

Montes Obarenes-Sierra de la Demanda Natural Park

One week route

Burgos Province

INTERESTING SIGHTSEEING

- Monte Santiago Natural Monument
- Montes Obarenes Natural Park
- Waterfalls: Salto del Nervi3n, Pedrosa de Tobalina, Tobera,
- Stony caves of Penches – Atapuerca archaeological area
- Sierra de la Demanda
- 3rbol F3sil Visitor Center, Nature Interpretation Center and Las Loberas
- Sabinares de Arlanza Natural Area

SCHEDULE

The following one week route takes place along the main ecosystems found in Burgos.

Over the course of one week, we'll try to take you through large natural areas characterized by wooded formations that are enclosed and remain unaltered. This will be combined with river and ravine sections until reaching cultivated lands and grasslands. In addition, this tour will also take you to waterfalls, as well as to archaeological and geological sites.

DAY 1

The first day of the tour will be spent in the Monte Santiago natural area. This area is located in the northeastern end of Burgos province, bordering the Basque Country. Most of its surface is covered by beech tree groves that border the karst formations of Sierra Salvada. In addition to the landscape, this trip is quite interesting because you'll have the chance to see, soaring the sky, numerous birds of prey that nest in the cliffs.

This is where you'll find the spectacular Salto del Nervi3n (or Cola de Caballo) waterfall. This is one of the longest waterfalls in Europe, exceeding a height of 300 meters. From Berberana, you'll be able to arrive at the best observatory in the canyon and then on to this waterfall. The trail will guide you along this path. In the vicinity, you'll find the remains of a wolf trap that dates back to pre-historical times. This trap was used to catch wolves from the high mountain area.

Afterwards, you can choose one of several tours. There is a geomorphic trail that runs along karst formations left over from limestone dissolution, which resulted in canyon wall landscape. Another

option is to take a trip through the beech tree groves in order to observe forest birds or to go directly to the outskirts by crossing the various live oak groves and grasslands. In addition, it is recommended to make a stop at the information center of Monte Santiago natural monument, located off highway BU-556, just 3 km from the forest trail.

DAY 2

On day 2 you will go across Montes Obarenes Natural Park. The biodiversity it offers as well as the good conditions of its habitats have helped this park obtain the certification as a Special Bird Protection Area and Community Relevant Site.

Following this route you'll arrive in Pedrosa de Tobalina, where you can enjoy watching the Burgos waterfall. If you continue all the way to Tobera, you'll also be able to visit another waterfall found at this location. The suggested tour takes you to Penches, where you'll have the chance to visit a number of interesting caves that contain pre-historical rock art.

At a 4 km distance from there, you'll arrive in Oña, where you can take a tour along the Oca river, going through an enclave created by the river. This town holds a number of medieval remains, including an ancient wall and the old Jewry street. To find more information on the history of this area, visitors are advised to visit the Medieval Information Center.

We suggest you to spend the rest of the day travelling to the town of Hozabeja to cross the Caderechas Valley, a hidden spot home to a highly valuable landscape filled with flowers and wildlife. Another option is going to Villanueva-Soportilla. The wealth of trees and shrubs that grow in the area is due to its privileged location, which lies between the Atlantic and Mediterranean biogeographical regions. Within the large number of rocky cliffs in this protected landscape, especially at Hoz de Sobrón, numerous birds of prey build their nests.

DAY 3

An ornithological hiking tour known as "El Pan Perdido" begins in Quintanaález.

El Pan Perdido represents the westernmost and highest peak in Sierra de Oña and forms part of Los Montes Obarenes Natural Park. It is also a Community Relevant Site as well as a Special Bird Protection Area bearing the same name. The uphill climb through a live oak grove allows visitors to see the abrupt rocky cliffs that make it easy to observe birds of prey, such as Egyptian vultures, golden eagles, red-billed choughs and griffon vultures. Upon reaching the edge and continuing on to the west, you'll arrive at a hill where you can conveniently walk down to Navas de Bureba.

There are two alternatives that may actually be complimentary to one another.

One option is to go to the towns of Tobes and Rahedo to enjoy watching various cliff nesting birds, such as choughs, common vultures and Egyptian vultures, which nest in the limestone formations along the small hill range. Moreover, you'll be able to enjoy the panoramic views from the naturally formed balcony in Valle de las Navas.

The other option is to go to Atapuerca to visit its Theme Park. This is one of the most significant places in pre-historical terms because of the history that took place there. In order to participate in a guided tour, you must book it in advance.

In addition, you can take the "Atapuerca Wetland" ornithological tour which crosses a number of lagoons. These lagoons are located in La Bureba Corridor, which is the most important migratory bird pass in the Iberian Peninsula. The route begins next to Cubillo fountain. Depending on the time of the year when you visit the wetland, you can observe different bird species. Birds building their nests here include Montagu's harriers and black-winged stilts. Hibernating birds include green plovers, as well as several species of anatidae birds. During the spring and fall season you can observe migratory birds passing by, such as pied avocets, reed warblers and greylag geese. Some of the species present all year long include: mallards, coots, common moorhens, grebes and marsh-harriers. Visitors are advised to visit the two bird observatories as well as the information center.

DAY 4

The following day, the tour begins in the Puras de Villafranca Grasslands. To arrive there from the previous location, you must take highway N-I.

The grasslands are characteristic vegetables formations produced by man's clearing activity in the forest. This activity normally involves live oaks and cork oaks; however, in this case it involves beech trees. This enclave lies right between the limits of Sierra de la Demanda and los Montes de Oca, and constitutes a single species forest of beech trees. The most common species of birds include common treecreepers, tits, and harriers.

The route continues to Sierra de la Demanda. Before arriving there, you can take a detour towards la ermita de San Roque de Villasur de Herreros, where you can visit the Mining Train Museum.

This natural area occupies the southeastern quadrant of the Burgos province. This is the most humid mountain range in the entire system, having very high levels of rainfall. The shadowy areas include the southernmost beech tree groves in Europe as well as one of the largest juniper groves in the southwestern part. Among the most representative bird species we can mention the grey partridge, whose population continues to decrease because of alterations to its habitat. There are also significant numbers of honey buzzards and eagle owls, which are relatively easy to spot.

A very interesting tour begins in the town of Pineda de la sierra, crossing through leafy forests. During the first part of the tour, you'll mostly see oak trees. Then, on the part of the tour that runs along the Arlanzón river, the riverside forest will be your main company. There, you'll be able to enjoy watching dippers sitting on the river rocks, and you'll be able to listen to cuckoos chanting in the forest. Also, you'll see eagle couples soar the sky. The Arlanzón swamp is close to this area, a place of interest for water birds.

DAY 5

You can take an additional tour in this mountain range or continue on for another 30 km until you reach Salas de los Infantes, where you will have two complimentary options.

One option is to go to Ura, taking highway N-234, to take the ornithological tour known as “Desfiladero de Mataviejas.” This tour runs along a pleasant road through the valley around Mataviejas river, a river feeding Arlanza river, within a zone declared as a Special Bird Protection Area and Relevant Community Site known as “Sabinas de la Arlanza.” What makes this route rather peculiar is the great limestone canyon, a narrow and winding rocky formation that lies within Mataviejas river. Here, you’ll find an accessible road where the entire family can enjoy the funny geographical formations and the vegetation, which is mainly comprised by junipers and oaks, as well as the wildlife. Some of the bird species you can observe here include Egyptian vultures and griffon vultures, which nest in inaccessible holes within the rocky walls. Also, in some sections of the route you can get close to the river, where you’ll be able to listen to the chants of numerous birds, such as nightingales, common warblers, melodious warblers and golden orioles.

The other option is to go to the edge of Hacinas. We suggest you to stop by the Árbol Fósil Visitor Center, where you can find very interesting tree samples and information panels.

Afterwards, the tour will continue to the lagoons found in this area, where you can take the “Las lagunas de Hacinas” ornithological tour, which allows visitors to observe several water bird species that stopover in this wetland layer.

Upon leaving town and going towards the east, you’ll pass a series of groves and meadows until you reach Hacinas creek. If you continue along the edge of the creek, you’ll arrive at an isolated cattle area enclosed by a fence. This is the lake complex of Fuentepeña Wetlands, which is comprised by ten lagoons that were deteriorating due to silting. Fortunately, these lagoons have been recovered, thus restoring an ecosystem with a large capacity to provide shelter to water birds.

Undoubtedly, what makes this enclave a very peculiar location, is the presence of more than 40 white stork nests in the surrounding area. This represents one of the most important white stork colonies in the Burgos province.

DAY 6

The following day of the tour takes place in Espinosa de Cervera. Before arriving in Silos, there is a section of Mataviejas canyon known as La Yecla. It’s a deep and narrow valley that was carved by the river along the limestone rock portion.

Then, the tour continues on to Ciruelos de Cervera, where you can visit the caves known as Santiago caves and Gato caves.

The remainder of the day will be spent journeying along the Sabinas del Arlanza Natural Park. In addition to juniper trees, it is common to find wooded riverside masses along the trail thanks to the influence of Arlanza river.

This tour allows visitors to observe riverside species near the river, as well as forest species, such as azure-winged magpies.

DAY 7

In the town of Caleruega, you'll find a Nature Interpretation Center as well as wolf traps. From the viewpoint at Peña de San Jorge you'll be able to observe the various landscapes, including the riverside, plains and mountains.

Another option is to go to Coruña del Conde, where visitors will find two Roman bridges dating back to the second century B.C. as well as a medieval castle from the 10th century.

