MAD RURAL

Crafts
with soul



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Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Comunidad de Madrid

MAD RURAL

The Madrid Region safeguards a valuable legacy of traditional crafts that still endures thanks to artisans, master craftspeople and creators who have managed to preserve techniques passed down from generation to generation. Wood, clay, stone, plant fibres, glass, wool and metal are transformed, in their hands, into unique pieces that speak of the region, its history and those who live there.

In Madrid's rural workshops, every tool seems to hold a story, and every gesture bears the mark of knowledge accumulated over centuries. Where the industrial age imposed speed and uniformity, craftsmanship continues to champion a different rhythm: that of precision, experience and uniqueness. Many of these workshops form part of the Register of Artisans and Artisan Enterprises of the Madrid Region, which protects and promotes traditional know-how and its adaptation to modern times, fostering the continuity of practices which, far from belonging solely to the past, continue to engage with the present.



MADRID DESTINO RURAL

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Madrid's crafts also stem from an intimate relationship between people and the landscape. Transhumance and pastoral life gave rise to wool working and textile crafts; the mountain forests fuelled carpentry and woodcarving; the granite of Guadarrama and the limestone of the south-eastern regions cemented the stonemasonry tradition; the clay of the fertile plains gave shape to pottery; the glass from Cadalso left a unique mark on the Sierra Oeste; and traditional cuisine — honey, bread, sweets, olive oil and wine — remains today a living expression of that craftsmanship linked to the land. In the Sierra Norte, you can be a 'shepherd for a day' or discover the living craft of pottery—experiences for families to learn about traditional skills and the resources of the local environment.

More than just a list of techniques, this tour invites you to discover traditional trades as a way of living in the region and to connect, through the materials themselves, with the rural identity of the Madrid Region.

SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

LIVING TRADITION IN SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

Discover the essence of Sierra de Guadarrama through its traditional crafts, a legacy that continues to shape its landscapes and identity. Stone-masonry, fuelled by the abundance of granite, transformed many villages into veritable open-air workshops. Stones from here now form part of great historic buildings, leaving behind quarries and routes that invite exploration.

Shepherding brings you closer to a way of life intimately linked to nature. For centuries, shepherds roamed the hills and meadows with their flocks, creating a living landscape where it is still possible to feel the tranquillity, observe the wildlife and understand the unhurried rhythm of the mountains.

Dairy farming, for its part, illustrates the evolution of livestock farming in the area. Amidst vast pastures and dehesas, cattle have played a central role in the local economy, first as a means of support for farm work and later as a source of high-quality produce.

To explore this region is to delve into a history of tradition, nature and culture, where every path and every village bears the mark of these ancestral trades.

Beekeeping completes this age-old bond with the natural environment. Among rockroses, thyme and other mountain flowers, bees produce honey with distinctive aromas while also performing an essential role in pollination. Caring for the hives preserves knowledge passed down from generation to generation and helps maintain the biodiversity of the Sierra.



THE STONEMASONRY LEGACY

Nestled among the mountains and dehesas of the Sierra de Guadarrama lies one of the area's most distinctive stories: its long tradition of stonemasonry. For generations, granite quarried from these lands was used to build streets, buildings and monuments in Madrid, turning the mountain villages into important centres of the stonemason's craft. Today, many of those quarries are no longer in use, but far from disappearing, they have left an indelible mark on the landscape and have become sites of considerable environmental and heritage value.

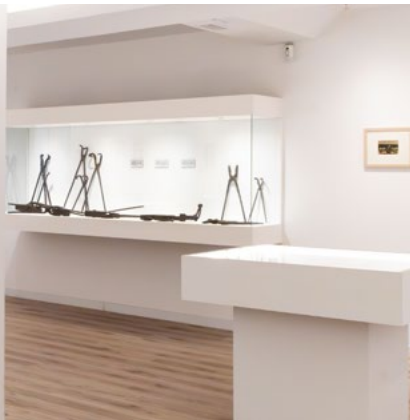
One of the best places to discover this history is the Alpedrete Stonemasons' Museum, dedicated to preserving the memory of the men and women who worked the stone and helped shape the town's identity. Visitors can explore the tools, traditional techniques and personal accounts associated with a craft deeply rooted in the Sierra de Guadarrama. The legacy of renowned stonemasons and other figures linked to this tradition also lives on, among them Cándido Muñoz, whose memory remains part of the municipality's cultural heritage.

The various walking routes through the quarries and dehesas of towns such as Alpedrete, El Boalo, Cerceda and Mataelpino, Moralzarzal, Becerril de la Sierra, Collado Mediano, Hoyo de Manzanares and Navacerrada reveal the historical and economic importance that granite quarrying once held for these communities. Rich in heritage, these walks are ideal for anyone looking to combine nature, memory and tradition in a single journey.









The Dehesa Boyal Trail allows you to delve into this unique landscape where nature and history intertwine. The route passes through holm oak and ash groves and former quarries that have now been transformed into natural wetlands and havens of biodiversity. Many of these ponds, created by quarrying activity, are home to amphibians, birds and flora of great ecological interest, to the extent that they have become one of the most valuable environmental sites in the mountainous region.

Along the route, four information panels provide insights into the different elements that have shaped the granite landscape and the stonemasonry tradition of the Sierra de Guadarrama.

More than just a walk through nature, this trail offers an opportunity to connect with the area's history, heritage and environmental value, while also reflecting on our role as responsible custodians of this natural legacy.

Type: Circular
Length: 1.6 km
Difficulty: Easy
Waymarking: Coloured arrows

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS: THE MEMORY OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Becerril de la Sierra Ethnographic Museum offers visitors the chance to discover the traditions and ways of life linked to the Sierra de Guadarrama. Situated on Avenida Calvo Sotelo, it houses objects, tools and testimonies that illustrate the close relationship between the region's inhabitants and the natural resources of the surrounding area.

The visit can be rounded off with an urban walking tour that takes in squares, fountains, hidden corners, buildings and monuments linked to water, stone and livestock farming – three essential elements that have shaped the history, economy and landscape of the mountains.



SHEPHERDS AND COWBOYS OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Sierra de Guadarrama preserves a deep-rooted tradition of livestock farming linked to shepherds and cowboys who, for centuries, have roamed the dehesas and mountain pastures. Today, livestock farming remains a vital activity and one of the region's greatest assets.

Of particular note is the meat bearing the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) 'Carne de la Sierra de Guadarrama', renowned for its excellent quality and traditional extensive rearing methods, where the cattle graze freely on the mountain meadows. This way of life also helps to preserve the landscape and biodiversity of the mountains.

The pastoral culture remains alive thanks to family-oriented grazing experiences and activities, which allow visitors to accompany the livestock, learn about the work of the shepherds and discover first-hand one of the most authentic traditions of the Madrid mountains.

Along the route, you will also discover the important role that transhumant goat herds play in nature conservation, helping to care for the landscape and maintain the balance of mountain ecosystems.



SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

MOUNTAIN CRAFTS: WOOD, WOOL, FIBRES AND SHEPHERDING KNOW-HOW

Sierra Norte preserves a rich tradition linked to pastoral life, forestry and an ancient self-sufficient economy in which every resource in the environment had its use and purpose. Many of these crafts have evolved over time, but their legacy lives on today in workshops, producers, experiences and inherited knowledge that continue to give the region its unmistakable character.

SHEPHERD AND CHEESEMAKER FOR A DAY

Experience an authentic day in the countryside in Bustarviejo with the artisan cheese-maker La Caperuza. You'll get up close to cows, goats, calves and kids, learn how to milk, and take part in herding tasks alongside Carea dogs and discover how artisan cheeses from the Sierra Norte are made.



TRADITIONAL CRAFTS ROUTE

In Pinilla del Valle, this 7-kilometre circular route allows you to discover what traditional life was like in the Sierra Norte. Along the way, you'll come across old features linked to trades that have now disappeared, such as the blacksmith's forge, the shoeing block, the lime kiln, the Navazo mill, the tile workshop and the charcoal pits. The path runs alongside the Los Hoyos stream and offers magnificent views of the Lozoya Valley, combining nature, heritage and ethnography in one of the region's most unique routes.



INTANGIBLE TRADITIONS: LIVING CUSTOMS OF SIERRA NORTE

Transhumance – the age-old practice of moving livestock between pastures – continues to set the rhythm of the landscape and mountain culture. Alongside this, music preserves the collective memory and accompanies celebrations and gatherings. And in the wood-fired ovens, rural bakeries maintain the flavours of yesteryear: artisan breads crafted with patience, time-honoured expertise and the warmth of tradition.

THE PATH OF LIFE'S TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

La Hiruela preserves the memory of the traditional trades that shaped life in the Sierra del Rincón. This pleasant trail takes in some of its most iconic sites, such as the Traditional Beehive, where honey was produced in hollow oak trunks; the Flour Mill, which harnessed the waters of the River Jarama to grind grain; and the Charcoal Kiln, a testament to one of the mountain's toughest trades. The route passes through orchards, meadows and Pyrenean oak forests, offering a genuine immersion in the landscape and mountain traditions.



EMOTIONAL MAP OF VILLAVIEJA DEL LOZOYA

Discover Villavieja del Lozoya through the memories and experiences of its inhabitants. This unique tour invites you to explore some of the town's most iconic sites, such as the blacksmith's forge, the washhouse, the communal oven, the shoeing block, the traditional mansions, the boar pen and the Mudejar arch. At each stop, the stories and accounts of the locals offer an insight into the daily life, traditions and collective memory of one of the most charming villages in the Lozoya Valley, making the visit a unique experience that helps you understand its past and identity.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS

The Sierra Norte preserves a valuable sample of its traditional heritage in the ethnographic museums of Horcajuelo de la Sierra, Lozoyuela and La Hiruela. These venues offer an insight into what daily life was like in the mountain villages through old dwellings, tools, household goods and traditional crafts. A journey through the history and customs of the region that brings visitors closer to rural culture and the ways of life that have shaped these mountains for centuries.



BEEKEEPER FOR A DAY

Discover the fascinating world of bees with the beekeepers of the Sierra Norte. In Robledillo de la Jara, the SAT El Jabardo opens the doors to its apiaries to show how bees live and how artisanal honey is produced. In Braojos, Miel El Bardal offers beekeeping tourism experiences that allow you to get up close to one of the region's most traditional trades. An activity for the whole family that combines nature, learning and tasting local produce.

Further information and bookings

- SAT El Jabardo (Robledillo de la Jara)
- Miel El Bardal (Braojos de la Sierra)



SIERRA OESTE DE MADRID

WINE CULTURE AND VEGETABLE GARDENS

Sierra Oeste de Madrid brings together artisanal tradition and a contemporary reinterpretation of historic trades in a region where the land still holds a very vivid memory. Here, the landscape, wine culture and trades linked to everyday life form a mosaic in which the rural experience is expressed through materials, inherited customs and the deep connection between work and the land.

Traditional viticulture is practised throughout virtually the entire region, as is agriculture, which is particularly significant in Villa del Prado and forms an essential part of the region's cultural landscape. Wine production combines inherited methods with modern techniques under the Vinos de Madrid Designation of Origin, keeping alive a tradition that is as much a part of gastronomy as it is of the way the land is managed and the changing of the seasons observed.

In this context, beekeeping also plays a significant role as a practice closely linked to ecological balance and the cycles of the landscape. Beyond the production of honey, it represents a body of knowledge tied to an understanding of the land, flowering patterns and environmental conditions, and plays a quiet yet decisive part in the conservation of biodiversity and the pollination of crops and wild species. Like other rural trades, it combines observation, experience and intergenerational transmission, and reveals a way of living in harmony with the environment through constant attention to its rhythms and transformations.

INTANGIBLE TRADES

CHEESE - MAKING · TRADITIONALBAKING · BEEKEEPING

THE CRAFT OF MILLING

The Navalagamella Mill Trail offers an insight into the ancient craft of milling, which was fundamental to rural life in the Sierra Oeste. These water mills harnessed the power of the River Perales to grind grain into flour, which was essential for the baker's trade and for supplying the villages of the region for centuries.



LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA

CLAY, LIMESTONE AND GASTRONOMIC TRADITION

The fertile plains of the Tagus and Tajuña rivers have historically been home to artisans working with clay, stone and gastronomy. In this region, the relationship with the land's resources has given rise to a range of trades in which raw materials are transformed into material culture, the built landscape and flavour. Here, the artisan heritage cannot be understood without everyday life, without agricultural tradition and without the memory of the products that have made these villages famous.

Pottery and ceramics, found in places such as Chinchón, Colmenar de Oreja and Campo Real, originate from the region's reddish clay, which is deeply linked to domestic a agricultural life. For generations, this clay has been used to create vessels, utensils and objects that formed part of everyday life in the countryside and the home. In Campo Real, the Museum of Pottery and Local Specialities, now closed, commemorates precisely this ancient local industry and links it to other products that define the town's identity, such as olives and cheese.



Limestone stonemasonry, particularly in Colmenar de Oreja, is another of the region's major trades. Local stone has shaped historic façades, sculptures and decorative elements, and stonemasonry continues to use techniques passed down from generation to generation. This tradition can be explored today at the Stone Museum in Colmenar de Oreja, which is open to the public and dedicated to preserving the memory of a material that has been crucial to the region's construction and architectural identity.



Traditional distillation, exemplified by Anís de Chinchón, is also a historic craft that preserves artisanal methods in the production of one of the region's most renowned products. The brand continues to use aniseed and the traditional distillation method of Chinchón, and the distillery itself offers visitors the chance to explore this heritage: a source from González Byass describes a visit to La Alcoholera de Chinchón as a tour through more than a hundred years of history, from the aromatic warehouses to the stills and the final tasting.



Traditional pastries and bread-making carry on that same heritage in the culinary sphere. Rosquillas, aniseed bread, olive oil sweets and family recipes form part of a culinary heritage in which the memory remains very much alive. In Morata de Tajuña, this tradition finds one of its most popular expressions in famous 'palmeritas', which have become one of the region's great sweet icons and are closely linked to the local identity.





Alongside this, agricultural trades also endure, linked to market gardening, honey and traditional farming in the river valleys. In this region, this identity is reflected in products such as the 'ajo fino' garlic from Chinchón, an emblematic crop of the area; the Carabaña tomato, particularly associated with the 'moruna' variety grown in Las Vegas; and the Villaconejos melon, so closely linked to the town that the local council itself highlights its "delicious melons", recalls that their cultivation began to spread in the late 19th century, and has even dedicated a Melon Museum and a Melon Festival to them.

Olive-growing culture also plays a vital role in the identity of Las Vegas and Madrid's Alcarria region. The area forms part of the new olive oil tourism route promoted in the region and preserves places where that heritage lives on. In Brea de Tajo, the 'La Almazara' Olive Oil Museum recalls a world linked to olive oil for centuries: the town council emphasises that Brea is situated in the region with the highest number of olive trees in the Madrid Region and that this oil mill, in operation since the 19th century is the only one remaining of the various oil mills that once existed in the town.





INTANGIBLE TRADES

ESPARTO · TRADITIONAL SWEETS · BAKERIES · HERITAGE FARMING TECHNIQUES

MICROEXPERIENCE

Esparto work belongs to that world of traditional crafts that transformed local resources into essential objects for everyday life. For centuries, this strong yet flexible plant fibre has been used to create items for the home, transport and farm work, shaping a material culture deeply rooted in the rural environment. In Villarejo de Salvanés, this knowledge is kept alive thanks to the esparto spinning workshops held on Saturdays, from 11.00 to 13.00 at the Casa de la Tercia, free of charge. Organised by the Villarejo de Salvanés Spinners' School, the activity offers an opportunity to discover a craft that combines technical knowledge, inherited tradition and a careful understanding of the materials and their potential.







MUSEUMS AND INTERPRETATION CENTRES OF THE RURAL WORLD

The identity of Madrid's rural regions is also preserved in museums and interpretative centres that house tools, everyday objects, farming implements, testimonies and memories linked to agricultural, livestock and craft-based life. These places offer an insight into how traditional trades have shaped the landscape, material culture and the way the land is inhabited.

Northern Mountains of Madrid.
Lozoyuela Ethnographic Museum.

Guadarrama Mountains.
Alpedrete Stonemason's Museum, Manzanares el Real Ethnological and Archaeological Museum.

Western Madrid Mountains.
Navas del Rey Ethnographic Museum, Tío Breva House Museum (Villamanta).

Las Vegas & Madrid's Alcarria.
Casa de la Tercia (Villarejo de Salvanés), Stone Museum (Colmenar de Oreja), La Almazara Olive Oil Museum (Brea de Tajo).





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