MAD RURAL

ADVENTURE DNA
Getaways for young people in the Community of Madrid



Financiado por la Unión Europea
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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
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Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Comunidad de Madrid

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Close to everything, far from the daily grind

Beyond the city, rural Madrid unfolds with mountains, pastures, valleys and historic trails that invite you to discover the region with an active spirit and an eye open to wonder. These getaways are designed for young people with a thirst for adventure: for those who enjoy walking for hours, cycling through forests, climbing to natural viewpoints or following trails that wind through mountain ranges and open countryside.

These are dynamic experiences, full of character and personality, where outdoor sports intertwine with the discovery of villages, unexpected heritage sites and landscapes that change their appearance with every season. Trails with challenging gradients, medium- and long-distance routes, technical sections and mountain scenery that reward the effort with open horizons and a silence rarely found in the city.

Many of these trails follow ancient paths through the landscape: cattle tracks used for centuries by transhumant herds, old Roman roads, railway lines now converted into greenways, or paths that once linked villages and mountain pastures. Today they are travelled at a different pace, yet their essence remains intact: routes where history and adventure go hand in hand, step by step.



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SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE AND ICONIC ROUTES

Intermediate · Scenic

Sierra de Guadarrama is the great adventure playground of the Community of Madrid. Here, the landscape takes on a whole new scale: granite peaks, mountain pine forests, historic trails and routes that have linked valleys and mountain passes for centuries.

It is a land of fresh air, steep gradients that put your legs to the test, and natural viewpoints that reward every step.

If you love the real mountains — long climbs, stony paths and routes steeped in history — this is one of the places where adventure is felt most intensely. High-altitude hiking, cycle tours and trails that have seen everyone from roman legionaries to modern mountaineers pass through.

EL YELMO, A HIKE THROUGH THE GRANITIC MUSEUM OF LA PEDRIZA

One of the most iconic walks in the Madrid mountains. The route climbs through the great granite museum of La Pedriza, a natural labyrinth of domes, crags and boulders shaped by erosion, which makes every section a distinct scenic experience.



The path requires caution on the stony sections and some mountain experience, but it rewards you with spectacular panoramic views and the feeling of making your way through one of the most unique areas of the National Park. It is the perfect choice for young people looking for an intense, photogenic and truly mountainous day out.

Technical details

- **Activity:** mountain hiking
- **Type:** circular / linear depending on the route chosen
- **Approximate distance:** 9–13.5 km
- **Estimated time:** 4–5 hours
- **Elevation gain:** medium-high
- **Terrain:** stony and granite paths
- **Signposting:** good, although it is advisable to bring a track
- **Difficulty:** Challenging intermediate

It is advisable to set off early to avoid the heat and to find the busiest sections less crowded.

Microexperience

In La Pedriza, pause for a moment to admire the granite walls and spires that line the path. It's no coincidence that this area is one of the leading climbing destinations in the Community of Madrid: the landscape resembles a vast natural climbing wall.

ASCENT OF LA NAJARRA FROM MIRAFLORES DE LA SIERRA

La Najarra encapsulates the classic Guadarrama landscape like few other peaks: mid-mountain pine forests, steadily ascending trails and a final ridge offering sweeping views over Cuerda Larga, the Lozoya Valley and much of the Madrid mountain range. From Miraflores de la Sierra, the route climbs to 2,108 metres at this iconic peak in the Sierra de Guadarrama National Park, much loved by hikers and trail runners.

The route combines moderate exertion, ever-changing scenery and a mountain atmosphere, allowing you to enjoy a very fulfilling experience without having to tackle a major alpine trek. From the summit, you can also see such recognisable landmarks as La Pedriza, Cabezas de Hierro and Siete Picos.

Technical details

- **Type:** uphill hike
- **Type:** linear round trip
- **Approximate distance:** 14–16 km
- **Estimated time:** 5–6 hours
- **Total elevation gain:** considerable
- **Terrain:** forest track and mountain path
- **Signposting:** good
- **Difficulty:** Challenging intermediate

Aerial adventure

In the area around Miraflores and other parts of the mountain range, paragliding adds an extra dose of adrenaline to your active holiday. Soaring over slopes and ridges whilst spotting vultures, eagles and falcons makes this one of the most unique experiences Guadarrama has to offer.

Further information:



CABEZA DE HIERRO MENOR FROM THE NAVACERRADA MOUNTAIN PASS

This route brings together several of the key features of the Madrid mountains: setting off from an iconic mountain pass, gaining altitude as you go, and reaching one of the best-known peaks in the Cuerda Larga area. The route to Cabeza de Hierro Menor via the Alto de las Guarramillas offers a complete and highly scenic mountaineering experience.

This route is ideal for those who are already accustomed to walking in high-mountain terrain and are looking for a challenging day's hike, featuring significant elevation gains, high-altitude winds and landscapes that change completely with each season.

Technical details

- **Type:** high-mountain hiking
- **Type:** linear round trip
- **Approximate distance:** 15–18 km
- **Estimated time:** 6–7 hours
- **Total elevation gain:** high
- **Terrain:** high-altitude tracks and ridge path
- **Signposting:** varies depending on the section
- **Difficulty:** challenging

In winter, you must exercise extreme caution and assess the conditions of snow, ice and visibility before setting off.

Guadarrama Mountains all year round

The mountain range can be enjoyed in any season, but winter adds a special appeal with activities such as mountaineering, winter ascents, ski touring, snowshoeing and the Puerto de Navacerrada ski resort, which offers a ski school and equipment hire.



Further information on the full network of routes in Sierra de Guadarrama:
https://sierraguadarrama.info/en/trails-network/

General safety recommendations

- Check the weather forecast (AEMET) before setting off.
- Download an offline track for long or technical routes.
- Carry at least 1.5–2 litres of water in summer.
- Let someone know your planned route.
- On the road: wear a helmet, use lights and obey the rules.
- In the mountains: be prepared for sudden changes in the weather.
- Emergencies: 112



LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA

OPEN LANDSCAPES, ARCHAEOLOGY AND CYCLING ROUTES

Intermediate · Scenic · Heritage

Amidst fertile plains, rolling hills and open horizons lies one of the most luminous and expansive landscapes in the Community of Madrid.

This region invites you to cycle at a leisurely pace, to let yourself be carried along paths that wind through olive groves and cereal fields, and to discover little stories hidden underground or along the edges of old railway lines.

Here, adventure is experienced at ground level, amongst rural tracks, dimly lit tunnels and villages that still retain the tranquil rhythm of the countryside.



VILLAREJO DE SALVANÉS – SANTA MARÍA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE ROUTE

A route well-suited to gravel bikes or lightweight MTBs, allowing you to discover the open countryside whilst cycling towards one of the area's most evocative heritage sites: the Santa María archaeological site. The route combines comfortable, rolling sections with a gentle gradient, ideal for maintaining a steady pace without any major technical challenges.

The route winds its way along wide tracks and through open countryside, on a ride that combines exercise, heritage and rural scenery. It is a particularly appealing getaway for those seeking an accessible route with an intriguing cultural element, and perfect for a morning's ride through rural Madrid.

Technical details

- **Type:** gravel / light MTB
- **Type:** linear
- **Recommended starting point:** Villarejo de Salvanés
- **Recommended distance:** 12.4 km
- **Estimated time:** 1 h – 1 h 30 min cycling
- **Elevation gain:** +150 m / -160 m
- **Surface:** paths and tracks
- **Signposting:** moderate
- **Water:** in the town
- **Shade:** limited
- **Level:** Active beginners

Ideal for a leisurely ride focusing on the countryside and local heritage, or as an accessible cycling route combining exercise with exploring the local area.





SANTORCAZ – BOCA DEL CARRASCAL

The Cerro de la Pradera and the slopes of Boca del Carrascal form a unique area on the northern slope of Santorcaz. Their slopes, unsuitable for farming, have become small pockets of natural woodland that preserve pockets of native vegetation adapted to the region's Mediterranean climate. The route follows an old track linking Santorcaz and Anchuelo halfway up the hillside. The views of the Anchuelo valley are magnificent and, in the distance, the buildings of Madrid can be seen. Along the way, you'll find holm oak groves, quermes, esparto grass, thyme, lavender, asperón and other shrubs typical of the Mediterranean woodland, adapted to the arid terrain with its poor, calcareous soils. The start of the trail is signposted, and the route leaves the village via a country lane before turning off towards an olive grove. At this point, you need to pay attention to the path, which runs alongside the olive trees until it reaches the small thicket known as the Boca del Carrascal, where the route leading to Anchuelo becomes clear. The path is a popular route for walkers and mountain bikers, and once you have crossed the ravine, it is easy to follow and offers panoramic views. The path reaches the boundary of the municipal area and returns along the same route.

Technical details

- **Activity:** hiking / active walk
- **Duration:** 1 hr 14 mins
- **Access:** tracks and footpaths
- **Distance:** 3.75 km
- **Elevation gain:** +50 m / -50 m
- **Fitness level:** low
- **Highlights:** Mediterranean landscape and native vegetation

VALVERDE DE ALCALÁ – THE SETTLERS' HOUSES ROUTE

A walk that offers a glimpse into one of the most unique episodes in the rural history of Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña. The route starts in Valverde de Alcalá and heads towards the old Settlers' Houses, built in the early 20th century as part of an agricultural colonisation project aimed at encouraging people to settle in the municipality.

The route follows the floodplain of the Pantueña stream, passes by the Fuente de la Oliva spring and climbs up to the moorland, where the remains of those peasant dwellings can be seen; though now in ruins, they are still steeped in history. It is a very interesting option for those looking for a short walk with little elevation gain and significant scenic and historical interest.

Technical details

- **Type:** hiking / active walk
- **Duration:** 2 hrs 7 mins
- **Access:** paths and tracks
- **Distance:** 10.38 km
- **Elevation gain:** +163 m / -163 m
- **Fitness level:** low to medium
- **Points of interest:** rural heritage and local history





Microexperience

In the tunnels of the Tajuña Greenway, pause for a few seconds and listen to how the echo of the wheels or voices changes. The acoustics of these passages carved into the rock are one of the little secrets that make the route unforgettable.

SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

MOUNTAINS, VIEWPOINTS AND CHALLENGING ROUTES

Intermediate · Nature

If you're into gaining altitude, working up a sweat and crowning your route with memorable views, Sierra Norte is the place for you. Here, the landscape takes on a whole new character: granite mountains, vast reservoirs, mountain passes and trails that wind up and down amongst oak trees, rockroses and natural viewpoints.

It's the perfect area for those seeking long routes, challenging climbs and nature in its purest form. From legendary trails around the Atazar Reservoir to cycling passes that put your legs to the test, this part of Madrid proves that the adventure begins long before you reach the summit.

SENDA DEL GENARO – GR300 (BY STAGES)

An absolute classic among Madrid's hiking trails. The Senda del Genaro circles the Atazar Reservoir on a long circular route that passes through some of the most spectacular landscapes of the Sierra Norte: mountain villages, viewpoints suspended above the water and trails winding through holm oaks and rockroses.

It's best to tackle it in stages, organising the route with friends and taking your time to savour each section. There are gentle stages to start with and others that demand greater stamina, but they all have one thing in common: the views over the region's largest reservoir.



Technical details

- **Type:** long-distance hiking
- **Type:** circular route in stages
- **Total distance:** 66 km
- **Recommended stage for beginners:** 10–15 km
- **Estimated time:** 4–6 hours per stage on average
- **Elevation gain:** steep and cumulative
- **Terrain:** mountain trails and tracks
- **Signposting:** good (GR)
- **Water:** limited along the route
- **Difficulty:** challenging

Download the track before setting off: some sections have no mobile coverage

MORCUERA AND CANENCIA MOUNTAIN PASSES

Two legendary mountain passes in Madrid cycling, all in a single ride. The Morcuera–Canencia combination is one of those routes every cyclist dreams of ticking off their list: mountain bends, steady gradients and panoramic views opening up over the valley with every kilometre of the climb.

The climb demands a steady pace and patience, but the reward always awaits at the top: fresh mountain air, endless views and the feeling of having conquered one of Madrid's great cycling classics.

Technical details

- **Discipline:** road cycling
- **Recommended starting point:** Lozoya
- **Total distance:** 63 km (depending on route)
- **Total elevation gain:** approx. +1,236 m
- **Estimated time:** 4–5 hours depending on pace
- **Traffic:** moderate
- **Water:** available in towns
- **Difficulty:** Challenging

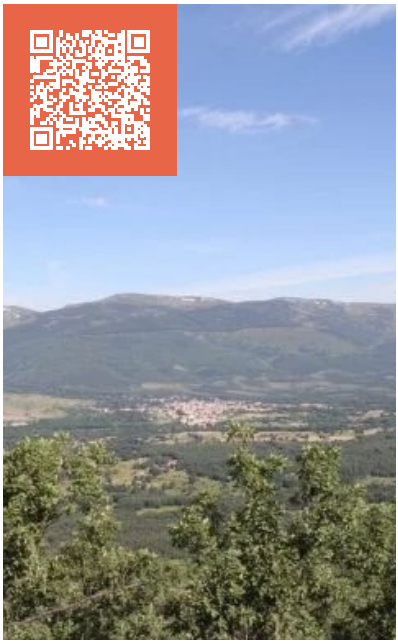
Helmets must be worn. A rear light and high-visibility vest are recommended.

Microexperience

In La Cabrera, try to reach the highest point in the late afternoon. As the sun sets, the granite glows with golden and reddish hues that transform the landscape into an unexpected spectacle.

Nature at its finest

The Sierra Norte is one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity in the Community of Madrid. As you make your way along the high-altitude trails, it is not uncommon to see griffon vultures gliding silently over the valleys or to see griffon vultures gliding silently over the valleys or hear the calls of birds of prey echoing between the granite ridges..



A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY. LA CABRERA

La Cabrera is one of the most unique landscapes in the Madrid mountains. Here, granite dominates the terrain and outlines ridges, boulders and technical trails that require you to tread carefully.

The route climbs towards Cerro de la Cabeza and winds its way around the enigmatic Tumba del Moro, a place steeped in history and offering sweeping views across the mountains. It is a relatively short but intense route, ideal for those who enjoy more technical terrain and the sensation of venturing into an almost wild landscape.

Technical details

- **Type:** technical hiking
- **Distance:** 8.3 km
- **Estimated time:** 2 hrs 40 mins
- **Elevation gain:** 266 m
- **Terrain:** granite, technical sections
- **Signposting:** variable
- **Difficulty:** challenging intermediate

Not recommended after rain: the rock can become very slippery.

SIERRA OESTE DE MADRID

CHALLENGING ROUTES, HERITAGE AND WILD NATURE

Intermediate · Nature

At the western edge of the Community of Madrid, the landscape becomes wilder and quieter. Sierra Oeste is a land of open pastures, Mediterranean pine forests and country lanes that wind their way through rolling hills.

Here, active tourism blends with medieval castles, archaeological sites and protected natural areas where wildlife still takes centre stage.

It is the perfect area for those seeking a peaceful yet authentic adventure: cycling amongst centuries-old holm oaks, walking along little-used forest trails or discovering places steeped in history and mystery.

ALDEA DEL FRESNO – CHAPINERÍA – VILLA-MANTILLA (ZEPA 56)

An ideal route for those who enjoy mountain biking in vast, uncrowded natural spaces. The route passes through Mediterranean pastures and protected areas where the landscape alternates between holm oaks, open meadows and country lanes that invite you to ride smoothly.

The route runs through ZEPA 56, a Special Protection Area for Birds, making it both a sporting and a nature experience. With a bit of luck, whilst cycling you may spot birds of prey gliding over the pastures or hear the sounds of the countryside in one of the quietest corners of western Madrid.

Technical details

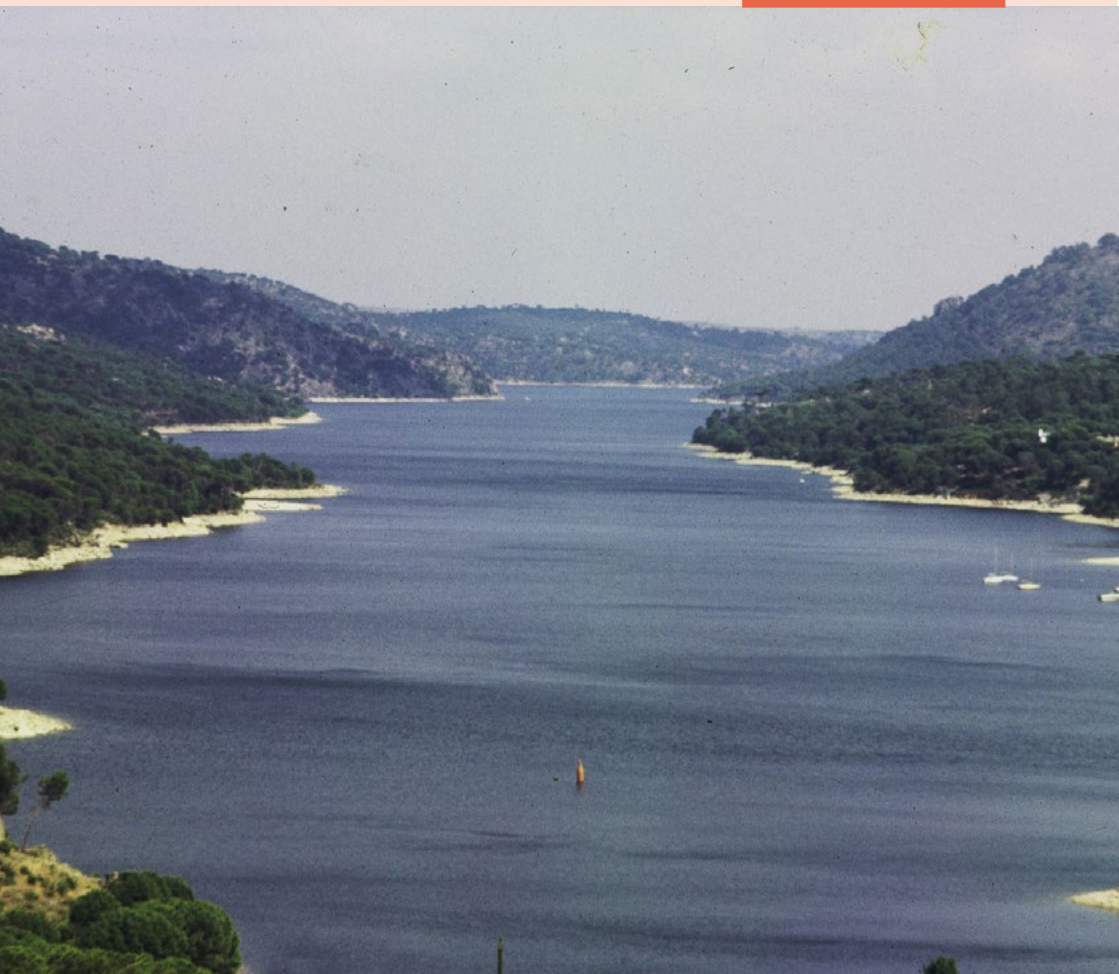
- **Type:** MTB
- **Distance:** 35–40 km
- **Estimated time:** 3–4 h
- **Elevation gain:** moderate
- **Terrain:** tracks and trails
- **Signposting:** patchy; GPS recommended
- **Level:** Intermediate

Always follow the signposting and environmental regulations when passing through the SPA (Special Protection Area).



Head to the **SAN JUAN RESERVOIR**, just a stone's throw from San Martín de Valdeiglesias, and swap tarmac for water. The plan here is simple: a board, a paddle and a desire to have fun.

Stand-up paddleboarding with spectacular views, kayaking to explore every nook and cranny, or try your hand at wakeboarding if you're looking to get your heart rate up. The best bit? It's the only reservoir in the Community of Madrid where motorised boating is permitted, so action is guaranteed. Beaches, sunshine and a summery atmosphere that makes you want to stay. Come with your mates or just wing it, because in San Juan everything encourages you to get moving, enjoy yourself and come back for more. Are you taking the plunge?



PIEDRA ESCRITA – CENICIENTOS

Hidden amongst the granite hills of Cenicientos lies one of the most intriguing sites in Sierra Oeste: Piedra Escrita. It is a large block of granite with mysterious figures carved into its surface, the origin of which continues to spark debate amongst historians and archaeologists.

The walk there is easy and short, but the place has something special about it: silence, open countryside and the feeling of standing before an ancient relic whose meaning we do not yet fully understand.

It is a perfect excursion to combine with other routes in the area and to enjoy a spot steeped in history and mystery.

If visiting independently, you must follow the marked route and, once there, remain within the designated area.

Technical details

- **Type:** short walk
- **Distance to the start:** 1–2 km
- **Estimated time:** 45 mins – 1 hr 30 mins
- **Elevation gain:** slight
- **Terrain:** track and path
- **Level:** Beginner

Highly recommended at sunset for the vastness and beauty of its panoramic surroundings.



Did you know...?

The ZEPA 56 is one of the best places in the Community of Madrid for observing birds of prey. In spring, it is relatively common to see eagles, kites or vultures soaring over the pastures as you walk along the paths of the Sierra Oeste.

Microexperience

When you arrive at Piedra Escrita, take a few minutes to calmly observe the figures carved into the rock. Some see religious symbols; others, ancient depictions that have yet to be deciphered. Whatever their origin, the place invites you to imagine stories from a bygone era.

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https://www.madrural.com/en/home-en/

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