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SPAIN

**MADRID**

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EXPERIENCES 2018 · 2019

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# MADRID, NATURALLY!



Comunidad  
de Madrid

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ECOTOURISM

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Spain is the European country with the greatest and richest biodiversity. In fact, it is the country that contributes the largest surface area to the Natura 2000 network and the one with the most Biosphere Reserves. In this context, it is not surprising that nature tourism should have grown far beyond that of conventional tourism in our country and registered an important increase in foreign visitors attracted to Spain by its natural resources.

At this time the Madrid Region manages nine major Protected Natural Spaces that account for up to 15% of its territory. Among these spaces are emblematic enclaves renowned the world over for their biodiversity, conservation and beauty.

Madrid can feel rightly fortunate for having such diverse and ecologically valuable expanses such as the Montejo Beech Forest, which was recently listed by UNESCO as a Natural World Heritage Site, the Guadarrama Mountain Range Natural Park, the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve or the Picturesque Expanse of the Abantos Pine Forest and the Area of La Herrería, to mention just a few. Places of immense wealth in flora and wildlife species thanks to a varied topography on which mountains, valleys, forests, rivers, lakes and steppes converge.

This universe of nature is only an hour away from the big city and visitors can access it via different connections and all kinds of facilities. In every direction they will discover a comprehensive offer of quality accommodation and activities as well as the excellent cuisine that will turn their visit into a unique experience. But they will also find all types of local initiatives and activities that promote awareness-raising about environmental care and a firm commitment to a sustainable way of travelling that minimizes the negative impacts on our natural heritage.

In Madrid's natural spaces, visitors will find plans for every taste, from specialized experiences for observing specific flora or wildlife to straightforward activities and routes for those who wish to enjoy the values provided by nature.

All of this makes of the Madrid Region an exceptional destination for enjoying its environment through Ecotourism, allowing us to discover them while conserving their environmental and landscape values for future generations.



# Ecotourism in Madrid

Explore Madrid's landscapes, observe and photograph its flora and wildlife, traverse its mountains and interpret its geological history, explore forests and glens. Learn about its natural history, taste the local products and listen to its neighbours. All of this is what ecotourism offers in Madrid, a journey made with all the senses to reconnect with the nature of the Region and contribute to the sustainable development of its towns and villages.

## Ecotourism:

- Is any form of nature-based tourism in which the tourist's motivation is the observation and appreciation of nature and of the prevailing cultures in rural areas
- Seeks to reduce negative impacts upon the natural and sociocultural environment
- Generates benefits for the host community
- Increases awareness on the conservation of cultural and natural assets

*Taken from the UNWTO's definition of Ecotourism, 2002*

Ecotourism is travelling to natural areas to learn about them, interpret them, enjoy them and tour them while appreciating and contributing in a practical way to their conservation, without generating impacts on the environment and having a positive repercussion on the local population.

*"Declaración de Daimiel", I Congreso Nacional de Ecoturismo, 2016*

*The Madrid Region offers the best conditions for practicing ecotourism:*

- **Excellent transport links.** Exceptional national and international air connections and good road and rail links for discovering Madrid's most unique countryside less than one hour from the city.
- **Good climate conditions.** Few rainfall days, many hours of sunshine per year and average temperature of 14.6 °C.
- **Variety of landscapes.** Mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, steppes, etc. translate into a wide variety of flora and wildlife species.
- **Well-managed natural spaces.** 39,9% of the territory is protected under the Natura 2000 Network. It boasts one UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, one National Park and two Biosphere Reserves with facilities accessible to all.
- **Rich cultural heritage.** Three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, historic towns, royalty, battles, traditions and an important cultural and activities agenda throughout the year.
- **Comprehensive offering of accommodation and specialized guides.** Local companies committed to local conservation and development offer unforgettable experiences.
- **Excellent gastronomic offering.** A variety of restaurants with quality ingredients, local produce and recipes for every taste.

Madrid offers you ecotourism experiences for discovering its natural and cultural heritage in every season of the year and in all its cardinal points.

In the Sierra Norte (Northern Range) or the Sierra del Guadarrama (Guadarrama Mountain Range) you can discover its National Park or interpret Madrid's livestock farming past in the Biosphere Reserve of the Sierra del Rincón; towards the east, in the Jarama valley and Madrid's Alcarria region, with moors and the valleys of the rivers Henares and Tajuña, you can observe steppeland birds; to the south, in the floodplains of Aranjuez, there are valuable enclaves for butterflies and aquatic birds, where you will also observe the wealth of Madrid's market gardens; and towards the east you can observe the wildlife in the holm oak forests of the rivers Alberche and Cofio while also enjoying its local cuisine.

## The best-conserved landscapes in Madrid one hour from the city

For visitors to Madrid, it is really easy to travel from the city centre to the natural spaces.

### Sierra del Guadarrama and Sierra Norte

Starting in the north, the **Guadarrama Mountain Range** and the **Northern Range** are two regions containing the **Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park**, the **Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve**, and the **Special Conservation Zone of the Lozoya River Basin**. Its emblematic landscapes are the best-preserved ones in Madrid: from the high mountains (peaks above 2,000 metres) to the extensive forests of wild pine, centuries-old oak woods, holm oak expanses and meadowlands dotted with ash to the countryside of the mountain range foothills and its important aquatic ecosystems. The eight reservoirs that supply water to Madrid and the clean river courses of the Lozoya, Manzanares and Guadarrama guarantee the enjoyment of well-preserved landscapes.

The Sierra del Guadarrama splits up into the Montes Carpetanos to the north, which cradle the river Lozoya, and the Cuerda Larga and La Pedriza (a great granite batholith made up of numerous crags, rock walls, scree, streams and meadows of great geological, landscape and sporting interest). These give rise to the **upper basin of the river Manzanares**, a Biosphere Reserve that acts as a natural corridor linking up with the **Monte de El Pardo** hill and channels the mountain air towards the capital.

### To the south, the rivers Guadalix and Jarama

From the Sierra Norte we connect, to the south, with the **basin of the river Guadalix** (which means "river of the alders") at the foot of the Moncalvillo meadowlands and, to the southeast, with the **Jarama valley** with its gentle cultivated terraces inhabited by grain-eating birds.

### The East, Parque Regional del Sureste (Southeast Regional Park), the Henares Basin and Alcarria

Further to the south and to the east we cross the **Henares basin** that gives way to landscapes of hills, moorland and Madrid's Alcarria region, where we can explore its groves of gall oaks, holm oaks and Kermes oak and cultivated copses. The Manzanares and the Jarama flow into each other, flanked by cliff-nesting birds. These rivers were drained by ancient gravel pits in the **Southeast Regional Park**, such as that of El Porcal where waterfowl can be observed. All these

rivers meet in the region of Las Vegas, where the Tagus river receives them to form riverside woodlands and wet areas of some importance, such as the El Regajal-Mar de Ontígola Natural Reserve or the Laguna de San Juan Wildlife Refuge.

### Sierra Oeste

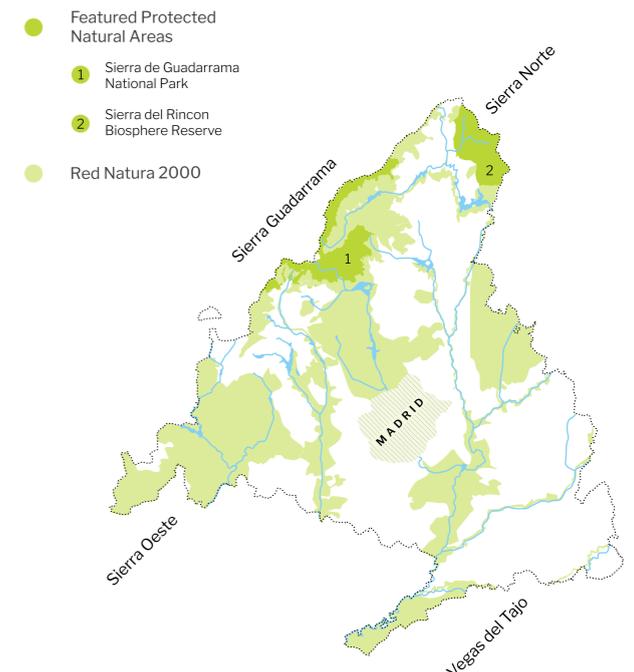
The circle is completed by returning towards Madrid to discover the region of the **Western Range**, carved out by the river **Alberche**, with the **San Juan** and **Picadas** reservoirs and the rivers **Cofio** and **Perales**, surrounded by pine and holm oak groves riding the ranges topped by granitic blocks that separate these rivers from the Guadarrama basin, whose copses and willow groves define it as far as the river Tagus.

### Interpretation and services

The **visitor centres** of the protected spaces we mention provide clear explanations of the natural and cultural heritage value contained by these spaces, while the marked paths allow us to explore the landscapes.

The tourism companies established in the area offer ecotourism experiences open to a broad range of tourists. Among them we find from activities for families with children and stays in rural tourism accommodation to watching endangered animals such as Iberian imperial eagles, black vultures and even wolves. To this we should add the broad availability of routes and trails that take you through the landscapes, the traditional activities of the towns and villages and their cuisine, the making of local products or the crafts of the rural medium.

All of these experiences can be enjoyed in a wide variety of rural accommodation in which to rest and disconnect from the noise and stress of the big cities.





La Pedriza, Sierra de Guadarrama National Park

## Sierra del Guadarrama and the upper basin of the river Manzanares, the peaks of a mediterranean high - mountain National Park

### The mountain range of painters and poets

The bluish mountainsides of the Guadarrama Mountain Range were the backdrop of some of Velázquez's famous paintings which can still be admired today in Madrid's Prado Museum. The range's visual gradation of granite blocks is an attractive horizon that fascinated major Spanish poets such as Antonio Machado, Vicente Aleixandre or Luis Rosales, as they express in many of their poems. The breakup of granite materials and the erosive action of water have modelled unique landforms in which the mountain villages, with their hewn granite houses, have found a perfect fit.



### A granite building with several tiers of vegetation

The granite blocks that form the Guadarrama Mountain Range harbour typical Mediterranean high-mountain flora with its singular adaptations. The different tiers of vegetation are staggered from the summits to the foot of the range in a mixture of Mediterranean, Atlantic and continental influence.

### The source of the river Manzanares, a film set landscape

Remote eras have fractured the granite that now forms a singular relief, particularly in La Pedriza with its granite crags, outcrops, gullies and towers that look like sculptures hewn from the stone. The ensemble is visible from Madrid and served as a magnificent natural stage for shooting famous international films such as *El Cid* (Anthony Mann, 1961) or *55 Days at Peking* (Nicholas Ray, 1963).

The gentle outline of the Cuerda Larga knolls (around 2,000 metres) makes them a special route for discovering the hardy high-mountain flora. Furthermore, the routes are suitable for all levels of hiking effort.

### The National Park, biodiversity close at hand

The creation of the National Park has its roots in its tremendous biodiversity and in a scientific tradition that had been calling for its protection. The Park is a veritable "Noah's Ark", with 255 species of vertebrates of which 148 are birds, among them some of the most endangered on the Iberian peninsula such as the black vulture, the Iberian imperial eagle or the black stork. Also noteworthy are the 58 mammal species such as mountain goats, roe deer, wildcats, otters, badgers or Pyrenean desmans; among the invertebrates, some extraordinary butterfly species such as *Graellsia isabelae* or *Parnassius apollo*.



### Spanish history at the foot of the Guadarrama range

The mountain range's cultural heritage reflects a part of Spanish history and has its top exponent in the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, a compilation of a period that articulated and organized the country. Located in the proximity of the National Park and recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this is an absolute must-see.



### The Abantos pine forest and the area of La Herrería, a historic natural space

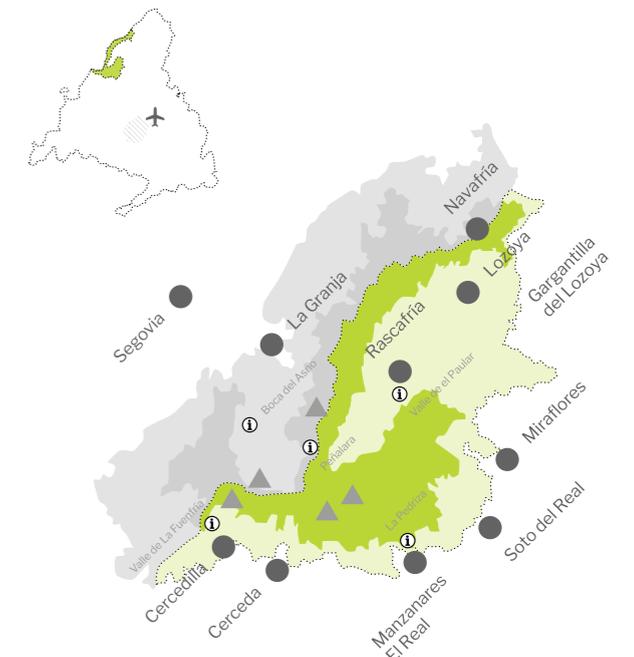
The Abantos pine forest forges into the environs of the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial and boasts undoubted landscape value that is inseparable from the Escorial setting. In the area of La Herrería the dominant vegetation is composed of gall oaks and ash trees. This space, protected as a Picturesque Expanse, has a relevant population of Apollo butterflies and Spanish moon moths and is the location of Felipe II's Chair, the area's best-known vantage point.

## Technical data sheet for the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park

- **Declaration date:** 2013
- **Protection categories:** National Park, Special Bird Protection Zone (ZEPA), Place of Regional Importance (LIC), Biosphere Reserve, and inclusion in the International Ramsar Convention List.
- **Area:** 33.960 ha (64% Madrid, 36% Castile and Leon)
- **Principal ecosystems:** *Pinus sylvestris* pine forest, juniper groves; high-mountain lakes and wetlands; granite formations and mountain and high-mountain reliefs; oak and gall oak forests; scrubland above forest level; high-mountain pastures and high-altitude ligneous steppes and scree.
- **Towns and Villages of Madrid:** Alameda del Valle, Becerril de la Sierra, Canencia, Cercedilla, El Boalo, Guadarrama, Los Molinos, Lozoya, Manzanares El Real, Miraflores de la Sierra, Navacerrada, Navarredonda and San Mamés, Pinilla del Valle, Rascafría and Soto del Real.
- **Visitor Centres:**
  - Peñalara Visitor Centre (Rascafría) +34 918 520 857
  - Fuenfría Valley\* Visitor Centre (Cercedilla) +34 918 522 213
  - La Pedriza\* Visitor Centre (Manzanares El Real) +34 918 539 978
  - El Paular Valley\* Visitor Centre (Rascafría) +34 918 691 757

\* Contact these centres for guided tours with prior booking.

**More information:** [www.parquenacionalsierraguadarrama.es](http://www.parquenacionalsierraguadarrama.es)



## Sierra Norte. The forest that protect Madrid's water

### *The water that moves Madrid*

As confirmed in the so-called Neanderthal Valley archaeological site on the river Lozoya, man has settled in this place since remote times. The Northern Range is a compendium of Madrid's history, of its peoples and its crafts over time (livestock ranchers, farmers, charcoal makers, barge punters, masons, miners or drovers). The past, present and future of the city of Madrid is intimately associated with this mountain range and it owes its quality of life to its crystal-clear waters.

### *A maximum-protection territory in the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park*

The highest summits in the Guadarrama Range National Park are in the Pico Peñalara (2,428 metres), which reveals the traces of the action of ice: moraines, cirque walls, glacier basins, lakes and small streams. The Wetlands of the Peñalara Massif are included in the RAMSAR Convention list, with more than 240 high-mountain points between lakes, ponds, streams and peat bogs of high ecological value.

Hikers who traverse this National Park will cross the juniper forests and spiny scrublands of the high peaks, enjoying encounters with mountain goats, bluethroats and great eagles. The routes through the pine and oak forests that cover the foothills of the Guadarrama Mountain Range immerse hikers in environments and expanses that differ greatly from the bustle of Madrid.

In the holm oak and ash meadowlands they will encounter fighting bulls and the different breeds of cattle that provide the highlights of mountain cuisine.

### *Rural Madrid*

To traverse the Northern Range is to learn what rural life was like in Madrid. Over the centuries, weavers, millers, blacksmiths, beekeepers and charcoal makers have left a mark on the cattle villages that can be seen even today. The mountain houses are a continuation of the geological landscape, as they are built from its stones (gneiss, slate, granite, quartzite).

Providing protection from inclement conditions determines the layout of the streets and the scant and tiny windows of the houses. The materials and construction methods are a true reflection of the terrain: masonry in gneiss and raw slates trimmed on the inside with adobe, or set with mud mortar and pebbles. The dwellings, with their oak or pine beams, were simple and indoor life was shared with the livestock.

### *Unique forests and pasturelands*

The Sierra Norte is home to the best oak forests of the Lozoya valley, which alternate with pine forests, scrubland, grazing and mowing meadows, vegetable gardens and hedgerows. The yews, holly trees, apple trees, mountain elms, rowans, walnut trees and mushrooms enrich the forests.

Madrid's only beech forest, and one of the southernmost in Europe, is protected and looked after in the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve. It contains trees of extreme age. Since in 1460 the neighbours of Montejo bought the beech expanses next to the river Jarama from a Sepúlveda-based knight, the Montejo beech forest has managed to survive numerous historic events and remains standing to this day. In 1974 it was declared a Natural Site of National Interest and in 2017 UNESCO listed it as a Natural World Heritage Site. The wildlife includes royal eagles, roe deer, forest birds and otters.

The wealth of species in this Biosphere Reserve exceeds 1,000 taxa. 193 species of vertebrate wildlife have been inventoried, together with 694 species of vascular flora and 139 of non-vascular flora (lichens, bryophytes and fungi).

### *A network of ecological corridors for ecotourism*

The vestiges of the livestock farming past are still seen in the glens, walkways and paths that configure the network of livestock trails traversed by Castile's wealth: its Merino sheep. Today they constitute the natural heritage to be discovered through the mountain landscapes and meadowlands dotted with holm oaks, ash and oak trees. Still to be seen here are ancient uses and crafts as well as fountains, wool washing basins, forges and horseshoeing frames that speak to us of this past.

The villages of the Sierra del Rincón still retain the trenches made with picks and shovels for harnessing the water left over from irrigating the vegetable gardens and using it for watering the mowing meadows and the fields on which grew the flax used as raw material for garments. The trenches also allow us to observe the remains of what was a deep-rooted custom: the family orchards, of which there are still examples in La Hiruela. The waters of the river Jarama turned the water wheels of the flour mills like the one shown to visitors in this village.



### *Landscapes and resources that give us quality of life*

The river Lozoya is the largest source to supply Madrid, with its famed waters for human consumption. The upper basin of the Manzanares is dominated by its great castle standing over the reservoir of the same name.

The Northern Range gives Madrid premium-quality local products such as Guadarrama beef, goat's cheeses, honey, the mushrooms picked in its pine and oak woods, the Montejo beans or fruit such as the apples from La Hiruela. All of them are part of a quality traditional cuisine that can be enjoyed in the restaurants of the mountain villages and the city.

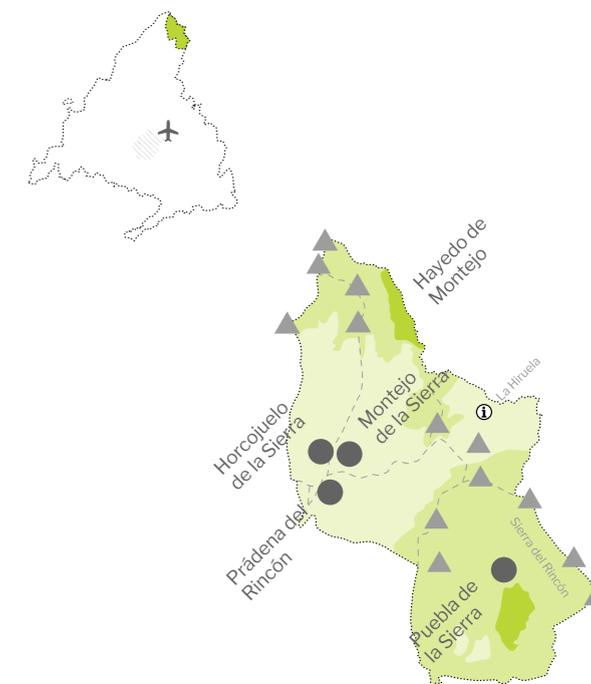


## Technical data sheet for the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve

- **Declaration date:** 29 June de 2005.
- **Protection categories:** Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO), Natural Site of National Interest and UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site (Montejo Beech Forest), Special Conservation Zone (ZEC), Site of Community Importance (SCI).
- **Area:** 15.231 ha.
- **Principal ecosystems:** mixed or monospecific pine woods, brush formations (brushwood, small-size acidophile brush, heathlands, thickets, etc.), oak woods, pastures, crags, beech woods, ash woods, holm oak woods and riverside forest formations.
- **Towns:** Horcajuelo de la Sierra, Montejo de la Sierra, Prádena del Rincón, La Hiruela and Puebla de la Sierra.
- **Centres:**
  - La Reserva Resources and Information Centre\* (Montejo de la Sierra) +34 91 869 70 58
  - Montejo Beech Wood Environmental Education Centre (Montejo de la Sierra)
  - Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve Centre (Horcajuelo de la Sierra)

\* Contact these centres for guided tours with prior booking.

**More information :** [www.sierradelrincon.org](http://www.sierradelrincon.org)





## Sierra Oeste. Holm oak and pine woods with the most endangered wildlife

### *Madrid's Western Range, the connection with the Gredos Mountain Range*

The Sierra Oeste is a succession of granite groupings populated with holm oak, pine and juniper woods. Its main river, the Alberche, issues from the Gredos mountains, with the flow retained in the San Juan and Picadas reservoirs. They are both Madrid's water reserves, as they are connected to the river Guadarrama. El Cofio and El Perales are the other two rivers in the area, sheltering the wildlife in their riverside willow and ash woods.



### *A place for viewing the most threatened wildlife*

The pine and holm oak woods that cover this region shelter the most threatened birds of prey on the Iberian peninsula, such as Iberian imperial eagles, black storks, black vultures and partridge eagles. The routes that cross the municipalities of Cenicientos, Navalagamella, Robledo de Chavela and Valdemaqueda allow visitors to traverse the territories populated by these birds and to observe them with the appropriate optical aids.

### *Mediterranean forests that climb up the granitic boulders*

The Western Range covers a considerable forest mass from the top of its peaks, with junipers and high-altitude scrub, oak and chestnut forests, resin and stone pine woods, holm oak woodland and open meadowlands inhabited by the varied wildlife. Game preserves are maintained.

The holm oak forests are the larder and refuge of a vast diversity of wildlife. There are numerous nesting and wintering birds occupying this biotope. Among them we may mention Iberian imperial eagles, goshawks, black vultures, eagle owls, black storks, etc. Inhabiting the holm oak expanses are many reptile species such as geckos, ocellated lizards, Iberian wall lizards, large psammodromus lizards and Montpellier snakes. The mammal community is very well represented, with genets, wild boars, badgers, wildcats, foxes, hedgehogs and several species of bats. The presence of rabbits allows several predator species to live, since they constitute the basis of the diet of many of them.

There are well-preserved forests such as the Las Rozas de Puerto Real chestnut forest, the most extensive one in Madrid. There are also centuries-old chestnut trees in La Fuente del Rey and in the granite crag of Las Machotas, in Zarzalejo. Gall oaks, oaks and ash trees in the Navalquejigo meadowlands, with the pine groves of Cadalso de los Vidrios and Cenicientos, complete the offer of places to visit.

### *Alberche, Cofio and Perales, refuges for diversity*

Galleries of willow, alder and ash trees flank the courses of these rivers and their streams, forming a wildlife corridor that connects the animals and allows them to move among the holm oak and pine woods. Several amphibian species are prominent in this type of habitat: common toads, Iberian painted frogs, Iberian spadefoot toads, natterjack toads, common frogs, Iberian ribbed newts and European tree frogs. Also frequent in riverside areas are reptiles such as Spanish pond turtles, viperine snakes and viperine water snakes. And among the birds we can observe dabchicks, great crested grebes, mallard ducks, grey herons or common kingfishers.

### *River Alberche meadowlands and vineyards, livestock breeding and farming past and present*

The numerous flocks of sheep that graze on the pastures of the Northern Range in summer descended along the network of glens and paths towards Extremadura, crossing the holm oak woods of the Western Range. Today these trails operate as corridors connecting the best-preserved spaces of the central and western Iberian peninsula. Numerous stone bridges crossed by the flocks remain in use, such as the 16th-century bridge of La Mocha in Valdemaqueda and many others that can be crossed while observing the ancient flour mills on the river Perales.

Today the meadowlands of the Western Range maintain livestock farming activities that produce quality meat and goat's cheeses made from the milk of the Guadarrama breed. You can learn about this heritage at the Livestock Trails Interpretation Centre in Villanueva de Perales.

In San Martín de Valdeiglesias and other villages in the area they produce a wine with Madrid Designation of Origin that is the ideal complement for the cuisine found in the Western Range. Its wineries occasionally open their doors to reveal the secrets of wine growing and making. The vegetable gardens and the riverside of Villa del Prado, with its farming produce, complete a landscape that invites you to taste its fruits.



### *From the Sierra Oeste to the stars*

The succession of peaks and valleys provides a darker sky for some star gazing. The arrival of humans on the moon was followed from the NASA station in Fresnedillas.

### Interpretation Centres in the Western Range:

- Casa del Águila Environmental Education Centre, Chapinería  
[www.ceaelaguila.blogspot.com.es](http://www.ceaelaguila.blogspot.com.es)
- "Paraje de la Puente" Nature Interpretation Centre, Fresnedillas de la Oliva  
[turismo.fresnedillasdelaoliva.es](http://turismo.fresnedillasdelaoliva.es)
- Livestock Trails Interpretation Centre, Villanueva de Perales  
[www.villanuevadeperales.es](http://www.villanuevadeperales.es)
- Lunar Museum, Fresnedillas de la Oliva  
[www.museolunar.es](http://www.museolunar.es)
- Visitor Centre for the NASA Monitoring Station, Robledo de Chavela  
[www.mdsc.nasa.gov](http://www.mdsc.nasa.gov)
- José Peña Wildlife Centre, Navas del Rey  
[www.naturanavas.com](http://www.naturanavas.com)
- Cañada Real Nature Centre, Peralejo (El Escorial)  
[www.opennature.com](http://www.opennature.com)

## The countryside and the valleys of Jarama and Henares. Granary for Madrid.

### *The countryside and valley of the Jarama, the cultivated riverside*

The river Jarama has modelled a succession of river terraces whose fertile soil nourishes cereal crops since time immemorial. They are alternated with pulses, vines and olive trees, creating mosaics of great environmental and landscape interest. These fields and expanses form the so-called cereal-growing steppes that provide nourishment for several bird species such as bustards, little bustards, stone curlews, sandgrouses and upland sandpipers and mockingbirds, crested larks, skylarks, goldfinches and linnets. Madrid is a good place for watching them, since in other countries they are on the decline.



### *The gypsiferous ledges of the Jarama and its ridges, a wildlife refuge*

Downstream, the river Jarama collides with gypsiferous substrates, excavating ledges that shelter cliff-nesting birds such as Egyptian vultures, peregrine falcons and a substantial population of eagle owls, bee-eaters and red-billed choughs.

Prominent in the vegetation of these ledges are black hawthorn, bladder-senna or fragrant virgin's bower, *brassica*, *helianthemum squamatum*, thyme or reseda as well as Moorish thyme, needle grasses, esparto grass, garden cress and white flax.

The river copses, with willows and tamarisks, are the ideal habitat for riverside birds such as black kites. The ancient gravel pits, such as those of El Porcal or the Campillo lake, are today a refuge for wildlife, where we can observe gatherings of aquatic birds in winter and unique species such as bearded reedlings, penduline tits, reed buntings and several types of warblers.

### *The countryside of the Henares, Madrid's Alcarria region*

The Alcarria refers to flatlands at a height of between 700 and 1,000 metres, with sparse vegetation on a calcareous or chalky substratum. Declivities and heathland succeed each other here. The shady zones are covered in the remains of gall oaks, holm oaks and Kermes oaks, while on the heaths dry-farming species predominate, such as cereals, olive and almond trees.

Many of the ancient gall oak woods are now scrubland, with aromatic plants such as rosemary, thyme, lavender and also thorny shrubs such as hawthorn, dog roses and others such as *cistus albidus*, broom, Kermes oak and esparto grass.

The copses of the river Henares retain some of Madrid Region's best riverside woods in the vicinity of clayey ledges.



## The riverside plains of Aranjuez. Madrid's market garden.

### *The riverside plains of Aranjuez. Madrid's market garden*

The rivers Jarama and Tajuña converge in this area on the river Tagus, with their waters irrigating fertile lands that have been cultivated for many centuries.

These plains have had ties to the Spanish Crown since the 16th century, in the time of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Later, his son Philip II ordered the construction of the old Aranjuez Palace here, remodelled in the 18th century in accordance with the French tastes of the new Bourbon dynasty. Right from the start, the surroundings were well-looked-after with plantations of trees and copses through which irrigation channels flowed. The Real Cortijo de San Isidro, a farming complex created by Charles III in the 18th century, contained vineyards, an olive press, a wine press and outbuildings for farming activities.

### *Historic gardens and hedgerows, World Heritage Site*

The copses of the rivers Tagus and Jarama and their plains were modelled to create gardens that at one time became the finest in Europe, with experimental cultivation zones, irrigation channels, irrigable lands and vegetable gardens where later the cultivation of strawberries and asparagus was introduced.

The historic vegetable gardens, the tree-lined boulevards and the copses, the Palace and the Gardens and the city itself form part of the Aranjuez Cultural Landscape declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001.

The plains contain singular enclaves such as El Regajal and Mar de Ontígola, the Ontígola Sea, with its unique butterfly species.

The different soils and shrub and herbaceous species propitiate a wide diversity of insects, making of El Regajal a natural enclave of global interest for the unique butterfly species it shelters (*Plebejus pylaon*, *Iolana iolas* y *Zerynthia rumina*).

The Mar de Ontígola was a reservoir created by Philip II with the intention of providing water for the nearby vegetable gardens and attracting waterfowl for practicing falconry. It is currently of great importance for aquatic bird fauna, which finds in this wet area an excellent refuge among the abundant marshy vegetation that extends over most of its surface.

The San Juan lake is an important wet area in the south of the Madrid Region, situated on the right margin of the river Tajuña within the municipality of Chinchón. Its vegetation is highly differentiated from that of the heathland and ledge areas. The plains and alluvial zone where the lake is situated make this a valuable resting place and shelter for a great variety and number of aquatic birds such as common pochards and tufted ducks, mallards and gadwalls, teals, etc.

### *Wetlands of high ornithological value*

The reed beds of Villamejor, situated on the river's left margin next to the basin of the Martín Román stream, is a good place for watching greylag geese, little bitterns, northern lapwings, black-winged stilts, moorhens or mallards. It also shelters one of the most important nesting colonies of Western marsh harriers in the Madrid Region.

The reed beds and copses of the Aranjuez plains house populations of black kites, European rollers, black-crowned night herons, little egrets and cattle egrets. They are also noteworthy for being one of the best-conserved bat habitats.



Atazar Reservoir

# Catalogue of ecotourism experiences

UA selection of experiences for discovering the nature and rural world of the Madrid Region, guided by the best professionals.

## Type of activity

 Observation of nature	 Agrotourism
 Flora	 Activities with donkeys
 Mushroom	 History
 Insects	 Traditional or craftsmen trades of agro-alimentary production
 Birds	
 Fauna	 Intangible heritage
 Stars	

## Adapted to different recipients

 The experience is adapted to families with children.	 The activity is can be adapted to sensory disabilities.
 Recommended activity for children from a given age.	

## To bear in mind

- The listed experiences and activities are subject to availability and prior booking.
- All activities include corresponding insurance.
- The listed prices include VAT.
- Experiences of more than one day are organized in a way that allows visitors to have free periods and take time to rest, stroll around the surroundings and make their own discoveries.
- Nature observation and discovery activities are guided and have the necessary permits in place. The companies that perform these tasks respect the natural spaces and species being watched so as to cause minimal disturbance to their habitat and behaviour. Participants should follow the indications of the guides at all times.
- All activities are available to adults. Those that can be adapted to families with children are indicated with the corresponding icon.
- Whenever the activity is recommended for children older than a set age, this will also be indicated with an icon.

## Certificates of quality and sustainability:

Company adhering to SICTED.  
 Company accredited with EMAS.  
 Company associated to the Association of Tourism and Ecotourism Companies of the Community of Madrid (AETAM).

# Sierra de Guadarrama

## Experiences

### 1. Observation of freely ranging wolves in the Guadarrama Mountain Range



An activity intended for watching one of the most emblematic species of Iberian wildlife in the high-mountain landscapes of the Guadarrama Mountain Range, with expert guides, admirers and protectors of the Iberian wolf.

A weekend for enjoying this unique and exclusive experience, which takes place on private estates, with four waiting periods for observing wolves, two at nightfall (Fridays and Saturdays) and two at dawn (Saturdays and Sundays), with stays in carefully chosen accommodation in the Madrid mountains the rest of the time.

The activity is undertaken in reduced groups, with latest-generation optical aids –with one ground-based telescope per person- to try to observe totally free-ranging Iberian wolves at a prudent distance to avoid disturbing the wolf packs.

The different tracking and photo-trapping techniques used will be explained. At the end, each participant will be given a video of everything that was observed.

#### When

October, November and December

#### Where

Puerto de Los Leones mountain pass

#### Duration

3 days, 2 nights.

#### Price

310 € per person

#### Includes

Two nights' full-board accommodation, four outings to observe Iberian wolves and a video of the experience

#### Other

Groups of maximum eight people. One-day activities and Iberian wolf tracking, photo-trapping and monitoring courses are also on offer in the Guadarrama Mountain Range

#### Organizing

Iberian Wild Track (CICMA 3283)  
 657 688 490  
 aventuras@iberianwildtrack.com  
 www.iberianwildtrack.com

### 2. Real history, insects of the world and happy animals



Two full days for discovering the most cherished settings of Philip II, insects from around the world and the day-to-day running of an environmentally responsible farm, in other words, history, biodiversity and organic production in the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park.

#### Day 1

After touring the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, with its monumental dimensions, we continue walking in the company of the guides from the *Deverde Association* to Philip II's Chair –where legend has it that he liked to sit and watch the progress of the works on the monastery; the La Herrería oak forest, the Casita del Infante Cottage and the monastery gardens.

Lunch in San Lorenzo de El Escorial and guided tour of the *InsectPark* Nature Centre, which features collections of insects from around the world and living communities of the planet's most numerous animals. Dinner and accommodation in Cercedilla, at the Hostal Aribel inn, a building dating from the early 20th century.

#### Day 2

Visit to the *Castilla Verde* biodynamic farm as farmers' trainees, among happy cows, horses, donkeys and hens. Afterwards we will visit the cheese-making factory where they use the fresh milk from the cows, and view a bakehouse where they bake their bread.

#### When

All year

#### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial and Cercedilla

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

198 € per person. Consulta discounts for children and groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), interpreter guide for the first day's activity, lunch at a local restaurant, visit to *InsectPark*, one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room), full board (dinner, breakfast and lunch) and guided tour of the biodynamic farm

#### Other

Groups of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
 91 852 09 00 - reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
 www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 3. Tradition and nature in the Guadarrama Mountain Range, other perspectives



Through this experience you will enjoy a different encounter with nature in the Guadarrama Mountain Range, admiring the stars, discovering the culinary uses for wild plants, walking with donkeys and learning how a biodynamic farm is run.

#### Day 1

Llegada al *Hostal La Maya* y después de la cena, visita nocturna al Parque Nacional de la Sierra de Guadarrama, por el valle de la Fuenfría, con un experto de la empresa *D2 Naturaleza* para identificar constelaciones, planetas y satélites, durante dos horas aproximadamente.

#### Day 2

Visit to the *Castilla Verde* biodynamic farm in Cercedilla, spending the morning as a farmer. After lunch, a gastro-botanical route around the Camorritos area at the foot of the Siete Picos massif, with a biologist from *D2 Naturaleza* to identify the edible plants along the way and discover their multiple applications in the kitchen.

#### Day 3

Family hiking in the National Park around the Mataelpino area, in the company of the donkeys from the *Dejando Huella Association*. Children will be able to ride them along parts of the route.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Cercedilla

#### Duration

3 days, 2 nights

#### Price

295€ per person. Consult discounts for children and groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), two nights' accommodation (in a double-occupancy room), full board, guided night-time hike, guided visit to the biodynamic farm, gastro-botanical route and interpretative hiking with donkeys

#### Other

Group of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 4. Walking with friendly donkeys and raising a toast with craft beers



The main activity is a guided family hike to discover the environs of Mataelpino and the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park, accompanied by the donkeys from the *Dejando Huella Association*. During the activity, which lasts approximately two hours, you will learn to engage with them and to handle them. The children will also enjoy riding them along sections of the route.

The other activity is a visit to the *Gabarrera brewery* in Mataelpino that includes a tasting. Here we will learn about brewing craft beers, based on traditional brewing methods and the use of 100% natural and organic ingredients: barley and wheat malt, hops, organic whole cane sugar, yeasts and, above all, meltwater from the high pools in the Guadarrama Mountain Range.

The activities can be undertaken in the order preferred by visitors. Accommodation is in the *Hotel La Sierra by Selecta*, an establishment for enjoying and relaxing. You can add some pampering to the visit.

#### Where

All year

#### Where

Mataelpino

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

133€ per person.  
Consult discounts for children and groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room) and full board, guided activity with donkeys and tasting visit to the brewery

#### Other

Groups of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 5. Birds and mare's milk in the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park



#### Day 1

Arrival in the morning at the *Prado Real Hotel* in Soto del Real, protected by the mountains of the Guadarrama Range. We recommend that you arrive early if you want to make the most of your free time before lunch and take a stroll in its surroundings.

After lunch in a local restaurant we visit the *Ecolactis Farm*, an innovative and organic farm, the first in Europe to produce mare's milk. Here they explain its characteristics and why they produce the animal milk that is closest to human milk. We will learn about the production process of the lyophilized milk and colostrum and the soaps and cosmetics they manufacture. At the end, a brief tasting of mare's milk.

#### Day 2

Bird watching with an ornithologist from the *Ecolactis Farm* next to the Santillana reservoir in the Regional Park of the Upper Basin of the Manzanares, where the protagonists are the hundreds of overwintering aquatic birds. But the water is not the only target; we should also be watching the birds of prey. Lunch in a local restaurant and transfer to the starting point in Madrid.

#### When

From March to September

#### Where

Soto del Real and Manzanares El Real

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

199€ per person.  
Consult price for groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room), full board, visit to the farm and guided bird-watching activity with optical aids

#### Other

Group of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 6. Mushroom picking around the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park



#### Day 1

Arrival in the morning at the *Hostal La Maya inn* in the village of Cercedilla, one of the gateways to the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park. The morning is devoted to the first activity, a guided tour with an expert mycologist who will teach you to identify mushroom species and how to pick them sustainably. During the activity you will pick only one mushroom of each edible species you encounter.

Depending on where there is greater abundance and variety of mushrooms at the time of the tour, the spot will be either a pine wood or an oak wood. After lunch in a local restaurant, a workshop will be held to identify and classify the picked mushrooms.

#### Day 2

Mushroom cookery workshop to learn about the ways you can cook these flavourful delicacies. We will learn recipes that use mushrooms from the region while the children carry out activities and crafts inspired in the world of mushrooms.

#### When

In spring and autumn

#### Where

Cercedilla

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

132€ per person. Consult price for groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room) and full board, mushroom-picking hike, identification workshop and mushroom cookery workshop

#### Other

Group of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

## 7. Stars and gastro-botanics in the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park



### Day 1

The experience starts with the arrival at the *Spa Rural Hacienda Los Robles Hotel* located in the town of Navacerrada. After dinner we make a night-time visit to the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park, specifically to the valley of La Barranca where an expert from the company *D2 Naturaleza* will identify constellations, planets and satellites. The session, with telescopes, lasts two hours. It starts earlier in winter and later in summer.

### Day 2

Route to the Golondrina peak to learn about the cooking possibilities offered by the vegetables from the Guadarrama Mountain Range, with a biologist guide from *D2 Naturaleza*. We will start with gastrobotanics, the science that investigates with new species of flora, recovers forgotten or unknown varieties from the vegetable kingdom and studies the different plant components (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds) for their use and application in the kitchen.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Navacerrada

#### Duration

2 days, 2 nights.

#### Price

175 € per person

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), two nights' accommodation (in a double-occupancy room) and full board, telescopes, guided night-time hike and gastrobotanics route

#### Other

Group of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

## 8. Among goats, craft beers and pampering



### Day 1

Arrival at the accommodation to enjoy a 90-minute hydrothermal circuit and the rest and relaxation offered by the *La Sierra by Selecta hotel* and spa located in Mataelpino in the exceptional surroundings of the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park.

### Day 2

In the morning we go off into the countryside of El Boalo, guided by the goatherd of the flock to learn first-hand about the tasks they perform, taking 80 goats along the livestock trails and watching the milking process in the milking parlour or the flock's suckling kids.

Before or after lunch, according to the group's preference, we visit the Gabarrera organic craft beer brewery. Here we will learn why it is organic and the steps taken to make craft beer, ending with a tasting of their beers.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Mataelpino

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

162 € per person.

Consult prices for children and groups

#### Includes

Transfers from the starting point in Madrid (hotel or airport), one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room), full board, a 90-minute hydrothermal circuit, transfer, goat herding and milking activity and visit to the brewery

#### Other

Group of minimum four people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

## 9. On foot and on horseback around meadowlands, forests and vegetable gardens



A weekend for returning to our roots in the kitchen garden and for recognizing the value of the excellent and productive meadowlands dotted with centuries-old ash, oak and holm oak trees, on foot and on horseback.

### Day 1

Interpreted route around the best ash, oak and holm oak meadowlands in the Madrid Region, with guides from the *Deverde Association*. After lunch in El Escorial, we visit the association's vegetable garden to learn how to sow, transplant and care for vegetables. Dinner and accommodation.

### Day 2

Interpretative route on horseback in the surroundings of the livestock trail, among holm oak, ash and oak trees; approximately one hour to enjoy the views from the elevated position of your saddle. In the afternoon, after lunch in El Escorial, a visit to the leafy forest of La Herrería, declared a Picturesque Landscape, with a guide who will tell us about its history.

#### When

All year

#### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial and El Escorial

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

From 210 € per person. Consult price for children

#### Includes

One night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room) and breakfast, in an establishment of your choice, two lunches and one dinner; two interpretative routes with specialized guides throughout the route, practical visit to the vegetable garden, a one-hour horseback ride for all levels (children preferably from eight years of age). Drinks and transfers are not included

#### Other

Group of minimum six people

#### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

## 10. Water trails in El Escorial and San Lorenzo de El Escorial



In this experience you will learn where the abundant water comes from that makes of San Lorenzo, El Escorial and the Picturesque Landscape of the Abantos Pine Forest and the area of La Herrería such a pleasant setting. With the guides from the *Deverde Association* you will interpret the ecosystems of ponds, basins and streams and view boats from the time of Philip II, pipes, a tunnel from the 1950s and reservoirs as well as the water treatment plant.

### Day 1

Route on foot from El Escorial towards the Valmayor reservoir passing through Las Machotas, San Benito, Abantos, La Peñota, etc., on a seven-kilometre trail (from three to four hours). After lunch, interpretative route to view the waters of the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, of the Jardín de los Frailes garden and of the Casita del Príncipe and Casita del Infante cottages; fountains, ponds and basins.

### Day 2

On the previous day we learned where the water arrived; today we will devote the morning to seeing where it comes from. Climb to the Monte Abantos area to discover ponds, basins, pipes, dams... and the animals that inhabit them. Two or three hours depending on the group's pace. The hike will end with lunch in El Escorial.

#### When

Mondays to Sundays, all year

#### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial and El Escorial

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

From 185 € per person. Consult price for children

#### Includes

Three interpretative routes with specialized guides throughout the tour, one night's accommodation (in a double-occupancy room) and breakfast in an establishment of your choice, two lunches and one dinner. Drinks and transfers are not included.

#### Other

Group of minimum six people

#### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

## 11. Cuelgamuros valley and princely cottages



Routes on foot interpreted by guides from the *Deverde Association* to discover the merits of the Cuelgamuros valley, known for being the site of the Valle de los Caídos complex.

### Day 1

Route on foot during the morning in the Cuelgamuros valley; two to four hours enjoying the excellent views and the impressive longevity of the black pine, some more than 500 years old, in the only natural black pine forest in the Madrid Region. After lunch in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, a dramatized visit to the Casita del Príncipe and Casita del Infante cottages, wandering around the gardens guided by an attendant in character from the time of Charles III who will reveal their secrets, show you the centuries-old trees and gaze at Madrid and El Escorial from their vantage points.

### Day 2

Circular route. From the Basilica of the Valle de los Caídos we climb through the pine woods of Cuelgamuros to the Altar Mayor chapel, a prime location for enjoying some beautiful vistas. Returning to the Valle de los Caídos complex, some free time for visiting the basilica and enjoying a pleasant lunch.

#### When

All year

#### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial and El Escorial

#### Duration

2 days, 1 nights

#### Price

From 160 € per person. Consult price for children

#### Includes

Two interpretative routes with specialized guides throughout the tour, one night's accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room) in an establishment of your choice, two lunches and one dinner. Drinks and transfers are not included

#### Other

Group of minimum six people

#### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

## Other activities Sierra de Guadarrama

### 12. Observing the rite of the mountain goats



Guided routes approaching various areas around La Morcuera in the Sierra del Guadarrama National Park that are inhabited by mountain goats, to observe how the rut sets the large males against each other in rough and exhausting head-butting contests. Binoculars for each visitor, two telescopes, digiscoping material for filming and photography and a picnic.

#### When

November and December

#### Where

Puerto de La Morcuera mountain pass and other areas where groups of mountain goats move around

#### Duration

8 hours

#### Price

30 € per person.  
Special discounts for family groups and organized groups of four to eight members

#### Other

Group of maximum eight people

#### Organizing

Graellsia Ecoturism  
91 057 32 86 and 649 100 395  
info@graellsia.com  
www.graellsia.com

### 13. Observation of griffon vultures during breeding season



Guided routes approaching several areas where griffon vultures breed in the upper basin of the river Guadarrama within the Natura 2000 Network. Here a discreet observation hide is set up to avoid causing disturbance to the nesting sites.

Access requires walking for one or two hours along mountainous terrain, sometimes in wintry conditions. However, the guides are perfectly qualified for seeking out the easiest and safest itineraries, ensuring that anyone can follow the activity. It includes a certified mountain guide as well as a biologist who will interpret nature for us. Also binoculars for everyone, telescopes and a picnic.

#### When

From February to May

#### Wheres

San Lorenzo de El Escorial

#### Duration

Full day (approximately 8 hours)

#### Price

25 € per person

#### Other

A maximum of eight people per group. Special discounts for family groups and organized groups of four to eight members

#### Organizing

Graellsia Ecoturism  
91 057 32 86 and 649 100 395  
info@graellsia.com  
www.graellsia.com

### 14. Safari around the Guadarrama wetlands



Route in a 4x4 vehicle designed for visiting several wetlands and reservoirs (Los Arroyos, La Jarosa, Santillana) in the Guadarrama river basin. These spaces are protected by the Natura 2000 Network, with abundant presence of migratory aquatic birds. We follow a short ornithological itinerary in each wetland area, guided by a certified mountain guide who is also a biologist and nature interpreter. Includes transfers in a 4x4 vehicle, binoculars for everyone and telescopes, digiscoping and filming equipment and a picnic.

#### When

From January to March

#### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial

#### Duration

Full day (approximately 8 hours)

#### Price

40 € per person

#### Other

Maximum four people per group. Special discounts for family groups and organized groups

#### Organizing

Graellsia Ecoturism  
91 057 32 86 and 649 100 395  
info@graellsia.com  
www.graellsia.com

### 15. Wildlife tracking in the Sierra del Guadarrama



Workshop for learning to identify wildlife in the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park from their tracks. Imparted on various levels according to participants' experience and on different routes depending on the type of wildlife being tracked and the season of the year.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Navacerrada, Manzanares El Real or Rascafría

#### Duration

Approximately 6 hours

#### Price

13 € per person.  
Consult discounts for more numerous groups

#### Other

A specialized guide-instructor for every 12 participants. Option of including a picnic with organic and local products.

#### Organizing

¡Ole! Outdoor  
609 862 171  
info@oleoutdoor.com  
www.oleoutdoor.com

### 16. When I grow up I want to be an... explorer! during breeding season



This activity allows concealed tracks in nature to be discovered with children in the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park. A lovely walk where children are given a list with examples they should look for, stimulating creative thinking and careful observation. With the help of the parents, they will have to collect leaves, pines, berries, animal remains, skins, etc., which are identified with a simple template. We also analyze the water quality in the streams and learn about the valley's lichens. At the end all the finds are shared and meaning is given to the encounter.

#### When

Saturdays and Sundays, all year

#### Where

Cercedilla

#### Duration

3 horas

#### Price

15 € per person.  
Children up to 15 years of age go free of charge

#### Other

No dogs are allowed

#### Organizing

Gaia. La Montaña Sostenible  
665 814 717  
info@gaialamontanasostenible.com  
www.gaialamontanasostenible.com

### 17. Tiny birds: bird watching for families with children



Depending on the season of the year, we go out in search of birds of prey or waterfowl on a convenient path adapted for families with children. The activity traverses natural spaces and starts with a workshop in which we make outlines to help the smaller children identify any species they observe. Accompanied by environmental educators who will teach them to use binoculars, to distinguish a great crested grebe from a duck or to watch through their telescopes so they don't miss out on any details of the birds.

#### When

Saturdays and Sundays all year  
(recommended from May to October)

#### Where

Manzanares El Real and Guadalix de la Sierra

#### Duration

2 hours

#### Price

18 € per person.  
Children up to 12 years go free of charge. Maximum one free place per registered adult

#### Other

Binocular and baby carrier rental service.  
Activity subject to weather conditions

#### Organizing

Navalmedio Experiencias en Naturaleza  
91 852 30 19  
reservas@navalmedio.es  
www.navalmedio.es

### 18. Tiny stars: hiking and star gazing for families with children



Night-time interpretation hike adapted to families with children. An original alternative for discovering the smells and sounds of the Guadarrama Range National Park, sometimes under the silvery light of the full moon and others under a canopy of stars. The activity is guided by environmental educators and astro-tourism instructors with Starlight® international certification. An added attraction is watching little children's faces glued to the telescope while they discover Saturn's rings or the moon's craters.

#### When

Every Saturday of the year (recommended from May to September).  
Activity subject to weather conditions

#### Where

Various sites in the Guadarrama Mountain Range

#### Duration

3 hours

#### Price

18 € por persona.  
Gratis niños hasta 12 años; máximo una gratuidad por adulto inscrito

#### Other

Servicio de alquiler de mochilas portabebés

#### Organizing

Navalmedio Experiencias en Naturaleza  
91 852 30 19  
reservas@navalmedio.es  
www.navalmedio.es

## 19. Tiny mushrooms: initiation to the world of mushrooms for families with children



A countryside outing designed for the enjoyment of children while the whole family is initiated into the fascinating world of mushrooms. Guided by the characters Marisol el Parasol (Penelope Parasol), Anacleto el Boletus (Angus Boletus) and Juanita la Amanita (Anita Amanita), they will start to become acquainted with the function of fungi in our forests, learn to recognize the most popular species and practice responsible picking. The group is accompanied throughout the activity by a mycology guide. Although the activity is designed for children, older family members will also improve their mushroom knowledge while they collaborate in teaching the children.

### When

Saturdays during the months of October and November

### Where

Cercedilla, Navacerrada, Guadarrama or Puerto de Navacerrada mountain pass

### Duration

2 hours

### Price

15 € per person.  
Children of up to 9 years go free of charge.  
Maximum one free place per registered adult

### Other

Group of maximum 25 people. Basket, penknife and baby carrier rental service.

### Organizing

Navalmedio Experiencias en Naturaleza  
91 852 30 19  
reservas@navalmedio.es  
www.navalmedio.es

## 20. The astonishing universe of insects and arachnids



Visual and sensory contact with the little-known world of insects that nonetheless comprises the most abundant biodiversity on the planet. Small armoured vehicles, sparkling jewels, butterflies with spectacular colours and live insects and arachnids of exceptional size. This is a guided group tour for discovering the fantastic secrets of insects, learn about the Spanish moon moth, a jewel of the Guadarrama Mountain Range which is bred in the *InsectPark*. Through the "I Spy" game we can find mimetic insects, take a walk around the jungles of the world and finish the tour by viewing giant scorpions and tarantulas.

### When

All year from Wednesdays to Sundays

### Where

San Lorenzo de El Escorial

### Duration

Approximately 2 hours

### Price

10 € per person.  
Children and groups of more than six people 8€. Children under 5 go free of charge

### Other

Optionally you can attend Entomology, Geology and Archaeology workshops, which are published on the website every month.

### Organizing

InsectPark. Centro de Naturaleza  
648 070 690  
insectpark@microfauna.es  
www.insectpark.es

## 21. The honey factory



An outing to become familiarized with the life of bees and their complex social structure, their crucial role in nature and the tasks of the beekeeper. The activity begins with a walk along the Thematic Path, with explanatory stops, to then visit the Educational Beehive, protected with beekeeper suits, to view the interior of a beehive and confirm everything we have learned along the path. Returning to the classroom, the children make a beeswax candle while the adults visit the Beekeeping Centre. Lastly, you can taste the honey from the Hoyo de Manzanares mountains.

### When

Spring, summer and autumn

### Where

Hoyo de Manzanares

### Duration

From 3 to 4 hours

### Price

15 € per person.  
Children from 4 to 12 years old, 10 €. 10% discount for large families and pensioners

### Other

Group of minimum eight people. Dogs are not allowed. Other workshops: *The heartbeat of the forest*; *The scent of the countryside*; *Friends of the wind*; *Animals in my garden*; *The kingdom of scents*; *The pond, a miniature ecosystem*; *Six legs, six*

### Organizing

Aula Apícola Sierra de Hoyo  
681 185 389  
aulaapicolahoyo@gmail.com  
www.aulaapicolahoyo.com

## 22. The Hermits' Route



We depart from the Roman bridge of El Escorial towards the famous La Herrería forest and Philip II's Chair. From here we climb to the Entrecabezas pass and the Tres Ermitaños (The Three Hermits) to view Monte Abantos, the Madrid mountain range and the Gredos foothills. We then descend to the old quarries and lakes of Castrejón, small seasonal pools visited by migratory birds. The six-hour route runs through a wide diversity of trees and shrubs, with the chance to see numerous fur and feather species. Return to El Escorial by train from Zarzalejo.

### When

All year

### Where

El Escorial (departure from RENFE station)

### Duration

6 hours

### Difficulty

Medium, 10 km with a 500-metre gradient

### Price

25 € adults, 15 € children (up to 15 years old).  
Return train ticket not included.

### Other

Groups of minimum of four adults; three adults and two children; two adults and three children or one adult and five children. Dogs can be brought along as per RENFE's conditions, since the return is by train. Accessible to the blind with two carers each

### Organizing

El Caminante y su Sombra  
610 795 754  
info@elcaminanteysusombra.com

# Sierra Norte

## Experiences

### 23. Following the tracks and footprints of the forest dwellers



A workshop for identifying the tracks and other signs of wildlife in the Guadarrama Range National Park. With a specialized guide from the company *Signatur*, we will learn about tracking methods, to differentiate the tracks of the various animals and to take moulds from the tracks. The workshop is held from 10 am to 5 pm.

After the learning session, night falls. We breakfast in the *Huerto de San Antonio Rural Complex*, a 2.5-hectare forest estate with ancient orchards and a wealth of wellsprings where the dwelling, the henhouse and the apiary have been carefully restored for accommodation, including a Finnish sauna.

#### When

Weekends throughout the year

#### Where

La Cabrera

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

116 € per person.

Children up to 14 years go free of charge. One free place per adult only

#### Includes

Workshop and one night's accommodation at the Huerto de San Antonio, with breakfast and 50 minutes of Finnish sauna

#### Other

Groups of minimum four and maximum ten people. Diploma for the learning session. Dogs are not allowed. Optional visit to the Romanesque convent-monastery of San Julián y San Antonio, adjacent to the Huerto de San Antonio

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 24. "Birding" in the Sierra del Rincón



Arrival at *Al Viento* in Horcajuelo de la Sierra: warm and welcoming accommodation in stone and wood for six people, who will enjoy a good night's rest and a country-style breakfast.

In the morning we will conduct an approach to ornithology route with a guide from the *De Raíz* collective around the valley of Horcajuelo de la Sierra, at the foot of the mountainous ranges of Somosierra and Sierra Escalba, an exceptional spot between the Guadarrama and Ayllón Ranges in the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve.

The nine-kilometre itinerary traverses from montane forests of Pyrenean oak to the alder groves by the streams to lavender and thyme thickets to farming mosaics made up of old flax plantations, vegetable gardens and meadows.

These ecosystems shelter a broad variety of bird life. In spring we can see European bee-eaters, shrikes (red-backed, woodchat and great grey shrikes), subalpine warblers and western Orphean warblers and hear the cuckoo's song. Among the birds of prey we can observe booted eagles, black kites and European honey buzzards. In autumn we can watch the migratory passage of some species as well as resident bird life.

#### When

May, June and July. September and October

#### Where

Horcajuelo de la Sierra

#### Duration

2 days y 1 night. The guided activity lasts approximately 5 hours

#### Price

75 € per person (group of six people)

#### Includes

Environmental guide-interpreter service, field guides, optical aids on loan (not for the entire group), one night's accommodation and breakfast

#### Other

No pets are allowed. Children must be accompanied by an adult

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 25. "Birding" in the Sierra Norte



Two days in which to discover the most interesting spots for bird watching in the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park and in the Cerro del Lozoya Biological Reserve. The activity has specialized guides from the company *Wild Iberian Nature*. During the routes we can see golden eagles, cinereous and griffon vultures, Iberian imperial eagles, red kites, Iberian magpies, European bee-eaters and hoopoes; also mammals such as badgers, roe deer, weasels or dormice, among others. The activity is adapted for all types of public, from beginners to experts.

As well as the two half-day guided routes, you will enjoy two nights' accommodation at *Monte Holiday Ecoturismo*, with a choice of luxury eco-lodges or tree houses (in holm oaks from four to seven metres tall) with views of the National Park and full board in the panoramic *El Fogón de Guille* restaurant or catering in the accommodation, depending on the dates.

#### When

Throughout the year

#### Where

Gargantilla del Lozoya

#### Duration

2 days, 2 nights

#### Price

799 € por familia de dos adultos y un niño.  
Consultar descuentos para grupos

#### Includes

799 € per family of two adults and one child. Consult discounts for groups. Includes: Two nights' accommodation and full board for two adults and one child, transfers to the route's starting point, two routes with specialized guide and optical aids (binoculars and ground-based telescope)

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

Quality and sustainability certificates: Monte Holiday Ecoturismo holds EMAS certification

### 26. Golden eagle hides in the Sierra Norte



Devotees of photographing large birds, or those who delight in watching them for hours, can do so in three hides in the Cerro del Lozoya Biological Reserve at the gates of the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park. In these exceptional locations you can photograph birds of prey and scavengers such as golden eagles, imperial eagles or cinereous vultures as well as several mammal species such as badgers or roe deer.

The hides, which can accommodate two people, are protected with mirrored glass. The sessions can last from four to ten hours and the day starts at 5 in the morning, with transfers in 4x4 vehicles to the summit of the Reserve at an altitude of 1,514 metres.

The experience consists of two sessions in the hides offered by *Wild Iberian Nature*, two nights' accommodation in *Monte Holiday Ecoturismo* with a choice of eco-lodges or tree houses (in holm oaks from four to seven metres tall) with views of the National Park and full board in the panoramic *El Fogón de Guille* restaurant or catering in the accommodation, depending on the dates.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Gargantilla del Lozoya

#### Duration

2 days, 2 nights

#### Price

799 € per person.  
Consult discounts for groups

#### Includes

Two nights' accommodation, full board (picnic for the hides), transfers to the hides and two sessions in them

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

Quality and sustainability certificates: Monte Holiday Ecoturismo holds EMAS certification.

## 27. Enjoy nature as a family in the Sierra Norte



In this experience we can discover as a family all of the most emblematic wildlife of the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park and the Cerro del Lozoya Biological reserve. In a four-hour route with specialized guides from the company *Wild Iberian Nature* we will try to observe golden eagles or cinereous vultures as well as mammals such as badgers or roe deer.

For the children's even greater enjoyment, you will make a guided and dramatized visit to an organic farm that has a vegetable garden and an animal petting zone, plus an activity in the *Multi-Adventure Park*, which has zip lines and a skills circuit..

The whole family will continue to enjoy nature by staying in *Monte Holiday Ecoturismo*, with a choice of eco-lodges or tree houses (in holm oaks from four to seven metres tall) with views of the National Park and full board in the panoramic *El Fogón de Guille* restaurant or catering in the accommodation, depending on the dates..

### When

All year

### Where

Gargantilla del Lozoya

### Duration

2 days, 2 nights

### Price

899€ per family.

2 adults, 1 child. Consult discounts for groups

### Includes

Two nights' accommodation for two adults and one child with full board, transfer to the activities, specialized guides, visit to an organic farm and activity in the Multi-Adventure Park

### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)

91 852 09 00

reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com

www.sierradelguadarrama.com

Quality and sustainability certificates: Monte Holiday Ecoturismo holds EMAS certification.

## 28. Goatherding and landscape: goats abound!



The experience starts with the arrival at the *Madre Terra* rural houses specializing in a healthy lifestyle. Next morning we go off into the countryside.

A unique opportunity for learning about the work and everyday life of a goatherd in La Puebla de la Sierra in the 21st century, walking with the herd of goats and taking part in everyday tasks.

You will learn about animal husbandry and rearing with extensive methods around the natural resources of the valley of La Puebla. We will also examine the evolution of the landscape over time. The good relations between these local populations and nature has led to declaring the Sierra del Rincón a Biosphere Reserve.

The route and places are determined according to the herd's annual cycle and the weather. No dogs are allowed to preserve the herd's wellbeing. During the activity, participants must pay attention to the instructions of the goatherd and the environmental educator from *De Raiz*.

### When

Mondays to Fridays throughout the year. Consult dates for weekends and holidays

### Where

La Puebla de la Sierra

### Duration

2 days, 1 night (the goatherding activity lasts approximately 4.5 hours)

### Price

98€ per person

### Includes

Accommodation with breakfast, environmental guide-interpreter service and teaching materials

### Other

Group of minimum six people. The activity may be postponed or cancelled due to weather warnings that do not include atmospheric phenomena inherent to each season. The difficulty (average-to-high) varies depending on the time of year. Participants should be accustomed to walking in the countryside. The route traverses a wide variety of pathways: tracks, trails, traditional footpaths. Children must be accompanied by an adult

### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)

91 852 09 00

reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com

www.sierradelguadarrama.com

## 29. Three days of countryside and traditions in Madarcos



Over a three-day period we can share the knowledge and traditions of our elders. In this activity, visitors will learn to enjoy another kind of rhythm in a world of different sensations.

You can choose one of these workshops to attend during the three days: bread making, beer brewing, production of vegetable or pork slaughtering preserves. Visitors can also put themselves in a shepherd's shoes, taking the sheep around the pastures and performing feeding and milking tasks. During the three days you will enjoy home cooking made from local and organic products.

### When

All year

### Where

Madarcos

### Duration

3 days, 2 nights

### Price

200€ per person. Consult price for children

### Includes

Two nights' accommodation in a double-occupancy room with en-suite bathroom and full board, a workshop with materials, walking with sheep and guide and a didactic concert

### Other

Groups of minimum eight and maximum sixteen people. Available in Spanish, English, French, German and Italian. The activities are straightforward except for shepherding. Dogs are allowed in the accommodation but cannot take part in the shepherding route

### Organizing

Alojamientos Madarcos Accommodation

699 320 518

madarcos@yahoo.com

www.madarcoturismo.es

## 30. The Sierra del Rincón, from farm to bike



Two days in the *Fuente del Arca* rural house accommodating six people in the heart of the Sierra del Rincón, with an agri-tourism activity and a guided route on an electric bike to discover the surroundings.

The agri-tourism activity teaches you about the different uses and rotations of the meadows, which generate biodiversity thanks to environmentally friendly human activity. You will visit a garden with fruit trees, aromatic wild plants and a farm with animals, greenhouse and vegetable garden. All in the company of Wilma the donkey, which the children can ride.

During the route on electric bikes, which lasts around three hours, you will ride on streets, paths and trails to effortlessly enjoy the landscapes of this Biosphere Reserve. The activity includes lunch made from local products to restore your energy.

### When

All year

### Where

Montejo de la Sierra

### Duration

2 days, 2 nights

### Price

118€ per person

### Includes

Two nights' accommodation, lunch, agri-tourism activity and guided route on electric bicycle

### Other

Group of minimum four people

### Organizing

Casa Rural Fuente del Arca

677 534 343

jaramaanimacion@gmail.com

www.casaruralfuenteelarca.es

### 31. Country life in El Capriolo



This experience will allow us to enjoy a family weekend at the *El Capriolo* Agri-tourism Centre, which combines tradition, nature and comfort. You will take part in two activities during your stay, a choice of the most interesting ones in each season for children and adults.

*Organic farming*, consisting of visiting a mountain vegetable garden cultivated for generations, where we will learn about fruit trees, vegetables, legumes and the aromatic plants that grow in the Northern Range. On the way back we can pick brambles, wild strawberries and raspberries. Rides along tracks and trails on the farm's nine donkeys. Nature workshop, consisting of a route around the village's surroundings, discovering wildlife tracks and footprints. Visit to Las Charolesas, the extensive livestock farm inherited down the generations. Route on a 4x4 to the vantage points of Cabeza del Cuadrón, with panoramic views of the river Lozoya reservoirs. Wildlife on the go, where we can encounter roe deer, vultures, squirrels, foxes, etc. All activities last approximately one hour

#### When

Weekends throughout the year

#### Where

Garganta de los Montes

#### Duration

3 days, 2 nights

#### Price

112,5 € per person

**Includes** Two nights' accommodation, buffet breakfast and two activities. Lunches and dinners are not included, but the accommodation has a fully equipped kitchen

#### Other

Group of minimum four people. Pets are welcome

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

### 32. Visit to a fighting bull ranch



In this activity we will have the opportunity of watching fighting bulls ranging freely. A tour around the La Pontezuela estate of the Guzmán ranch in Cabanillas de la Sierra, learning about the breeding, selection and handling of the cattle and their environment. We will visit the meadowlands where the bulls, cows and their calves graze, accompanied by staff from the estate.

#### Day 1

Arrival at the Sara de *Ur Hotel* in La Cabrera, an oasis of peace in an early 20th-century building.

#### Day 2

Visit to the estate guided by the rancher, around two hours. Country lunch, with local barbecued products.

#### Day 3

Lunch in a local restaurant, with bull's tail as the star dish.

#### When

All year

#### Where

La Cabrera and Cabanillas de la Sierra

#### Duration

2 days, 2 nights

#### Price

127 € per person.  
Consult discounts for children and groups

#### Includes

Two nights' accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room), visit to the cattle ranch, country lunch and lunch in a local restaurant

#### Other

Group of minimum six people. Optionally, exhibition or testing of fighting bulls, with a group of minimum fifteen people

#### Organizing

Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office (CICMA 663)  
91 852 09 00  
reservas@sierradelguadarrama.com  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

## Other activities Sierra Norte

### 33. "Birding" as a family in the Sierra Norte



Easy walking for the whole family in forests, mountain meadows or riversides as an introduction to bird watching, learning about some of the most common species found in our countryside and the tricks that allow you to identify them.

Optical aids will be provided. The routes, which differ according to the season, are mainly located in the municipalities of Alameda del Valle and Rascafría, in the environs of the Guadarrama Mountain Range National Park.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Alameda del Valle and Rascafría

#### Duration

4 hours

#### Price

12 € per person (depending on number of participants)

#### Organizing

Wild Iberian Nature  
681 268 935 / 619 848 124  
info@wildiberiannature.es  
www.wildiberiannature.es

### 34. "Birding" between the mountain range and the Jarama valley



Bird watching activity between the villages of Patones de Abajo and Patones de Arriba. The circular itinerary runs through limestone ravines, ancient vegetable gardens and streams. We will enjoy the contrasts between slates and limestones and the panoramic views of the Jarama river plain. This mosaic is a refuge and feeding ground for golden eagles, eagle owls, common kestrels, goshawks, buzzards, red-billed choughs and jackdaws, among others.

We will also admire the ethnographic wealth of the village of Patones de Arriba and learn about the historical value of the Isabel II Canal infrastructures (beacons, siphons, aqueducts) for water supply.

#### When

Weekends; groups from Mondays to Sundays. Consult dates on the website. Recommended in spring, autumn and winter

#### Where

Patones de Abajo

#### Duration

5 hours

#### Price

16 € per person; children under 14, 10 €. Consult prices for groups

#### Other

Groups of 12 to 15 people. Binoculars on loan (not for the entire group). We recommend that participants bring their own binoculars. Proposals and prices adapted to already established groups

#### Organizing

De Raíz. Educación e interpretación ambiental  
615 076 498  
info@deraiz.online  
www.deraiz.online

### 35. "Birding" along the sweep of the river Lozoya



In this activity we go upstream along the river Lozoya between the Pontón de la Oliva and the La Parra dams. The valley is a sweep of contrasts between slate and limestone, brushland and forest, meadowlands and afforested land. A showcase in which to look out for red-billed choughs, peregrine falcons, golden eagles and eagle owls in the limestone rifts. Black redstarts, corn buntings, rock buntings in the scrubland; blue tits, tree-creepers, wrens and scops owls in the riverside woods. And on the river, cormorants, ducks and herons. As we walk we see the dams, canals, banks and beacons of the Isabel II Canal, which was key in the history of providing a water supply for Madrid.

#### When

Weekends; groups, from Mondays to Sundays. Consult dates on the website. Recommended in spring, autumn and winter

#### Where

Patones, Pontón de la Oliva

#### Duration (Two options)

Five-hour half-day to cover seven kilometres or full eight-hour day to cover fourteen kilometres

#### Price

Half day, 16 € per person.  
Children under 14, 10 €. Consult prices for groups and full-day outing

#### Other

Groups of 12 to 15 people. Binoculars on loan (not for the whole group). We recommend that participants bring their own binoculars. Proposals and prices adapted for already established groups

#### Organizing

De Raíz. Educación e interpretación ambiental  
615 076 498  
info@deraiz.online  
www.deraiz.online

### 36. Interpretative route by the Riosequillo reservoir



The route starts in the village of Villavieja del Lozoya and crosses its meadowlands dotted with ash trees and its holm oak forest to reach the river Lozoya, on the banks of the Riosequillo reservoir. Here an expert guide will help us to find footprints and tracks of the wildlife that inhabits this area of the river's middle course such as foxes, roe deer, wild boar or otters.

#### When

All year.

#### Where

Buitrago de Lozoya.

#### Duration

4 hours.

#### Price

10 € per person. Children 5 €.

#### Organizing

Signatur  
699 203 766  
signaturmad@gmail.com  
www.signaturweb.com

### 37. The magical corner of the Canencia birch forest



In this experience you will enjoy the autumn or spring colours in one of the enclaves with the highest plant diversity in Madrid's mountain range. Here live distinctive vegetation species such as yew and birch trees.

This easy circular route is suitable for the whole family and covers around ten kilometres. Accompanied by a guide, we will learn to identify plant species and to interpret the quirks of this setting. We will walk through the best birch forest in the Madrid Region to the foot of a centuries-old yew, recognized as a unique tree.

#### When

Sundays in spring or autumn, from October to November

#### Where

Canencia de la Sierra (Canencia mountain pass)

#### Duration

Approximately 3.5 hours

#### Price

10 € per person

#### Other

Group of minimum four people.  
Minors have to be accompanied by an adult

#### Organizing

El Cielo es el Límite  
644 479 142  
el.cielo.s.limite@gmail.com  
www.cielolimite.com

### 38. The sweet world of bees, beekeepers for a day



Bees are far more important than we think. The earth's biodiversity depends to a great extent on pollination, the process that fecundates the flowers to produce fruit and seeds thanks to the action of bees and other insects.

Beekeeping is an ancestral activity and was one of the traditional occupations of the Northern Range. This is an occasion for enjoyment, feeling like a genuine beekeeper while discovering the lives of bees and their close relationship with humans.

#### When

First Saturday of every month, from September to June

#### Where

Bustarviejo

#### Duration

3 hours

#### Price

20 € per person, 16 € if you book one week ahead

#### Organizing

Valle de los Abedules  
630 084 576  
informacion@alberguevalle.com  
www.albergue-valle.com

### 39. Spinning tales



Along the trail that traverses the Sierra del Rincón, we will feel and learn about all the intangible heritage of the Northern Range, through the music, literature and oral tradition associated with livestock herding.

A 7.5-kilometre route to also discover the landscapes, vegetation and the wildlife that inhabits it and the uses of this territory listed as a Biosphere Reserve. Guided by an environmental educator and a musician. It includes teaching resources.

#### When

All year, except for the hottest months

#### Where

Prádena del Rincón

#### Duration

4.5 hours, in the morning or afternoon

#### Price

16 € per person.  
Children under 14, 10 €. Children under 2 go free of charge

#### Other

Consult calendar on the website. Proposals and prices adapted to already established groups

#### Organizing

De Raíz. Educación e interpretación ambiental  
615 076 498  
info@deraiz.online  
www.deraiz.online

## Sierra Oeste

### Experiences

#### 40. Forests, ancestral crafts and spacewalks



An experience in the environs of Fresnedillas de la Oliva, where we can follow interpretative routes through Mediterranean meadowlands and forests with an abundance of birds of prey, discover the secrets behind the area's artisan breads and cheeses and learn curious facts about the moon and outer space.

#### Day 1

An interpretative circular trail through the Navalquejigo meadowlands, a space protected by the Natura 2000 Network, to learn about gall oaks, holm oaks, maples and cork oaks. After lunch we visit the artisan cheese factory of *La Cabezuela*, the traditional *El árbol del pan* bakery and the *Fresnedillas de la Oliva Lunar Museum*, which displays some unique objects associated with NASA space missions.

#### Day 2

Interpretative route through one of the Region's best Mediterranean forests, in the vicinity of Fresnedillas de la Oliva, with holm oaks, cork oaks, strawberry trees, pines and more. After lunch, visit to the NASA Station, one of the space agency's few facilities outside the United States.

#### When

All year

#### Where

Fresnedillas de la Oliva and Navalagamella

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

From 175 € per person, in a double-occupancy room and in a group of six adults. Consult price for children

#### Includes

One night's accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room), two lunches, one dinner, two routes with specialized guide and admission tickets to the bread bakery, cheese factory, Lunar Museum and NASA. Drinks and transfers are not included

#### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

#### 41. The Sierra Oeste and its animals



In this experience you will enjoy the wildlife of the Western Range: wolves, donkeys, horses, vultures, bulls, insects... all these and many more.

#### Day 1

Interpretative route along bridges and the Roman road from San Lorenzo de El Escorial to Peralejo to observe nature. After lunch, guided tour of the *Cañada Real Nature Centre* in Peralejo, a wildlife reception centre and shelter where we will see wolves and vultures among many other animals.

#### Day 2

Interpretative route with the six donkeys from the company *A Ritmo de Burro* (At a Donkey's Pace) for observing the birds of prey of the Robledondo area. After lunch you can choose between a guided tour of the *InsectPark* in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, a centre for scientific and cultural dissemination of insect life, or a fighting bull ranch in a guided tour on a trailer.

#### When

All year

#### Where

El Escorial, Peralejo and Robledondo

#### Duration

2 days, 1 night

#### Price

From 150 € per person, in a double-occupancy room and in a group of six adults. Consult price for children

#### Includes

One night's accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room), two lunches, one dinner, a route with specialized guide from the company Deverde, a one-hour donkey ride, admission tickets to the ranch or to InsectPark. Drinks and transfers are not included

#### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

## 42. Water trails in the Sierra Oeste



In this experience we can follow the course of the river Cofio from the mountain as it passes under bridges and along mills, laundering sites and the Hornillo stream. We will enjoy the panoramic views of the Western Range and its villages.

### Day 1

Interpretative route around the environs of Valdemaqueda along the river Cofio, crossing the Mocha bridge. With the help of a forestry engineer, we discover the contrasts between the resin pine and stone pine forest. After lunch, in Valdemaqueda or in Santa María de la Alameda, we visit a centre specializing in the bonsai growing technique to learn about their care, characteristics and interesting facts.

### Day 2

Route from Santa María de la Alameda to the cascade of the Hornillo stream through the valleys of the river Aceña and the Hornillo stream. Estimated duration is two to four hours, depending on the group's walking pace. Lunch in Robledondo or Santa María de la Alameda.

### When

All year

### Where

Santa María de la Alameda, Valdemaqueda and Robledondo

### Duration

2 days, 1 night

### Price

From 185 € per person, in a double-occupancy room and in a group of six adults. Consult price for children

### Includes

One night's accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room), two lunches, one dinner, two routes with specialized guide and an explanatory bonsai workshop. Drinks and transfers are not included

### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasmadrid.es  
www.escapadasmadrid.es

## 42. Witnesses of the civil war assuaged by nature



In this experience we will discover how nature has worked its magic on the constructions erected in the fronts of the Spanish Civil War.

### Day 1

Interpretative route between the villages of Quijorna and Valdemorillo, dotted with numerous war-time constructions that are well-conserved and integrated into their natural setting. If the weather is good, we eat a picnic in the countryside. The route continues in the afternoon, after which you can enjoy some free time.

### Day 2

Visit to the canyon of the river Aulencia, in the Regional Park of the middle course of the river Guadarrama, in a spectacular setting surrounded by dense ash, oak and holm oak groves. We can finish in the vicinity of Colmenar del Arroyo to view a small restored fort.

### When

All year

### Where

Quijorna and Colmenar del Arroyo

### Duration

2 days, 1 night

### Price

From 175 € per person, in a double-occupancy room and in a group of six adults. Consult price for children

### Includes

One night's accommodation and breakfast (in a double-occupancy room), two lunches, one dinner, two routes with specialized guide. Drinks and transfers are not included

### Organizing

Escapadas a Madrid Travel Agency (CICMA 3547)  
607 676 371  
reservas@escapadasamadrid.es  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

## Other activities Sierra Norte

### 44. "Birding" in the Sierra Oeste



Routes designed for people of different ages and differing ornithological knowledge.

The itineraries, accompanied by specialized guides, run through two territories with great plant and wildlife biodiversity: the holm oak forests of the rivers Alberche and Cofio, spaces protected by the Natura 2000 Network.

### When

From September to May, Tuesdays to Sundays

### Where

Navas del Rey (meeting point)

### Duration

Half day (four hours) or full day (between eight and nine hours)

### Price

From 120 € for the group, in a half-day outing. Price per person varies depending on the number of participants

### Includes

Optical aids and transport. Optional lunch or picnic

### Organizing

Naturanavas  
636 721 114  
naturanavas@gmail.com  
www.naturanavas.com

### 45. Guided tour of the José Peña Wildlife Centre



The José Peña Wildlife Centre located in an eight-hectare estate on ancient restored quarries is home to more than 40 species of irremovable birds and mammals. With the guide's help we will have a close encounter with the ecosystem of the Mediterranean forest and its diversity of diurnal and nocturnal wildlife. Children will have the opportunity to get close to some of the animals and to feed others.

### When

All year, Tuesdays to Sundays

### Where

Navas del Rey

### Duration

Approximately 3 hours

### Price

From 8 € per person for admission ticket to the centre, plus the cost of the instructor, depending on the number of participants

### Organizing

Naturanavas  
636 721 114  
naturanavas@gmail.com  
www.naturanavas.com

#### 46. Discover the Sierra Oeste on Zamora donkeys



Various routes on the back of the company's six Zamora donkeys, on which we traverse the mountains of the Western Range accompanied by a specialized guide for interpreting the landscapes, the flora and wildlife we encounter along the way.

The Zamora-León breed, which is in danger of extinction, is characterized by its large size, huge strength and good nature, so this activity is enjoyable at any age. From this exceptional height, the landscapes acquire another dimension, fallow deer and roe deer can be seen from above and we are that bit closer to black vultures and imperial eagles.

##### When

All year

##### Where

Robledondo

##### Duration

From 1 hour to several days

##### Price

From 15 € per person; children four and five years old go free if they ride on the donkey with an adult

##### Other

Dogs are not allowed. The use of a helmet is mandatory (they are loaned to visitors). To provide a personalized experience, groups are not mixed to complete the number of available donkeys

##### Organizing

A ritmo de burro S.L.  
619 815 486  
casi@aritmodeburro.com  
www.aritmodeburro.com

#### 47. Enjoy wine culture as a family



Visit to the vineyard and winery with explanations on cultivation and the wine-making process. Directed tasting of two wines, for adults. In the meantime, an instructor will conduct environmental education activities with the children in the vineyard and among the fruit trees, followed by a workshop for crafts associated with wine. To end, a gathering for an outdoor lunch.

The Aumesquet Garrido winery in the area of Las Mariscalas, in Cadalso de los Vidrios, produces wine in limited quantities from the garnacha grape from vines at least 50 years old.

##### When

Spring, autumn and winter. Consult dates for the programmes

##### Where

Cadalso de los Vidrios

##### Duration

2 hours plus the time devoted to lunch

##### Price

28 € per person, children 15 €, children under 3 go free of charge

##### Includes

Lunch

##### Other

Activity subject to weather conditions

##### Organizing

Bodega Aumesquet Garrido  
605 593 994  
info@fincamariscalas.com  
www.madridenoturismo.org/bodega/aumesquet-garrido

#### 48. Visit to a winery, tasting and vineyard workshop



The Las Moradas de San Martín winery is located in the heart of the countryside in San Martín de Valdeiglesias, surrounded by its own vineyards covered in old vines. Depending on the season, workshops are organized for visitors: one on the harvest (with a tasting of the grapes on the vine), one on pruning (to rebalance the vine) and one on geology and vines, to learn more about the vineyard soils.

At the end, a tasting of two wines —Senda and Initio— in the tasting room, with views of the vineyards and the casks room, as an initiation into the principles of tasting and the basic aromas and flavours of a glass of wine.

##### When

Spring, summer and autumn. Consult scheduled dates

##### Where

San Martín de Valdeiglesias

##### Duration

2 hours

##### Price

15 € per person per visit with workshop

##### Other

Group of minimum six and maximum 25 people. Prior reservation at least two days in advance

##### Organizing

Bodega Las Moradas de San Martín  
660 237 456  
acarreras@lasmoradasdesanmartin.es  
www.lasmoradasdesanmartin.es

# Floodplains and Jarama

## Activities

### 49. The lifecycle of bees



In this activity, led by a beekeeper, you will discover the fascinating world of bees and their crucial importance for biodiversity and environmental balance. The activity starts with a talk on the individuals in the hive, their tasks according to age or reproduction in a glass beehive, in Valderacete.

Afterwards, after a walk we arrive in the beehive area and, kitted out as beekeepers, we attend the opening of a hive where we will visualize everything we learned earlier and, what is truly admirable, the hard-working bee community as they strive to carry on their species.

#### When

From March to October

#### Where

Valdaracete.

#### Duration

Approximately 2.5 hours

#### Price

20 € per person. Children under 10, 14 €

#### Includes

Beekeeper outfits for young and old

#### Other

Group of minimum four and maximum fifteen people. Prior booking a week in advance

#### Organizing

Tuapitur  
606 210 558  
info@tuapitur.com  
www.tuapitur.com

### 50. Bees and flowers



Outing to the countryside in the vicinity of a beehive in Valdaracete to discover where the bees live. A landscape covered in rosemary, thyme and bugloss.

With the help of a beekeeper guide we will learn to identify the flowers from which bees gather nectar and pollen. We will also learn about the parts of a flower, the types of pollination, the products they generate and their medicinal qualities, the diseases that affect them and their importance in maintaining botanical diversity.

#### When

In the flowering season, which begins with the almond trees in February and lasts until May

#### Where

Valdaracete

#### Duration

Approximately 1.5 hours

#### Price

10 € per person. Children under 10, 5 €

#### Other

Groups of minimum four and maximum fifteen people

#### Organizing

Tuapitur  
606 210 558  
info@tuapitur.com  
www.tuapitur.com

### 51. Andrés Morate organic winery



The visit starts in the Bodega Ecológica Andrés Morate, the first organic winery in the Madrid Region, created in 1998. From here we set out for one of the vineyards of the 25 plots that together form the winery's 20 hectares. Here they explain how they work the land in an environmentally friendly way and how they grow the different grape varieties: small-grain moscatel and airén for white wine and tempranillo, syrah and cabernet sauvignon for reds.

Return to the winery, where they explain all about wine-making, ending in a tasting of three wines: white, young red and cask-aged red, complemented with some chorizo and sheep's cheese tapas.

#### When

Saturdays at 12 h, throughout the year. For other days of the week, consult availability

#### Where

Belmonte de Tajo

#### Duration

From 2 hours

#### Price

16 € per person. Without a tour of the vineyard, 11 €

#### Other

Group of maximum 12 people. Prior booking at least two days in advance

#### Organizing

Bodega Ecológica Andrés Morate  
667 334 500  
bodegas@andresmorate.com  
www.andresmorate.com

## More information

*Companies offering experiences in the catalogue*

*Travel agencies*

**Sierra del Guadarrama Booking Office**  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

**Escapadas a Madrid**  
www.escapadasamadrid.es

**Iberian Wild Track**  
www.iberianwildtrack.com

*Companies offering activities*

*Activities involving observation of nature, interpreted hiking and/or environmental education.*

**A Ritmo de Burro**  
www.aritmodeburro.com

**Asociación de Verde**  
www.deverde.es

**Asociación Dejando Huella**  
www.dejandohuellaenmataelpino.com

**D2 Naturaleza**  
www.d2naturaleza.com

**De Raiz**  
www.deraiz.online

**El Caminante y su Sombra**  
www.elcaminanteysusombra.com

**El Cielo es el Límite**  
www.cielolimito.com

**Gaia. La Montaña Sostenible**  
www.gaialamontanasostenible.com

**Graellsia Ecoturismo**  
www.graellsia.com

**Iberian Wild Track**  
www.iberianwildtrack.com

**Navalmedio Experiencias en Naturaleza**  
www.navalmedio.es

**¡Olé! Outdoor**  
www.oleoutdoor.com

**Signatur**  
www.signaturweb.com

**Wild Iberian Nature**  
www.wildiberiannature.es

*Wildlife Centres*

**Cañada Real (El Escorial)**  
www.opennature.com

**Centro de Fauna José Peña (Navas del Rey)**  
www.naturanavas.com

**InsectPark (El Escorial)**  
www.insectpark.es

*Agri-tourism*

**Agroturismo El Capriolo (Garganta de los Montes)**  
www.agroturismoelcapriolo.es

**Aula Apícola Sierra de Hoyo (Hoyo de Manzanares)**  
www.aulaapicolahoyo.com

**Bodega Aumesquet Garrido (Cadalso de los Vidrios)**  
www.madridenoturismo.org/bodega/aumesquet-garrido/

**Bodega Ecológica Andrés Morate (Belmonte de Tajo)**  
www.andresmorate.com

**Bodega Las Moradas de San Martín (San Martín de Valdeiglesias)**  
www.lasmoradasdesanmartin.es

**Casa Rural Fuente del Arca (Montejo de la Sierra)**  
www.casaruralfuentedelarca.es

**Ganadería Guzmán (Cabanillas de la Sierra)**  
www.ganaderiaguzman.es

**Granja Casilla Verde (Cercedilla)**  
www.castillaverde.es

**Tuapitur (Colmenar de Oreja)**  
www.tuapitur.com

*Accommodation*

*Specialized establishments offering ecotourism activities for discovering nature, the way of life of the rural world and its traditions.*

**Agroturismo El Capriolo (Garganta de los Montes)**  
www.agroturismoelcapriolo.es

**Al Viento, Alojamiento y Turismo Rural (Horcajuelo y Prádena del Rincón)**  
www.alvientoturismorural.com

**Albergue Valle Abedules (Bustarviejo)**  
www.albergue-valle.com

**Alojamientos Madarcos (Madarcos)**  
www.madarcosturismo.es

**Casa Rural Fuente del Arca (Montejo de la Sierra)**  
www.casaruralfuentedelarca.es

**El Huerto de San Antonio (La Cabrera)**  
www.ruralinside.com

*Websites of interest*

**Turismo de Madrid**  
www.turismomadrid.es

**Madrid Birdwatching**  
www.madridbirdwatching.es

**Sendas de Madrid**  
*Hiking, ornithological and cycling routes.*  
www.sendasdemadrid.es

**Environmental Education Centres in the Madrid Region**  
*Programme of activities, workshops and itineraries for discovering Madrid's countryside:*  
www.mapama.gob.es/es/ceneam/recursos/quien-es-quien/redcentros.aspx

**Sierra de Guadarrama**  
www.sierraguadarrama.info  
www.sierradelguadarrama.com

**Sierra Norte**  
www.sierranorte.com

**Sierra Oeste**  
http://www.turismo SierraOesteMadrid.org/

**Association of active tourism and ecotourism companies in Madrid**  
www.aetam.es

**Sierra del Guadarrama National Park**  
www.parquenacionalsierraguadarrama.es

**Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve**  
www.sierradelrincon.org

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[www.madrid.org/publicamadrid](http://www.madrid.org/publicamadrid)



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