the mouth of the Eo River in a beautiful seaside town excellent for tourism. Enjoy the incredible sunsets at the **Baiona Parador Hotel** (Pontevedra) or discover one of the best white wines in the world at the **Cambados Parador Hotel** (Pontevedra), the capital of the Albariño wine region. And these are just some of the parador hotels you will find in Galicia.

In **Asturias** there are some unique locations. You can stay in an old monastery which is now the **Cangas de Onis Parador Hotel** and while you're there visit the Covadonga Lakes. From the **Monasterio de Corias Parador Hotel**, in the picturesque district of Cangas de Narcea, there are spectacular views of the mountainous landscape and the Narcea River. If you prefer an urban location, the **Gijón Parador Hotel**, a refurbished old mill, is just a short walk from the Playa de San Lorenzo beach and the city centre.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

FUENTE DE PARADOR HOTEL
CANTABRIA

In **Cantabria** you can sleep like a king in the **Limpas Parador Hotel**, a palace surrounded by beautiful gardens, an ideal location for relaxing and visiting the neighbouring towns and villages. Or you could stay at one of the two parador buildings in **Santillana del Mar** and enjoy the atmosphere in this beautiful medieval town, very near the Altamira cave. Or sleep surrounded by high mountains at the **Fuente Dé Parador Hotel**.

If your destination is **Euskadi**, prepare yourself for the finest gastronomy and wines from the Rioja Alavesa Region at the **Argómaniz Parador Hotel**, a Renaissance palace where you can enjoy peace and quiet which is only possible out in the countryside. You could also stay in a castle at the **Hondarribia Parador Hotel** in the seaside town of the same name, with amazing views of the French coast.

① *For more options, go to www.parador.es*



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