MAD RURAL

CALM LANDSCAPES

Cultural and natural getaways for older travellers



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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE INDUSTRIA Y TURISMO

Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

MAD RURAL

A region to explore at a leisurely pace

Sometimes, the best trip isn't the one that takes you furthest away, but the one that brings you back to the serene rhythm of simple things. Very close to the city, the rural villages of the

Madrid Region boast peaceful landscapes, living traditions and a way of enjoying life characterised by tranquillity.

Amidst mountains, historic trails and squares that preserve the memory of generations, experiences await that are designed to let you savour every moment: peaceful walks through nature, cultural visits steeped in history, traditional cuisine, wines crafted using traditional methods, and encounters with the most authentic rural life.

There's no rush here. Just the pleasure of discovering, sharing and letting yourself be surprised by places brimming with charm. An invitation to travel differently, at a leisurely pace, with an awakened curiosity and a desire to embrace new experiences.

Rediscover the pleasure of travelling at a leisurely pace and let yourself be captivated by the rural heart of Madrid.



MADRID DESTINO RURAL

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SIERRA OESTE DE MADRID

DEHESAS, MONASTERIES AND CHARMING VILLAGES

Heritage · Nature

At the western edge of the Madrid Region lies a region of open landscapes, dehesas and villages steeped in history. Sierra Oeste retains a serene rural atmosphere, where nature, heritage and traditions coexist in harmony.

This experience invites you to discover some of its most iconic sites: a medieval monastery steeped in history, a village with traditional architecture, and a gentle route that allows you to enjoy the mountain scenery at your own pace. An invitation to explore this area at a leisurely pace, alternating between culture, walking and moments to take in the surroundings



MONASTERY OF SANTA MARÍA LA REAL DE VALDEIGLESIAS - PELAYOS DE LA PRESA

Founded by the Cistercian Order in the 12th century, the monastery of Santa María la Real de Valdeiglesias still retains the strength and serenity characteristic of ancient monastic sites, surrounded by the tranquillity of the countryside.

During the visit, you will explore some of the main areas open to the public, which offer an insight into medieval monastic life: courtyards, convent buildings and architectural remains that evoke centuries of history. The atmosphere of the place invites you to walk slowly, observing the detail of the stonework and the spaciousness of the interior areas.

The route is comfortable and accessible for the most part, allowing you to enjoy the visit at your own pace, with plenty of time to appreciate the historical significance of the site.

Further practical information

Duration of visit: 45–60 mins
Surface: even stone
Gradients: minimal on the main route
Rest areas: spacious indoor areas
Toilets: check availability
Guided tours: recommended Suitable for a half-day cultural outing, which can be combined with other nearby sites in the Sierra Oeste.

CADALSO DE LOS VIDRIOS

Cadalso de los Vidrios is one of the villages with the greatest historical character in Sierra Oeste. Its traditional town centre retains squares, quiet streets and various examples of civil heritage that evoke the importance the town held in centuries past.

The walk can begin in the gardens and pond of Palacio de Villena, an elegant Renaissance building linked to the Castilian nobility, and continue through the streets of the historic centre, where you'll find old wine cellars, traditional houses and corners full of character.

Along the way, it is easy to find small bars and restaurants where you can stop to sample the local cuisine, making the visit an ideal way to combine culture and relaxation.

It is a pleasant stroll that allows you to soak up the town's tranquil atmosphere whilst discovering some of its most iconic buildings.

Further practical information

City walk: 1.5–2 km
Gradients: gentle with slight uphill sections
Surface: traditional urban paving
Rest stops: squares and the area around Palacio de Villena
Toilets: in local establishments
Best time: morning

Ideal for combining a cultural stroll with local cuisine in a relaxed setting.

Microexperience

In Cadalso de los Vidrios, some of the world's most highly regarded Garnacha wines come from small vineyards in Sierra Oeste. Local wineries have committed to recovering old vines from the area, placing these landscapes firmly on the international wine map with wines that have achieved 100 Parker points.

Visiting one of these wineries and tasting its wines offers a different way to understand the region: landscape, tradition and contemporary viticulture brought together in a single glass.





THE BOQUERÓN ROUTE – RECOMMENDED SECTION

The Boquerón Route winds through a landscape characteristic of Sierra Oeste, where traditional pastures interweave with the first hills of the mountain range. The result is an open landscape, with sweeping views and a constant sense of tranquillity.

The recommended section offers a comfortable walk along wide forest tracks, surrounded by Mediterranean vegetation and pastureland. Along the way, there are various vantage points from which to admire the landscape as it transitions from countryside to mountains.

The route is particularly pleasant for walking in a group at a leisurely pace, with time to observe the surroundings, chat and enjoy the fresh air.

Further practical information

Recommended distance: 3–4 km (return)
Estimated time: 1 hr 15 mins – 1 hr 45 mins
Surface: compacted forest track
Elevation gain: gentle
Shade: partial
Rest stops: possible on wide verges
Best time of year: autumn and spring. Ideal for a leisurely walk and enjoying the countryside.

Archaeological site of La Mezquita

Discover a unique site where history is revealed through the stone. La Mezquita archaeological site preserves the remains of a Romanesque-Mudejar church, alongside a necropolis with burials dating from the Middle Ages to modern times. Highlights include tombs carved into the rock, ancient walls of the church, the remains of a tower and structures such as the sacristy and the drainage system.

Visits by appointment only.



Microexperience

In Cadalso de los Vidrios, look out for the Casa de los Salvajes. Its unique façade decoration, featuring carved figures with a medieval feel, is one of the most intriguing and least well-known features of the town's heritage.

SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

BEAUTIFUL NATURAL SURROUNDINGS AND MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

Landscape · Heritage

Sierra de Guadarrama is one of the great natural areas in Madrid. For generations, its pine forests, mountains and mountain villages have been a haven of tranquillity and a place to connect with nature for those seeking fresh air, open landscapes and peaceful walks.

WALK ALONG THE BANKS OF THE RESERVOIR OF SANTILLANA – MANZANARES EL REAL

This linear route runs alongside the waters of the Santillana Reservoir through one of the most recognisable landscapes in the mountains, offering views of La Pedriza and the castle at Manzanares El Real. The route is easy to follow and virtually flat, making it ideal for a leisurely stroll where you can stop to take in the surroundings.

As well as its scenic value, it is one of the most interesting spots in the area for birdwatching. The proximity to the water and the variety of habitats attract numerous species, so the walk can turn into a little birdwatching experience without requiring much effort.

As it is a linear route, it can be easily adapted to suit each group, either by covering just the first section or by extending the walk if you fancy continuing along the edge of the reservoir.

Further practical information

Recommended distance: 3 km (first section, extendable)
Estimated time: 1 h
Difficulty: low
Elevation gain: virtually none
Surface: easy footpath
Option to shorten the route: yes, as it is a linear route • Best time of year: all year round
Highly recommended for those seeking open countryside, an easy walk and birdwatching in a setting of great beauty.



ROUTE: FROM ALPEDRETE TO COLLADO MEDIANO AMONGST OLD QUARRIES

This linear route allows you to discover a mountainous landscape closely linked to the history of stonemasonry. The path climbs gently amongst holm oaks, oaks and old granite quarries, whilst also offering beautiful views of the surroundings and the mountain range's silhouette.

It is an easy and pleasant walk for a peaceful morning, especially if complemented by a visit to the Alpedrete Stonemasons' Museum, which explains one of the most representative trades of the Sierra de Guadarrama, or by a guided tour of the Roman inn site at Beneficio in Collado Mediano.

Further practical information

Distance: 4.15 km
Estimated time: 1 hr 30 mins
Difficulty: low
Elevation gain: 120 m
Surface: track and dirt track
Best time of year: all year round, avoiding the hottest days of summer Ideal for combining a gentle walk with local heritage in a single excursion.

Sierra de Guadarrama was one of the first leisure destinations for Madrid residents from the late 19th century onwards. The arrival of the railway made these mountain landscapes easier to reach these mountain landscapes and turned villages such as Cercedilla and Navacerrada into popular destinations for day trips and relaxation.







DEHESA DE LA GOLONDRINA – NAVACERRADA

Dehesa de la Golondrina is one of the most pleasant walks in Navacerrada for those seeking tranquillity, light shade and a peaceful stroll. The route follows a wide forest track through oak and holm oak trees, past springs and over small hills, passing by the San Antonio chapel and several spots where you can stop and take your time.

Thanks to its peaceful nature and proximity to the village, it fits perfectly into a day focused on wellbeing and health, combining gentle exercise, fresh air and relaxation in an accessible natural setting.

Further practical information

Distance: 3 km
Estimated time: 2 hours (there and back)
Difficulty: low
Elevation gain: gentle along the main route
Surface: forest track
Water: drinking fountains at various points along the route
Ideal for a leisurely outing in the countryside, with no physical demands

Final safety and planning note

The distances, times and characteristics described are approximate and may vary depending on your pace, weather conditions, the condition of the trail or any ad hoc works. Suitable footwear is recommended, and you should check the opening times of museums and facilities before your visit.

LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA

HISTORIC VILLAGES, WINE AND LEISURELY WALKS

Heritage · Tranquillity

Here, the countryside unfolds amidst vineyards, olive groves and villages that preserve the essence of history intact. Here, the journey is savoured at a leisurely pace: strolls through charming streets, lingering glances at the traditional agricultural landscape, and stops to discover wineries, museums and squares that invite you to sit and observe local life. An ideal option for those wishing to combine culture, nature and gastronomy in peaceful and accessible surroundings.



CAMPO REAL – THE 40-DAY TRAIN

This walk takes you along one of the most unique routes in south-eastern Madrid: the route of the old '40-Day Train', a piece of infrastructure linked to the Spanish Civil War that today remains an integral part of the rural landscape of Campo Real.

The route follows easy paths through almond groves, olive groves and gentle agricultural hills until it reaches some of the most visible sections of the old railway. The railway cuttings carved into the ground are among the most striking features of the route and help visitors to grasp the historical significance of the place.

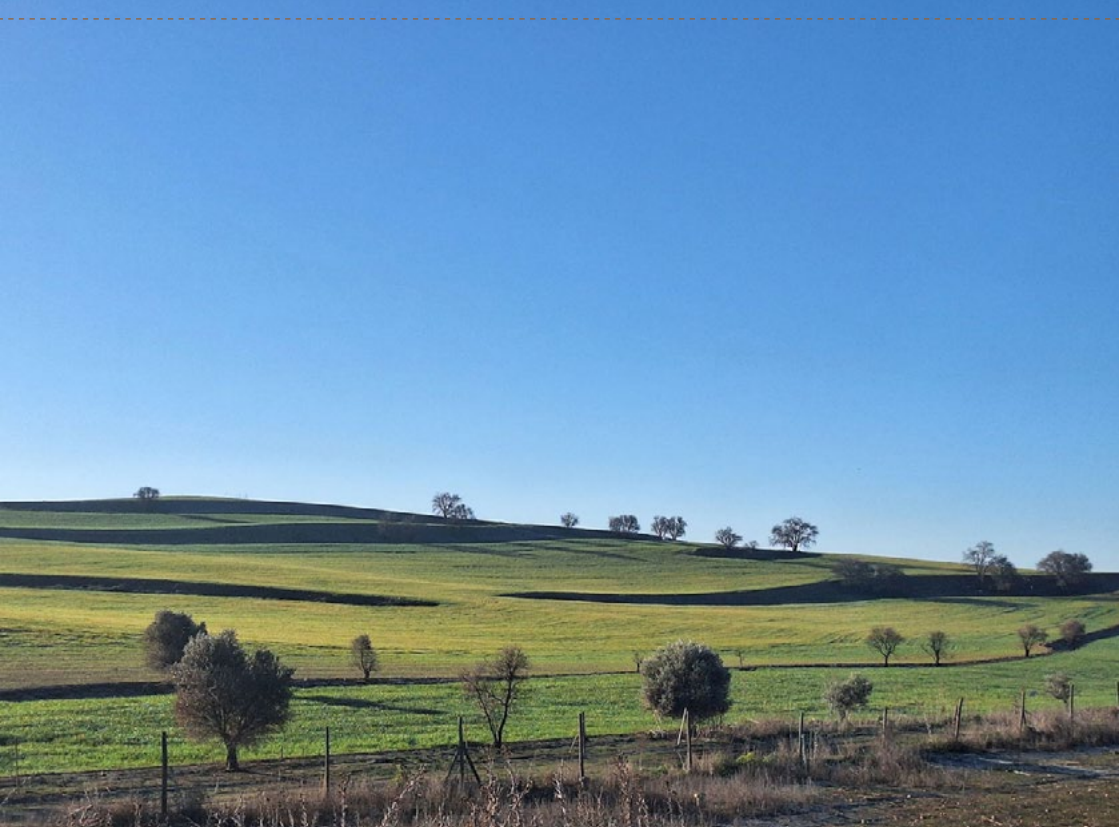
This is a simple, wide-open walk, ideal for a leisurely stroll that combines agricultural scenery, historical memory and sweeping horizons in a peaceful excursion.

The route is particularly pleasant in spring and autumn, when the countryside displays its most delicate hues and the walk invites you to pause and take in the surroundings.

Further practical information

Distance: 6.29 km (circular)
Estimated time: 38 mins
Difficulty: easy
Elevation gain: 40 m
Surface: country lanes
Best time of year: spring and autumn
A highly recommended route for those wishing to combine a leisurely walk, open countryside and a peaceful insight into the region's recent history.





LOECHES – JUNIPER TRAIL

This circular route links the architectural heritage of Loeches with a pleasant walk along the paths and hills surrounding the town. The walk begins next to the Tourist Office, near the Convento Grande, one of the most recognisable landmarks in the local landscape.

After passing through part of the historic centre, the path opens out onto a landscape of rolling farmland and peaceful footpaths, before returning via the Juniper Trail, alongside Monte de Loeches, an area of rich woodland featuring oak and holm oak trees and a more shaded atmosphere.

The combination of historic architecture, open horizons and stretches of natural countryside makes this route a particularly pleasant choice for a leisurely morning stroll.

Further practical information

Distance: 11.39 km (circular)
Estimated time: 1 hr 17 mins
Difficulty: moderate
Elevation gain: 80 m
Terrain: country lanes and footpaths
Best time of year: autumn, winter and spring

This route can be adapted to cover just the historic sites and the first section of the trail, allowing you to enjoy the scenery with less physical exertion.

TITULCIA – JUNTA DE LOS RÍOS

Titulcia offers one of the most evocative river-side walks in south-eastern Madrid. The Junta de los Ríos route leads from the village to the confluence of the Tajuña and Jarama rivers, a site of great natural value where the water and riverside vegetation completely transform the landscape.

The route follows an easy, almost flat path, passing by the historic iron bridge over the Tajuña and then winding its way through a landscape of oak groves, tamarisk, willows and wet meadows – an area particularly favourable for birdwatching.

This is a short and very pleasant walk, perfect for strolling at a leisurely pace, enjoying the coolness of the river and discovering one of the most distinctive scenes in the South-East Regional Park.

Further practical information

Distance: 4.01 km (circular route)
Estimated time: 58 mins
Difficulty: easy
Elevation gain: 3 m
Terrain: flat, easy paths
Best time of year: spring and autumn

Highly recommended for those looking for a short, natural, and accessible walk, with the added appeal of a riverside landscape.

Microexperience

In Titulcia, step inside the winery and discover the unique 'sobremadre' wine, a production method closely linked to the region's winemaking history. At wineries such as Viña Bayona, the wine ferments on its own lees and is bottled directly from the earthenware vat, retaining a slight natural effervescence that gives it a fresh and distinctive character.

A short tasting session offers a better understanding of the landscape surrounding the village: vineyards irrigated by the River Tajuña, traditional grape varieties such as Malvar, and a winemaking tradition that has been kept alive for generations.



Microexperience

Discover Oleotourism in Loeches with a guided walk through the historic Olive Grove of the Count-Duke of Olivares, a unique setting of centuries-old olive trees where tradition, landscape, and history come together around olive oil culture. During the visit, you will learn about the secrets of olive cultivation and traditional olive oil production, ending the experience with a guided tasting of local varieties.

SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

QUIET VILLAGES AND ACCESSIBLE ROUTES

Scenic · Heritage

Sierra Norte de Madrid is home to some of the region's most serene and best-preserved landscapes. Amidst rolling hills, rivers and historic villages, travellers will find places where time seems to pass at a gentle, leisurely pace.

This itinerary combines historical heritage, traditional architecture and nature walks, in settings that invite you to stroll at a leisurely pace, take in the scenery and breathe in the fresh mountain air. An ideal experience for those seeking tranquillity, culture and accessible routes in one of the most attractive rural areas of the Madrid Region.

BUITRAGO DEL LOZOYA

Buitrago del Lozoya is one of the most unique historic towns in Sierra Norte. Its medieval walled enclosure, almost entirely encircled by a meander of the river Lozoya, forms an unmistakable sight against the mountainous backdrop.

The walk can begin by following the outer perimeter of the walls, which are among the best-preserved in the Madrid Region, with towers and sections that give an insight into the town's former defensive role. From certain sections of the route, there are beautiful views over the river and the historic centre.

Upon passing through one of its medieval gates, visitors enter a small, tranquil historic centre that is a delight to explore on foot. The streets retain their traditional layout and lead to some of the town's most iconic sites, such as the church of Santa María del Castillo.

Within the walled enclosure are also the castle and the medieval garden, two sites that round off the visit and provide a better understanding of the town's heritage value.

The Picasso Museum – Eugenio Arias Collection, meanwhile, is situated outside the walled enclosure, currently on the ground floor of the town hall. It houses a unique collection of works by the Malaga-born artist, the result of his friendship with the barber from Buitrago during his exile in France.

The visit can be rounded off with a pleasant stroll along the river and the reservoir, a particularly peaceful setting where you can take your time to enjoy the mountainous landscape.

The site combines medieval heritage, culture and a leisurely stroll in a very accessible itinerary.

Further practical information

Recommended city walk: 2–3 km
Terrain: flat in the historic centre
Reservoir walk: even, wide surface
Gradients: very gentle
Rest stops: frequent benches along the riverside walk
Toilets: municipal facilities and catering
Estimated time: 2–3 hours including museum visits
Best time: sunset by the river

A visit particularly well suited to combining heritage with a leisurely stroll.



LA CABRERA – HISTORY TRAIL (RECOMMENDED SHORT SECTION)

At the foot of the Sierra de La Cabrera lies one of the most characteristic granite landscapes in northern Madrid. Here, amongst rock formations and Mediterranean mountain vegetation, runs the Route through History, an interpretative trail that links nature and heritage.

The route centres on the Convent of San Antonio and San Julián, a historic site of great heritage value. From here, the path continues along easy footpaths and tracks, allowing you to enjoy the open landscape and the granite rocks that dominate the surroundings. The excursion can be rounded off with a guided tour of the convent, a free activity available all year round by prior booking.

The recommended short section allows you to explore the area at a leisurely pace, stop at the interpretative points and enjoy the scenery without having to tackle the full route. The guided tour also offers a deeper insight into the site's history, a tour of the Romanesque church and a stroll through the gardens and fountains.

Further practical information

Recommended distance: 2.5 km
Estimated time: 1 hr 15 mins – 1 hr 45 mins
Surface: footpath and compacted track
Elevation: gentle with slight undulations
Rest areas: spacious natural areas
Toilets: in the town
Best time of year: spring and autumn

The route can be extended depending on your fitness level, although the shorter section is the most recommended for enjoying the walk at a leisurely pace.



NAZARET CHAPEL – MONTEJO DE LA SIERRA

Set in the natural surroundings of Montejo de la Sierra, this circular route leads to the Nazaret Chapel, a small, traditional site surrounded by open countryside. The route allows you to discover one of the most authentic settings in the Sierra Norte, where woods, meadows and sweeping views of the surrounding area alternate.

The path runs along well-maintained forest tracks, with gentle, steady gradients that allow you to walk at a steady pace whilst enjoying the tranquillity of the surroundings. Along the route, there are various spots where you can stop to admire the scenery or take a break.

This route is slightly longer than the previous ones and is specially designed for those who are used to walking and wish to enjoy a more extensive hike through the mountains.

Further practical information

Distance: 8.3 km (can be shortened in sections)
Estimated time: 2 hrs 30 mins – 3 hrs 30 mins
Difficulty: low–moderate
Surface: mountain forest track
Gradient: gentle with continuous sections
Shade: partial
Rest stops: no benches; natural resting spots
Best time of year: spring

It is recommended to walk just part of the route if you wish to reduce the effort involved.

Microexperience

In Buitrago del Lozoya, a stroll along the river at dusk allows you to admire the town walls reflected in the water whilst the evening light bathes the historic centre. It is one of those serene moments when you can clearly sense the town's peaceful, medieval character.



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