

Green Spain is more than a place

It is a way of looking at life; of relating to the landscape, enjoying nature, understanding cuisine and discovering history.

Green Spain is a **territory sculpted by the rain and sea**, a dream destination for lovers of natural beauty, authentic tradition and **history that you can see** and touch.

Positioned in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, it covers four regions (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country), with a number of common denominators:

- Mountainous terrain which stretches down to the shoreline itself.
- A rugged, emerald landscape, twinned with such iconic places as the Scottish Highlands or the coast of Brittany.
- A way of life and cuisine profoundly shaped by the omnipresence of the sea and the fertility of the valleys.
- A distinctive culture, deeply rooted in tradition (with its own languages, religious beliefs, myths, fears and legends), which is nonetheless open to a cosmopolitan worldview as it looks ahead to the future.

• A population who feel the landscape as their own, having built up a relationship with it since they were children, whether surfing the waves at the beach, climbing its hillsides, or cycling along its valleys.

Green Spain is a place full of winding highways, solitary lighthouses, cliffs bitten into by the sea, rocky mountain ranges, beech woods and gullies.

Green Spain is also a whole world of cities, villages, centuries-old hermitages, defiant fortresses, caves that became museums 35,000 years ago, and a fertile setting for culture, expressed in both modern buildings and wooden carvings sculpted in the Middle Ages.

Green Spain is what you discover when you let the Spirit of the North guide your footsteps.



Greenspain

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Discover Green Spain in 2 minutes

Green Spain in figures

29% of the area of Green Spain is **protected** natural landscape.

Green Spain has no fewer than 42 protected areas: 2 National Parks, 25 Nature Parks and 15 Biosphere Reserves.

2,500 It has more than 2,500 kilometres of coastline, covering the Cantabrian Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the rias of Galicia

18 caves with prehistoric art declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

56 restaurants with Michelin Stars.

2,500 The Grand Route of Green Spain is a 'tracked' itinerary of more than 2,500 kilometres of by-roads.

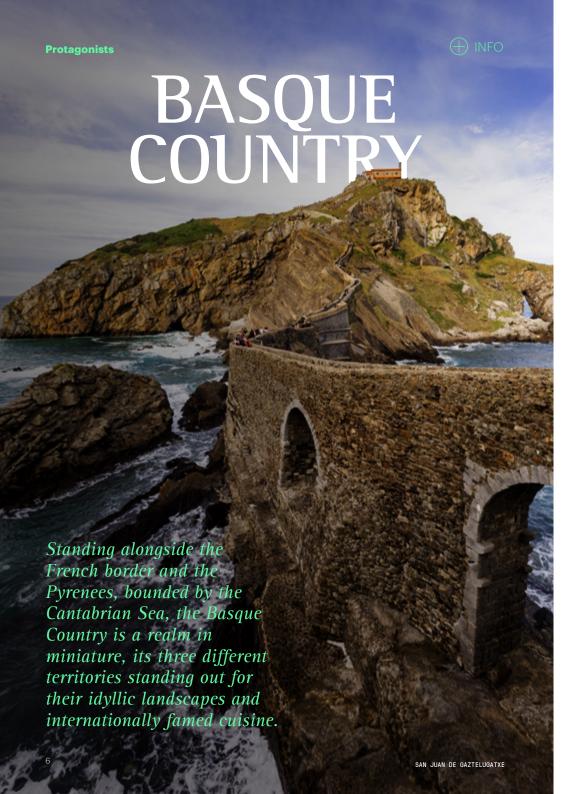
Four paths with mediaeval roots leading you to Santiago de Compostela or other shrines in the most magical part of Spain.

More than 30 Greenways (converted former train lines) exclusively for walkers and cyclists.

A dozen medium-sized cities and provincial capitals (populations between 50,000 and just over 250,000), with a full range of amenities.

PROTAGONISTS





he Basque Country is
a region with a strong
cultural identity, and
a marked contrast
between ancestral
traditions and modernity, all
reflected in its architecture, cuisine
and way of life. In the Basque
Country, past, present and future
always walk hand in hand.

The Basque landscape is a living example of this rich culture: a territory dotted with hillsides and geographical features (many of them the source of myths and legends), where cities and villages have grown at the bottom

of the valleys. On the green slopes, isolated buildings known as 'caseríos' stand out, the essence of Basque rural culture, their influence seen in traditional sports, and even cuisine.

The Basque Country is a broad and highly mountainous strip of land, in places covered with woodland, in others with meadows, becoming less abrupt in the more southerly region of Álava, characterised by its great open spaces (the largest in Green Spain) and farmland. The landscape of Rioja Alavesa is carpeted with vineyards alongside



the River Ebro, and Spain's oldest wine-making designation of origin.

The Basque Country has a coastline of more than 170 kilometres of huge natural and landscape value, all backed up by the existence of Nature Parks, Biosphere Reserves and other protected sites, which seem to have been drawn from a past era. Both the coastline and inland areas have helped to mould the Basque way of life, intrinsically linked to such open-air activities as surfing, hiking, local ball sports and cycling.

provincial capitals are lively, modern cities, offering the necessary contrast with the Basque greenery: cosmopolitan Bilbao and the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum are a must-see for lovers of modern art; San Sebastian immediately transports you to the Belle Epoque; while Vitoria-Gasteiz is famed for its quality of life.

Many Basques have carried the name of their homeland around the world, including the seafarer **Juan Sebastián Elcano** and the sculptor Eduardo **Chillida.**





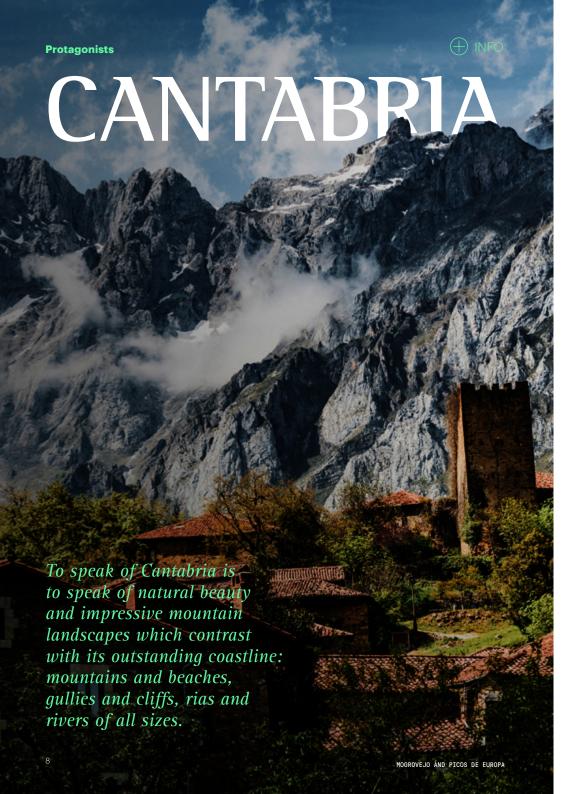
- A rich bar culture with genuinely local drinks (txakoli and cider), a wide range of seafood and characterful cheeses.
- Spain's pioneers at the culinary cutting-edge of signature cuisine.
- Tightly packed Michelin-starred restaurants, with one of the world's highest concentrations of culinary accolades.
- The wines of Rioja Alavesa belong to **Spain's oldest wine-making Designation of Origin.**
- Memorable dishes:
 Baked spider crab
 Rib-eye steak
 Sauid in its own ink



- Did you know that the **highest waterfall** on the Iberian Peninsula, measuring 222 metres, is to be found in Amurrio, in Álava?
- Did you know that **Getaria is the**birthplace of the designer Cristóbal
 Balenciaga and the seafarer Juan
 Sebastián Elcano, who captained the
 first circumnavigation of the Globe?
- Did you know that Portugalete and Getxo in Vizcaya are linked by the oldest transporter bridge on the planet, the Puente Bizkaia, which is still in operation?







antabria has more than 200 kilometres of coastline, almost a hundred beaches, and mountains that climb higher than 2,600 metres, such as Peña Vieja, one of the summits rising from the Picos de Europa National Park.

Cantabria also boasts an **abundance of historical heritage, running from Prehistory to the present,** with notable landmarks from all the significant eras.

A network of caves where our most distant ancestors expressed their artistic concerns.

Chief among these **UNESCO World Heritage** grottos is
Altamira, with its bison painted more than 18,000 years ago, and even older traces dating back 35,600 years.

Hermitages, collegiate churches and Romanesque buildings found nowhere else in Spain, in places such as Santillana del Mar, Piasca and Castañeda.



with the indiana architectural style favoured by colonists returning from Latin America such as Medio Cudeyo and Comillas, where the Sobrellano palace and cemetery look like something out of a fantasy story.

Lonely mountain villages with the scent of wood smoke, such as **Bárcena Mayor** and **Carmona**, real gems of traditional architecture, rural atmosphere, and the gateway to the forests and mountains of Cantabria.

The whole territory is the perfect setting for open-air sporting pursuits and activities, and for active tourism. The beaches are revered by surfers and sailing enthusiasts; the mountains, by keen hikers and climbers; while the golf courses stand in unique settings, some fanned by the sea breeze, and others the cool inland air.





Gastronomy

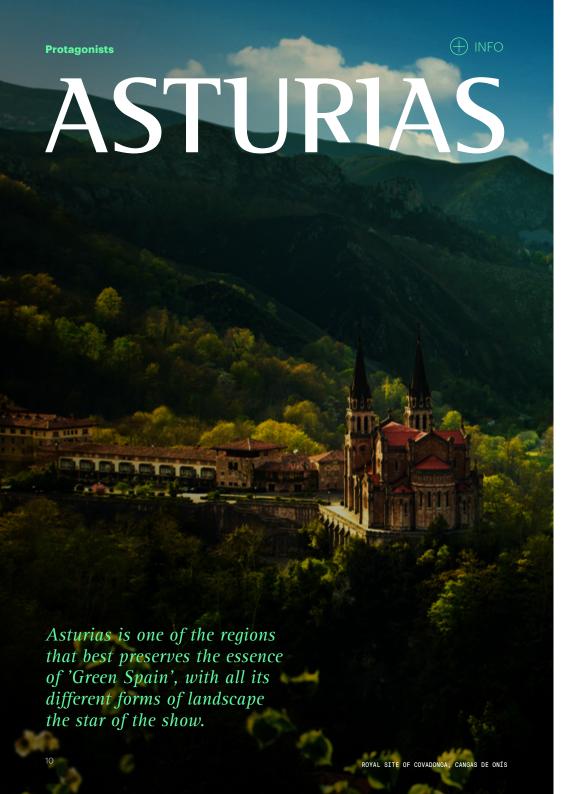
- Spain's pioneers and masters of the art of preserving anchovies.
- Nationwide fame earned through such traditional cakes as sobaos pasiegos and guesadas.
- Major producer of orujo distilled from local grape skins in a number of inland mountain areas.
- Distinctive inland cuisine with salmon and trout streams, as well as meadowland pasture for the cattle and sheep that provide meat and cheese.

Memorable dishes:

Mountain stew Bonito casserole Pasiego pastries

Curiosities

- Did you know that **Spain's Emperor**and **King Charles V disembarked in Laredo** on his last journey, an event
 which is re-enacted every year through
 the streets of the town?
- Did you know that the modernist architect
 Antonio Gaudí, creator of the Sagrada
 Familia in Barcelona, only designed
 three buildings outside Catalonia, and
 that one of them, El Capricho, is to be
 found in the town of Comillas?
- Did you know that Alto Asón is a paradise for keen potholers and that the town of Ruesga is home to Spain's deepest natural well, measuring 436 metres?



his 'natural paradise'
has provided the setting
for significant episodes in
Spanish history, building
up a vast legacy of heritage, with notable features from the
main historical periods.

Caves with prehistoric art designated as UNESCO
World Heritage Sites, such as La
Peña in Candamo and Tito Bustillo in Ribadesella.

Roman remains linked to the former Silver Road, such as the Roman baths in Gijón.

Asturias was the birthplace of the Iberian Peninsula's
first mediaeval Christian kingdom. Here you can discover such
legendary locations as the Royal
Site of Covadonga.

The 'green' fame of Asturias is based an objective fact: more than a third of the whole region lies within a Protected Natural Space, most notably seven Biosphere Reserves across a wealth of different settings, from the River Eo, Oscos and Terras de Burón to Somiedo and Las Ubiñas-La Mesa. The Picos de Europa National Park (shared with neighbouring Cantabria) is the natural jewel in the crown, with an extensive range of Alpine landscapes, green meadows and woodlands.



The other natural side of Asturias is made up of a wild, rugged shoreline, with 400 kilometres of largely unspoiled coast, dotted with beaches, cliffs, estuaries and marshland.

Settings which have made Asturias a pre-eminent active tourism destination in Spain, for all manner of open-air sports, from surfing and other water sports (the race down the River Sella is one of the main

events on the Spanish canoeing calendar) to hiking or any type of cycling: road, mountain or gravel.

Asturias is home to gems of Spain's earliest Christian art, with pre-Romanesque mediaeval landmarks such as Santa María del Naranco in Oviedo and San Salvador de Valdediós in Villaviciosa, also declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



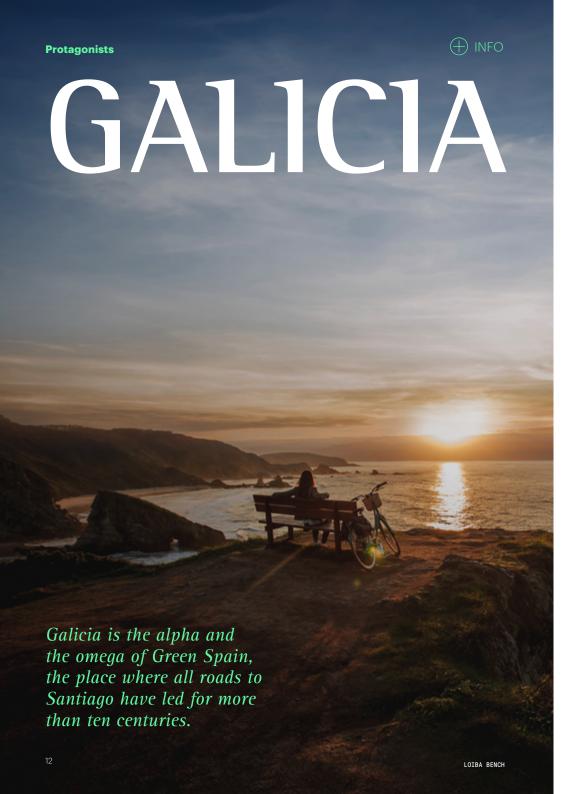


Gastronomy

- Delicious cooking closely linked to the region's geography. The restaurants of Asturias are famed nationwide for the authenticity of their ingredients, drawing on a natural larder as rich as the landscape.
- A phenomenon of food and drink culture focused on natural cider at the traditional 'chigres' where it is specially poured in a ritual ceremony: the 'escanciado'.
- Farmhouse cheeses with elaborate processes handed down from past generations, as in the case of Cabrales.
- Masters of coastal cuisine with an extensive local repertoire of recipes, using both black and common sea bream, as well as monkfish, the king of the Asturian kitchen.
 - Memorable dishes:
 Fabada asturiana bean stew
 Asturian beef from contented cows that graze the mountain meadows
 Casadielles, puff pastry dessert filled with walnuts

Curiosities

- Did you know that Asturias has a greater variety of traditional **farmhouse** cheeses than any other region in Europe, with over 100 different types, many with their own seals of quality or protected designation of origin?
- Did you know that Gulpiyuri is an 'inland beach' where you can bathe in seawater out of sight of the Cantabrian Sea.
- Did you know that Oviedo's mediaeval cathedral contains a Sacred Chamber, holding some of Christianity's most revered sacred relics?



alicia is also the land containing what was for centuries believed to be the end of the world: Cape
Finisterre, a natural viewing platform from which to marvel at the sun sinking into the waves.

Galicia is **the largest of all the regions of Green Spain,**the most populous, and with **the longest coastline**: 1,629
kilometres in all, more than the rest
of its neighbours put together.

Galicia is the only part of
Green Spain bathed by a sea (the
Cantabrian) and an ocean (the
Atlantic); dotted with a series
of flooded river valleys known
as the Rías Altas and Rías Baixas.
Inland Galicia is also a realm of
sharp geographical contrasts, and
contours sculpted by more than
a thousand rivers as they make
their way down to the coast.



These delights take the form of half a dozen **Nature Parks** such as the Fragas del Eume; **Biosphere Reserves** including Ribeira Sacra and Serras do Oribio e Courel, and the **National Maritime-Terrestrial Park**of the **Atlantic Islands of Galicia**.

All of which goes to make up a unique land with its **own wealth of distinctive mythology and culture**, expressed through its architectural heritage, cuisine, fiestas, instruments such as the bagpipes, and traditions.

A journey to Galicia is a journey through time to discover ancient dolmens; a unique Roman lighthouse still in operation (the Tower of Hercules in A Coruña); dozens of enchanting villages, whether on the coast (Muros, Cambados, Baiona) or inland (Mondoñedo, Rivadabia, Allariz); or to explore the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the revered saint's remains live.





Gastronomy

- In the region with the longest coastline, they are true masters of the art of preparing seafood and shellfish.
- **Further inland, another type of 'magic' also takes place,** above all cheeses, beef and market garden produce such as Padrón peppers.
- There are numerous celebrations and fairs throughout the year at which cuisine is centre stage.
- Excellent wines in five Designations of Origin: Monterrei, Rías Baixas, O Ribeiro, Valdeorras and Ribeira Sacra (the latter stands out for its heroic viticulture). All of them renowned for their quality, variety and personality.
- Memorable dishes:
 Galician octopus
 Empanada, Galician Pie
 Ham hock with turnip greens

Curiosities

- Did you know that the **cliffs** of Vixía
 Herbeira, near San Andrés de Teixido **are the highest in continental Europe**with a drop of 620 metres?
- Did you know that the city of Lugo has the longest complete Roman walls still standing in the world?
- Did you know that Combarro has the greatest concentration of hórreos (old stone constructions used to store produce) in Spain right on the coast?



The Northern Camino de Santiago

Santiago de
Compostela has,
since the discovery
of the remains of
St James in the 9th
century, been the
dream destination
for thousands of
pilgrims from around
the world.

Some **900 kilometres** lie between the French border and Santiago de Compostela along the Camino del Norte.

The Northern Camino de Santiago is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, comprising four main routes:

Coastal Camino

This runs almost the whole length of the Cantabrian coast as far as the Galician town of Ribadeo, before then heading inland towards Santiago de Compostela.

Original Camino

It hugs the sea, like the Coastal Camino, and after passing Oviedo turns inland to join up with the French Camino in Melide.

Basque-Rioja Camino

Branch connecting Irun and the French border with the French Camino via either Santo Domingo de la Calzada or Burgos.

Liébana Camino

Branch beginning in San Vicente de la Barquera and running as far as the Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana, which houses the largest known fragment of the True Cross. Whenever 16 April, the feast day of Santo Toribio, falls on a Sunday, a Lebaniego Jubilee Year is celebrated.

∠. The Grand Route

The Grand Route of Green Spain is a complete travel experience to discover in depth the Spirit of the North: a route divided into 16 stages linking the two northern ends of Spain, from Hondarribia alongside the French border and the Pyrenees, to the mouth of the River Miño separating Galicia from Portugal

A journey through the star attractions and hidden treasures of Northern Spain.

What makes the Grand Route of Green Spain so special?

Over **2,500 kilometres of delightful by-roads,** with the
chance to enjoy **slow driving**as you discover the villages
and landscapes.

It offers a journey through the cuisine of one of the 'tastiest' regions anywhere in Spain.

It is closely linked to the N-634, the distinctive 'Route 66' of Green Spain, a legendary highway.

It showcases a wide variety of ecosystems of the coast (beaches, dunes, marshland, cliffs, estuaries...) and inland, from meadows to native woodland, along with former glaciers and dry plains.

It passes through villages and cities of all types and sizes, allowing for an immersive experience of the peoples of the North.

You can follow it on your mobile phone through convenient tracks which accurately break down the itinerary, or take the old school approach with a roadmap, assisted by The Grand Route PDF guide.

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3.

Wine and Food Culture

Green Spain, from the Pyrenees to the Portuguese border, covers one of the areas of Spain with the greatest culinary reputation, based on the produce provided both by the sea and by the fields and mountains inland.

The regions of Green Spain share the same culinary roots:

- Homage to the finest local produce, native to the region and sourced nearby.
- **Dishes with few spices,** making natural flavours the star of the show.
- · Passion for charcoal grilling.
- Cuisine firmly shaped by tradition, which nonetheless stands out for its more avant-garde endeavours, with over 50 Michelin-starred restaurants.
- Importance of small-scale local producers and traditional markets.

SEAFARING PASSION

- Prominence of fish, both white (hake, cod, seabream, turbot) and oily (sardines and anchovies).
- Delicious casseroled bonito in the summer months.
- A particular taste for seafood, shellfish and octopus.

INLAND TREASURES

- A great livestock tradition, centred on beef that enjoys cult status.
- Green Spain is home to some of the country's premier cheesemaking districts, such as Idiazabal, Arzúa-Ulloa, Afuega'l pitu and Bejes-Tresviso.
- Market garden tradition, with produce to embellish stews, salads and garnishes.

Green Spain enjoys an illustrious wine-making tradition, with such protected Designations of Origin as Rioja Alavesa, Costa de Cantabria, Cangas and Ribeira Sacra.



4. Slow Sleep

Sleep means more than just closing your eyes and resting. In Green Spain, 'sleep' means a choice of accommodation that blends into the landscape and its history; means spending the night in unique natural settings, cosmopolitan cities, or villages where time has stood still.

'Slow Sleep' is all about unwinding, relaxing, discovering the place's history, chatting with the townsfolk, experiencing the same sensations as the local population, discovering their culinary secrets, and in short, feeling part of your surroundings, and a privileged way of life. Green Spain has for more than 150 years been a welcoming place for holidays and retreats.

What is Slow Sleep?

- Unwind and relax
- Discover history
- Strike up a conversation with the townsfolk and experience the same sensations as the local population.
- Discover culinary secrets through the distinctive recipes of each location, and homegrown ingredients sourced on the spot.
- Experience a privileged setting and way of life.

What types of accommodation are covered?

- Historic spa resorts
- Urban mansions
- Country manor houses
- Accommodation in the traditional buildings of the rural community, such as the Basque caseríos, Galician pazos, Asturian casonas, casas de indianos, cabañas pasiegas in Cantabria...
- Boutique hotels in urban settings



Ecotourism&Nature

Green Spain lies in the northern strip of Spain, perfectly framed by an ocean (the Atlantic), a sea (the Cantabrian) and two major mountain ranges: the Cantabrian Range and the Pyrenees. This location, its mountainous terrain and diverse climate help to create the beautiful green landscapes which characterise the region.

The territory runs the length of the Cantabrian coastline, occupying a strip some 100 kilometres wide from north to south, with 2,500 kilometres of coastline. Which means there is room for sites of natural beauty on the shoreline itself, as well as mountains climbing to more than 2,500 metres.

What does Green Spain conceal within its nature?

- Temperate climate all year round: wet and cool (but not cold) winters, and mild summers of warm temperatures.
- Two National Parks (Picos de Europa and Atlantic Islands of Galicia), over twenty Nature Parks and 15 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.
- More than 150 smaller protected sites where visitors can enjoy biodiversity at its fullest.
- A territory to be travelled, walked and experienced; a place for hiking, surfing, cycling (road, mountain or gravel), climbing, sailing, horseriding, potholing and plenty more besides.
- More than 30 Greenways of differing lengths (some more than 40 kilometres long) to cycle or walk far from any motor vehicle, and in close contact with nature.

6. **Surfing**

The coastline of Green Spain is bathed by the Cantabrian Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Its four territories (Basque Country, Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia) have a shoreline totalling almost 2,500 kilometres.

A coast with everything from endless sandy beaches and rocky coves to cliffs and coastal mountain ranges; along with estuaries, rias, islands and archipelagos of islets.

There is also a **vibrant surf culture**, with numerous companies dedicated to every aspect of the surfing world: from local board design and manufacture to the creation of surf fashion and **extensive tourist infrastructure** of hotels, enchanting rural accommodation, hostels and campsites with unrivalled views.

Green Spain's surfing spots offer:

- Constant swells and great waves throughout the year.
- Perfect beaches for surfing beginners, with schools and all amenities to take up the sport from scratch.
- Huge, powerful waves suitable only for the most experienced and daring of surfers.
- Beaches where some of Spain's legendary surfers learned their trade, such as Aritz Aramburu and Lucía Martiño.
- World Class quality waves of global reputation hosting international events and competitions.
- Long beaches for uncrowded surfing.

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Green Spain also boasts an **urban**, **cosmopolitan side**, in the form of more than **a dozen medium-sized cities** (all with populations of more than 50,000, and in some cases over 250,000), **dotted along the route** between the French and Portuguese borders.

Green Spain has its **own cultural identity** handed down intact to the present day, through fiestas, celebrations, cuisine, and even the regions' **own languages**: Galician, 'Bable' in Asturias, and Basque.

Green Spain is home to the stone lifters of the Basque Country, the coastal rowers of Cantabria, the wild horse herders of Galicia and the nomadic cowherds of Asturias.

SPA CITIES

- San Sebastian, famous for its haute cuisine in miniature: 'pintxos'.
- Santander, bathed by the one of the most beautiful bays in the world.
- Ourense, revered for its thermal spring waters.

CITIES WITH AN INDUSTRIAL PAST

- Bilbao, the city reborn with the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum.
- Gijón, the Roman town with a lively cultural and nightlife scene.
- Avilés, home to one of the few Oscar Niemeyer buildings in Europe.

CITIES WITH THE BEST QUALITY OF LIFE

- Vitoria-Gasteiz, known for its parks, gardens and idyllic residential areas.
- Pontevedra, with one of the largest pedestrianised city centres in Europe.
- Oviedo, its sense of grandeur and attractive mediaeval heritage.

HERITAGE CITIES

- Santiago de Compostela, a dream destination for more than ten centuries.
- Lugo, surrounded by the largest fortified Roman enclosure in Europe.

TRUE SEAFARING CITIES

- Ferrol, the ultimate shipbuilding city.
- A Coruña, home to the only Roman lighthouse in the world still in operation.
- Vigo, one of the most vibrant and exciting cities in Green Spain.





12 enchanting villages in the Green Spain

Basque Country



Pasai Donibane. A village with just a single street, where the houses rise from the waters of the sea itself. like in Venice.



Laguardia. A mediaeval town standing atop a rocky hill, with commanding views of the outstanding landscape of vineyards and modern wineries.



Mundaka. A town with an enviable position alongside the mouth of the Ría de Urdaibai and the sea, and a wave that surfers from around the world long to ride.

Cantabria



Santillana del Mar. Pure mediaeval beauty and an imposing historical and artistic centre neighbouring the Cave of Altamira.



Comillas. A village built in the *indiano* and modernist styles, with landmarks (the Sobrellano palace and even the cemetery) resembling something from a storybook.



Bárcena Mayor. A real treasure of traditional architecture, rural atmosphere, and the stepping stone to the woodlands and mountains of Cantabria.

Asturias



Cudillero. A picturesque fishing village shaped like an amphitheatre, with narrow streets and colourful houses. Perfect to sample the finest seafaring cuisine.



Llastres. A seafaring town with a privileged setting alongside broad beaches where the dinosaurs left their footprints.



Cangas de Onís. Gateway to the Picos de Europa, with its iconic 'Roman Bridge' and a hermitage built on the site of a dolmen.

Galicia



Combarro. Stone houses and granary stores overlooking the Ría de Pontevedra, the ideal place to enjoy the finest Galician seafood.



Allariz. A mediaeval village declared a Historical and Artistic Site, with cobbled streets surrounded by leafy woodland and riverside landscapes.



Cambados. Birthplace of Albariño wine, with a seafaring atmosphere, grand manor houses and one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Spain.

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