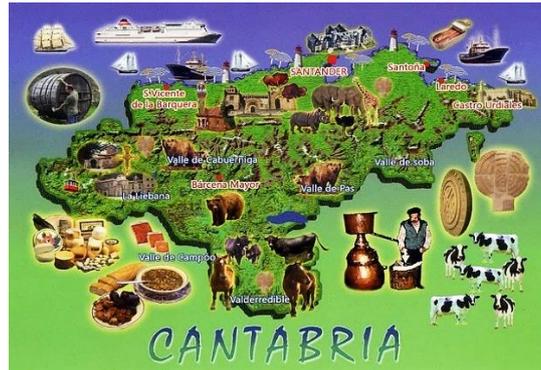


## SPANISH CULTURE & CUISINE

# "Cantabria - known as Green Spain"

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2022

A 10 night tour to the cooler northern region of Cantabria, with the opportunity to join in the daily excursions offered to nearby places of interest or to simply relax and enjoy Santillana del Mar, which has often been referred to as one of the most beautiful villages in the whole of Spain, let alone Cantabria.



Cantabria offers a trip full of beautiful scenery, excellent gastronomy and unique heritage. This northern part of Spain is home to various prehistoric caves, of which the most famous of all is Altamira, awarded the World Heritage designation and known as the "Sistine Chapel of Prehistoric Art". Cantabria's towns and villages contain a wealth of beautiful monuments such as the Magdalena Palace in Santander, the monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana and Gaudí's "Capricho" monument in Comillas. A highlight of the trip will be the "**Battle of the Flowers**", a special festival of national interest which has been held in Laredo for over 100 years.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August Day 1: Jávea / Castillo de Garcimuñoz (299 km) / Alcala de Henares (150 km)**



08.30 hrs: On leaving Jávea we will make our way to the **Castillo de Garcimuñoz**, originally built by the knight García Muñoz in the 12th century (refreshment stop en route).

12.30 hrs: Entry with audio-guide and an explanatory video about the history of the fortress; an elevator

takes visitors from one level to another, enabling accessibility for people with reduced mobility. Free time for refreshments.

15.00 hrs: Continue our journey to **Alcalá de Henares**.

17.00 hrs: Arrival and check in to the **4\* Parador de Alcalá de Henares** for 2 nights, with dinner & breakfast included, previously a 17th-century monastery school located in the former San Jerónimo College (or similar 4\* hotel).



20.00 hrs: Dinner for the group.

### Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August Day 2: Alcalá de Henares **FREE DAY**

Breakfast followed by a free day to explore Alcalá de Henares, the birthplace of Cervantes.



#### College of San Ildefonso

Lovely facade and you can visit the patios for free or take the guided tour to see the chapel: €4



**Cervantes Square** is the former Market square of Alcalá, where medieval people traded their products on market days. The square was also used as a bullring during fairs and festivals. Its name comes from **Miguel de Cervantes**, one of the most important figures of Alcalá.



In the middle of Calle Mayor is Cervantes birthplace and in front of this house there is a bench which has a life-size sculpture of Sancho and Don Quijote.



**Corral de Comedias** is one of the oldest preserved theatres in Europe. Built in 1601-02 and designed to mirror the Corral de la Cruz in Madrid.



### **Plaza de los Santos Niños**

Its name is given in memory of the children Justo and Pastor, who were Hispano-Roman martyrs executed in the year 304 for refusing to renounce their faith.



### **Convent of Clarisas**

You may wish to visit the convent of Clarissa nuns in San Diego Square, where the nuns make and sell 'almendras garrapiñadas': candied almonds or caramel-coated almonds. Clarisa nuns are an enclosed religious order, so you cannot see them but once you are in the hall of the building, place your order at the turnstile designed to let the nuns maintain their privacy.

20.00 hrs: Dinner for the group.

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August Day 3: Alcalá de Henares / Burgos (247km) / Santillana del Mar (165 km)**

Breakfast and check out of hotel.

08.45 hrs: We will make our way to Burgos, with a comfort stop en-route.



12.00 hrs: Perhaps Burgos' most famous sight is its mighty cathedral - one of the most impressive in the whole of Spain. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it began life as a simple Romanesque cathedral and from 1221 to 1261, it was turned into the grand structure it is today. The main altar is particularly striking with its brilliant gold plating and ornate carvings, as is the magnificent star-vaulted dome, under which is the tomb of El Cid, a nobleman and military leader during medieval times and Castilla y León's local hero.

15.30 hrs: Mid-afternoon we will make our way to Santillana del Mar and check into the 4\* Hotel Cuevas (adults only, breakfast included, 3 mins. walk to historic centre), which will be our base for the next 6 nights.



Santillana del Mar has often been referred to as one of the most beautiful villages in the whole of Spain, let alone just Cantabria. It is undoubtedly one of the towns with the greatest historical-artistic value in Spain, to the point that everything in it is a monument. Think perfect medieval stone and timber houses, caramel-coloured architecture and cobbled streets. It was built around the collegiate church of Santa María and is also dotted with old defence towers and Renaissance palaces. Known as "the town of the three lies", since it is neither "holy", nor "flat", nor does it have a "sea".



**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August Day 4: Santillana del Mar / Santander (30 km) JOIN THE INCLUDED EXCURSION OR HAVE A FREE DAY**



09.45 hrs: After breakfast we will make our way to Santander.

11.00 hrs: Visit to the **Palacio de la Magdalena**, situated on the vast Magdalena Peninsula, on the edge of the city, which has become a symbol of Santander. Built between 1908 and 1912, it is one of

the best examples of this style of architecture in the whole of northern Spain. The palace was used as a summer residence for the Spanish royal family.



13.00 hrs: Our coach will then drop us off in the centre of Santander for a free afternoon for individual sightseeing. One of the most impressive buildings in the city is the Santander Cathedral, originally built in the 13th century, although the upper part of the cathedral dates from the 14th century and the cloisters were built in the 15th century. Inside you will find the tomb of the writer, literary critic and historian, Menéndez Pelayo.



Inaugurated in 2017, the *Centro Botín* is a modernist building that houses an important art collection as well as recreational activities and a small shopping area. The main characteristic of this building is its design, by the the Italian architect Renzo Piano.



Or perhaps take a tour on the Santander hop-on-hop-off bus. See Santander Cathedral, Cantabrian Maritime Museum, Paseo Pereda, and El Sardinero beach, hopping on and off at any of the 10 stops around the city, with onboard audio commentary.

18.00 hrs: Re-board our coach and return to Santillana del Mar; free evening.

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August Day 5: Santillana del Mar / Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana (85km) / Potes (3km) / Sotama Visitors' Centre (Picos de Europa) 4km)**

**JOIN THE INCLUDED EXCURSION OR HAVE A FREE DAY**



09.00 hrs: We will make our way to the *Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana*, one of the 5 places in Christianity that, together with Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela and Caravaca de la Cruz, has the privilege of issuing perpetual indulgences. Pilgrims come from all over the world to worship the Lignum Crucis, the largest preserved fragment of the Cross of Christ.

11.30 hrs: After re-joining our coach we will travel on to nearby Potes. Steeped in history and embraced by the rugged slope of the Picos de Europa, the Cantabrian village of Potes has been declared the most beautiful town in inland Spain. Not only is it home to magnificent medieval bridges, stone streets and vistas of verdant hillsides, the town also has an exquisite food

culture, notably chickpea stew (Cocido Lebaniego). Free time for own sight-seeing and refreshments.

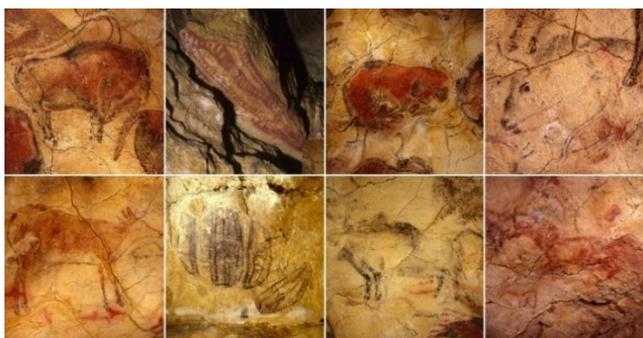


15.30 hrs: We will travel to the nearby Sotama Visitors' Centre, Picos de Europa National Park. Although opinions are divided as to the aesthetics of the centre's outward appearance, once inside there is much to be admired. Spread over three levels, you will find a projection room with films being shown on a double screen of aerial views of the mountains and their wildlife, a map and book shop, interpretation panels and displays of local architecture,

centuries-old traditional practices such as farming, manufacture of local products, clogs, cheeses, etc. and the now defunct mining industry. Perhaps the most impressive is a room with a 360°-degree view of the Picos and the Cantabrian mountains. The Picos de Europa National Park extends for almost 70,000 hectares over the regions of Asturias, Cantabria and Castilla y Leon.

17.15 hrs: Re-join our coach for the return journey to Santillana del Mar.

**Tuesday 23rd August Day 6: free day to explore Santillana del Mar**



If you are interested in prehistoric cave paintings, then a visit to the **National Museum and Research Center Altamira** will be a priority: 2 km/25 mins walk from the hotel; Reduced admission: €1.50. Renowned for prehistoric cave art featuring charcoal drawings and polychrome paintings of contemporary local fauna and human hands. The earliest paintings were applied during the Upper Paleolithic, around 36,000 years ago. The site was discovered in 1868 by Modesto Cubillas.



**Collegiate Church of Santa Juliana**

Opening hours: 10am to 13pm; 16pm to 19pm. Admission € 3 per person.



### Torre de Don Borja

The tower-house, in Gothic style, has among its most characteristic elements a patio erected in the 16th century. The Don Borja Tower was declared in 1943, like the whole of the town, a Site of Cultural Interest.



Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August Day 7: Santillana del Mar/ San Vicente de la Barquera (36 km)  
/ Comillas (11 km)

**JOIN THE INCLUDED EXCURSION OR HAVE A FREE DAY**



09.00 hrs: We will travel to San Vicente de la Barquera, sandwiched between the foothills of the Picos de Europa and the Cantabrian Sea, sitting right at the mouth of what is known as Ría de San Vicente de la Barquera, a beautiful estuary. The Old Town has many interesting places to visit, particularly the **Plaza Mayor del Fuero**. The many wooden balconies of the houses that lead to the square are striking.



**The Corro Family Palace (now the Town Hall)** was built by the family of the Inquisitor and ran a hospital for pilgrims in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. **La Torre del Prevoste** attached to the town walls and built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The **church of Santa María de los Ángeles**, declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1931, is located on top of a rocky promontory that dominates the entire village and is next to the castle within the old town.



A free morning in San Vicente de la Barquera, including time for lunch.

14.30 hrs: We will make our way to nearby Comillas, which sits in a spectacular location, right on the edge of a long crescent beach and on a peninsula sticking out into the sea. It is filled with historic architecture, cobbled streets and Modernista-style buildings and is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful and best-known villages in Cantabria.



Or perhaps to pay a visit to the *Sobrellano palace* and its *cathedral chapel-pantheon*.





18.00 hrs: Our final visit of the day will be to the nearby **El Capricho**, designed by Antoni Gaudí. It was built in 1883-85 for the summer use of a wealthy client, Máximo Díaz de Quijano who

unfortunately died a year before the house was completed.

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August Day 8: Santillana del Mar / Liérganes (42 km) / Selaya (27 km)**

**JOIN THE INCLUDED EXCURSION OR HAVE A FREE DAY**



09.30 hrs: A relaxing visit to nearby **Liérganes**, an old town declared an Historic Site, made famous by the legend of the Fish Man whose statue can be found next to the Roman bridge. The seventeenth century brought a period of great splendour due to the introduction of corn cultivation and the construction by Jean Curtius of the first artillery factory in Spain. Among the most important buildings, the **Casa de los Cañones** (18th century) stands out, with its war cannons flanking the complex. There is also the **Casa de Cuesta Mercadillo**, with its coat of arms on the corner.



15.15 hrs: We will re-join our coach and make our way to Selaya.



16.00 hrs: A visit to the Sobaos and Quesadas Factory and Museum in the Pasiegos Valleys, where we will discover the origin and evolution of sobaos and quesadas, with the support of audio-visuals, information panels, different ethnographic material, period utensils and everyday objects collected by families, in addition to having a glazed area over the work section that allows you to observe the production process (approx. 30 mins).



Time to shop or to have an afternoon snack inside the cafeteria or on the terrace.



17.30 hrs: Return to our hotel in **Santillana del Mar**.

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August Day 9: Santillana del Mar / Santoña (71km) / Laredo (15km)**

**JOIN THE INCLUDED EXCURSION OR HAVE A FREE DAY**

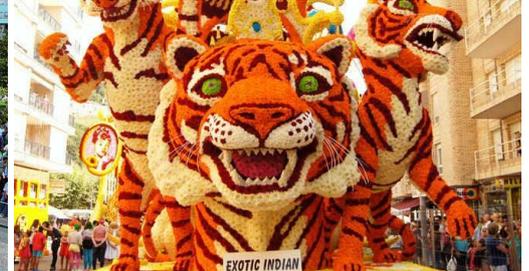
09.00 hrs: After breakfast we will board our coach and travel to **Santoña**.

10.30 hrs: Our first visit this morning will be to the *Conservas Emilia anchovy factory* in Santoña, one of the best fishing villages in Spain, famous for its anchovy manufacture industry.





12.00 hrs: We will then travel to nearby Laredo: Of all the beautiful villages in Cantabria, Laredo is the one with the largest marina. It is a fishing village with a spectacular landscape that is composed of the Treto estuary and the bay of Santoña. But in addition to its privileged nature, it also has an artistic and historical complex of great value.



One of the highlights of our tour will no doubt be **La Batalla de Flores de Laredo**. The streets are filled with an abundance of fresh flowers during this popular festival. The high point of the celebration comes at about 5:30 pm when the parade of floats adorned with fresh flowers sets off through the streets. However, people have been busy decorating the carts since the night before and the town is already caught up in the festival atmosphere. In addition to the parade there are also a range of street markets and musical performances, until finally the jury chooses the best float of the year, after which the festivities continue until nightfall.

20.00 hrs: Return to Santillana del Mar.

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August Day 10: Santillana del Mar / Aranda De Duero (290km) / Sigüenza (142 km)**

09.00 hrs: After breakfast we will check out of our hotel and make our way to **Aranda De Duero**, with a refreshment break en route. A visit to this area would perhaps not be complete without a tasting of Ribera del Duero wine!



13.00 hrs: **PRADOREY** is situated in an impressive Finca 10km from Aranda de Duero. The 520 hectares of vineyards that surround the winery constitute the largest vineyard extension of a single winery in Ribera del Duero.



The visitor will discover the technological innovations that are applied to the production of wine and the bottle warehouse and Wine Museum which hold the most special vintages. The visit concludes with a tasting of 2 wines, an Iberian aperitif, gourmet cheese Real Sitio de Ventosilla and PRADOREY extra virgin olive oil. Duration: 1 hour 30 mins.

**"WE ARE PIONEERS IN THE RIBERA DEL DUERO IN MAKING THEM IN CENTURIES-OLD CLAY JARS AND FERMENTATION WITH NATIVE YEASTS"**



15.00 hrs: We will travel on to **Sigüenza** and check into our hotel for 2 nights, the 4\* Parador de Sigüenza, an imposing 12th century medieval castle installed in an Arab fortress and built on a Roman settlement (or similar 4\* hotel). This imposing castle was the residence of bishops, cardinals and kings and between the thick stone walls there is a paved courtyard, a stately dining room and the Romanesque chapel from the 13th

century. Location: 500 m from the Plaza Mayor and the Cathedral Basilica.

20.00 hrs: Dinner for the group in the hotel.



The medieval town of Sigüenza has recently formalized its candidacy to be declared a World Heritage City by UNESCO. If successful, it would be the third city in Castilla-La Mancha with such extraordinary distinction after Toledo and Cuenca, and the sixteenth in Spain.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August Day 11: Sigüenza Free day to explore Sigüenza on your own.**



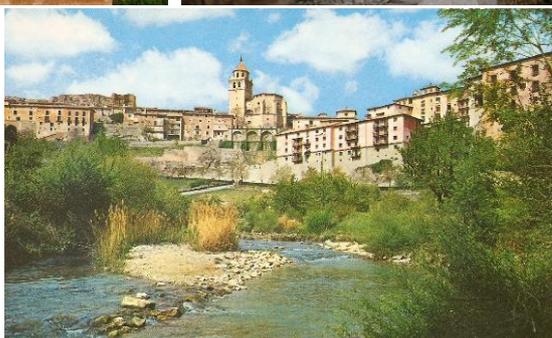
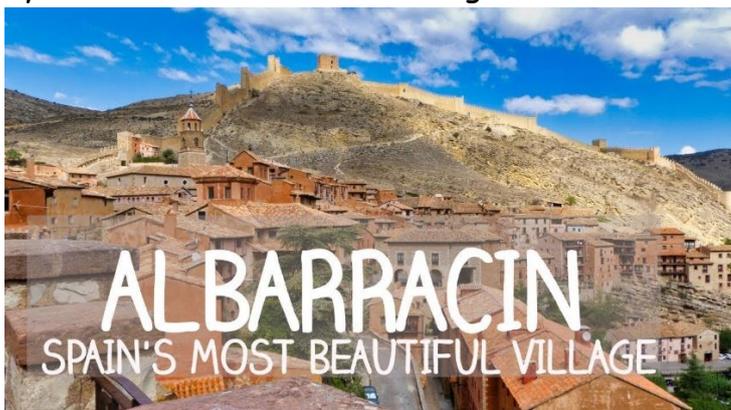
**Cathedral of Santa María:** declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1931, dedicated to Santa María la Mayor, patron saint of the city of Sigüenza. The cathedral is known throughout Spain as "*El Doncel (the young nobleman) de Sigüenza*", a member of the Vázquez de Arce family and a knight of St. James, who died at twenty-five years old in the War of Granada.



**Doncel House:** typical construction of the civil gothic architecture of XV century. It was the residence of the Vazquez de Arce family, the Doncel family. **Iglesia de Santiago** located in the Calle Mayor in the upper part of town: a Romanesque church constructed by the Bishop Cerebruno in the middle of the 12th century. Jail square (Plaza de la Carcel).

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August Day 12: Sigüenza / Albarracín (172km) / Jávea (302km)**

09.00 hrs: After checking out of our hotel, we will make our way to **Albarracín**, with a comfort stop en route. Towering medieval walls dominate the hillside with the ruins of a Moorish castle standing on a hilltop above the old town, which is situated on a curve of the Guadalaviar River. The 16<sup>th</sup> century **Catedral del Salvador** features a bell tower built on the remains of a Romanesque temple. It has been declared to be of Cultural Interest and has been proposed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.



Free time for refreshments, to wander the streets, stroll by the river or to visit the castle.

15.30 hrs: We will re-join our coach for the final leg of our journey to Jávea, with a refreshment break en route.

19.30 hrs: Approximate arrival in Jávea.

PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE PROGRAMME IS PROVISIONAL UNTIL THE HOTELS AND EXCURSIONS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED.

Angela & Tony  
Group Leaders - Spanish Culture & Cuisine

