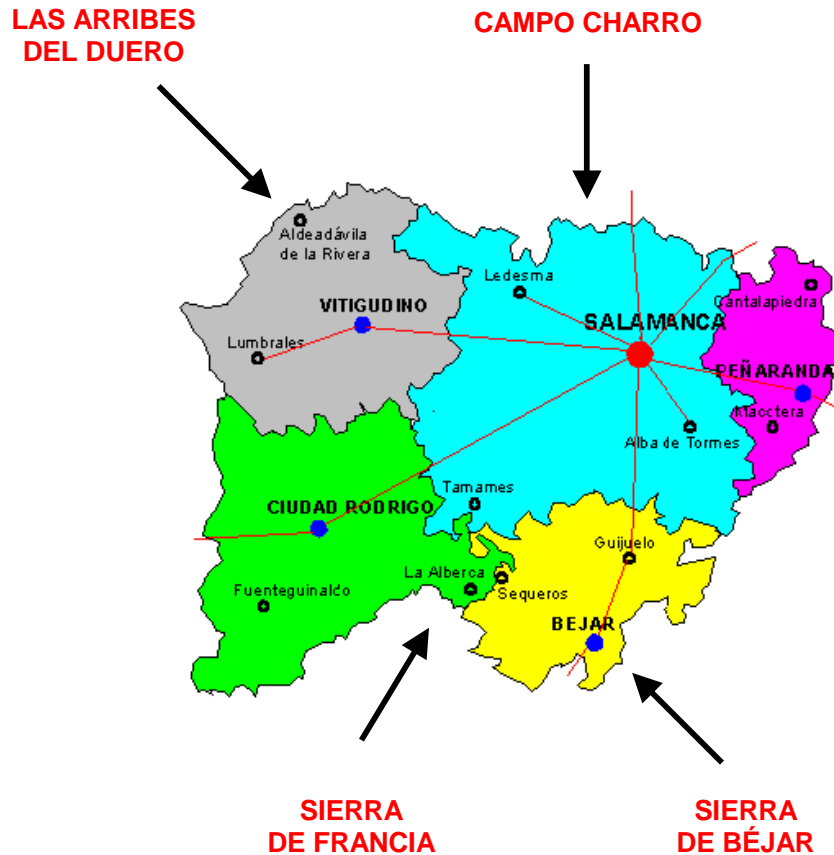




The provincial mosaic reflected in its geographical areas





THE PROVINCE OF SALAMANCA

Salamanca is part of the Spanish region known as “Castilla y León” (Castile and Leon). Located in the western part of Spain, right beside the border with Portugal, Salamanca is in the inner part of the country.

The city of **Salamanca** is located in the north east corner of the province with the same name, 200 kilometres west of Madrid and well connected by motorway. Thanks to the recently renewed **airport** of Valladolid, which offers flights with Ryanair and Air France, now Salamanca is an accessible destination, only at a one-hour drive from Valladolid. The city itself has an airport but only domestic flights are operated.

When references to **Salamanca** reach our ears, our minds are full of images of the Plaza Mayor and the University, the Roman bridge and cathedrals, the students and palaces, the House of Shells, the European Capital of Culture and UNESCO's Heritage of Humanity thanks to its historical heritage and to the charm of the city itself, since Salamanca can be considered one of the most beautiful Spanish cities. It is also in Salamanca, where the purest Spanish (or “Castellano”) is spoken, which makes the city a popular destination for students wanting to learn Spanish. But Salamanca, happily, is much more. In this rich territory there are **secret valleys** (a refuge for numerous wildlife species), **gentle towns** with excellent examples of the purest traditional architecture, **peaceful forests** that invite you to walk through them, **historical ashlars** of military, civil and religious buildings preserved in time, **cheerful** and **bustling festivities**, and celebrations full of life and amusement. These are all aspects that we invite you to discover during your visit.

Therefore, we present you the nature's mosaic of the province reflected in its geographical areas, where we suggest a new way to get to know these wonderful places, more intimate, nearer to the roots. In every corner you will find sites worth visiting. If you have some time to spare, here are some suggestions of the best places to visit.

SIERRA DE BÉJAR



70 kilometres south of Salamanca, you will find the beautiful town of **Béjar**, with 14.000 inhabitants. Surrounded by mountains, the landscape is, in fact, one of the main appeals of the town. This area known as “Sierra de Béjar” is a meeting point for nature lovers and mountaineers.



Béjar offers plenty of tourist services and monuments worth a visit, since it has been an important city also in the past. In a visit to Béjar, you cannot miss its “Palacio Ducal” (the palace of the dukes of the city), the remains of the stone walls built by the Arabs which once surrounded the city, and of course, **the oldest bullfighting ring in Spain** dating from 1711.

This mountain range is a natural paradise located close to the border between the provinces of Ávila and Salamanca. The highest peaks reach to a height of 221m above sea level and the Trampal and Duque lakes below supply water and electricity to the region. The views from all around here are fantastic and it is worth coming for the fresh air, the hiking, the hunting and the fishing. The national climbing club runs a hostel in the mountains that is open all year round.

Sierra de Béjar is also the highest mountain range in the whole province. Its summits, frequently snowy, evoke a well-known image for the people of Salamanca because it stands out on the southern horizons of this territory. The characteristics of the settlements of this area show a clear environmental adaptation with architectural elements of unquestionable picturesqueness and worth. All these singularities have allowed great part of this territory to be included inside the **Nature Area of Candelario**, which contributes even more to the attractiveness of the visit.

Skiing and Mountaineering

Any visit to this area should consider the possibility of climbing to the top of its summits. Here, in altitudes higher than 2,000 meters, varied leisure activities can be carried out in contact with one of the most privileged nature areas in Salamanca.

SIERRA DE FRANCIA



To do this, you will have to go to the **Covatilla ski resort** where you can practice the sport, or take the road that will take you to **La Plataforma** from Candelario. Any one of the accesses will allow you to travel the numerous roads and paths that go along these summits.

Historical towns and Roman Road.

The **historical towns** of the district offer you another possibility to carry out an interesting route that will take you to the steep streets of **Candelario**, where you will hear the rippling of its lively river currents and visit the streets of the old city of **Béjar** locked within its Arab walls.



After visiting the famous textile city you might enjoy visiting the medieval village of **Montemayor del Rio**. Very near by, you will come across one of the most important historical areas on the whole peninsula: the **Calzada Romana de la Plata**. If you wish, you can go into it in search of Roman bridges, cobblestone roads and milestones that will lead you to Salamanca and, even still, to Astorga. And, above all, enjoy the incredible forests everywhere, because they contain some of the most beautiful corners in the whole province.



The **Sierra de Francia** is another mountain area close to Sierra de Béjar. Here you will also discover astonishing landscapes and typical villages such as La Alberca and Miranda del Castañar with its 15th-century fortress. Traditions, fiestas and local folklore have been kept in these villages as is shown in their buildings, their "fiestas" and their typical garments.



The towns display valuable folk architecture, which acts as the unique background to festivities, customs and ancestral traditions of great cultural wealth. Local gastronomy is characterized by exquisite stews and roasts, and local crafts are diverse and will undoubtedly surprise the visitor.

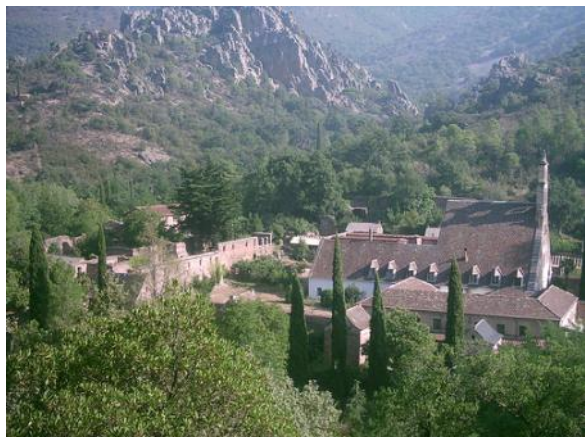


We would not make a mistake if we affirmed that the district is in one of the most renowned places and of the greatest tourist tradition of all Salamanca. This is a mountainous environment, nurtured by valleys covered with forests and furrowed by numerous rivers, it enjoys the highest environmental quality and has been protected under the name of **Nature Area of The Batuecas-Sierra de Francia**.

Peña de Francia

The summit of the **Peña de Francia**, with its monastery dedicated to the Virgin, will serve you as an

excellent natural lookout post from which tyou can see the whole district, other neighbouring districts and part of the lands of Caceres. From there you can distinguish numerous towns that deserve a leisurely visit. The historical towns of **Mogarráz**, **San Martín del Castañar**, **Sequeros**, **Miranda del Castañar** or **La Alberca** could be your starting point, which would enable you to continue descending until you reach the archaeological **Valle de Las Batuecas** or the river **Alagón**. If you choose the river Alagón, you will be able to reach the northern most mountains close to **Linares de Riofrío** and the medieval village of **Monleón**.



Hiking

If you are friend of hiking, you will have more than enough opportunities to walk through thick forests, to old gold mines like those of **El Cabaco**. Travel along marked paths (**GR-10**, **Ruta del Alagón**) or enjoy the countless trails and sidewalks that unite the different towns scattered over this privileged area.



CIUDAD RODRIGO AND SIERRA DE GATA

Varied landscapes make up this territory of Salamanca which converges with Portugal and Extremadura to the southwest of the capital. Its outlying, border character has maintained a high environmental, architectural, ethnological and cultural quality that has hardly been modified by the hand of man. **Las Arribes del Águeda**, **el Rebollar**, the **Valle del Azaba** and the elevations of the **Sierra de Gata** are good examples of this. This border district, in an historically conflictive region, is full of walls, castles and fortresses that were intended to scare away

invaders. To a greater or lesser extent, they have provided personality and character to the district.

Ciudad Rodrigo



Visiting this jewel of the west of the province is completely indispensable.

Inside its perfectly designed walls (which were given their definitive shape in the XVIII century), there is a valuable artistic historical heritage. Do not miss the **Plaza Mayor** and the **city council building**, the **Cathedral**, the **Castle of Enrique II Trastámara** (Parador Nacional), the **church of Cerralbo** or the countless palaces that ennoble their streets. And if you can choose any moment to visit, do so when the city is celebrating its biggest festivity: "**the Carnival of the Bull**".



El Rebollar and Sierra de Gata

Visit the south of the district and enjoy the **nature area of Rebollar** and the summits of the **Sierra de Gata**. Along the interesting route you will discover landscapes, forests and meadows sprinkled with Roman roads and bridges, vestiges of pre-Roman towns, dolmens, hermitage and numerous towns which contain the greatest wealth of these lands: their people.



Come to them and enjoy their old traditions, customs and festivities.

From Fuenteguinaldo to Navasfrías



Do not miss the parochial church of **Fuenteguinaldo**, with its beautiful altarpiece of the XVI century, made by Lucas Mitata, and the nearby **castro de Iruña**. In **El Bodón**, in the hermitage located on the outskirts of the town, you can enjoy another piece of the sculptor's work and you can also buy some beautiful textile crafts or ceramic. Enjoy the folklore of Rebollar in **Robleda** and **Peñaparda** and if you prefer, go toward the southwestern end of Salamanca, to **Navasfrías**, where you will find attractive offers to spend an unforgettable weekend in the border lands.

LAS ARRIBES DEL DUERO



The last part of the **river Tormes** and the river **Duero**, near the border with Portugal have created a unique situation in the province of Salamanca where spectacular reservoirs alternate with formidable canyons. It is the only possibility that nature has to solve the problem of the notable difference of altitude that separates the lands of the plateau from those of the Spanish-Portuguese border at the **jetty de Vega Terrón**, in **La Fregeneda**.

Mediterranean climate

The climatic conditions are benign and there is a microclimate fully characteristic of the Mediterranean: olive trees, prickly pears, orange trees, etc. The route that we propose goes through all those riverside towns that bring us closer to the shores of the river so we can enjoy the impressive views of the deep

canyons of the river Duero and of the tributaries that pour into their waters.



Ledesma, from its position overlooking the Tormes, is a suitable beginning for a route that goes toward the **reservoir of Almendra**, the first of a series of spectacular hydroelectric structures that "tame" the flowing river currents. From there you can head toward **Villarino del los Aires** and visit the lookout posts and balconies of the Duero in **Aldeadávila de la Ribera**, where you can have an attractive boat ride along the base of the canyon.



The following landmarks of your trip are: **Mieza**, **Vilvestre**, **Saucelle** and **Hinojosa de Duero**, then a descent to the **Vega Terrón** river port, in the municipality of **La Fregeneda**, where Salamanca communicates with Oporto and the Atlantic Ocean.



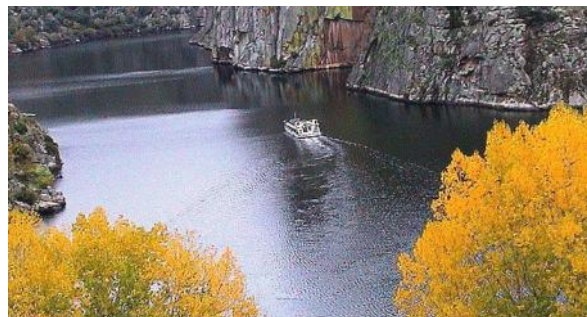
Along the road you will encounter waterfalls like **Pozo de los Humos**, between Pereña and Masueco, or the **cachón de Camaces** (next to Hinojosa). You may choose to visit the pre-Roman town of **Yecla de Yeltes** (included in the Route of Border Fortifications) or travel to medieval areas like **San Felices de los Gallegos** and the fortress of **Sobradillo**.

Your steps will have taken you to the villages of **Lumbrales** and **Vitigudino**. Do not leave the second one without taking a walk through its arched main square, seeing the beauty of its parochial church and enjoying the atmosphere of this urban centre, which is the regional head of the northwest of Salamanca.



Deep valleys

The presence of deep valleys favours the existence of peculiar climatic conditions, producing an environment fully characteristic of the Mediterranean where the flora and the fauna reach a high degree of biodiversity. These factors have led the area to be declared the **Nature Park of Arribes del Duero**.



Cattle Raising Landscapes

In the areas further away from the riverside that are more toward the centre of Salamanca, there is a prevalence of extensive areas of oaks that dominate the cattle landscapes of **Vitigudino**, **Ledesma** and **Abadengo**. **Ledesma**, **Almendra**, **Villarino de los Aires**, **Pereña de la Ribera**, **Masueco**, **Aldeadávila de la Ribera**, **Mieza**, **Vilvestre**, **Saucelle**, **Hinojosa de Duero** and **La Fregeneda** are the landmarks of the itinerary that will offer you the possibility of descending to the river itself in some places, see the large dams from spectacular lookouts or feel overwhelmed by the waterfalls.



CAMPO CHARRO: HOME OF THE TORO BRAVO

The well-known name includes the lands of the centre of the province which constitute the landscape that, for many people, best defines Salamanca: **la dehesa**.



These places, without any spectacular features, are a harmonious succession of gently rolling lands where the bright reflection of a stream or pond can stand out. The territory, covered mainly by oaks, contains unquestionable environmental wealth and a model of respectful, sustainable use of the environment.



Oaks and toro bravo

We invite the traveller to visit cattle ranches, bull rings and tentaderos (places where the aggressiveness of the bull is tested). We assure you that in all these places the impressive figure of the **toro bravo** will accompany you as an ancestral and eternal protector of the oak woods. If you want to carry out a complete journey of the district we invite you to enjoy a route that will take you to the most secret places in the **Campo Charro**.



We choose the capital, Salamanca, as our starting point, from where we will go southwest in the direction of **Matilla de los Caños del Río**. Below the remains of what was its fortress, we will make a turn in order to reach **Aldehuela de la Bóveda** and **Fuente de San Esteban**. We will have a number of opportunities to enjoy the beauty of the meadow no matter what time of the year we have chosen.

Hermitages and Spas

The second part of the journey will take us to the beautiful corner of the **Balneario de Retortillo** (of Roman origin) and to **Aldehuela de Yeltes**, **Tamames**, **Vecinos** and **Las Veguillas**.

Immersed in this environment so characteristic of Salamanca, we will find archaeological remains such as dolmens and vestiges of pre-Roman towns and some of the most beautiful humilladeros (crosses at the entrances to Christian towns where people wanting to enter had to kneel) in the whole province. Do not forget to visit **the hermitage of the Cueto** (Matilla de los Caños del Río) and the one at **Cabrera** (Las Veguillas). These places

display the deep spirituality and sincere religious feeling of the residents of this district.

When returning to the capital you may choose to visit the **historical area of Los Arapiles** and visit its history classroom, or go up to the monolith that honours the events of the **Spanish War of Independence**.



ALBA DE TORMES

Follow the river to **Alba de Tormes**, the beautiful riverside town where **Santa Teresa** is buried and where the **Teresiana Route** and the route of **Camino de la Lengua (the Castilian Language)**, both pass through, before heading to **Peñaranda de Bracamonte**, where you will find some of the most beautiful arched squares in all Salamanca.



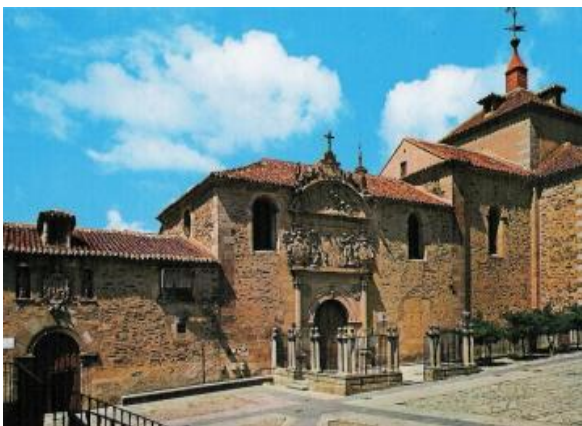
But what you might prefer is to travel roads and paths, venture through old, narrow cattle herding canyons or along a part of the **Calzada Romana de la Plata** that goes toward Zamora and León on its way from Salamanca. Whichever you choose, we assure you complete satisfaction.



Santa Teresa de Jesús visited this mystical village in 1582 and died. Her remains have been kept here ever since and that is what attracts so many tourists and pilgrims. The village is located just 20 km from Salamanca.



The Santa Isabel Convent, the Las Dueñas Monastery and the 16th century Santiago Apóstol Church are all worth visiting, especially if you're interested in medieval art and architecture. As for eating, be sure to try local specialities, such as stewed partridge or the locally produced sweets known as *benedictinas*. There is a good selection of local crafts on sale here too, and children will love the artificial beach at the entrance to the village, on the banks of the Tormes River. Many events, such as the Fiestas de Santa Teresa, take place in the village.



Peñaranda de Bracamonte

It is a town of 6685 inhabitants. Located in the western region of the province of Salamanca, in the middle of seamlessly endless plains of wheat; between such historic landmarks as the Old Kingdom of León and the Old Kingdom of Castilla.



The old town of Peñaranda was declared a Historic Artistic Monument in 1973. Peñaranda has wonderful sites and monuments declared of National Interest. It is worth to visit the Church and Convent of the Carmelite Nuns. The church dates from the first half of the seventeenth century.



Peñaranda is also the headquarter of the International Centre for Advanced Technologies, runs by the foundation Germán Sánchez Ruipérez. Sánchez Ruipérez is the first publisher in the Spanish language of textbooks, dictionaries, legal texts and computer books. He owns the Grupo Anaya, Ediciones América, and Cátedra among others, with branches in Europe and Latin America. He was born in Peñaranda de Bracamonte in 1926.

