

CASTILLA

Y

NADA QUE SE PAREZCA A TI

TOURIST NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

LEÓN



ROMAN CANALS



The network of canals built to facilitate mining operations at Las Médulas represents a remarkable feat of civil engineering. It required extensive earthworks, levelling, and the construction of walls, all on terrain characterised by steep slopes.

The primary tool used to design and execute the canal network was the chorobates or coróbata, a massive wooden level six metres long, featuring sighting holes, two plumb lines for adjustment, and supported by two wooden legs.

The canals transporting water followed the contour lines along the right bank of the Cabrera River, stretching for estimated lengths between 70 and 90 kilometres. The most distant canal from Las Médulas exceeds 140 kilometres. Altogether, the hydraulic network may have spanned up to 600 kilometres, making it the second-longest water conveyance system of antiquity.

The average gradient was 0.50%, with the canals either dug as simple ditches in the soil or rock, constructed on masonry walls, or tunnelled through rocky outcrops where necessary.

The first canal originates at an elevation of 850 metres. As mining exploitation advanced, the network climbed higher to ensure continued operations at the Orellán viewpoint, the final phase of Roman mining activities.



TOURIST PROPOSALS

Convento Mosen Rubi, Ávila



MOSÉN RUBÍ CHAPEL, ÁVILA

This exceptional architectural complex consists of the Hospital de la Anunciación, which became a Dominican convent in 1872, and the Mosén Rubí Chapel. The church was consecrated under the name "The Annunciation of Our Lady" and houses an image of the Most Holy Christ of the Battles, which the Catholic Monarchs carried with them on all their military campaigns. One of the most striking features of this beautiful temple is its late Gothic polygonal apse, adorned with angular buttresses, the typical perlados abulenses (pearl-like decorations), and various coats of arms belonging to the Bracamonte family. At the top, semi-circular arched windows with mullions allow light to illuminate the interior. The nave and the main portal are in Renaissance style. The church's layout is a Greek cross, and inside lies the tomb with the effigies of its founders, Don Andrés Vázquez Dávila and Doña María Herrera. In 1983, it was declared a National Monument.



Fiesta de los Jefes, Santo Domingo de Silos, Burgos



FIESTA DE LOS JEFES, BURGOS

This festival is held in Santo Domingo de Silos on the last Saturday of January and re-enacts the heroic defence by the villagers against an Arab attack. Declared of Touristic Interest in Castilla y León, the festival begins in the village square with the reading of a proclamation. Activities include the encerradas (a local tradition), street parades, horse races for San Antón, children's torch races through the village, and a Castilian Thanksgiving Mass. According to legend, during the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, the Caliphate's armies besieged Santo Domingo de Silos. The villagers devised a unique strategy: they simulated a fire and the destruction of all the village's possessions. Believing the village to be already devastated, the enemy abandoned the siege. Mid-morning, the youngest villagers gather to find the Jefes: the Captain, the Cuchillón (Sword Bearer), the Standard Bearer, and the Drummer, who are the main figures of the festival. The Jefes, carrying torches, then parade through the village accompanied by dozens of youths wearing cowbells.



URBAN SCULPTURES IN LEÓN

The city of León is not only renowned for its rich history and ancient monuments but also for its vibrant artistic scene, showcased by various sculptures that adorn its streets and squares. León's urban sculptures reflect the city's cultural identity and its evolution over time. These artworks not only enhance the urban landscape but also tell stories, honour historical figures, and provoke reflection on contemporary issues. From iconic figures to modern installations, each sculpture holds its own meaning. One of the most emblematic is La Negrilla by Amancio González (1997), located in Plaza Santo Domingo. Other well-known works include Figura sentada con pájaro muerto (1998) in Plaza del Cid, El cazador de estrellas in Pasaje de Avenida Ordoño, and pieces by Carlos Cuenllas, such as Coche de Carreras nº19 and Fisura XV. In front of the Cathedral, in Plaza de Regla, Juan Carlos Uriarte's Homenaje a los Constructores de Catedrales (1997) pays tribute to the anonymous builders who contributed to the Cathedral's construction.



Museo del Turismo en el Museo Diocesano. Inauguración sala 115, Palencia



THE LARGEST MUSEUM IN THE WORLD, PALENCIA

This museum, established eight years ago in Valladolid, is considered the largest in the world by extension, as it is present in 17 countries across four continents. The primary goal of the "Museum of Tourism" is to narrate the history of the tourism sector through themed spaces (Rooms), each focusing on a specific aspect of the industry's evolution. The Rooms cover topics such as the history of tourism in a destination, the development of a hotel enterprise, or a significant resource. This non-profit organisation has 500 passionate volunteers worldwide. Of its 100+ exhibition spaces, six are located in the province of Palencia. Recently inaugurated were Room 115 at the Diocesan Museum, dedicated to Pilgrimage Routes in Palencia – Religious Tourism, and Room 49 at the Palencia Museum, focused on Hospitality Tokens. Another Room in the capital, located at I.E.S. Virgen de la Calle, tells the story of tourism in Palencia. The museum also has a presence in the towns of Becerril de Campos, Baltanás, and Barruelo de Santullán.





HISTORIC SITE OF VILLANUEVA DEL CONDE, SALAMANCA

Located 78 kilometres south of Salamanca, in the heart of the Sierra de Francia, Villanueva del Conde is a picturesque village that retains its traditional mountain architecture and customs. This charming village, declared a Historic-Artistic Site in 2016, is situated on a hillside surrounded by beautiful chestnut and oak forests, ideal for hiking the Camino de los Prodigios trail. One of Villanueva del Conde's most distinctive features is its circular urban layout, resembling a walled enclosure with a central area known as the huertitas. These enclosed spaces are only accessible through the houses or via three narrow streets that facilitate movement within the village. The village's fountains, the Church of San Fabián and San Sebastián, and the Francia and San Benito rivers complete a delightful stroll through this historic site.



SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS IN SEGOVIA

Saint John of the Cross arrived in Segovia in 1574 with Saint Teresa of Ávila and conducted the foundational Mass for the Convent of the Carmelites. He returned in 1580 to establish his own Convent of Discalced Carmelites. In Segovia, he left an indelible impression on those who knew him. Later, he was sent to Peñuela, a small village in Andalusia, to join other friars in preparation for a mission to the Americas. However, his plans were thwarted by illness. He passed away in Úbeda in December 1591 at the age of 49. Saint John was beatified, canonised, and named one of the 36 Doctors of the Church. Since 1952, he has been the patron saint of Spanish-language poets. In the Church of the Carmelite Convent in Segovia, his tomb, crafted in marble by Félix Granda, marks the original site of his burial before his remains were moved to the ark above the altar. The altarpiece is presided over by the Virgin of Mount Carmel and is painted based on Saint John's works such as "The Ascent of Mount Carmel", "The Living Flame of Love", "Dark Night", "The Fountain", and "Spiritual Canticle".





MUSEO DE ARTE SACRO DE ÁGREDA, SORIA

The Church of Our Lady of Peña de Ágreda has housed the first religious art museum in Castilla y León since 2002. The temple was consecrated as such at the end of the 12th century (1193) by the Bishop of Tarazona, Juan Frontín, which makes it the oldest church in Ágreda. Twenty-eight years later, in the first quarter of the 13th century (1221), the future King James I the Conqueror married Doña Leonor of Castilla there. The museum houses over 25 pieces of altarpieces and sculptures from the 13th to the 18th centuries, which, for various reasons, no longer occupy their original places. Notable works include Gothic paintings, altarpieces influenced by Aragonese and Castilian styles, predellas, tombstones, and pieces with Cordoban artistic roots. At the head of the temple is a Baroque altarpiece, featuring an oil painting of the Immaculate Conception, held and surrounded by angels. The visit should include a walk through the historic centre of the town of Ágreda, with its labyrinthine and irregular streets, which reminds us that three cultures once coexisted here. The Arab and Christian quarters are well differentiated, with remnants of the Jewish presence in these lands.



THE HISTORICAL LEGACY OF SIMANCAS, VALLADOLID



Just 10 kilometres from Valladolid, perched on a natural hill, lies the town of Simancas. It was originally a Vaccean settlement, later an important Roman city called “Septimancas”, and subsequently a Visigothic necropolis of great significance during the Muslim occupation. Its traditional Castilian architecture is magnificently preserved. The town's highlight is its fortress, constructed in the 15th century by the Enríquez family, prior to the establishment of the General Archive, which was created during the reign of Charles V to safeguard documents of the Castilian monarchy from the 15th to the 19th centuries. Among its network of streets, the Church of El Salvador, in late Gothic style, stands out, retaining its original Romanesque tower. One of the shell motifs on its façade marks the route of the Camino de Santiago to Madrid passing through the municipality. Other notable features include the Renaissance façade of the Hospital and the neoclassical façade of the Town Hall. From the Town Hall, visitors can head to the viewpoint overlooking the Pisuerga Riverbank. The town's imposing medieval bridge is another key landmark. Within the municipality, visitors can also find Los Zumacales, a corridor tomb approximately six thousand years old, and the only example of megalithic architecture in the province of Valladolid.



PERERUELA OVENS, ZAMORA

Hornos de Pereruela, Zamora (cedida Alfarería Luisa Pérez Pastor)



The ovens of Pereruela are a traditional craft originating in the town of Pereruela in the province of Zamora. Renowned for their exceptional quality and durability, these ovens are made from refractory clay, a special type of material extracted from local quarries that can withstand extreme temperatures. The manufacturing process is entirely artisanal, passed down through generations, preserving a centuries-old tradition. Each oven is hand-shaped, fired in traditional kilns, and meticulously inspected to ensure its durability and ability to retain heat. This makes them ideal for cooking, particularly for roasting, baking bread, and preparing other traditional dishes. In addition to ovens, Pereruela ceramics also include casseroles, pots, and other kitchen utensils, all crafted from the same refractory clay. The reputation of these ovens has transcended borders, and they are now globally appreciated for their culinary efficiency and longevity. The ovens of Pereruela are a symbol of artisanal expertise and the cultural richness of Castilla y León.

**REMEMBER, IN CASTILLA
Y LEÓN, YOU'LL FIND
EVERYTHING AND
MORE...
WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE
YOU!!!**



LAS POSADAS REALES PROPOSALS



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In this newsletter, we would also like to share the proposals of some incoming tour operators in Castilla y León that organise different activities based on their thorough knowledge of the area and extensive experience.

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