

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

*in Spain*



[www.spain.info](http://www.spain.info)



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# INTRODUCTION

Spain is a haven for lovers of nature and has so much to offer if you are interested in sustainable tourism, a concept based on the responsible use of natural and cultural resources and which helps improve the social and economic conditions of the local inhabitants.

Over a quarter of Spain's territory is dedicated to the preservation of nature. Come and see for yourself! Feel the beauty and the magic of woods, rivers and mountains that you've never even dreamt of. Spain has been recognised by the UNESCO as the country with the most **biosphere reserves** in the world and the second highest number of **geoparks**.

**Destinations on the coast** are a unique opportunity to relax and enjoy the sea and its natural surroundings all year round. Come and spend a few unforgettable days on one of the best coastlines in Europe: as a result of the cleanliness of their waters and excellent environmental education programmes, over 500 Spanish beaches have been authorised to fly the Blue Flag.

Come and enjoy our **cultural attractions** in **spectacular natural surroundings**.

As a result of its efforts in the preservation of this legacy, UNESCO has declared nearly 50 World Heritage Sites in Spain, 6 of them in natural areas.

▼ PLAYA DE LA FRANCESA  
ISLA DE LA GRACIOSA, CANARY ISLANDS





▲ ATLANTIC ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK  
GALICIA

Spain is top of the list in Europe, with **28 Protected Natural Areas which comply with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST)**, where protection of the natural environment is essential. In addition to the implementation of different **environmental management systems** in accordance with UNE-EN ISO 14001, Ecolabel and EMAS requirements, many public companies and administrations are promoting tourism which respects the environment.

Throughout Spanish territory you'll find a large number of experiences and destinations acknowledged by pioneering initiatives like the **Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI)** and the **Ecotourism Club in Spain** (<https://soyecoturista.com/>),

a non-profit organisation that offers a responsible journey through the best of nature in Spain, enjoying experiences organised by companies committed to its protection.

**Get about responsibly** and reduce your carbon footprint. Spain has a National Railway Network (RENFE) which uses electrical energy generated to a great extent from renewable sources. Walk, take a bicycle or rent an electric vehicle. All these means of transport contribute to preserving the environment.

Explore Spain, a country full of history, culture and surprising natural surroundings. Come and breathe clean air and experience sustainability to the limit.

📍 <https://soyecoturista.com>

# SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS IN SPAIN

Some of the most fascinating places in Spain have adopted good practices which comply with the requirements for environmental, social and economic preservation. These are destinations which make responsible use of natural and cultural resources, while supporting local craftsmen and products.



## EL HIERRO (CANARY ISLANDS)

The smallest of the Canary Islands is a haven of sustainability thanks to the revolutionary implementation of renewable energies, innovative recycling programmes and the promotion of electric vehicles.

The extraordinary contrast between the volcanic landscapes, lush forests and wonderful seabeds led to the island of

El Hierro being declared a **Biosphere Reserve** in 2000. Since then, visitors have been invited to discover the natural delights whilst respecting and preserving the environment.

The flagship for their efforts to become a global benchmark is the **Gorona del Viento wind/hydro-electric power station**, which is a combination of

energy generated by wind turbines and that produced by a waterfall between two artificial reservoirs. This innovative plant has already been able to satisfy the island's total demand for electricity during prolonged periods of time. Come and visit it, you'll be really surprised.

Their **zero waste policy**, harvesting and producing **"bio" products** and a **transport plan** based on replacing fossil-fuel vehicles with electric vehicles have made it a true pioneer.

El Hierro is an true laboratory for clean energy and ecological awareness campaigns. This commitment to self-sufficiency and searching for innovative solutions is a part of the history of the island's inhabitants, who since time immemorial have worshipped the Garoé tree, which collects water from the mists which frequently settle over the island. At the **San Andrés Visitor Centre** you can learn all about the phenomenon of horizontal rain and all the mysteries surrounding this amazing place.

Do you like diving? You'll feel just like Jacques Cousteau in the **Punta de La Restinga Marine Reserve**, at the southeast end of the island. There you can discover a unique undersea landscape which is full of life resulting from its singular volcanic features and the social and ecological awareness of El Hierro's inhabitants and fishermen.

PLAZA DE LA VIRGEN BLANCA  
VITORIA-GASTEIZ

## VITORIA-GASTEIZ (ALAVA)

The clean air and the abundance of green spaces in the capital of the Basque Country/Euskadi provide a good example for other cities. And it also boasts other attractions, such as a rich medieval past and **zero-mile food and wine culture**. Don't miss its magnificent historical old town, which has preserved its medieval layout, and is home to one of best examples of restoration of Spain's historical heritage - the **Cathedral of Santa Maria**, where you can see the restoration work in progress. In 2012 it was declared the **Green Capital of Europe**, the result of over 30 years promoting sustainable development initiatives.

Take a stroll around the **Anillo Verde**, or Green Ring, which surrounds the city with a series of large parks, featuring over 79 km of paths and tracks, in addition to rivers and streams, meadows and islands of forest.

One of the jewels in the Green Ring is the **Salburua Wetlands**, a breeding ground for numerous species of birds. Learn about the area's biodiversity in **Ataria**, a highly original visitor centre located in a unique wooden and glass

SALBURUA WETLANDS  
VITORIA-GASTEIZ

building which blends into the environment.

Vitoria is the first urban destination to feature in the Ecotourism Club in Spain, with the Salburua Wetlands and various companies recognised under the Red Natura 2000 Sustainable Nature Tourism Recognition System.

In 2016, Vitoria was awarded the **Biosphere Responsible Tourism** certificate, which recognises it as a sustainable tourist destination.



▲ CROSCAT VOLCANO  
GIRONA

## LA GARROTXA (GIRONA)

La Garrotxa has the honour of being the first nature reserve in Spain to implement the **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST)** and is the model for its application both in our country and in the rest of Europe.

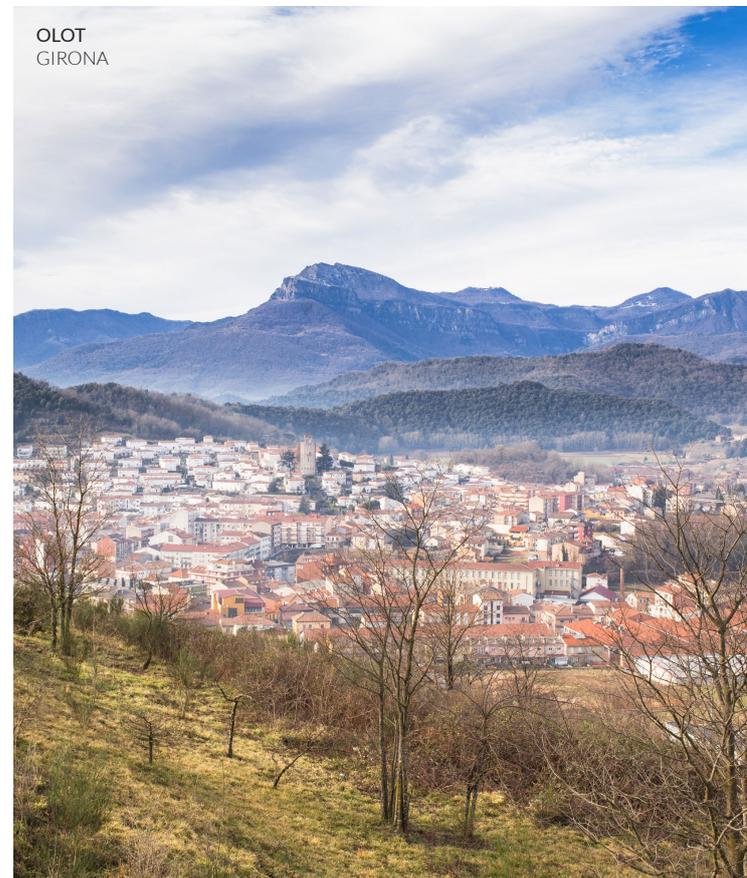
In the interior of the province of Girona (Catalonia) you'll find this unique place: a nature reserve full of volcanoes, craters and basalt lava flows covered by dense vegetation. In the north, in the area called Alta Garrotxa, the landscape is steeper and more rugged.

Delightful medieval towns like **Olot** are the access points to this surprising countryside which abounds with won-

derful hiking routes. Climbing up to the peaks of the **Santa Margarida** and **Montsacopa** volcanoes, peering into the crater of the **Croscat** volcano, and walking through oak and beech forests are unforgettable experiences for any nature lover. There is a voluntary commitment by the individuals and companies responsible for protected natural areas to adopt the principles of sustainable tourism. Those places are so designated not only because of their extraordinary environmental value, but also because they provide excellent, sustainable services and facilities.

La Garrotxa is also one of the first destinations to join the Ecotourism Club in Spain,

① [HTTPS://ES.TURISMEGARROTXA.COM](https://es.turismegarrotxa.com)



OLOT  
GIRONA

SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS IN SPAIN



## LA PALMA (CANARY ISLANDS)

Atmospheric conditions on the island of La Palma make it one of the best places in the world for watching the stars.

The absence of light pollution and the inherent climatic and atmospheric conditions led to its declaration as the world's first **Starlight Reserve**.

This distinction means you can spend whole nights observing the celestial vault like never before.

Climb up to the **El Roque de los Muchachos** Observatory to enjoy an incredible experience. As the sun goes down, a blanket of clouds surrounds the island below the mountain peaks which gives you an amazing feeling of walking in the sky.





The environmental characteristics on La Palma are unique. That is why it was recognised by the UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve.

More than a third of the island is made up of protected natural areas. Much of the landscape is dominated by shades of black and red, presided over by an enormous 8 kilometre glacial depression, the **Caldera de Taburiente National Park**. The ancient pine forests make for surprising trails on foot or on horseback. Look out to a horizon which looks like a different planet: a huge sea of solidified lava that reaches right to the seashore.

This Canary Island treasure is part of **Spain's Ecotourism Club**, a pioneering initiative providing travellers with experiences that care about the environment and local development.

① [www.starsislandlapalma.es](http://www.starsislandlapalma.es)  
[www.soyecoturista.com](http://www.soyecoturista.com)  
<https://lapalmabiosfera.es/turismo>

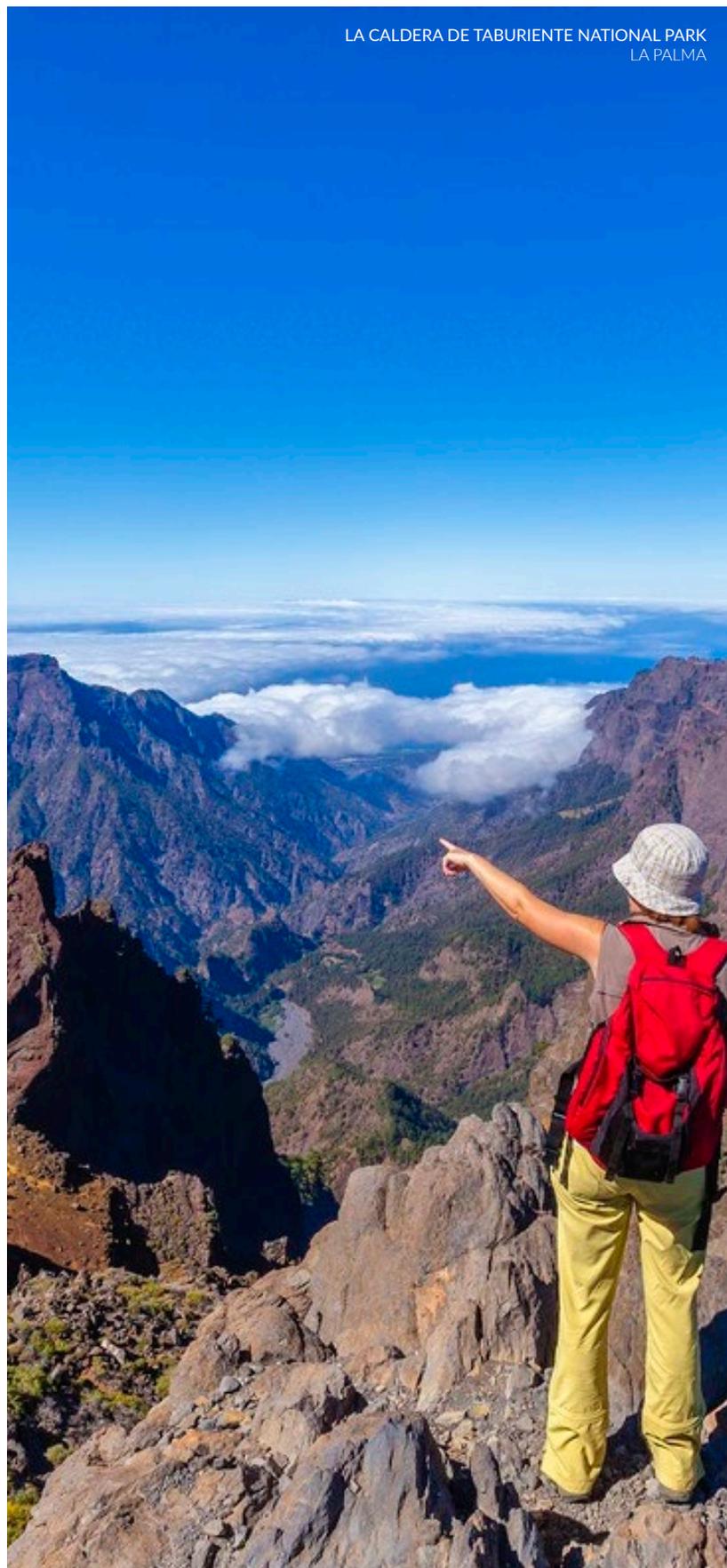




Photo: Francisco Javier Gil Oreja/123rf.com

In the heart of the Basque Country, bathed by the Cantabrian Sea, you'll find this magnificent natural environment - the only Biosphere Reserve in Euskadi.

## URDAIBAI BIOSPHERE RESERVE (VIZCAYA)

▲ URDAIBAU MUDFLATS

The Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve is part of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club. It is a **wetland with numerous ecosystems** which is home to species of animals and vegetation which are very important for the area's ecological balance, like the osprey, the spoonbill and the bittern.

Make a tour of the reserve and get a closer look at the region's four basic ecosystems, surrounded by fishing villages and the green Basque countryside: Cantabrian oak forest, Atlantic prairies and woods, marshland and open sea. The route has information panels along the way, through really beautiful coun-

tryside, with amazing features like the **Urdaibai Bird Centre** (in the district of Gautegiz-Arteaga), where you'll find all the information you could possibly need on the numerous bird species you'll be able to see.

Another interesting place to visit is the **Euskadi Biodiversity Centre**, located in the **Madariaga Tower**. Apart from learning all about the indigenous flora and fauna, you can also climb up to the lookout point and get a fantastic view of the **Isla de Izaro**, the **Playa de Laida** and the marshland.

📍 [www.turismourdaibai.com](http://www.turismourdaibai.com)

## FORMENTERA (BALEARIC ISLANDS)

There is a secret treasure hidden under the turquoise-blue waters around the Balearic Islands: the **fields of posidonia oceanica seagrass**, declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. This indigenous Mediterranean plant (said to be the oldest living being on earth, around 100,000 years old) covers 7,650 hectares around the Island of Formentera.

Posidonia is responsible for the transparency and colour of the water, and it is a key factor in oxygenating and maintaining the quality of the marine ecosystem. In this habitat, in the Ibiza and Formentera **Ses Salines Nature Reserve**, 400 species of plants and 1,000 species of marine animals feed and reproduce.

If you come in October you can join in the **Save Posidonia Project** festival, a meeting point for new projects to defend and promote sustainability and respect for the environment which includes sports competitions, musical performances, yoga, photography, film, workshops...

As dropping anchor here is severely restricted, the best way of enjoying this incredible underwater forest is snorkelling from one of the island's idyllic beaches, like **Ses Illetes** and **Llevant**. A truly unforgettable experience.



## DELTA DE L'EBRE NATURE RESERVE (TARRAGONA)

The **largest wetland in Catalonia** harbours a wealth of natural features, as well as incredible landscapes and idyllic beaches. Take a walk through the park's rice fields at sunset, explore the maritime fluvial island of Buda by bicycle or take a kayak to discover the delights of such a special place as this.



▲ DELTA DEL EBRO NATURE RESERVE  
TARRAGONA

The environmental wealth of the Ebro Delta has led to its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and in 2009 it was awarded the **European Destination of Excellence prize (EDEN)**. It is also a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club and the ECST, which is a guarantee that its 320 square kilometres remain an ideal habitat for more than 300 species of birds, including the exotic flamingo and Audouin's gull.

You should visit the **Balsa de la Encanyissada**, the largest lagoon in the

Delta, and enjoy the magnificent natural surroundings. The whole region is really flat, so a bicycle is ideal.

You can learn about their unique culture and traditions, like how they plant, weed and reap the rice in **Deltebre**, where they have revived the traditional way of cultivating one of the prominent ingredients in the exquisite Mediterranean cuisine. Here you can also visit the **Ecomuseum** and learn about the Ebro Delta ecosystem.

📍 <https://deltadelebrecoturisme.com>

## SIERRA ESPUÑA (MURCIA)

This sanctuary for active tourism is the largest forest mass in the Region of Murcia. This regional park complies with the ECST and is firmly committed to sustainability, adopting all kinds of initiatives to protect the lushest environment in southeast Spain. It is also a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club.

Ravines, streams and springs will accompany you through this area with special protection area for birds and areas of geological interest. The undoubted highlight is the protected landscape of **Barranco de Gebas**, a semi-desert area with a lunar feel surrounding the **Algeciras reservoir**, which is a nesting

site for species such as grey herons, little grebes, mallards and storks.

One of the region's most unusual features are the **snow wells**, 16th century structures where snow was kept to then be used in the summer, an ancient tradition which already took the sustainable use of natural resources into account.

If you want to discover the local culture, you can visit the historic villages surrounding the Sierra Espuña and get to know their history and customs, which are adapted to the rhythm of the mountains. **Pottery** plays an important role and you can also explore its rich troubadour tradition.

📍 <https://territoriosierraespuna.com>

▼ PROTECTED LANDSCAPE OF BARRANCOS DE GEBAS  
MURCIA





## LANZAROTE (CANARY ISLANDS)

The island of volcanoes is a unique moonscape. It's covered with craters, ravines and valleys of solidified lava. Over time a spectacular natural environment has been created which has been declared a Biosphere Reserve. The natural treasures and tranquillity will make you feel like you're on another planet.

Lanzarote was the first destination in the world to be declared a **Biosphere Responsible Tourism Destination**. The unique geological heritage of this island led to its recognition by the UNESCO as the **Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands**

**Geopark** and it is a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club.

The volcanic origin of the archipelago becomes evident when you visit the **Timanfaya National Park**. From the natural lookout point of **Montaña Rajada** the surrounding landscape is a blur of fire, ash and rock. The pure beauty of this red and jet black soil has remained unspoiled by human activity.

In the Nature Reserve of the **Pool of Los Clicos** there is an extraordinary green lake over a volcanic crater.



▲ TIMANFAYA NATIONAL PARK  
LANZAROTE



▲ CHARCO DE LOS CLICOS  
LANZAROTE

Discover the relationship between the inhabitants and their unique natural environment and explore the footprint left by the architect **César Manrique** on the island and the significance of his ecological message. Most of his works are to be found in Lanzarote, including the renowned **César Manrique Foundation**. Discover the perfect harmony between art and the landscape, where respect for the environment is what is most important.

📍 <https://ecoturismo.lanzarotebiosfera.org>



## PROVINCE OF LEÓN

With seven biosphere reserves, one of the highest concentrations in the world, the province of León leads by example in the preservation and protection of biodiversity.

A good starting point for exploring the region is the little town of **Caín**, in the **Valdeón Valley**. This is the start of the iconic Cares Route, a fascinating trail through what is known as the "divine gorge" to **Poncebos** (Asturias). It is in the heart of the **Picos de Europa National Park**, one of the most beautiful natural surroundings in mainland Spain.

The mountainous profile of the region defines an environment which is ideal for hiking through beech and oak forests, kayaking down rivers and gazing at the Milky Way from up in the mountains. You're likely to come across chamois goats, golden eagles and otters who inhabit natural havens like the **Alto Bernesga**, the **Omaña and Luna Valleys**, **Babia**, **Laciana**, **los Ancares in León** and **Los Argüellos**.

There are really extraordinary geological formations like the **Valporquero Caves**, with magical stalactites and stalagmites, and trails ideal for walking or cycling like the **Laciana Green Route**, along what used to be the railway between the towns of Caboalles de Arriba and Villablino.

The unspoiled countryside, the abundant flora and fauna and local commitment to environmental preservation make this region an ideal destination for ecotourism.



An invitation to enjoy an environment exemplifying the coexistence of traditional activities with respect for nature.

▲ SOMIEDO NATURE RESERVE  
ASTURIAS

## SOMIEDO AND FUENTES DEL NARCEA (ASTURIAS)

The Somiedo Natural Park features high peaks, lakes, forests, mountain pastures and meadows and is an ideal habitat for species in danger of extinction like the brown bear, the wolf and the Cantabrian grouse.

This beautiful part of Asturias is a Biosphere Reserve. It is a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club, and is certified under the Red Natura 2000 Sustainable Nature Tourism Recognition System. See how the countryside changes with the seasons and discover the actions being taken to conserve it.

This paradise for hikers has interesting features like the park's Visitor Centre, located in **Pola de Somiedo**, an educational and leisure area displaying the region's natural and ethnographic resources. The **Brown Bear Foundation** also has a Visitor Centre dedicated to this important refuge for the north of Spain's most significant plantigrade

mammal. Neighbouring Somiedo is the Fuentes del Narcea Nature Reserve, which is another ideal place for bear watching in Asturias. Both areas have authorised companies that are members of Spain's Ecotourism Club that offer guided tours to see bears in the wild, contributing to their conservation.

Another protected area is the **Muniellos Biosphere Reserve**, a member of the Ecotourism Club located in the in the Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Reserve. They show an exemplary commitment to the environment, as can be seen in places where human beings live in harmony with the flora and fauna, like the **Muniellos Forest** and the **Hermo beech forest**.

① <https://somedoturismo.es>  
<https://fuentesdelnarcea.com>  
<https://soyecoturista.com/somiedo>  
<https://soyecoturista.com/muniellos-fuentes-del-narcea/>

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN SPAIN

In Spain there are so many areas where nature and its preservation are a prominent feature that it is really difficult to choose. Here are just a few of them, with different ecosystems and places of interest.

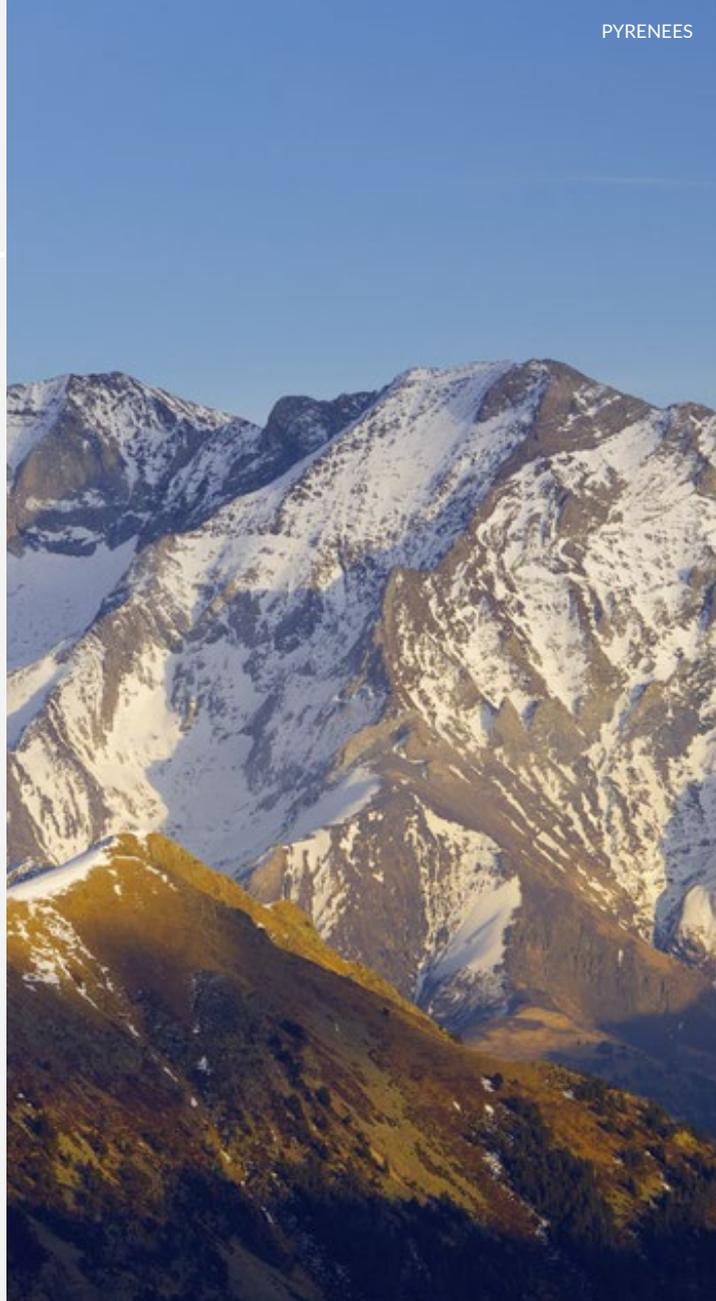
SIERRA NEVADA NATIONAL PARK  
GRANADA AND ALMERÍA



### SIERRA NEVADA NATIONAL PARK

Between Granada and Almería, the **Sierra Nevada National Park**, also a Biosphere Reserve, is an ideal environment for enjoying ecotourism. If your hobby is photographing nature, here you have high mountains and desert like the **Veleta** and the **Mulhacén**, (two of the highest peaks in Spain) and the **Alboloduy ravine**. This is one of the best places to spot Iberian mountain goats, which are indigenous to the peninsula.

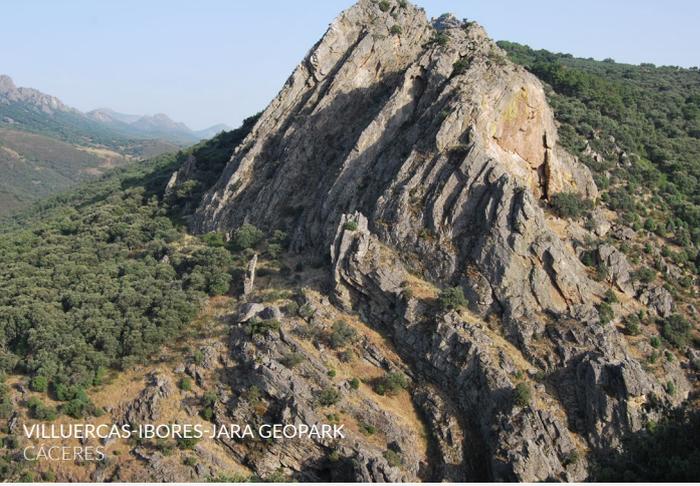
📍 [www.ecoturismosierranevada.com](http://www.ecoturismosierranevada.com)



### SOBRARBE GEOPARK

In the heart of the Aragón Pyrenees you'll find the **Sobrarbe Geopark**, the only one in this mountain chain in the northeast of Spain. It has a rich geological heritage. This can be seen in places like the **frozen grotto of Casteret**, a cave with really beautiful ice formations. Apart from peaks and a unique mountain landscape, the region enjoys an extraordinary ecological and cultural heritage.

📍 [www.geoparquepirineos.com](http://www.geoparquepirineos.com)



VILLUERCAS-IBORES-JARA GEOPARK  
CÁCERES

## VILLUERCAS-IBORES-JARA GEOPARK

The only geopark in Extremadura is in Cáceres, in a mountain range between the Guadiana and the Tagus with outstanding biodiversity and geodiversity. It features 54 geosites, including the La Villuerca cliffs, at 1,601 metres, offering a balcony over the geopark and a journey through the history of the Earth.

📍 [www.geoparquevilluercas.es](http://www.geoparquevilluercas.es)

## SIERRA DE LA CULEBRA

To find out all about the Iberian wolf and learn about the traditional way of life and customs which still exist alongside those of today, you should visit the **Sierra de la Culebra** (Zamora). Here you'll find the highest concentration of wolves in Spain and one of the highest in Europe, while there are also an important number of deer and wild boars. In the town of Robledo (Puebla de Sanabria, Zamora) you'll find the **Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente - Castile and León Iberian Wolf Centre**, where a number of these animals live in semi-freedom and can be seen from observation towers distributed around the area.

## GARAJONAY NATIONAL PARK

Small in size but with so many attractions. That is how you'll find **La Gomera**, a Biosphere Reserve in the Canary Islands. It's like a garden with valleys full of palm trees, enormous ravines, a coastline ideal for diving and forests of an intense green. Explore the island on foot and visit the **Garajonay National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This wonderfully preserved subtropical laurel forest is unique in the world and represents half the extension of this type of forest in the whole archipelago.



GARAJONAY NATIONAL PARK  
LA GOMERA

Other interesting features of this National Park are the great diversity of indigenous species (especially invertebrates) and spectacular geological monuments like Los Roques. From the lookout point you can see over the whole island.

📍 <https://gomeralexperience.com>

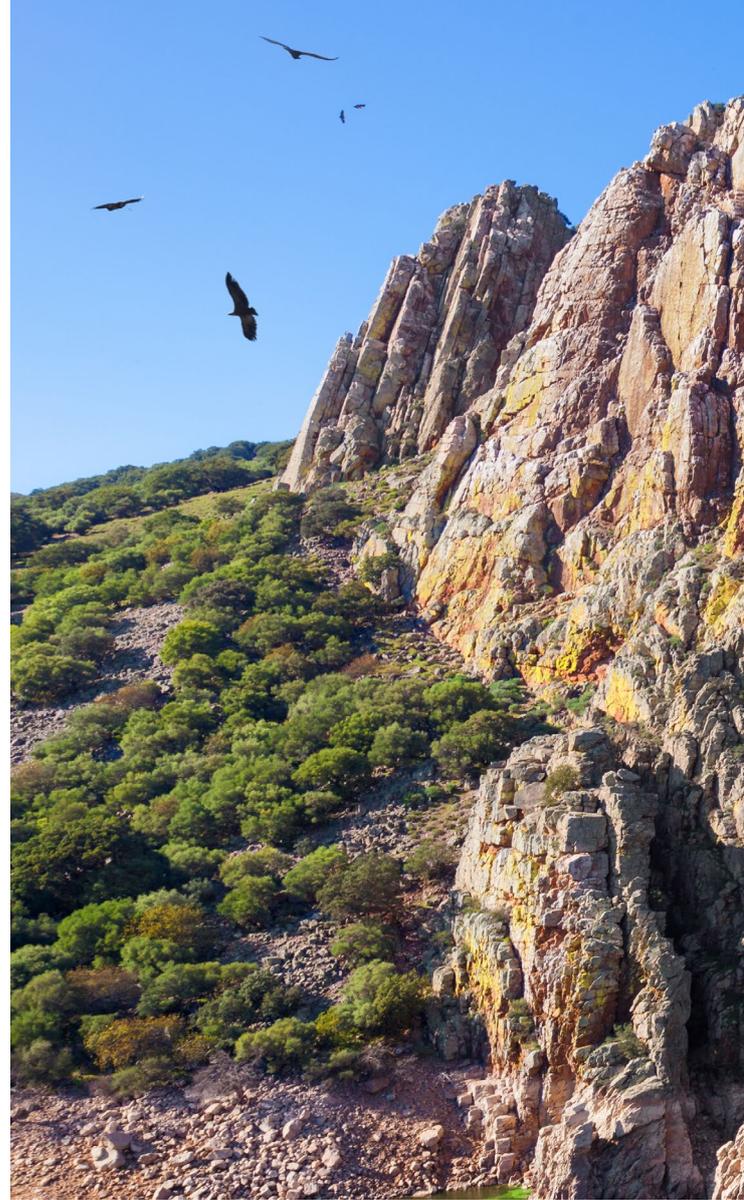


Photo: Ernesto Jiménez Lucas/123rf.com

▲ LYNX

## 100% SUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCES

Explore Spain's unspoiled nature, discover its incomparable biological diversity and learn about the preservation initiatives adopted to minimise the human footprint on the environment. Learn all about our most iconic and threatened wild animals, attend ecological festivals and sample the local cuisine and products.



## BIRD WATCHING

Take your binoculars and enjoy the incredible variety of landscapes and birds. Spain is located right in an important migratory corridor which countless birds choose each year and come here to breed and to rest. You'd be amazed how easy it is to observe birds of prey and forest and aquatic birds in almost any part of Spain, a haven for bird-watchers.

Some of the best areas are the **Trasmiera Ecopark**, in Arnuero (Cantabria), a true open-air museum. You can take a guided tour through the **Joyel marshlands**, on the migratory route for thousands of



▲ COLONY OF BLACK VULTURES IN MONFRAGÜE  
EXTREMADURA

birds like the spoonbill and the curlew. In the region there are still numerous "tidal mills", a renewable energy technology which was formerly used to take advantage of tidal power.

Located on Andalusia's Atlantic Coast, the **Doñana National Park**, which has been declared a World Heritage Site, is one of the natural areas with the greatest biodiversity in Europe. There are a wide variety of ecosystems to be explored on foot or on horseback: Mediterranean game reserves, the arid landscapes of the mobile dunes and the natural wealth of the marshlands. These

freshwater plains reach their maximum splendour in spring and in summer when seabirds come here to feed and breed.

The **Monfragüe National Park** is one of the natural gems of the province of Cáceres, a natural haven declared a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA). Go up to the **Roquedo de Peña Falcón**, one of the lookout points overlooking the Tagus River, and watch the largest bird of prey living in Europe, the black vulture, as it glides through the sky. At night, the blanket of stars over the light-pollution free Monfragüe sky will leave you speechless.



▲ CABAÑEROS NATIONAL PARK  
TOLEDO

## HIKING FOR YOU TO ENJOY AND LEARN

Put on your walking boots and set out on one of the trails through Spain's natural treasures. These routes are ideal for promoting awareness of the need to protect places and environments where we would otherwise end up losing their valuable biodiversity. There are countless possibilities, like the **Understand and Preserve** routes in Segovia, and the trails through the **Sierra de Guadarrama National Park**, which has been declared a Biosphere Reserve. Your guide will be a highly experienced biologist and environmental expert who will explain all about the region's flora and fauna.

## GEOBOTANICAL ROUTES

If you'd like to learn more about the relationship between vegetation and the natural environment, this experience will help you understand places like the **Tabladillo Valley** (Segovia), the **Cabañeros National Park** (Toledo and Ciudad Real) and the area surrounding **Cuenca**, a World Heritage site. On the way you'll discover karstic springs, Neolithic caves and medieval bridges on amazing routes taken by experts in geology.

## VISIT THE NATIONAL PARKS ON FOOT, BY BICYCLE OR ON HORSEBACK

Discover Spain's natural treasures on horseback. Gallop across meadows and valleys, visit medieval towns...

Choose one of the organised bridle trails in our national parks and enjoy the freedom of riding on horseback. There are a large number of riding schools near some of the most beautiful and out-of-the-way corners of Spain.

These regions can also be visited on hiking, bicycle and mountain bike routes, a great way of feeling in direct contact with nature.



## NATURE AND TOURISM IN THE BALEARIC ISLANDS

Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, Formentera and the Cabrera archipelago have a broad network of natural areas and almost a quarter of the territory is part of the **European Natura 2000 Network**.



Highlights in the Balearic Islands include the Menorca Biosphere Reserve, which is a member of Spain's Ecotourism Club. Its Menorca Biosphere brand includes 52 tourism companies and 20 food producers and other artisans, guaranteeing sustainability, commitment and quality.

📍 <https://marcamenorcabiosfera.org/es>



▲ MAHÓN CHEESE  
MENORCA

Culture and the preservation of traditional handicrafts are also an important part of ecotourism. Explore the Mediterranean countryside as you visit wine-cellar and oil mills, where wines and oils of the highest quality are produced, as well as ancient farm estates where they still manufacture delicious local honey, cold-meat products and honey.

You'll find unique Balearic Island species like the Balearic lizard and the *ferreret* or indigenous toad which lives in the torrents in the spectacular **Sierra de Tramuntana** in Mallorca, which has been declared a World Heritage site.

The eight marine reserves permit the effective management of fishing resources. There you can snorkel for fun and explore the incredible seabeds, although you will first have to request authorisation on the following website:

📍 [www.caib.es/seucaib/es/tramites/tramite/1139905](http://www.caib.es/seucaib/es/tramites/tramite/1139905)

## EXPERIENCE SUSTAINABLE GASTRONOMY

Seasonal green vegetables and fruit, dried and dehydrated fruit, seeds, leguminous vegetables... Local products play a leading role in the numerous eco-markets which have appeared all over Spain. Spain also features events like BioCultura, a fair focusing on organic products and responsible consumption. There is also a wide selection of festivals relating to sustainable gastronomy, one of the most important being "Cómo como" (How I eat), which is held in Barcelona and includes interesting features like *show-cooking*, concerts, workshops and conferences.

Try **agrotourism**, a holiday which includes agricultural and livestock activities. You can take part in the daily farm work, help harvest the grapes in a vineyard or learn how to make olive oil. Activities like this are available in many types of accommodation, from hotels to hostels, houses, villas and farm-schools for children all over Spain. A good example are the agrotourism estates in the Balearic Islands.

① *Search for a suitable destination and activity on:*  
[www.biospheretourism.com](http://www.biospheretourism.com)



# HOW TO BE A SUSTAINABLE TRAVELLER

Here are ten tips for you to help make your holiday destination a better place.

- ▶ Plan your trip. Choose suppliers who provide good quality, and respect human rights and the environment.
- ▶ Make careful use of natural resources like water and energy. Always re-use the towels and only use the air-conditioning where absolutely necessary.
- ▶ Try to generate as little waste as possible, especially plastics. Use reusable canteens and bottles. Make a habit of using bags made of cloth.
- ▶ You can always recycle even when you're on holiday. Always dispose of waste in a suitable place.
- ▶ Make sure the only footprint you leave in a natural area comes from your footwear.
- ▶ When visiting sensitive ecosystems, like protected natural areas, find out how this can be done causing the lowest possible impact.
- ▶ When buying presents and souvenirs, look for something that expresses the local culture. You'll be helping the economy of the places you visit and promoting cultural diversity.



- ▶ Do not acquire protected flora and fauna or products derived from these species. It's a crime and you'll be contributing to their extinction.
- ▶ On your visit, take pleasure in discovering the culture, customs, cuisine and traditions of the local people. Respect them and get to know them, they have so much to tell you.
- ▶ Try to go on foot or by bike whenever possible.

## SLEEP IN SUSTAINABLE ACCOMMODATION

There is a broad selection of hotels and accommodation in Spain whose concern for their impact on the environment is certified. These establishments usually have a sign at the entrance accrediting their environmental commitment. Ceres Ecotur, Q for quality, Ecolabel, Ecotourism Club and Green Globe are the most frequent and prestigious labels.

*Glamour* and comfort are not necessarily incompatible with respect for the environment. **Glamping in Spain** is a new reality which offers numerous different solutions and can be found all over Spain. This unique accommodation is usually located in extraordinary natural surroundings, and includes luxury facilities to make your stay ideal. You could sleep in a beautiful, tree-top cabin or a candle-lit Berber tent. These are just two of the numerous options you could try.

Each Spanish region has its traditional accommodation. Enjoy being surrounded by the sea and the mountains in a mansion in Asturias or a country house in Galicia. Relax surrounded by olive groves or the aroma of orange blossom in an Andalusian country estate, in a farm-workers dwelling. Stay in a traditional dwelling in a farmhouse in Euskadi or Navarre, or a country house in Catalonia or Valencia. There they will be delighted to explain all about their local customs and you'll be invited to sample their craft products.

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Increased social awareness has brought about new options in urban transport in Spain. Apart from **public transport** (bus, metro, tram and suburban railway) there are now alternative ways to get about cleanly and comfortably.

Not only in the large provincial capitals, there are now many towns and cities which have created **bike lanes and public bicycle hire** suitable for touring their historical town centres and main tourist resorts. Some examples of bicycle-friendly cities are Pontevedra, Vitoria, San Sebastián, Valencia, Murcia, Seville, Córdoba and Bilbao.

In places like Madrid, Barcelona, Ibiza, Málaga and Granada there are also **electric cars and bikes** for hire by the hour, an ecological alternative which is becoming popular all over the country. These alternatives usually work via mobile apps which require prior registration.

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## EXPLORE SPAIN BY TRAIN

For long-distance travel the train is the fastest and least contaminating option. 90% of Spanish trains are powered by electricity produced from renewable sources with the resulting reduction in the carbon footprint.

The Spanish National Railway Network (RENFE) links all the country's main cities and regions. The unquestionable stars of the system are the **AVE high-speed trains** which serve 32 tourist destinations, with Madrid as their main hub.

As an ecotourist we recommend the **Renfe Spain Pass**, valid on all the long and medium-distance AVE routes. The AVE network also has a **Renfe-SNCF** service that links Madrid and Barcelona with the main cities in France and connects with the rest of the European railway network. You can purchase tickets and check timetables and routes on [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es)

📍 [www.spain.info](http://www.spain.info)



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