

The Charm of Hidden Spain

5 Night Parador Tour – Bed & Breakfast

Your itinerary

The following pages contain general information about your car or motorcycle tour and the locations where you will stay. The order in which they appear may not be the order your hotels have been confirmed for you - for your individual itinerary please refer to your holiday documentation.



Caleruega



Route planning

You may wish to go to one of the travel websites such as Google maps, viamichelin.com* theaa.co.uk.

*Motorway tolls, where applicable, are indicated on this site.

Hotel directions With your travel documents you will find an information sheet for each hotel which has been booked for you giving directions together with some further details.

Arrival Unless stated, you will be expected to arrive at each of the hotels pre-booked for you by 6pm each day. This should allow you time to have a fairly leisurely drive between hotel stops but if you find you will be arriving later than this please ring and advise the hotelier so that your room is held for you.

This tour is on a bed and breakfast basis.

Staying in a selection of superb Paradores, this itinerary gives you the chance to go off the usual tourist tracks to some exceptional, lesser known places. Discover picturesque ancient villages, incredible architecture and history - and for motorcyclists in particular the route takes you on some great roads!

Santillana del Mar



This is one of northern Spain's most picturesque villages with its wealth of historic buildings including medieval, Baroque and Renaissance styles. The Colegiata church is said to be the best example of

Romanesque architecture in Cantabria. At holiday times, particularly at Easter and in August the village becomes extremely busy so during these periods it's best to visit in the evening after the crowds have gone. **Altamira**, about 20 minutes' walk away has some famous prehistoric cave paintings discovered at the end of the 19th century. The original caves cannot be visited except by special request made well in advance but you can visit the museum where the replicated caves are displayed. **Suances** [5k from Santillana] is a fishing village and small seaside resort with 2 good beaches including one popular with surfers.

After spending the night in Santillana we suggest driving on the N623 towards Burgos. This is the perfect road for having a very leisurely, scenic and enjoyable drive, with some attractive stops such as:

Orbaneja del Castillo is a charming village surrounded by a rocky ridge which resembles castle ruins, deep in the Ebro canyon. This quaint enchanting place has crystal clear waterfalls that rush from the mountains for most of the year, dividing the village and flowing into little pools and streams.

Burgos has one of the most impressive Gothic cathedrals in Europe and is one of the main stops on Europe's most important pilgrim way, the Camino de Santiago or Way of St James.



Lerma

High above the Arlanza river, Lerma is a historic little town which can be seen from some distance away as you approach it. The Parador stands in the square on the hilltop, within the Ducal Palace which was built at the beginning of the 16th century for King Filipe III, on the site of a ruined castle. The old quarter is entered by a huge gate set between 2 round towers and it's a fairly steep climb to the top of the hill. Don't miss the collegiate church of San Pedro which is worth a visit and has one of the oldest working organs in Spain, dating from 1616. For wonderful views of the river and surrounding scenery, to the left of the town hall take the steps up to the ramparts.



About 20 minutes' drive from Lerma is the village of **Covarrubias**, another ancient place with lovely medieval streets to wander through and there are the famous 15thC

churches of San Cosme and San Damián. A little further is the 18thC monastery of **Santo Domingo de Silos** where Gregorian chants can be heard and the nearby gorge of **La Yecla** is also worth visiting.

Caleruega is considered another one of the most beautiful villages in Spain and is famous for its traditional architecture around the Santo Domingo square.

There are 2 monasteries here including one where the monks sell cakes and pastries!



Peñaranda de Duero, a beautiful medieval village with an outstanding historic centre is dominated by its castle and situated on the Ribera del Duero wine route. In the streets of Peñaranda you will find palaces, churches, collegiate churches, and large Renaissance and Baroque houses.



El Burgo de Osma is a small ancient city which has a fantastic cathedral and medieval walls, floodlit at night, and there are the remains of a Roman bridge over the river Ucero. This is all overlooked by a castle on a hilltop on the outskirts of town. Not far from here you can find the fortress of Gormaz which was built in the 10thC to defend the lands of the Duero from Christian attacks during the Reconquista. It is the longest fortification in Europe. Near here is the hamlet of Calatañazor, notorious for a deadly battle which took place in 1002 and there is a tiny fortified hilltop city.

Soria

This city is located on the river Duero and boasts some impressive Romanesque buildings in its medieval streets, as well as splendid examples of civil architecture. Don't miss the hermitage of San Saturio (patron saint of Soria) located on the left bank of the river and built into the rock. This small chapel, dating from the 18thC, is an octagonal shaped building and its interior is overseen by a Baroque altar.



Laguardia a walled medieval town founded in the 10thC as a defence for the Kingdom of Navarre and whose medieval layout has remained almost intact. The streets are full of fine medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical buildings.

San Millán de la Cogolla is listed as a World Heritage site due to its outstanding artistic,

literary and linguistic importance. It was here that the first words were written in the Romance language we now know as Spanish.

Santo Domingo de la Calzada

Santo Domingo was once an important staging post on the old Pilgrim Way of St James and is an historic town with some interesting architecture. Whilst in the famous Rioja wine region you may like to visit some of Spain's most charming medieval villages including Laguardia which has some of the best cellars around. The village was built on a hilltop above a mass of underground cellars used for wine production and storage and

produces a very nice fruity red that is best drunk 'young'. Many good restaurants and wine bars are found in the narrow streets.



Tobera a small hamlet with a lovely church by the river which runs in the middle of the village with several waterfalls.

Frías - this tiny city is the smallest in Spain. Its origins date back to the 9th century when Alfonso VIII repopulated the valley to reinforce the border between Castille and Navarra. The historic quarter preserves its medieval atmosphere, and terracotta tiled buildings lead up to an impressive hilltop castle. From Frías the lovely mountain road N629 takes you to Limpias.

Limpias

Laredo, 7k north of Limpias, is a large seaside resort with a magnificent beach. On the last Friday in August a 'flower battle' takes place where floats filled with flowers are paraded through the streets. Another excellent beach and large fishing port is just along the coast at Santoña.



Santander is one of the most traditional holiday resorts of northern Spain where many of the Spanish themselves choose to holiday, escaping the more arid inland areas. There is a superb sandy beach, modern leisure amenities and an attractive promenade laid out with flower borders and trees, popular with the locals who enjoy a stroll along it in the evenings. The city has wonderful restaurants and shops plus a variety of nightlife and entertainment.

Also a great place to visit is Bilbao which over recent years has been transformed into a vibrant modern city with plenty to attract tourists. In addition to the famous Guggenheim museum there is much more to see (and best explored on foot) - the old quarter, remarkable architecture, stunning bridges, parks, museums, art galleries and fabulous shopping.