

# ASTURIAS

+ CANTABRIA and the PICOS DE EUROPA

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024**  
**12 Days, 11 Nights**

**2 nights Avila, 3 nights Oviedo, 4 nights Panes, 2 nights Zaragoza**  
**Leader: Coral Guise-Smith**



**Day 1 Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August**



Our stop for lunch and independent sightseeing will be Aranjuez, the first of many World Heritage Sites that we will be visiting on this trip.

The Royal Palace is Aranjuez's jewel. Its origins date back to the year 1561 when Philip II commissioned its construction. The great Plaza de Armas is in front of the palace.

The Gardens surrounding the Palace are considered the most beautiful of its era and have inspired many artists. The Prince's Garden is a landscaped garden. The Parterre Garden is an English-style garden with winding paths. The Island Garden, located on an island on the Tagus River, is a unique example of a Renaissance garden. The King's Garden is a Mudéjar garden that is usually closed due to fragile ground conditions.



The Old Quarter of Aranjuez has been declared a Historic Artistic Monument as it is a unique example of Baroque town planning. Designed in 1747 by Giacomo Bonavia, from its very beginning it was set to be a noble area that would house buildings of a dignified construction. Its impressive houses with courtyards, domes, mansions, convents, balconies, squares and spacious streets are testimony of four centuries of history.

We continue to the walled city of Avila for a two night stay at 4\* Hotel Palacios Velada.



The hotel is a converted and extended palace located within the city walls next to the cathedral. The courtyard is a beautiful location for a coffee break.



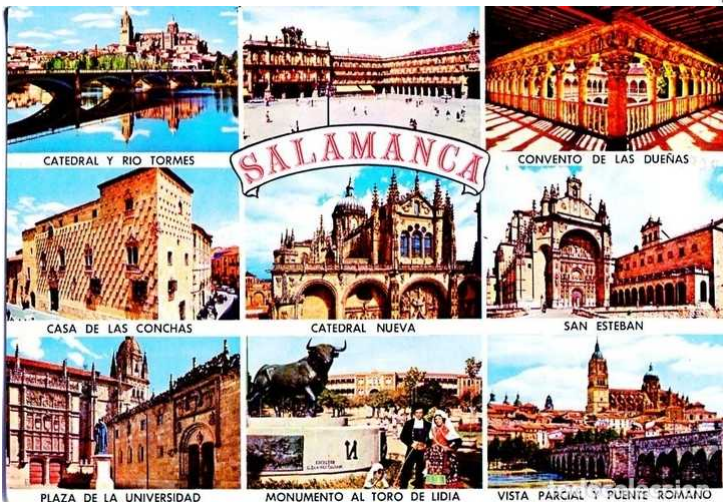
**Day 2 Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September**



After breakfast, we will have a short bus transfer to Salamanca for a guided tour.



Salamanca is home to one of the oldest universities in Europe. The city's historic centre has important Romanesque, Gothic, Moorish, Renaissance, and Baroque monuments. The Plaza Mayor, with its galleries and arcades, is particularly impressive.



After the guided tour, there will be time for lunch and independent sightseeing. There are many places that you could choose to visit such as the Catedral Nueva, the Casa de las Conchas, the Catedral Vieja de Santa Maria de la Sede, Casa Lis, the Puente Romano, the Convento de San Esteban, the Clerecia and the Convento de las Dueñas.



After returning from Salamanca, there will be time for independent sightseeing in Avila. As well as the city walls, you could visit the Plaza Mayor, the Jewish Quarter and many religious buildings, including the Catedral de San Salvador and the Convento de Santa Teresa.



If your legs need a break, Avila has a Tourist train that can take you round the major sites.



### **Day 3 Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

During our transfer to Oviedo, our stop for lunch and independent sightseeing will be the city of Leon.

With its soaring towers and lavishly decorated facade, the Cathedral of León is a breathtaking sight. The impressive building, constructed in the 13th and 14th centuries, is one of the great masterpieces of Early Gothic architecture in Spain. The harmonious interior is equally beautiful, with stunning traceried windows creating an ethereal lighting effect in the sanctuary. The cathedral has more than 1,800 square metres of stained-glass windows.







We continue to Oviedo for a three night stay at the Gran Hotel Espana 350 metres from the centre.

#### **Day 4 Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**

After breakfast, we will have a short bus transfer to the coastal city of Gijón for independent sightseeing. In the vicinity of the Santa Catalina Park located on the headland overlooking the city can be found the Roman Baths, the Elogio del Horizonte statue and the Museo Casa Natal de Jovellanos. The Aquarium and the Railway Museum are by the harbour.



We will return to Oviedo for a guided tour. Our first stop will be on the outskirts of the city to visit the 9<sup>th</sup> century Iglesia de Santa Maria del Naranco. The church is a wonderful example of pre-Romanesque architecture with its interesting exterior staircase, rectangular floor plan, and barrel-vaulted hall illuminated by arched windows and enjoys World Heritage status.

We will also visit the Iglesia de San Miguel del Lillo located nearby.

The highlights of the city centre are the Catedral de San Salvador and several Baroque palaces. In the past few decades, Oviedo has become known for its increasing number of public sculptures. The hundreds of sculptures can be found everywhere, woven into the landscape and installed on sidewalks and pedestrian streets throughout the city.





## Day 5 Wednesday 4th September



We will visit two beautiful fishing villages located to the west of Gijón. Our first stop will be Llanes. It is a quiet town of white houses which preserves all the charm and attraction of its seafaring tradition. Built around an S-shaped cove sitting between sheer cliffs, the historic quarter of Llanes, its promenade and the port are all worth visiting. A small river divides the town in two, although several narrow bridges are there to unite it.

Llanes is famous for its Indian houses, mansions built by people who returned to Spain after making their fortunes in the Americas. The streets through the Cambaral neighbourhood next to the pier lead up to the El Chano Mirador. From here, you can access the Watchtower, Lighthouse and Cemetery from where the views are even more spectacular.



We continue to Cudillero, a small, picturesque fishing port which sits on the side of a mountain. Outstanding are its hanging houses with eaves and brightly-coloured windows perched on a horseshoe of steep cliffs around the port. It has many routes with viewpoints, among which it is worth mentioning the walk to the lighthouse, La Garita, La Atalaya or El Pico. Its two most important buildings are the Gothic parish church, which dates from the 16th century and contains wonderful baroque carvings; and the chapel of Humilladero, which is the oldest structure in town.



The fishermen's taverns, which are in a narrow cobbled square next to the sea, are the main tourist attraction.





## Day 6 Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September



On leaving Oviedo and heading south-east, we will pass through some beautiful countryside. Many rivers have been dammed and valleys flooded for the generation of hydro-electric power creating a stunning combination of lakes and mountains.

On arrival in Riaño, we will enjoy a boat trip on the lake and its fjords. There will then be time for lunch and independent sightseeing.

In the past, Riaño won a 'Most Beautiful Village in Spain' competition on Cadena Ser.



The Paseo del Recuerdo is a 1 km lakeside path that runs from the Parish Church of Riaño to the Hermitage of Our Lady of the Rosary. Both churches were moved stone by stone to their current locations before the valley was flooded.

For the more energetic, an uphill walk from the village brings you to the Miradors of Las Hazas and Valcayo and the best views in the area.

We continue to Panes for a four night stay at Hotel El Tilo.



## Day 7 Friday 6th September



Our first visit will be to Covadonga, the location of the 8<sup>th</sup> century battle where King Pelayo defeated the army of the Caliphate. There will be time to visit both the Santa Cueva and the Basilica.

Our next stop is at Lastres, a beautiful fishing village that has been used as the location for many films and TV series. Lastres has a spectacular old town with cobbled streets and mansions that intermingle with simple fishermen's houses. The Whalers' neighborhood, the Buen Suceso chapel, the Clock Tower and the Church of Santa María de Sábada are all worth a visit.



Our final stop is at Ribadesella. The town has two clearly distinct parts: the east side with the old part of the city, and the west side, home of the Tito Bustillo cave, one of the treasures of European cave art. Highlights of the historic quarter include the Romanesque churches of Santa María de Junco and San Esteban de Leces, the 15<sup>th</sup> century Gothic chapel of Santa Ana and the 16<sup>th</sup> century chapel of Nuestra Señora de Guía. The Town Hall is an outstanding example of civil architecture, as are the numerous mansions dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



## Day 8 Saturday 7th September

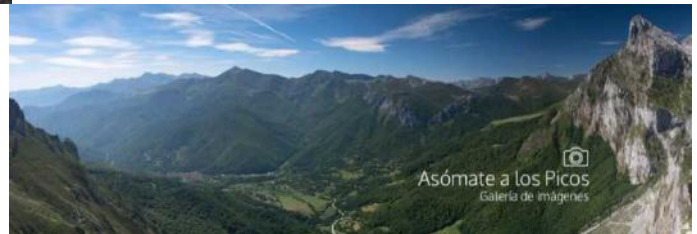
Today will be our last day in the Picos de Europa. Our first stop will be at Fuente Dé where there is a Parador.



The purpose of our visit to Fuente Dé is to have the opportunity to take a ride on the cable car. In wonderful natural surroundings, the cable car rises from 1094 to 1847m, an ascent of 750m along an impressive cliff. At the top, you will be able to enjoy the stunning views, have a coffee or just enjoy the pure mountain air.



The spectacular viewpoint has a suspended iron platform. It gives you the sensation of flying over the valley, a sensation that is not pleasant for everyone.



We continue to Potes for independent sightseeing and lunch. Potes, the capital of the historic region of Liébana, is one of the most attractive villages in Cantabria. Its streets have many bridges, as well as buildings and monuments with centuries of history. The Torre del Infantado dates from the 15th century. Other buildings and sites of interest include various mansions such as the house-tower of Orejón de la Lama (Baroque), the San Vicente Parish Church and the ancient bridges of San Cayetano and La Cárcel spanning the Quiviesa riverbed.



## Day 9 Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September

Our first stop will be at San Vicente de la Barquera, one of the most picturesque sights on the Cantabrian coast, with its beaches, the old village and the exceptional backdrop of the snow-capped mountains of the Picos de Europa. It has an interesting collection of monuments, including the church of Santa María de los Ángeles, the castle and the remains of a wall.



We continue to the town of Comillas for a guided tour. The town has cobbled streets and squares with ancestral houses, towers and Modernist style buildings designed by Gaudí and Domènech i Montaner. Of particular note are El Capricho, designed by Gaudí, the Sobrellano Palace and the Pontifical University. After the tour, there will be time for lunch and independent sightseeing.



For our final visit, we head inland to the beautifully preserved medieval village of Barcena Mayor. You will have time to wander the streets with their stone houses and wooden balconies full of colourful flowers. You will also find the small shops of artisans who work wicker and wood to make all kinds of objects. There are several restaurants located by the river.

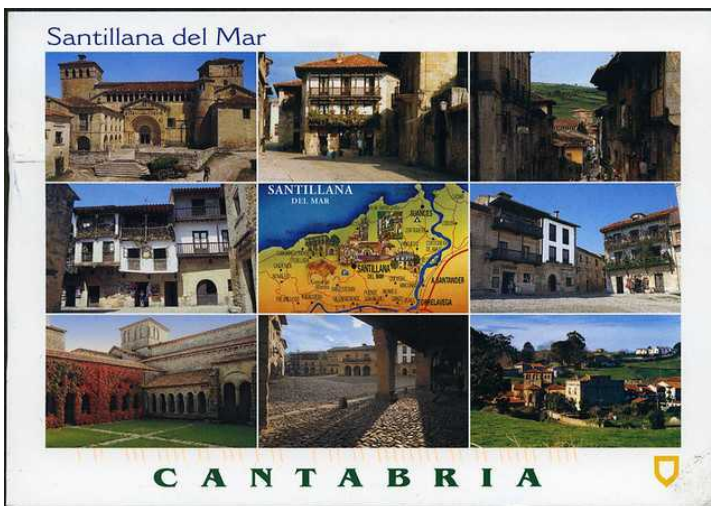


If we have time on our way back to Panes, we will stop briefly in the village of Carmona, the main centre for the production of handmade wooden clogs.



## **Day 10 Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

On our departure from Panes our first stop will be at the Altamira Museum. The cave, whose occupants 16500 years ago left their mark through the wonderful and famous paintings of bison, a great masterpiece of rock art. The cave is no longer open to tourists so our visit will focus on a visit to the museum, which includes access to the neo-cave , a very thorough and almost perfect replica of the original cave.



We will then have a 2 km transfer to Santillana del Mar, a beautiful medieval town which was developed around the 12<sup>th</sup> century collegiate church of Santa María. The picturesque cobbled streets are lined with stately buildings most of which were built between the XIV and XVII centuries. There are the Merino and Don Borja towers from medieval times, Renaissance palaces such as the Valverde Palace and baroque mansions like the Valdivieso. There will be time for independent sightseeing and lunch.

On our way to Zaragoza, our coffee stop will be in the medieval village of Briones. The square is of great beauty and overlooks unique historical buildings.



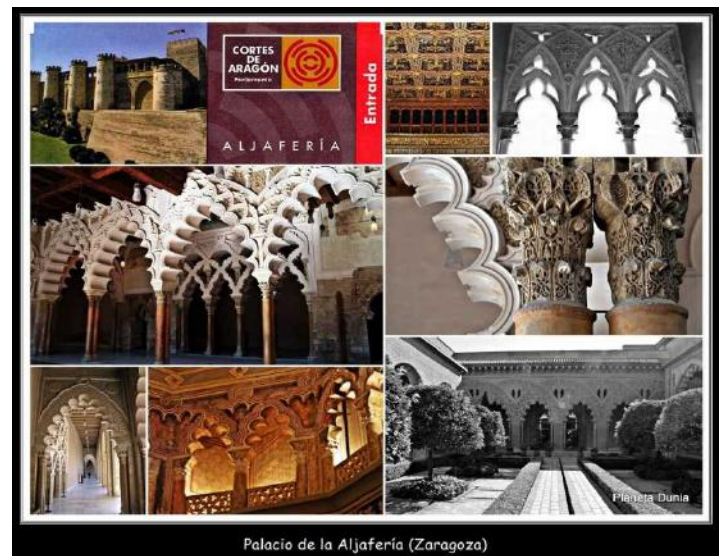




We continue to Zaragoza for a two-night stay at 3\* Hotel Tipo Hotel Oriente.

### Day 11 Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September

This morning, we will enjoy a guided tour of Zaragoza. Our first stop will be at the Palacio de la Aljaferia, an 11th-century Arab castle palace. It is a palace of quadrangular plan with rounded towers except for one of them, known as the Troubadour's Tower, which has a rectangular plan. The rooms are arranged around the courtyard, which is open to the sky. Its roofs, coffered ceilings and plasterwork decoration are some of its greatest charms.



Palacio de la Aljaferia (Zaragoza)





We then transfer to the historic centre where our tour continues.

Zaragoza has an impressive monumental legacy in its streets, as Romans, Muslims, Jews and Christians left their mark. There are ruins of Roman civilisation such as the Theatre. The Mudejar-style churches, have been declared a World Heritage Site. There are Baroque jewels such as the Basilica del Pilar. The city also contains many examples of the work of the genius Francisco de Goya.

After the end of our guided tour, the rest of the day is free for independent sightseeing.

### **Day 12 Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September**

On the last day of our trip, we will be travelling back home. Our stop for independent sightseeing and lunch will be at the beautiful village of Albarracin, former capital of the Moorish kingdom of Taifa. The village has an imposing fortified enclosure. The Fortress and the Andador Tower are from the 10th century. In the 11th century, the kings of Albarracin constructed the walls around the poor area of Engarrada. Finally, after the Reconquest, the Christian lords and kings of Aragon erected new sections of walls and most of the forts and towers that remain.







The main Square, where the Ayuntamiento is located, is a good place to start your visit round this picturesque village, sheltering a bunch of interesting monuments and museums, like the cathedral, 'Santiago' and 'Santa María' churches and the Pérez-Toyuela family Museum-Manor House.

Prices for this trip are as follows and are for B&B only.

Number of people	40	43	45	48	50-54
Single	1415.00	1389.00	1375.00	1354.00	1338.00
Double	1034.00	1008.00	995.00	973.00	961

Due to interest already shown I believe we will hit 50 people easily.

Half board is available on request for an additional €185 per person. If you wish to take this up it will not be possible to change your mind after payment has been made.

Guided tours in English in Salamanca. Oviedo, Comillas and Zaragoza are included. Also included are tickets for the entrance to the university and museum of Salamanca, the Boat trip in Riano, the Cable car ride in Fuente Dé, and the Altamira Museum.

## Deposit is €80 per person.

To book a place on this trip contact Coral Guise-Smith [travel-events@u3amoraira-teulada.org](mailto:travel-events@u3amoraira-teulada.org)

Please pay your deposit by return to U3A Moraira La Caixa Bank Moraira **ES02 2100 7686 6602 0016 4581 BIC if necessary: CAIXESBBXXX**. Reference is your surname, membership number and Asturias. Please make sure you enter these details so they can be checked by the travel treasurer.

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