MAD RURAL

Paths of faith, nature and heritage in the Community of Madrid



Financiado por la Unión Europea NextGenerationEU

Gobierno de España · Ministerio de Industria y Turismo

Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Comunidad de Madrid

MAD RURAL

SPIRITUAL MADRID

There is a side to Madrid that reveals itself far from the hustle and bustle of the city. A Madrid of serene mountains, ancient paths and villages where time seems to pass at a slower pace.

In its mountain ranges and valleys, history has left deep traces: chapels overlooking the meadows, monasteries guarding centuries of silence, and paths once trodden by shepherds, travellers and pilgrims.

These are lands where nature and spirituality have coexisted for generations.

This leaflet invites you to discover this inner Madrid, where walking becomes a way of connecting with the landscape, with memory and, often, with oneself.

The rural regions of the Community of Madrid —Sierra Norte, Sierra de Guadarrama, Sierra Oeste and Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña— preserve a network of historic routes that have been travelled for centuries. Among them are ancient pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, medieval footpaths, royal roads and trails leading to small chapels hidden amongst hills and valleys.

Today, these itineraries allow us to rediscover a region where every step reveals a story, every landscape invites us to pause, and every path still holds something of the spirit of those who travelled it before.



MADRID DESTINO RURAL

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ROUTES OF THE CARPETANIA SUENA PROJECT -SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

In Sierra Norte, the landscape is not just to be admired: it is also to be heard. The Carpetania Suena project invites you to explore the region through its sounds, the stories passed down from generation to generation, and the memories that linger along the paths.

Walking these routes is a way of hearing the whisper of the wind through the holm oak groves, the murmur of the streams, or the voices of the past that still seem to echo amongst the hills and villages

JUANA LA BELTRANEJA ROUTE

This 10.9 km itinerary follows in the footsteps of the route taken in the 15th century by the young princess Juana la Beltraneja on her way to her wedding ceremony. The path winds its way through holm oak and ash groves, following ancient cattle tracks that still retain the essence of the traditional landscape, on a journey where nature and history intertwine serenely. Along the route, you'll come across some of the valley's most unique heritage sites: the Cal y Canto Bridge, the evocative ruins of the Hermitage of La Trinidad and the remains of the Church of Santiago (Site of Cultural Interest), a site open to the landscape that preserves, between stone and horizon, the medieval memory of the Lozoya Valley.

Technical details:

Starting point: Buitrago del Lozoya (Plaza de la Bellota)
Distance: 10,9 km
Duration: 2 hrs 30 mins

MEDIEVAL BRIDGES ROUTE

This route invites you to discover the historical heritage linked to the valley's ancient crossings – those places where, for centuries, paths, travellers and herds converged. The itinerary links several medieval bridges that facilitated communication between villages and grazing lands, combining the solidity of traditional architecture with the beauty of the river landscape and the natural sounds of the surroundings. Through this route, visitors can delve into a historical interpretation of the area that complements the medieval narrative found on other routes in the Carpetania network, enriching the experience with an accessible and informative interpretation of the landscape and its history.

Technical details:

Starting point: Canencia
Distance: 18,3 km
Duration: 3 hrs 5 mins

HISTORICAL TRAILS

THE MADRID ROUTE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA IN SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

The Madrid route to Santiago de Compostela is one of the great historic pilgrimage routes in Spain. It begins in the capital, at the Church of St James and St John the Baptist, and heads north until it crosses the Sierra de Guadarrama via the Puerto de la Fuenfría pass. From there, it continues through the provinces of Segovia, Valladolid and León until it joins the French Way at Sahagún.

This is a route of great scenic and cultural richness, where Madrid's urban heritage gives way to pastures, reservoirs, mountain paths and villages with a deep historical legacy. On the Madrid section, the route passes through mountainous areas and villages alongside the Santillana Reservoir, Manzanares el Real, El Boalo, Mataelpino, Becerril de la Sierra, Navacerrada, Cercedilla and the Fuenfría Valley, before entering the province of Segovia.

The section through the Sierra de Guadarrama is one of the most iconic stretches of the route. In this area, the itinerary is divided into three main stages: Tres Cantos–Manzanares el Real, Manzanares el Real–Cercedilla and Cercedilla–Puerto de la Fuenfría. The journey through the mountain range partly follows the ancient Roman Road XXIV, combining nature, historical memory and the tradition of pilgrimage in a single route.

It is a unique way to begin the pilgrimage to Santiago from the heart of Madrid, with a gradual transition from the urban landscape to the mountains, amidst heritage, nature and spirituality.



Technical details:

Starting point: Madrid (Church of Santiago and San Juan Bautista) Route: Madrid – Sierra de Guadarrama – Segovia – Valladolid – León – Sahagún (connection with the French Way)

Approximate total distance: 320–325 km to Sahagún

Total distance to Santiago: approx. 680–700 km

Estimated time: 12–13 stages to Sahagún.

Highest point: Puerto de la Fuenfría (1,796 m)

Final connection: Sahagún (French Way)

CYCLING EXPERIENCE IN SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

The Camino de Santiago from Madrid is an excellent option for anyone looking to enjoy a cycle ride through the countryside, covering three stages that take us from the city up into the mountains.

- **Stage 1. Madrid to Tres Cantos**
- **Stage 2. Tres Cantos to Manzanares el Real**
- **Stage 3. Manzanares el Real to Cercedilla**

A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY – LA CABRERA

At the foot of the Sierra de La Cabrera, the landscape bears traces that span the centuries. This route invites you to discover them at your own pace: ancient pre-Roman settlements, Visigothic remains and the unique Monastery of San Antonio and San Julián, one of the most evocative monastic complexes in Sierra Norte.

The route climbs up to Cerro de la Cabeza, offering sweeping views of the surrounding countryside, and reaches the enigmatic Tumba del Moro, a small necropolis carved into the rock that has fuelled legends for generations.

Here, history and landscape intertwine with every step.

Technical details:

Starting point: La Cabrera (Centro de Innovación Turística Villa San Roque)
Distance: 8,3 km
Duration estimado: 2 hrs 40 mins



THE MENDOCINO ROUTE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Discover a unique stretch of the Mendocino Way to Santiago de Compostela between Guadalix de la Sierra and Soto del Real, where the landscape takes centre stage. Over its 9–10 km, the route passes through vast pastures dotted with holm oaks, open meadows and livestock farms bordered by traditional stone walls. The horizon is dominated by the imposing silhouette of the Sierra de Guadarrama, which accompanies the walker for almost the entire journey. It is a peaceful and uncrowded setting, where it is common to come across cattle grazing freely and a clear light that brings out the colours of the countryside. An ideal route for immersing yourself in the rural essence and enjoying the most authentic landscape of the Madrid mountains.

Technical details:

Starting point: Guadalix de la Sierra (Church of San Juan Bautista)
Distance: 9-10 km
Estimat: 2 hrs 15 mins





THE UCLÉS, LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA SANTIAGO PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

A historic route deeply linked to the Order of Santiago since the 12th century, when the Monastery of Uclés became the Order's mother house and one of the great spiritual centres of the Iberian Peninsula. Restored in 2010, this route is once again attracting pilgrims and travellers seeking a spiritual and cultural experience amidst the landscapes this area has to offer.

The route, covering 144.4 km between Madrid and Uclés, can be completed in six days on foot or in one or two days by bicycle. As it winds through the region of Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña, it passes through towns such as Morata de Tajuña, Perales de Tajuña, Tielmes, Carabaña and Estremera, where historic churches, chapels, caves carved out of gypsum and sections of the Greenway blend naturally into the landscape of the Tajuña river floodplains.

The route also includes a detour via Villarejo de Salvanés and Valdaracete, towns historically linked to the Order of Santiago. Approximately 80 per cent of the route

is accessible, making it one of the most inclusive pilgrimage routes to Santiago, open to all kinds of walkers wishing to discover this region step by step.

ROYAL ROUTE TO GUADALUPE THE MONKS' WAY

A historic route documented since the 14th century, when the Hieronymite monks set out from Lupiana bound for the Monastery of Guadalupe. For centuries, this route was one of the great royal pilgrimage routes to Extremadura, travelled by travellers, religious figures and walkers who crossed these lands guided by devotion and the hospitality of the villages along the way.

In the region of Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña, the route follows the Tajuña valley, passing through towns such as Ambite, Orusco de Tajuña, Carabaña, Tielmes, Perales and Morata de Tajuña, until it reaches Titulcia, a historic enclave where ancient pilgrimage routes converge.

The itinerary combines agricultural plains, rural heritage and sections of the Vía Verde, alongside areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the surroundings of the River Jarama and the South-East Regional Park. From Toledo, the route continues to the Monastery of Guadalupe, adding a further 198 km to a journey that extends the traveller's experience through some of the most evocative landscapes of central Spain.



CHAPELS AND SCENERY FOR CONTEMPLATION



NAZARET CHAPEL – MONTEJO DE LA SIERRA

First mentioned as far back as the 14th century in Alfonso XI's *Las Monterías*, this route climbs up to the chapel, situated atop a hill offering sweeping views over the valley. The circular route winds through open meadows, past dry-stone walls and along ancient livestock tracks that still bear the mark of the traditional landscape, on a path where nature, history and silence accompany the visitor to this small enclave of mountain spirituality.

Technical details:

Starting point: Montejo de la Sierra
Distance: 8,3 km
Duration: 2 hrs 10 mins



CHAPEL OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LOS PRADOS GARGANTA DE LOS MONTES

Recommended route for families – ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

A short, accessible route linking the town centre with the Nava de la Virgen recreational area, winding through a peaceful landscape that invites you to stroll at a leisurely pace. Devotion to Nuestra Señora de los Prados dates back to the 17th century and forms part of the town's collective memory; for centuries, its inhabitants turned to the Virgin for protection against illness and poor harvests, keeping alive a tradition deeply rooted in the history and spirit of the community.

Technical details:

Starting point: C/ Castillejo
Distance: 5 km
Duration: 1 hrs 30 mins



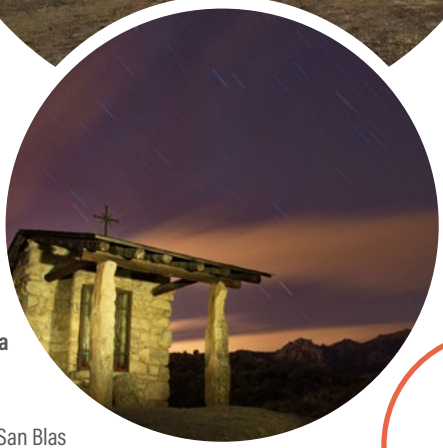
SANTA ANA CHAPEL, ALAMEDA DEL VALLE



The route to the Chapel of Santa Ana is one of the most iconic walks in Alameda del Valle. The path climbs gently through communal meadows and ash groves, passing through the characteristic landscape of the lower Lozoya valley, where nature still retains its unhurried pace. The path runs alongside the Santa Ana stream and allows visitors to discover traditional features of rural life, such as the Cueva de la Zorra or the remains of the old tile-making workshop, where the roof tiles that still cover many of the village's houses were once produced. The chapel, situated atop a small hill with excellent views over the valley, has been a spiritual and scenic landmark for locals and walkers alike since the 18th century.

Technical details:

Starting point: Antiguas Eras (lower part of the village)
Distance: 3 km (one way)
Duration: 1 hrs



SAN BLAS CHAPEL

Route through the San Blas Valley – Miraflores de la Sierra

Recommended route for families

This circular route climbs from the Fuente del Cura to the San Blas Wayside Shrine, the site where a chapel was built in the 17th century and which today retains the serene character of traditional places of worship. From this point, visitors can enjoy spectacular views of La Pedriza, the Hueco de San Blas and the Santillana Reservoir – a landscape of great beauty that unfolds amongst mountains and rocky outcrops. The route continues to the Ermita del Rosario, situated on high ground offering sweeping panoramic views of the mountain range, inviting you to pause and take in the horizon.

Technical details:

Starting point: Miraflores de la Sierra
Distance: 7,83 km
Duration: 3 hrs



NATURALEZA, TRADICIÓN Y PAISAJE RURAL

VEREDA DEL CRISTO NATURE TRAIL – COLMENAR DE OREJA

Recommended route for families

This circular route connects the Cristo del Humilladero Chapel with the Vereda del Cristo, passing through the open landscape of olive groves, moorland and vineyards that characterises the Colmenar de Oreja area. Along the way, walkers will come across unique spots such as the Fuente de Valdegredero and the Mirador de los Barrancos, offering sweeping views over the Tagus Valley – a horizon where nature, agricultural tradition and the landscape blend in harmony.

Technical details:

Starting point: Colmenar de Oreja
Distance: 7 km
Duration: 2 h 30 min



Did you know...?

The original sculpture, linked to the Battle of Lepanto, was lost during the . The replica of the Cristo del Humilladero commemorates an image which, according to tradition, accompanied Spanish sailors in the famous battle of 1571.



THE MILLS OF THE RIVER PERALES – NAVALAGAMELLA

This route runs alongside the River Perales, following the course of the water through ash groves and riverside vegetation, in a landscape where nature retains a remarkable wealth of biodiversity. Along the way, you'll come across the remains of old water mills, a testament to the activity that for centuries harnessed the river's power to grind grain and sustain the life of the surrounding villages. The route starts at the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Estrella, the town's main historical landmark, from where this walk begins, combining heritage, landscape and rural history.

Technical details:

Starting point: Church of Nuestra Señora de la Estrella
Distance: 7 km
Duration: 3 hrs

ROUTE TO THE CHAPEL OF LA PEÑA SACRA – MANZANARES EL REAL

Circular route, 1 hour and 20 minutes

This circular route climbs from the town centre to the Chapel of Our Lady of La Peña Sacra, situated on a rocky outcrop offering sweeping views of our town, Mendoza Castle, the Santillana reservoir and La Pedriza. The route combines rural footpaths with the characteristic granite landscape of Sierra de Guadarrama, where rocks, scrubland and open horizons accompany the ascent. Along the way, nature and tradition intertwine in a setting of great scenic beauty that invites you both to stroll and to contemplate the mountain landscape.



FROM SOTO DEL REAL TO MIRAFLORES DE LA SIERRA VIA THE CHAPEL OF SAN BLAS

Delve into one of the most authentic landscapes of Sierra de Guadarrama via this route, where nature and history intertwine. The route winds its way through gentle hills and knolls covered in Mediterranean vegetation and pine forests, alternating between open stretches and areas of denser woodland. As you proceed, points of heritage interest integrated into the landscape come into view, whilst the horizon opens up to reveal peaks and ridges of great beauty..

The trail offers the chance to enjoy a wide variety of ecosystems: holm oaks, scrubland aromatic vegetation and, in the higher areas, the pine forests characteristic of the mountains, creating an ever-changing landscape full of contrasts. A peaceful and evocative setting, where every step combines panoramic views, well-preserved nature and the feeling of exploring a land steeped in history – ideal for those seeking a complete experience in the heart of the mountains.

Technical details:

Starting point: Soto del Real
Distance: Aproximadamente 6–8 km
Duration estimado: Entre 2 y 3 horas



CERCEDILLA: ROUTES THROUGH CHAPELS AND WOODLANDS. PURICELLI TRAIL (EASY):

It starts near Cercedilla railway station and leads to the Las Dehesas area, passing very close to the chapel. The route partly follows the unfinished 'República' road.

It is a route with very little elevation gain, ideal for families. The terrain is dirt with some large stones, so it is not suitable for pushchairs.

It runs in the shade of tall wild pines, making it pleasant even in summer.

WATER TRAIL (EASY-MODERATE):

It starts at Cercedilla station and is signposted with light blue dots. It crosses the eastern slope of the valley, passing through areas of oak and pine trees.

LA PEÑOTA CIRCULAR ROUTE (DIFFICULT):

It links the area around the chapel and the Puricelli Trail with the ascent to La Peñota (1,945 m). It is approximately 13–16 km long with an elevation gain of more than 800 metres.



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