

Cantabria

Santander

capital de Cantabria

Santander is a modern city with a population of almost 200,000 located on a beautiful south-facing bay, which belongs to the *Club of the World's Most Beautiful Bays*. Always changing and always beautiful, light and wind determine its contrast-filled image: blue when calm and grey when choppy.

Tourism in Santander began in the mid-nineteenth century with the first “wave baths” on the Sardinero beaches and culminated with the summer visits of the king and queen of Spain from 1913 to 1930, becoming the summer court during this period. It was the heyday of the city, the period its most representative buildings date from: the *Palacio Real de La Magdalena*, the *Hotel Real* and the *Gran Casino*, buildings which radiate splendour today.

Few cities can boast including within their urban area a dozen beaches with such diverse characteristics and, at the same time, so attractive: family beaches, sheltered beaches, distinguished beaches and sporting beaches. *Los Peligros*, *La Magdalena*, *Bikini*, *El Camello*, the beaches

of *El Sardinero*, *Los Molinucos*, *Mataleñas* and *La Maruca*. All ready to give the best of themselves both during the summer and on mild winter and autumn days.

Its elegant promenades and avenues (*Pereda*, *Castelar* or *Reina Victoria*) offer visitors the charm of a city that has managed to combine tradition and modernity, where nature plays the lead role in any space. The city has a rich and varied cultural and artistic heritage to enjoy every day of the year. However, two events have marked the cultural development of Santander in recent decades: the *Menéndez Pelayo International University* and the *International Festival of Santander*, events of great significance that have projected the image of the city outside our borders. All these qualities, along with many others (unique scenery and large number of hotels), have succeeded in making the Cantabrian capital one of the favourite destinations in Spain for organizing all kinds of professional, social or sporting events. Proof of this is the upcoming 2014 World Sailing Championship in the waters of the bay.



Paseo de Pereda frente a la bahía de Santander



Península de La Magdalena y playas de El Sardinero



Playa de Covachos (Costa Quebrada)



Cantabria azul · Blue Cantabria

paisaje de costa · playas · villas marineras · turismo náutico

Cantabria has more than *two hundred kilometres of coastline*, an extension enclosing a wide variety of landscapes. Steep cliffs alternate with small islands, deep estuaries, spacious bays and beautiful beaches. Of the six protected natural areas in the region, three are directly linked to the coast: the Oyambre Natural Park, the Liencres Dunes Natural Park and the Santoña, Victoria and Joyel Marshes Natural Park.

The Cantabrian coastline presents an interesting network of lighthouses located on watchtowers and headlands. Around them are based lively fishing villages where tourism and history come together in respectful harmony. In this vast space, coloured by the reflection of a beautiful and changeable sky, a wide range of recreational activities (fishing, diving, etc.) or sports (sailing, rowing, surfing, windsurfing, kite-surfing, etc.) are offered, which help to diversify and enrich the holiday entertainment in our region.

Beaches

There are about one hundred beaches of high natural and scenic value on the coastline of Cantabria. The coastline is shared by small sheltered coves and wide sandy beaches; in both cases, the scenery surrounding them is exceptional: green meadows, rolling hills or craggy mountains. Most are easily accessible with the exception of a few, which, at the same time, has led to the better conservation of the latter.

Among the small beaches, distinguished by their unique charm, are: Berellín (Prellezo), wedged between rocks and vegetation; Santa Justa (Ubiarco), with a beautiful chapel lying between the folds of the cliff; Portio, La Arnía, Somocuevas and Covachos, with their sheer cliffs, nestled in the so-called "Costa Quebrada". Among the most extensive, the wild

Langre beach, the Comillas and Laredo family beaches, the spectacular Berria beach or the rocky sands of Noja and Isla provide beautiful sites for seaside enjoyment.

Worth mentioning are the many beaches suitable for surfing: Somo and Loredó, in Ribamontán al Mar (Spain's first surfing reserve); Valdearenas and Canallave, in Piélagos; Los Locos, in Suances; and Merón, in San Vicente de la Barquera, are some of the best examples of sites for a sport in which Cantabria is Spain's leading region.

Fishing villages

The coast of Cantabria is the setting for a number of places which throughout history have played an important role as key trade and fishing towns and, in recent times, have become major tourist centres. These are the so-called "Cuatro Villas de la Costa de la Mar" (Four Sea Coast Villages): Castro-Urdiales, Laredo, San Vicente de la Barquera and Santander, belonging to the Brotherhood which had its origins in around 1200 and lasted until the mid-eighteenth century. The first three conserve the remains of medieval walls and old towns crowned by beautiful temples, symbols of a powerful seafaring tradition.

Although of lesser historical significance, there are other charming villages linked to the sea, such as the aristocratic Comillas, Suances, or Santoña, leading Cantabrian port for the fishing of anchovies.

Cantabria cultural · Culture in Cantabria

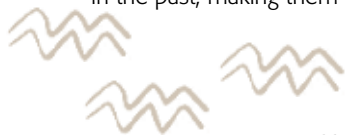
arte rupestre · cuevas patrimonio mundial · museos

UNESCO World Heritage rock art and caves

Cantabria has one of the *most important rock art heritages in the world*. The various caves in Cantabria with drawings, paintings and engravings are the core of a broader group called Cantabrian Palaeolithic Art, which extends from western Asturias to the Basque Country. The walls and ceilings of numerous caves throughout the Cantabrian region are covered with works of art. In 2008, nine Cantabrian caves were declared World Heritage by UNESCO: the group of chambers of *Monte Castillo* (El Castillo, Las Monedas, Las Chimeneas and La Pasiega), in Puente Viesgo; *Chufín*, in Ridones (Rionansa); *Hornos de la Peña*, in Tárriba (San Felices de Buelna); *El Pendo*, in Escobedo (Camargo); *La Gama*, in Omoño (Ribamontán al Monte) and *Covalanas*, in Ramales de la Victoria. Previously, only *Altamira*, since 1985, had registered its name with golden letters in such a prestigious list.

Most of them can be visited, so going to see their paintings is one of the best ways to increase ones knowledge of Cantabria and the way of life of its ancestral inhabitants. The sightseeing tour of this impressive array of prehistoric caves takes us back to the origin of art. Animal figures, symbols and complicated shapes conceal the spirituality and mystery that the primitive caveman managed to transfer to the rock with great sensitivity, and the result of which has been a source of inspiration for artists and poets throughout the twentieth century.

Recently there has been new chronological dating of the paintings of Altamira and El Castillo, placing them between 30,000 and 40,000 years in the past, making them “mankind’s oldest”.



Menéndez Pelayo Library and Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Santander)

Museums

Cantabria’s museums, as the repositories of memory that they are, offer a number of interesting options in several areas: prehistory, ethnography, nature, the sea, religious art ... All bear witness to the glorious past and their legacy has allowed the recovery, study and dissemination of the heritage of one of the most significant Spanish regions from the point of view of history and art. Thus, the Neocueva of Altamira allows us to travel in time; the Muriedas Ethnographic Museum shows us rural traditions and lifestyles; the Cantabria Nature Museum, in Carrejo, shows the region’s different landscapes and ecosystems; the *Regina Coeli* Diocesan Museum, in Santillana del Mar, reflects the rich religious heritage of the churches of Cantabria; the Cantabrian Maritime Museum, in Santander, exhibits everything related to the sea; the Casona de Tudanca, birthplace of writer and scholar, José María de Cossío, contains within its walls the most brilliant pages from the literary history of Cantabria.



Covalanas Cave (Ramales de la Victoria)



Cueva de Covalanas (Ramales de la Victoria)



Cantabria cultural · Culture in Cantabria

neocueva de Altamira · patrimonio arquitectónico

Neocueva and Museum of Altamira

The Neocueva (New Cave) of Altamira, which opened in 2001, is a three-dimensional reproduction of the world's most famous prehistoric cave with Palaeolithic rock art. Made using the latest technology, it represents what the cave was like from 40,000 to 30,000 years ago, when it was inhabited by groups of hunter-gatherers. The *Neocueva* faithfully reproduces the marvellous *Great Ceiling* or "polychrome" ceiling with representations of bison, horses, deer, goats and signs, painted by the master or masters of Altamira.

The Altamira Museum, which includes the aforementioned Neocueva, permanently displays the exhibition, *The Times of Altamira*, a valuable collection of Palaeolithic archaeology. It also organizes various activities and workshops to show what life was like for those who lived in and painted the cave.

Discovered in 1879 by Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola and his daughter María, the original cave was first opened to the public in 1917, being declared a National Monument in 1924 and a *World Heritage Site* in 1985. From the outset it became one of the most visited destinations in Spain and a tourist landmark for Cantabria. Closed in 2002 after conservation problems were detected, it is currently pending scientific reports to decide on its future.

Architectural heritage

Almost thirty centuries comprise the "recent" history of Cantabria, a region whose name could be translated as "land of mountain man." This land was well known in antiquity for its indomitable warriors "the Cantabrians", who defied Rome for a long period. With the Roman settlement of *Ju-*

lióbriga (first century B.C.) in Campoo, began the huge amount of architectural specimens (civil, military and religious) that over the centuries would flood Cantabria with houses and palaces, towers and castles, and Christian churches of all sizes and styles.

Fine examples of the former include the Neo-Gothic palace of Sobrellano and the modernist building, *El Capricho*, by Gaudí, both in Comillas; or the baroque palaces of Soñanes, in Villacarriedo, and Elsedo, in Pámanes. In the second category, there is the King's Castle in San Vicente de la Barquera, the castle-lighthouse of Castro-Urdiales, and Argüeso Castle (the only non-coastal castle in Cantabria), or towers like Linares, Estrada, or Pero Niño, in Llano. Outstanding examples of religious architecture include the Mozarabic church in Lebeña, the beautiful Romanesque collegiate churches in Santillana del Mar, Castañeda, Cervatos and San Martín de Elines, and the Gothic Church of Castro-Urdiales.



Collegiate church of Santa Juliana (Santillana del Mar)

Cantabria deliciosa · Delights of Cantabria

gastronomía · alimentos de calidad · estrellas Michelin

The privileged location of Cantabria, with deep river valleys and mountains, and bathed by the sea it gives its name to, gives it a natural larder with the finest raw materials from both the sea and the land. The richness and diversity of its products, coupled with traditional processing methods, make Cantabria ("The Mountain") a special place to enjoy the most exquisite gastronomic delicacies included in one or other of the *five quality brands* that exist.

The cheeses are the star products with three protected designations of origin: picón Bejes-Tresviso, Cantabria cream cheese and *quesucos* from Liébana. The well known *sobao pasiego* (traditional sponge cake) and *Cantabria meat* make up the two geographical indications protected in Cantabria. Various foods covered by Controlled Quality brands (Valderredible potatoes, Isla peppers, honey or grape marc spirit from Liébana), Organic Farming and Wines of Cantabria, complete the roll of honour of Cantabrian delicacies. Although they have no controlled quality brand, the *quesada pasiega* and *canned anchovies or tuna* also enjoy an excellent reputation and high consumer demand. Among the regional culinary preparations that can be regularly tasted in restaurants, there is the seafood casserole on the coast and the highland stew and Liébana stew in inland areas.

A little known but significant fact is that *Cantabria currently provides the second largest regional concentration of Michelin stars in Spain*. Surprisingly, the second smallest region of our country, with a population of just 600,000, has five restaurants with this esteemed award, which clearly demonstrates the high level of Cantabrian cuisine.

To enjoy all these gastronomic delights and high class hotels, Cantabria has the *Club de Calidad Cantabria Infinita*, a select group of establishments located in mansions and palaces that offer travellers new sensations in historic sites.



"Quesucos" from Liébana



Dish prepared with Cantabrian Meat



San Vicente de la Barquera

Cantabria diversa · Diversity of Cantabria

comarcas de Cantabria

If anything characterizes the topography of Cantabria it is the wide variety of the landscapes. *Its enormous diversity, full of contrasts*—high mountains, valleys and coastline—alternate in an unparalleled succession of shapes and colours. The different *regions that make up the territory of Cantabria*, offer numerous unique features which together form a homogeneous whole full of charm and appeal.

Asón-Agüera

This region occupies the eastern part of the Cantabrian coast. It includes areas of high ecological value such as the *Collados del Asón* Natural Park and a major underground complex formed by the valleys of Rasines and Ruesga. Its most important towns are Ramales de la Victoria, Ampuero and Limpias.

Besaya

Along the course of the river Besaya, roads have been opened up to *La Meseta* since ancient times. The remains of Roman road between So-maconcha and Pie de Concha are proof of this. Similarly, a Romanesque ensemble of great sculptural richness runs along the Besaya basin from Reinosa to Suances, with such significant examples as Yermo and Silió. Its capital is Torrelavega and other important locations are Los Corrales de Buelna, Las Caldas and Bárcena de Pie de Concha.

Campoo Los Valles

This region of transition to the Castilian plateau is full of history (Ju-lióbriga Roman ruins) and art. It has the most valuable ensemble of

Romanesque religious architecture in Cantabria as well as beautiful cave chapels. The source of the River Ebro (Fontibre) is in this region and its capital is Reinosa.

Santander and surroundings

This is one of the most densely populated areas in Cantabria, with towns such as Astillero, Camargo, Santa Cruz de Bezana and Piélagos, and areas of outstanding natural value such as the so-called “Costa Quebrada” or the Liencres Dunes Natural Park.

Central Coast

The central coast of Cantabria extends from Miengo, west of Santander, to Comillas. This is an area with population centres, both coastal and inland, that show a perfect symbiosis between nature and man’s creation, many of them containing great historical and monumental richness. The magical medieval Santillana del Mar, the aristocratic and modernist Comillas, the monastic Cóbrecas, the unique Ruiloba and Novalles or the exceptional beaches of Suances, Mogro and Usgo are a few examples.

East Coast

Fishing area where tourism is the main driver of current economic activity. Laredo and Castro-Urdiales are its two most well-known towns. Worthy of note are their old towns and interesting monumental sites, in addition to their Festivals of National Tourist Interest: the *Battle of Flowers* and the *Coso Blanco*.



Cantabria diversa · Diversity of Cantabria

comarcas de Cantabria

Liébana

Its ancestral isolation, caused by its rugged topography, has enabled it to maintain its own special characteristics as well as a Mediterranean micro-climate with crops such as grapes and cork oak trees. The capital, Potes, is the starting point to visit the monastery of Santo Toribio or the Fuente Dé cable car in the *Picos de Europa*, its two main tourist attractions.



Vestibulo del Palacio de Sobrellano (Comillas)

Pas-Pisueña-Miera

The Valleys of the river Pas make up the most unique of Cantabria's regions. The unique way of life of its inhabitants, the Pasiegos, preserved for centuries, has led to the emergence of the cabin, which along with the *cuévano* (basket carried on the back), represent the most unique elements of their culture, whose most significant features are found in the most traditional towns of the Pas valley region, Vega de Pas and San Pedro del Romeral (crossed by the river Pas and its tributaries), and San Roque de Riomiera and Liérganes (on the banks of the river Miera).



Saja-Nansa

Region that combines the high environmental value of its landscapes and natural areas (Saja-Besaya and Oyambre Natural Parks) with historic-artistic sites like Carmona, Bárcena Mayor and Tudanca, which have hardly been altered in recent decades, and fishing villages, such as San Vicente de la Barquera, where the landscape value merges with tradition and gastronomy. At Rábago can be found *Soplao* cave, an essential visit in the region, whose largest town is Cabezón de la Sal, where the route of the *Foramontanos* sets out towards Campoo.

Trasmiera

Historic region from the former Merindad de Trasmiera. Its coastal territory, which extends from the Bay of Santander to Santoña, features a wide variety of beautiful beaches (Somo, Loredó, Langre, Isla and Noja), where water sports such as surfing and sailing take on a leading role, along with golf (Pedreña and Noja) and cultural and gastronomic tourism (Santoña).



Iglesia mozárabe y pueblo de Lebeña. Al fondo Pico Ajero

Cantabria familiar · Cantabria with the Family

lugares para ir con niños

Travelling as a family is one of the most rewarding activities that can be done today after the pressures of work imposed in most cities, where hard work and leisure are sometimes difficult to reconcile. Cantabria offers many possibilities for the practice of this widespread holiday mode, where the prime objective is family fun.

We offer a few suggestions, realizing that the traveller can find other equally satisfactory possibilities.

Outdoor activities include the *Cantabrian townships* of Argüeso and Cabezón de la Sal, places that recreate the lifestyles and customs of the early Cantabrians; the *Roman ruins* and the Domus (museum that reconstructs an ancient Roman house) of Julióbriga, in Retortillo (Campoo); the *Fuente Dé cable car*, which takes you to the heart of the central massif of the *Picos de Europa*, at an altitude of 1,800 metres; the *Alto Campoo ski resort*, in Brañavieja; the *Three Kings parade and the zoo*, in Santillana del Mar; the *Vijanera festival*, in Silió; and the *landing of Carlos V*, in Laredo. Santander, meanwhile, also offers great possibilities for children: the *Magdalena Park* located on the peninsula, where you can find the Palacio Real, which has a small zoo, a tourist train and a large playground; walks and boat trips on the bay; or the Wave Baths festival in Sardinero.

If bad weather makes outdoor activities impossible, there is nothing better than to visit one of the *various museums scattered throughout the region*: the Neocueva and Museum of Altamira (Santillana del Mar), The Natural History Museum of Cantabria (Carrejo), the Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria (Muriedas) or the Cantabrian Maritime Museum in Santander. Also, *Soplao cave* (one of the largest in the world for the great development and abundance of its complex eccentric concentra-

tions), in Rábago, which is accessed by a mining train, or the *Peñacabarga camera obscura*, offer unforgettable experiences for children.



Ski resort (Alto Campoo)



Museo Marítimo del Cantábrico (Santander)



Cantabria familiar · Cantabria with the Family

Parque de la Naturaleza de Cabárceno



Cabárceno Nature Park

The Cabárceno Nature Park is a space designed to house animals from the seven continents in semi-liberty in large areas, attempting to reproduce the original habitat of each species, so that their adaptation to the park is as satisfactory as possible and they can reproduce normally. Bears, elephants, tigers, lynxes, giraffes, ostriches, zebras, hippos, rhinos and lions run free before the astonished eyes of visitors. Worthy of special mention is the recently built gorilla enclosure, the largest in Spain, which serves as home to these great apes, whose games are showstoppers for young visitors.

Located 17 kilometers from Santander, it covers an area of 750 hectares spread over different areas including a farm and an *environmental education classroom*, an area set up for *demonstrating the flight and hunting techniques of birds of prey*, another for *sea lion shows*, a *reptile house*, and various buildings that house catering services and souvenir shops. It also has a trekking circuit to tour the park on foot, enjoying the animals and outstanding scenery, and various recreational and parking areas. In addition, the park has two entrances: one via Obregón (west entrance), which is usually the busiest, and one in the town of Cabárceno (east entrance).

The characteristic reddish hue of the karst landscape that dominates the park is due to the mining of iron ore, which was produced from Roman times until a few years ago.

One of the main objectives of the park is to carry out *programmes of conservation and reproduction of endangered species* of animals such as the African elephant, the tiger, the brown bear, the gorilla, the European bison and the white rhino.



Pair of lynxes

Cantabria natural · Natural Cantabria

espacios naturales protegidos

The natural territory of Cantabria is the result of the concentration, in a small area of just five thousand square kilometres, of high mountains that plunge into the sea, deep green valleys, crossed by short, fast-flowing rivers, and rocky shores interspersed with fine sandy beaches. The natural scenery of this land is so stunning and breathtaking that has given its name to the two geographic features that define this side of the Iberian Peninsula: the *Cantabrian Mountains* and the *Bay of Biscay*.

Protected areas

Cantabria has a National Park (Picos de Europa) and five Natural Parks (Saja-Besaya, Oyambre, Collados del Asón, Liencres Dunes and the Santoña, Victoria and Joyel Marshes).

The *Saja-Besaya Natural Park* is part of the Saja Reserve, the largest national game reserve in Spain, and covers most of the western part of Cantabria. It preserves major areas of beech and oak forest, which are the habitat of endangered species such as the brown bear, the grouse and the golden eagle. The *Oyambre Natural Park* is an area of marsh and woodland behind a long beach with an abundance of waterfowl and migratory birds. The *Collados del Asón Natural Park* is located entirely in the municipality of Soba, one of the most beautiful natural areas in Cantabria, and home to the source of the river Asón, which arises from a karst upwelling, creating a spectacular waterfall of over fifty metres in height. The *Liencres Dunes Natural Park*, located at the mouth of the river Pas, is characterized by the outstanding rugged beauty caused by the action of the wind on the sand and sea. It is the most important area of dunes in the north of the peninsula. Finally, the *Santoña, Victoria and Jo-*

yel Marshes Natural Park is one of the most ecologically valuable estuaries in northern Spain, essential starting point and shelter for a variety of waterfowl.

Other areas of interest

The *Hermida gorge*, gateway to Liébana, is a narrow limestone gorge carved out by the river Deva over a length 20 kilometres, with walls that reach a height of 600 metres in some stretches. The *Tina Mayor and Tina Menor* estuaries are the westernmost estuaries of Cantabria and are formed by the mouths of the rivers Deva and Nansa, one of the most beautiful spots on the Cantabrian coast.

The *Ebro reservoir*, Spain's largest reservoir, bathes the area of Campoo, with a high average altitude but gentle slopes. Its unique scenic appeal lies in the combination of townships hugging the shore and the almost immediate mountains with their forests.

The *Trasmiera Ecopark*, "an open-air museum", is located in the municipality of Arnuero. It aims to promote a new form of land management and use based on the recovery and revaluation of historical, cultural and natural heritage conceived as a whole. It consists of the Memory Observatory (Salvador Hedilla Traditions Centre), the Tide Observatory (Santa Olaja Mill) and the Art Observatory (Church of the Assumption).







Macizo Central de Los Picos de Europa

Cantabria natural · Natural Cantabria

Parque Nacional Picos de Europa · teleférico de Fuente Dé

Picos de Europa National Park

The National Park includes almost all of the *Picos de Europa*, about 700 km² spread between Cantabria, Asturias and León, being the most rugged area of the Cantabrian Mountains. It is a huge limestone massif, rising sharply over the surrounding valleys, crossed by the rivers *Deva*, *Duje*, *Cares* and *Sella*, which have carved out impressive gorges, partitioning the territory into three distinct massifs: Eastern, Central and Western.

From a geomorphological point of view, the *Picos de Europa* are world famous for their unique canyons, glacial forms and, particularly, their karst landscape, with *several of the world's deepest caves*. The highest peaks are those of the Cantabrian mountains of Peña Vieja (2,614 m), Pico Tesorero (2,563 m), Morra de Lechugales (2,441 m) and Peña Remoña (2,239 m). The vegetation includes magnificent examples of Atlantic forest (mainly beech and oak), which coexist with the Mediterranean holm oak groves that dominate the valley of Liébana; and in the higher areas of the Picos de Europa, a mountain flora of great botanical interest.

The National Park is one of the last refuges of endangered species such as the brown bear and grouse, others more abundant species being the roe deer and chamois.

The landscape of the area is rounded off by the beautiful and welcoming towns at the foot of the cliffs, with interesting examples of popular architecture, including the last *hórreos* (stone granaries) of Cantabria.

The best way of seeing the Picos de Europa is to go to *Fuente Dé cable car*, a glacial cirque populated by beech groves, and take the cable car, which ascends 753 metres and within minutes reaches the upper station, El Cable, where there is a breathtaking viewpoint from which to contemplate Liébana Valley in all its splendour.



Cantabria natural · Natural Cantabria

cueva geológica El Soplao · red de cuevas del Alto Asón



Soplao cave is located in the Sierra de Amnero, near the village of Rábago, and its underground galleries run beneath the municipalities of Rionansa, Valdáliga and Herrerías, in western Cantabria. When a mining gallery intersects a natural cavern, a strong draught of fresh air is produced in the mine, a “soplao” (draught) in mining parlance; hence its name.

A group of Cantabrian cavers first penetrated the cavity in 1975, thereby starting a period of exploration and surveying, which culminated in 2005 with the public opening of the cave.

The uniqueness of the speleothems in the Soplao cave is the main tourist attraction and is what has made the cave become famous, *especially the abundance and variety of eccentrics* or helictites, delicate formations that defy gravity taking on whimsical shapes which lavishly decorate ceilings and walls.

The tour of the cave can be done in two ways: one hour sightseeing tour (adapted for disabled), or 2.5 hour adventure tour, designed for you to feel the atmosphere the underground world (in this case the organization provides the necessary equipment).

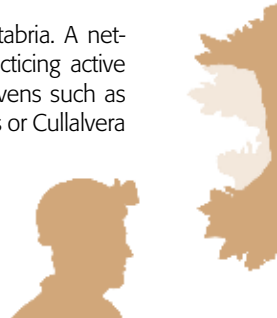
In the vicinity of Soplao, in 2008, was discovered a major Lower Cretaceous *amber deposit* with abundant organic material (remains of organisms trapped in the resin before it became amber); extremely rare deposits.

Alto Asón Cave Network

This is one of the most valuable cavern complexes in Cantabria. A network of natural caves open to the public, designed for practicing active speleological tourism to discover authentic underground havens such as Coventosa, Cayuela, Cueva Fresca, Cueva del Escalón, Tocinos or Cullalvera (Ramales de la Victoria).

< Detail of eccentric in Soplao

> Gorda Gallery (Soplao cave)





Galería Gorda (Cueva de El Soplar)

Cantabria transitable · Discovering ways in Cantabria

viejos caminos y peregrinaciones · senderos · cicloturismo

Nature lovers can discover the beauty and charm of the Cantabrian landscape via a comprehensive *network of short and long-distance trails* available throughout the region. Most are well marked and not excessively difficult.

Greenways (old railway tracks converted into routes for cyclists or walkers) also offer the chance to explore lesser known but equally beautiful areas.

Roman road

The first road network to be built in Cantabria dates from the Roman occupation, and is the basis of the arrangement of the current road system. The *Besaya Valley roman road*, which ran from Herrera de Pisuergra (*Pisoraca*) to Suances (*Portus Blendium*), was built in the first century after the Cantabrian wars; it was the most important artery of communication between La Meseta and the Cantabrian coast and was used until the construction of the Camino Real in the eighteenth century. A stretch of about 5 km of this road is still preserved in very good condition between Somaconcha (municipality of Pesquera) and Pie de Concha (municipality of Bárcena de Pie de Concha), in a mountainous area with thick vegetation.

The Camino de Santiago via the North

The movement of pilgrims to Santiago via Cantabria predates the best known French route, which the Cluniacs did not open until the twelfth century, when the Muslims had retreated enough for those lands to be considered safe.

The Camino de Santiago along the coast, of which Cantabria is part, is today a very appealing alternative for those who prefer a greener and

fresher route, dotted with small architectural jewels and holy places, and which also allows you to combine the pleasure of pilgrimage with the enjoyment of the sea.

The Way to Santo Toribio de Liébana

This is a pilgrim route that arose in the eighth century to worship the *Lignum Crucis*, which is preserved in the monastery of Santo Toribio. The route passes through the same towns as the Camino de Santiago along the coast as far as the town of Unquera, from where it follows the path leading to the town of Potes.

In 1512, the year in which the monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana was granted the Bull of Pope Julius II by which the plenary jubilee year indulgence can be earned by pilgrimage, the *Camino Lebaniego* (Liébana Way) was established, which is a variant of the *Camino de la Costa* (Coastal Way). Unlike other jubilee years, the Liébana Jubilee is celebrated only when the festival of Santo Toribio (April 16) falls on a Sunday. It is then, in the Holy Year, when the "Door of Forgiveness" is opened in the monastery chapel for pilgrims to enter to earn the indulgence and worship the *Lignum Crucis*.

The current monastery keeps the relics of Santo Toribio, bishop of Astorga, and the largest piece of the Cross of Christ preserved in the world, brought by the bishop from the Holy Land. It is also believed that in this monastery Beato de Liébana wrote his famous "Commentaries on the Apocalypse" (776).

The Gothic church, its classicist cloister, the Baroque Chapel of the *Lignum Crucis* and the monastery outbuildings complete the monastic complex.





Monasterio de Santo Toribio de Liébana

Cantabria verde · Green Cantabria

pueblos con encanto · actividades al aire libre

Charming villages

Green Cantabria is inland Cantabria, an area subdivided into valleys formed by short, steeply sloping rivers, which produce very sharp reliefs at their sources and gentle reliefs in their intermediate courses. These areas are dominated by the *countless shades of green that colour the forests and meadows*, and rolling hills which alternate with high mountains. The natural isolation of these valleys has enabled them to preserve a *wide variety of villages*, each one more fascinating than the last.

Cabuérniga, in the heart of the Saja-Besaya Natural Park, has villages that enjoy an enviable peace, broken only by the murmur of the rivers or of the visitors who come to try the traditional dishes of the area. Their houses, of a very characteristic type and well-preserved, retain their ancient charm with their neat facades of stone and wood, as in Carmona or Bárcena Mayor. *Liébana*, with villages scattered among the high slopes, shows a perfect symbiosis between man and nature. They are small towns sheltered in the folds of the Cantabrian Mountains, where the immensity of the Picos de Europa and their snowy peaks are always present; Brez, Cucayo, Pido, Luriego and Mogrovejo are good examples. In their modest houses a wide variety of cheeses, here called “quesucos”, with Protected Designation of Origin, are made by hand. *The Valleys of the river Pas*, a region characterized by rugged terrain, presents the most unique identity sign of Cantabria. Its charm, manifest in any of its three main towns (Vega de Pas, San Roque de Riomiera and San Pedro del Romeral), not only lies in the curious character of its people and its landscape, but also in the small ethnographic details that captivate whoever first makes contact with this ancestral people (the cabin, the *cuévano*, the *sobao*, etc.).

Golf

Cantabria has several golf courses spread throughout the region, predominantly located in the coastal strip: Mataleñas, Club Parayas, Abra del Pas, Santa Marina, La Junquera, Oyambre, Rovacías, Noja and Ramón Sota. Only Nestares, located in the Campoo region, is not located near the coast. The uniqueness of Cantabrian golf courses is provided by the spectacular scenery that surrounds them, most overlooking the Bay of Biscay, and others with views of impressive massifs like the Picos de Europa. Their facilities include a comprehensive range of services that complement the entertainment and enjoyment of the players of this sport. The most historic course in Cantabria is the *Real Golf de Pedreña*, opened in 1928, located in the town of Pedreña, off the Bay of Santander, internationally known as the place where the legendary *Severiano Ballesteros* trained.



Mataleñas Golf Club (Santander)



OFICINAS DE TURISMO · TOURIST OFFICES

CANTABRIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICES OFICINAS DEL GOBIERNO DE CANTABRIA SANTANDER

Oficina Regional de Turismo:
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T.: 942 310 708 · Fax: 942 313 248
"Teléfono Vacaciones": 901 111 112
santander@srcantabria.es

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Parque Amestoy, s/n · 39700
T.: 942 871 512 · Fax: 942 871 337
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LAREDO

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Teléfono y Fax: 942 611 096
laredo@srcantabria.es

SANTILLANA DEL MAR

Jesús Otero, 20 · 39330
T.: 942 818 251 · Fax: 942 840 265
santillana@srcantabria.es

PARAYAS AIRPORT

Arrivals
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aeropuerto@srcantabria.es

SANTANDER FERRY TERMINAL

Estación Marítima, s/n · 39003
Open on Ferry/Cruise days

SANTANDER BUS STATION

Plaza de las Estaciones, s/n · 39002
T.: 629 910 440

estacionautobuses@srcantabria.es

Open summer season

UNQUERA

San Felipe Neri, s/n · 39560
(junto a Casa de Cultura Villa Mercedes)
T.: 690 602 107 · unquera@srcantabria.es

Open Easter and summer

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Fax: 942 203 005

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turismo@cabezondelasal.net

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museohedilla@ecoparque.info

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Bajos del Ayuntamiento
Barrio Hazas, 53 · 39776
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T.: 942 776 146 · Fax: 942 776 155
cultura@valderredible.es

POTES

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39570 · T.: 942 730 787
turismopotes@yahoo.es

RAMALES DE LA VICTORIA

Fundación Orense
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SANTOÑA

Palacio de Manzanedo · 39740
Teléfono y Fax: 942 660 066
oficinadeturismo@turismosantona.com

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Avda. del Generalísimo, 20 · 39540
T.: 942 710 797 · Fax: 942 712 251
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SUANCES

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Teléfono y Fax: 942 810 924
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turismo@colindres.es

ISLA

Centro de Iniciativas Turísticas
Avda. Juan Hormaechea, s/n · 39195
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info@islacantabria.com

LA VEGA (Vega de Liébana)

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(next to lifeguard station)

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39006 Santander · T.: 942 367 030
www.hosteleriadecantabria.net

www.dormirencantabria.com

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www.aavotes.es

Asociación de Turismo Rural de Cantabria

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