

Las Batuecas Natural Park

Weekend Route

Salamanca Province

INTERESTING SIGHTSEEING

- Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia Natural Park
- La Casa del Parque Nature Interpretation Center
- “Los Castaños Centenarios” – Route for handicapped individuals
- Las Quilamas Mountain Range
- Santa Teresa Reservoir

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS

Water birds, river birds, cliff nesting birds and forest birds

SCHEDULE

Day 1

This route begins in the heart of Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia Natural Park, specifically in the town of La Alberca. This was the first town in Spain to be declared as a Historical Site. It is worth paying a visit to La Casa del Parque, an information center where you can find interactive exhibits relating to the park.

This is where the “La Alberca – Herguijuela” ornithological route begins. In this route, it is quite possible to observe several Iberian wildlife species flying over the sky. One of the most representative birds is the black stork that nests in this area. The black stork is an endangered species which is very demanding when it comes to choosing a place where to raise its young, trying to keep as far away from human contact at all times. Golden eagles, peregrine falcons and eagle-owls are also frequently present in this area. People who suffer from impaired mobility or some or other types of physical disabilities can also access the trails in this natural area. A very interesting tour known as “Los Castaños Centenarios” begins at El Casarito. The route runs along a wooden runway which is duly set up and not too steep. This runway crosses various wooded areas filled with oaks and chestnut trees (some of which are hundreds of years old and measure up to 9 meters around). The runway also provides astounding views of La Peña de Francia. You can enjoy watching a number of predator birds and forest birds during the tour.

The number of options in the park is quite varied. You can access the park from Las Quilamas Mountain Range, 35 km (21.7 miles) from El Casarito. This natural space, which lies before Las Quilamas and is soon to be declared a Natural Park, is a combination of Atlantic and Mediterranean influence, including live oak groves, oak groves and chestnut groves along practically isolated valleys. It is worth noting that black vultures, black storks and golden eagles nest in this area.

An interesting trip begins in Valero and leads to Castillo Viejo. Here you will find the best viewpoint within the mountain range. Upon climbing the top, you'll be able to observe warblers, snow buntings and chaffinches, as well as predator birds flying at higher altitudes.

Day 2

The Santa Teresa Reservoir has been categorized as a particularly interesting wetland area. This dam regulates the course of the Tormes River in the Gredos mountain range and is home to numerous water bird species.

The Tormes River serves as a water supply and comprises a highly important ecological corridor. The distance covered by the river amounts to 50 km (31 miles) until it reaches the reservoir. You can choose to integrate in this route during the last part of the travel before reaching the reservoir, where the river becomes deeper, at Aldejaviéja de Tormes.

Another option is to walk by the edge of the river until reaching the dam wall. This is the location where a tour begins. There are information panels and you can access the diverse surrounding ecosystems. This is a meeting point for herons, anatidae birds, cormorants, as well as several species of water birds. The last part of the trail, at Galindrúste, is quite important because you'll have the chance to observe cranes during the winter season. This location has no observatories; nonetheless, it is one of the 5 chosen locations in the Castilla y León region because of the latter species, which spends the winter there year after year.

In addition, there is another ornithological hiking route at Pelayos known as "Santa Teresa Reservoir," which involves going around the dam and stopping at specific, favorable locations where you can observe various birds. During the winter season thousands of cranes choose this area as a sleeping place and gather daily in the afternoon in order to rest. Other water bird species also use the wetland layer to rest and find food. Such species include mallards and pochards.

Local Action Group: ADRECAG, ADRISS

