

TAKE IT WITH YOU

The Field Guide

25 places in Spain almost nobody knows

A CAMPAIGN BY TURESPAÑA · MADE WITH MINUBE

HOCES DEL RÍO DURATÓN, SEGOVIA

Twenty-five places, one country.

This is not a list of the greatest hits. There are no cathedrals here that you already know from a postcard, no beach you have seen a thousand times on somebody else's feed. What you have in your hands is the other Spain: the one that locals drive to on a Sunday and rarely explain to anyone else.

A beach with no sea in sight. A desert with a western town still standing in it. A waterfall that only exists after it rains. A village whose ceiling is a rock. A river the colour of rust that scientists use to rehearse for Mars. All of them are real, all of them are open, and almost none of them appear on the first page of a search.

We have kept each place to a single page on purpose. Enough to know what you are looking at and why it is strange, not so much that there is nothing left to discover when you arrive. The coordinates are there so you can drop them into any map, online or off. The rest is yours.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

One page per place, in the same order as the story: the headline, what you are looking at, and when it is at its best.

The coordinates point at the place itself, not at a car park or a village centre. Check access and opening times before you set off: several of these are protected areas with limits on visitors.

Distances in Spain are longer than they look on a map. Three or four of these in a week is a good trip; ten is a blur.

Everything here is fragile. The rule is the old one: leave it exactly as you found it.

THE TWENTY-FIVE

01 Las Médulas León
02 Bardenas Reales Navarra
03 Playa de Gulpiyuri Asturias
04 Setenil de las Bodegas Cádiz
05 Caminito del Rey Málaga
06 Congost de Mont-rebei Lleida / Huesca
07 Castellfollit de la Roca Girona
08 Ribeira Sacra Lugo / Ourense
09 Orbaneja del Castillo Burgos
10 Cascada del Ézaro A Coruña
11 Flysch de Zumaia Gipuzkoa
12 Salto del Nervión Burgos / Álava
13 Faro del Caballo Cantabria
14 Hoces del Río Duratón Segovia
15 Monasterio de Piedra Zaragoza
16 Albarracín Teruel
17 Ciudad Encantada Cuenca
18 Garganta de los Infiernos Cáceres
19 Río Tinto Huelva
20 Desierto de Tabernas Almería
21 Laguna Rosa de Torrevieja Alicante
22 Torrent de Pareis Mallorca
23 Anaga Tenerife
24 La Geria Lanzarote
25 Islas Cíes Pontevedra



LAS MÉDULAS · LEÓN

01
/ 25

The Romans took the gold. This is what they left.

Las Médulas · LEÓN, CASTILLA Y LEÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Two thousand years ago Roman engineers cut channels into this mountain and released water to collapse it, sifting the debris for gold. What remains is a landscape of red clay spires under chestnut trees.

THE LONGER STORY

What looks like a natural badland is an industrial ruin two thousand years old. Roman engineers drove tunnels into the mountain, filled them with water from distant channels and let the pressure bring the hillside down, then washed the debris for gold. When they left, the forest came back over the rubble and the sharp red spires stayed. Walking the paths below them, you are inside the negative space of a mountain that was carried away.

WHEN TO GO

Autumn, when the chestnut woods turn and the low sun sets the clay alight.

COORDINATES

42.4589, -6.7672

GOOD TO KNOW

A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997.



02
/ 25

A desert next to the greenest hills in Spain.

Bardenas Reales · NAVARRA, NAVARRA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Half an hour from the green valleys of Navarra the land turns to clay, gypsum and sandstone, carved by wind and rain into gullies, plateaus and the lone pinnacle of Castildetierra.

THE LONGER STORY

The surprise is the border. You leave green valleys, drive half an hour, and the land simply gives up: clay, gypsum and sandstone with almost nothing growing on it, cut into gullies and flat-topped hills by rain that falls rarely and violently. Castildetierra, the lone pinnacle with a hard cap of rock holding up a cone of soft clay, is the shape everyone photographs. Come early and you will have the tracks to yourself.

WHEN TO GO

Sunrise or the last hour of light; spring and autumn, when the heat is bearable.

COORDINATES

42.2030, -1.4930

GOOD TO KNOW

A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 2000.



03
/ 25

A beach with no sea in sight.

Playa de Gulpiyuri · ASTURIAS, ASTURIAS

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A cove of sand and waves in the middle of a meadow. The sea is a hundred metres away, out of sight: it reaches the beach through tunnels in the rock.

THE LONGER STORY

From the path you hear surf and see a meadow. Then the ground opens into a small bowl of sand with real waves rolling in, and the sea nowhere in sight. The water arrives through tunnels the sea has eaten under the limestone from the coast behind. It is a beach that behaves like a beach — tides, foam, cold Atlantic water — hidden inland like a secret the coast keeps.

WHEN TO GO

High tide, when there is water; small and busy in August, so go early.

COORDINATES

43.4464, -4.8850

GOOD TO KNOW

Declared a Natural Monument in 2001.



SETENIL DE LAS BODEGAS · CÁDIZ

04
/ 25

A village that uses a rock as its roof.

Setenil de las Bodegas · CÁDIZ, ANDALUCÍA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Whole streets of white houses are built into the overhang of a gorge, so the rock is their ceiling and, in summer, their shade.

THE LONGER STORY

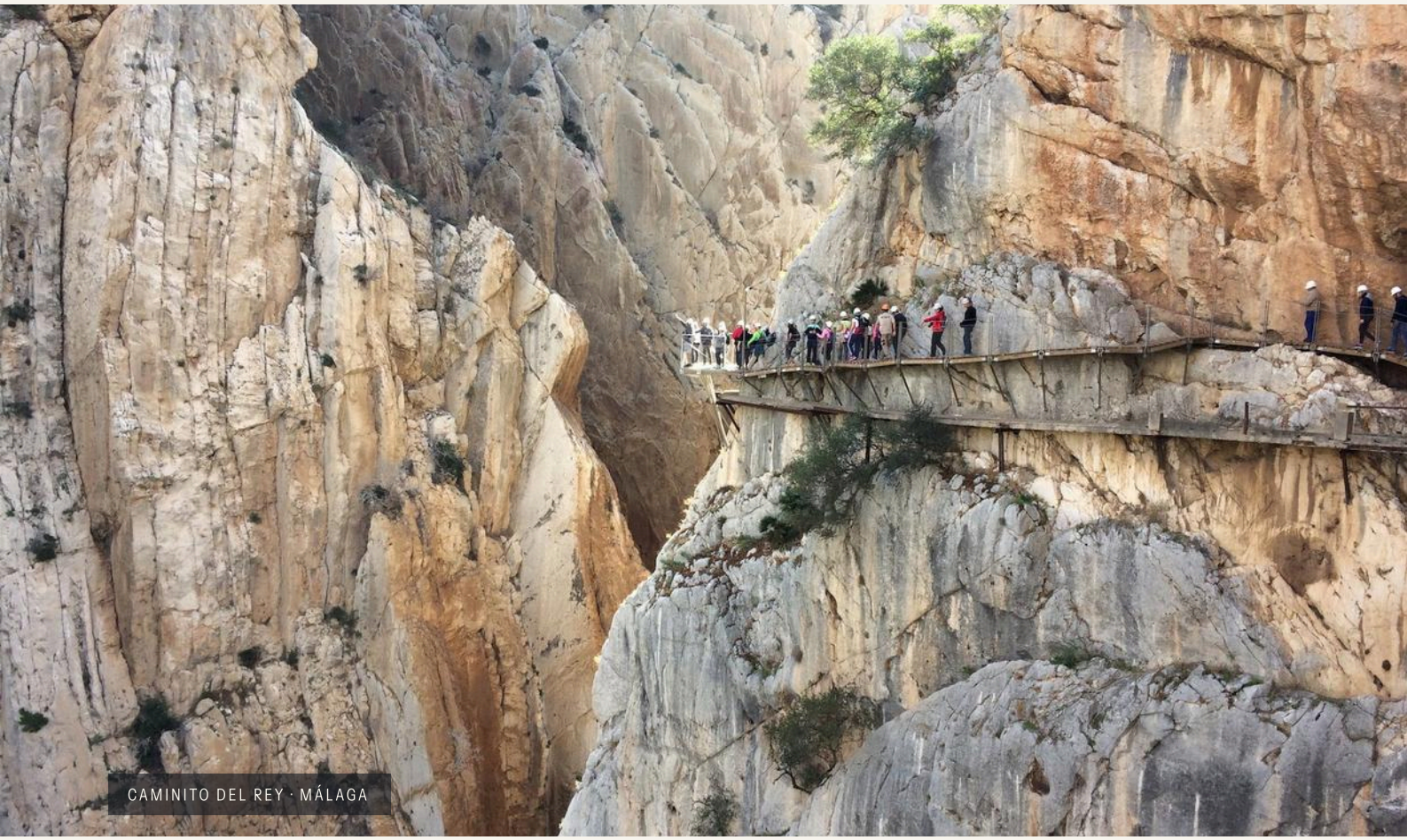
Other white towns sit on their rock. This one sits under it. The river cut a gorge, people moved into the overhangs, and the streets grew with a ceiling of stone above them: bars, houses and doorways with a hundred tonnes of rock as a roof. In summer the shade under the overhang is a room-temperature street in the middle of Andalusia, which is exactly why anyone built here.

WHEN TO GO

Any month. Midday in summer, to feel what the rock does to the heat.

COORDINATES

36.8636, -5.1819



05
/ 25

A footpath nailed to a cliff, a hundred metres up.

Caminito del Rey · MÁLAGA, ANDALUCÍA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A walkway bolted to the walls of a gorge, built for workers of a hydroelectric plant and reopened to visitors after decades of abandonment.

THE LONGER STORY

A walkway is bolted to the wall of a gorge, high above the river, for people who once needed to reach a hydroelectric plant. Abandoned for decades, it became a legend among people who should not have been on it. Restored and reopened, it is now a one-way walk along the cliff with the old broken path visible below your feet through the boards.

WHEN TO GO

Spring and autumn; book ahead, the walk runs on timed entry.

COORDINATES

36.9250, -4.7890


CONGOST DE MONT-REBEI · LLEIDA / HUESCA

06
/ 25

A path carved into the wall of a canyon.

Congost de Mont-rebei · LLEIDA / HUESCA, CATALUÑA / ARAGÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A ledge cut by hand into limestone, with turquoise water far below and no road, no village and no noise.

THE LONGER STORY

There is no road through this gorge and no village in it. A ledge cut by hand into the limestone runs along one wall, wide enough for one person, with turquoise water a long way below and vultures riding the thermals between the two sides. What stays with you is the quiet: no engines, no signs, only your own steps in the rock.

WHEN TO GO

Spring, when the water is high and the light reaches the bottom of the gorge.

COORDINATES

42.1000, -0.7010



CASTELLFOLLIT DE LA ROCA · GIRONA

07
/ 25

A village built to the very edge of a cliff.

Castellfollit de la Roca · GIRONA, CATALUÑA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

The houses stop where the basalt stops: the whole village sits on a narrow cliff formed by ancient lava flows.

THE LONGER STORY

The village ends exactly where the basalt ends. Ancient lava flows cooled into a narrow crag between two rivers, and the houses were built out to the very edge of it, so from below the whole place looks like a wall with windows. The best view is not from inside the village but from the road across the valley, where you can see how little ground the town actually stands on.

WHEN TO GO

Early morning, when mist sits in the valley and the crag floats above it.

COORDINATES

42.2205, 2.5513



08
/ 25

Wine grown on cliffs above a river canyon.

Ribeira Sacra · LUGO / OURENSE, GALICIA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Terraced vineyards climb almost vertically from the canyons of the Sil and Miño rivers. The easiest way to see them is from a boat.

THE LONGER STORY

Vines here are farmed on slopes so steep that everything is done by hand, on terraces stacked up the walls of river canyons. The Romans planted them, monasteries kept them, and the shape of the work has barely changed. From a boat on the Sil you look up at centuries of stone walls holding the soil in place, and it becomes obvious why these wines are called heroic.

WHEN TO GO

September, at harvest, when the terraces are full of people and the river is still warm.

COORDINATES

42.4100, -7.5700



ORBANEJA DEL CASTILLO · BURGOS

09
/ 25

A waterfall that runs through a village.

Orbaneja del Castillo · BURGOS, CASTILLA Y LEÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A stream pours out of a cave, tumbles between the houses in a series of pools and falls into the river Ebro below.

THE LONGER STORY

Water comes out of a cave in the cliff above the village, runs straight down through the middle of it in a chain of small pools and drops into the Ebro at the bottom. Houses, streets and stairs are arranged around the waterfall rather than the other way round. It is a very small place with a great deal going on in it, and it is worth walking up to the cave mouth to see where all of it begins.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring, when the flow is strongest and the pools are full.

COORDINATES

42.8680, -3.7690



CASCADA DEL ÉZARO · A CORUÑA

10
/ 25

A river that ends as a waterfall into the sea.

Cascada del Ézaro · A CORUÑA, GALICIA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

The river Xallas reaches the Atlantic by dropping straight off a granite mountain onto the shore.

THE LONGER STORY

Rivers usually reach the sea slowly. This one arrives by falling off a granite mountain onto the shore, in full view of the road, with the Atlantic waiting a few metres away. Above it, the viewpoint on Monte Pindo looks down on the whole coast; below, the water hits rock and goes straight into salt water.

WHEN TO GO

After rain, and at dusk in summer, when the fall is lit.

COORDINATES

42.9110, -9.1290



FLYSCH DE ZUMAIA · GIPUZKOA

11
/ 25

Millions of years, standing on end.

Flysch de Zumaia · GIPUZKOA, PAÍS VASCO

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

The cliffs are layers of rock tilted upright, each one a page of geological time you can walk along at low tide.

THE LONGER STORY

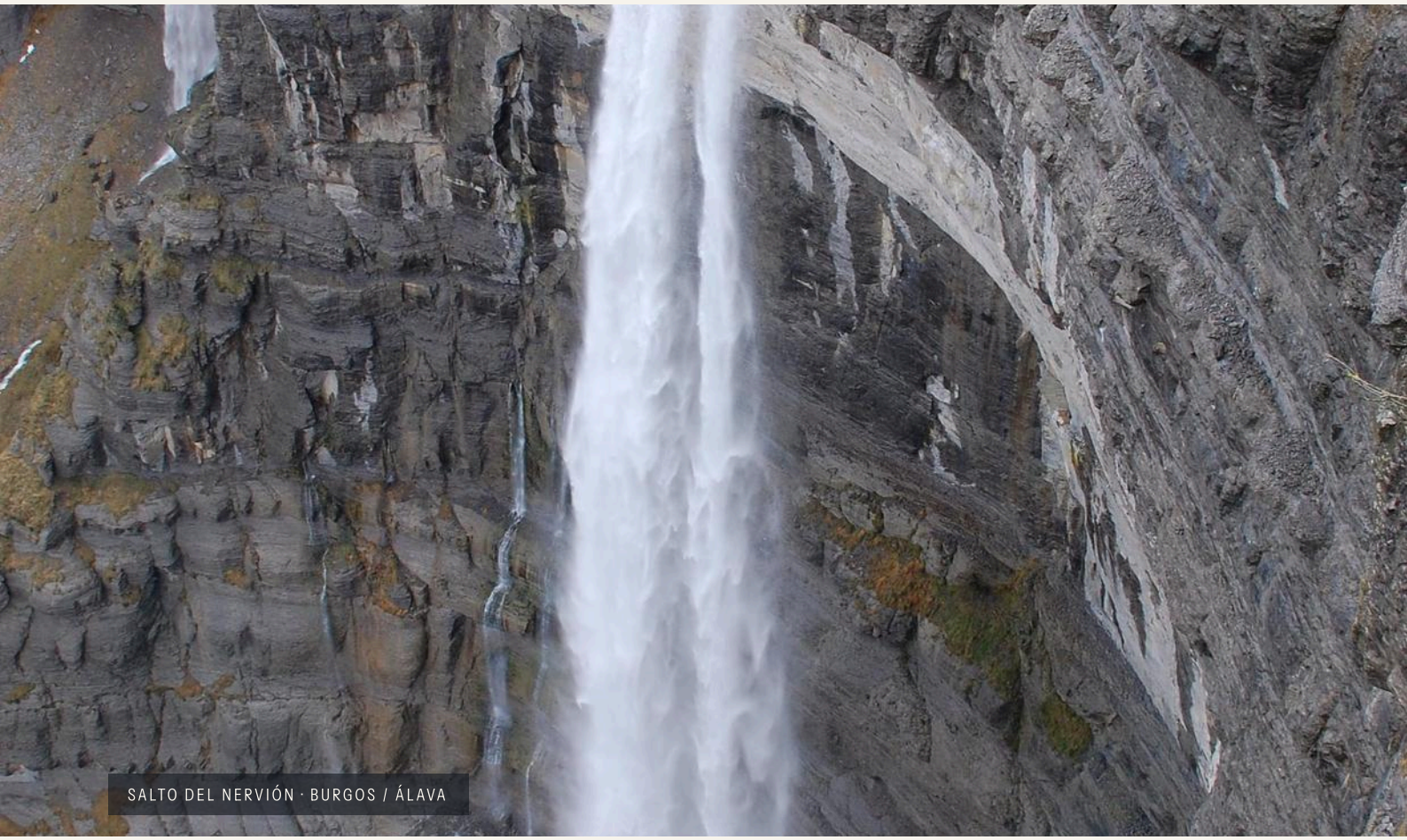
The cliffs are made of thousands of rock layers standing on end, each one laid down in a distant sea and then tilted upright by the collision that raised the Pyrenees. Geologists read them the way you read a book: dark and light bands, one after another, marking time on a scale that has nothing to do with us. At low tide you can walk out onto the platform and put your hand on several million years at once.

WHEN TO GO

Low tide, always. Check the tide tables before you drive there.

COORDINATES

43.2979, -2.2634


SALTO DEL NERVIÓN · BURGOS / ÁLAVA

12
/ 25

A waterfall that exists only after it rains.

Salto del Nervión · BURGOS / ÁLAVA, CASTILLA Y LEÓN / PAÍS VASCO

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

One of the highest waterfalls in Spain, and most days there is no water at all: it appears after heavy rain or snowmelt and disappears again.

THE LONGER STORY

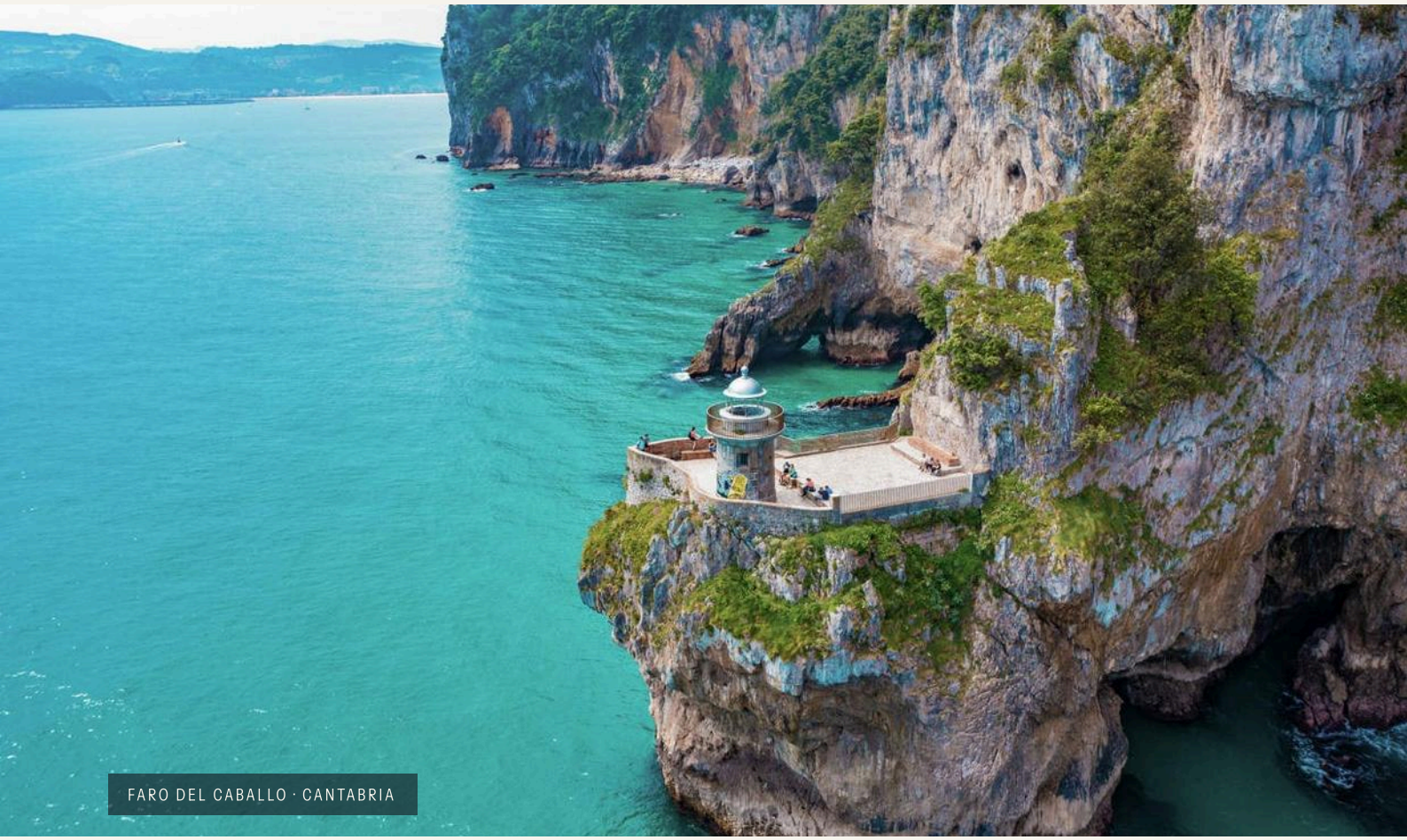
You walk to the viewpoint across a flat, wide moor with nothing to suggest what is coming, and then the ground disappears: a horseshoe of cliff with a river falling off the lip of it into a valley far below. Most days there is no river. The fall exists only when there has been enough rain or enough snow melting above, which makes seeing it feel less like sightseeing and more like luck.

WHEN TO GO

After days of heavy rain, or during the snowmelt at the end of winter.

COORDINATES

42.9330, -2.9940



FARO DEL CABALLO · CANTABRIA

13
/ 25

A lighthouse you reach by climbing down.

Faro del Caballo · CANTABRIA, CANTABRIA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Hundreds of steps cut into the cliff lead down to a lighthouse at the foot of Monte Buciero, and then back up.

THE LONGER STORY

A staircase cut into the cliff drops down the face of Monte Buciero to a small white lighthouse standing just above the water. Going down is easy and the view of the sea between your feet is extraordinary. Coming back up is the part people remember, and the reason to bring water and to start early rather than at midday.

WHEN TO GO

A clear morning outside the hottest months; the climb back is all in the sun.

COORDINATES

43.4645, -3.4223



HOCES DEL RÍO DURATÓN · SEGOVIA

14
/ 25

A canyon you paddle through, with vultures overhead.

Hoces del Río Duratón · SEGOVIA, CASTILLA Y LEÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A river bends between limestone walls where griffon vultures nest; a Romanesque hermitage sits on a spur above the water.

THE LONGER STORY

The river loops through a limestone canyon in slow, deliberate curves, and griffon vultures nest in the walls above it. From the hermitage of San Frutos, on a spur of rock with the water on three sides, you can watch them come off the cliff at eye level and turn over the gorge without a single beat of the wings. It is the sort of place that makes people lower their voices.

WHEN TO GO

Spring, for the birds; sunrise, for the light in the canyon.

COORDINATES

41.3225, -3.8572



MONASTERIO DE PIEDRA · ZARAGOZA

15
/ 25

A monastery with waterfalls in the garden.

Monasterio de Piedra · ZARAGOZA, ARAGÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Behind the walls of a Cistercian monastery, the river Piedra falls through a park of waterfalls, grottoes and lakes.

THE LONGER STORY

Behind the walls of a Cistercian monastery, the river Piedra has been left to do what it likes: fall, pool, disappear underground and come back out somewhere else. Paths lead behind waterfalls, into grottoes and around lakes, in a park that a nineteenth-century owner shaped as a romantic garden. Half of it is water and the other half is the sound of water.

WHEN TO GO

Spring, when the flow is at its highest and the park is at its greenest.

COORDINATES

41.1936, -1.7789



16
/ 25

A pink town hanging over a river.

Albarracín · TERUEL, ARAGÓN

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Houses of reddish plaster lean over narrow streets on a spur above the river Guadalaviar, inside medieval walls.

THE LONGER STORY

The town is built of the same reddish clay as the hill it stands on, so from a distance the houses and the rock are one colour. Inside, the streets are narrow enough to touch both sides, the upper floors lean out over your head, and the medieval wall climbs the ridge above everything. It is easy to walk in circles here, and that is the correct way to visit.

WHEN TO GO

Autumn or winter, with the low sun on the plaster; snow makes it unforgettable.

COORDINATES

40.4083, -1.4436



17
/ 25

A city with no houses, carved by rain.

Ciudad Encantada · CUENCA, CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Limestone shaped over millions of years into mushrooms, ships and faces, along a path through a pine forest.

THE LONGER STORY

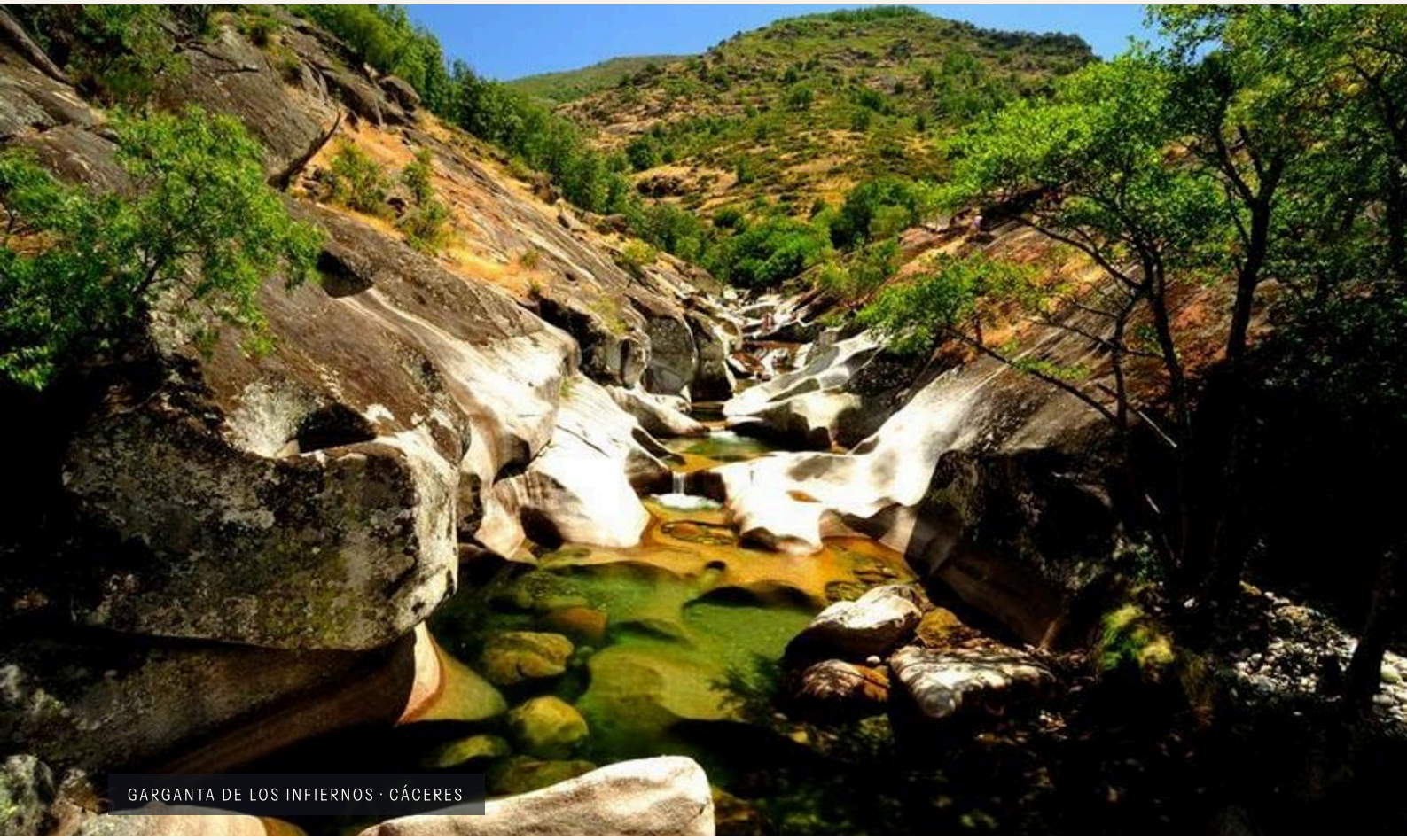
A pine forest with a limestone floor that rain and time have carved into shapes: mushrooms on thin stems, prows of ships, faces in the rock. The names on the signs are the ones people gave them long ago, and half the fun is disagreeing with them. It is a short walk, easy for anyone, in the middle of a very quiet stretch of Cuenca.

WHEN TO GO

Autumn, when the forest floor changes colour under the stone.

COORDINATES

40.2028, -2.0087



GARGANTA DE LOS INFIERNOS · CÁCERES

18
/ 25

Natural pools carved into granite, one after another.

Garganta de los Infiernos · CÁCERES, EXTREMADURA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Los Pilones: a staircase of round pools worn into the rock by a mountain stream, in the cherry valley of the Jerte.

THE LONGER STORY

A mountain stream comes down the Jerte valley through granite and, along the way, has drilled a staircase of round pools into the rock, one falling into the next. The valley around it is famous for cherry trees; in spring the whole slope goes white with blossom and the water is loud with snowmelt.

WHEN TO GO

Late March for the cherry blossom; summer for the pools.

COORDINATES

40.1520, -5.7900



19
/ 25

A red river where scientists rehearse Mars.

Río Tinto · HUELVA, ANDALUCÍA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Iron and copper turn the water the colour of rust; its acidity and microbes have made it a stand-in for Mars in scientific research.

THE LONGER STORY

Iron and copper dissolved from the surrounding rock turn this river the colour of rust, and its water is so acidic that almost nothing lives in it except microbes that thrive on metal. Those microbes are the reason scientists come here: conditions in this valley resemble what they expect to find elsewhere in the solar system, so the river doubles as a rehearsal for Mars. Around it, the old mining landscape adds machinery and red hills to the strangeness.

WHEN TO GO

Summer, when low water leaves the mineral colours at their strongest.

COORDINATES

37.6917, -6.5900



DESIERTO DE TABERNAS · ALMERÍA

20
/ 25

A desert where the westerns were shot.

Desierto de Tabernas · ALMERÍA, ANDALUCÍA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A landscape of dry gullies and badlands where film sets from the 1960s still stand, saloons included.

THE LONGER STORY

Dry gullies, bare ridges and a light that Hollywood decided looked exactly like the American West. Film crews built towns here in the sixties and some of them are still standing, saloon doors included, in the middle of genuine badlands. Away from the sets, the desert is a working landscape of dry riverbeds and hard, pale hills.

WHEN TO GO

Winter and early spring; the summer heat is serious.

COORDINATES

37.0000, -2.4500



LAGUNA ROSA DE TORREVIEJA · ALICANTE

21
/ 25

A lake that turns pink.

Laguna Rosa de Torrevieja · ALICANTE, COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A salt lagoon whose water turns pink in the warm months, next to one of the largest salt works in Europe.

THE LONGER STORY

A salt lagoon beside one of Europe's big salt works, where microscopic algae and the bacteria that feed on them turn the water pink in the warm months. The colour changes with heat and salinity: some days it is soft rose, some days closer to strawberry. Salt crystals crust the shore and the smell is of the sea, concentrated.

WHEN TO GO

The hottest months, at midday, when the colour is most intense.

COORDINATES

38.0080, -0.7250



22
/ 25

A canyon that ends in a cove.

Torrent de Pareis · MALLORCA, ILLES BALEARS

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

A gorge between limestone walls opens onto a pebble beach hemmed in by cliffs, reached by a road of hairpin bends or by boat.

THE LONGER STORY

Two torrents meet inside the Serra de Tramuntana and cut a gorge that ends, suddenly, at a beach of round stones with cliffs on both sides. You get there by a road of hairpin bends famous among cyclists, by boat, or on foot down the gorge itself, which is a serious walk. The acoustics of the place are so good that concerts are held on the sand.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring and early autumn; the gorge walk is only for dry weather.

COORDINATES

39.8519, 2.8032



23
/ 25

A rainforest of mist on a volcanic island.

Anaga · TENERIFE, CANARIAS

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Ancient laurel forest, wrapped in cloud most of the year, on a ridge of volcanic peaks half an hour from the island capital.

THE LONGER STORY

A ridge of eroded volcanic peaks half an hour from Santa Cruz, covered in laurel forest of a kind that once grew across the Mediterranean and now survives in a handful of Atlantic islands. Trade winds push cloud into the trees all year, so the forest drips even when it is not raining, and the paths run between moss, ferns and roots along ridges with the ocean on both sides.

WHEN TO GO

Any time of year; mornings, before the cloud closes in completely.

COORDINATES

28.5335, -16.2803



24
/ 25

Vines that grow in holes dug into volcanic ash.

La Geria · LANZAROTE, CANARIAS

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

Each vine sits in its own hollow in the black ash, sheltered by a low stone wall from the wind: thousands of crescents across the slopes.

THE LONGER STORY

Volcanic ash covers the ground, so each vine is planted in its own hollow dug down to the soil below, with a low crescent wall of black stone to shelter it from the wind. Thousands of these hollows spread across the slopes in a pattern that looks deliberate and alien, and it is simply the only way anything grows here. The wine is made from grapes that never see a trellis.

WHEN TO GO

Any month; late afternoon, when the black ash goes warm and the shadows show the hollows.

COORDINATES

28.9800, -13.7000


ISLAS CÍES · PONTEVEDRA

25
/ 25

Islands you can only visit with a permit.

Islas Cíes · PONTEVEDRA, GALICIA

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

White sand, Atlantic water and no cars: three islands at the mouth of a ría, with a daily limit on visitors and boats as the only way in.

THE LONGER STORY

Three islands at the mouth of the ría de Vigo, with white sand, water that looks tropical and is not, and no cars at all. Boats are the only way in and the number of visitors each day is capped, which is why the beaches still look the way they do. Walk up to the lighthouse for the view back over the dunes and the mainland.

WHEN TO GO

June to September, when the boats run; book the crossing and the permit early.

COORDINATES

42.2260, -8.9000

By region

Where they fall on the map, so you can group them into a trip.

Castilla y León

01 Las Médulas · 09 Orbaneja del Castillo · 14 Hoces del Río Duratón

Navarra

02 Bardenas Reales

Asturias

03 Playa de Gulpiyuri

Andalucía

04 Setenil de las Bodegas · 05 Caminito del Rey · 19 Río Tinto · 20 Desierto de Tabernas

Cataluña / Aragón

06 Congost de Mont-rebei

Cataluña

07 Castellfollit de la Roca

Galicia

08 Ribeira Sacra · 10 Cascada del Ézaro · 25 Islas Cíes

País Vasco

11 Flysch de Zumaia

Castilla y León / País Vasco

12 Salto del Nervión

Cantabria

13 Faro del Caballo

Aragón

15 Monasterio de Piedra · 16 Albarracín

Castilla-La Mancha

17 Ciudad Encantada

Extremadura

18 Garganta de los Infiernos

Comunidad Valenciana

21 Laguna Rosa de Torrevieja

Illes Balears

22 Torrent de Pareis

Canarias

23 Anaga · 24 La Geria

THE DRAW

One reader wins a 7-night trip for two to Spain — flights, hotels and a rental car — to see three of these twenty-five for real. Entries are open from 1 October to 30 November 2026 and the winner is drawn on 15 December 2026. Full terms and privacy policy are on the website.

Go and see for yourself.

Photographs are a promise, not a substitute. Every one of these places is better in person, in weather that no one can plan, on a day that belongs to you alone.

CREDITS

Photographs by the minube community. Brand: Turespaña. Story and design for the 25 places campaign. This guide is a prototype for client review; figures and legal texts are provisional.

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#25PLACESSPAIN

FIRST EDITION