San Lorenzo de El Escorial
Alcalá de Henares
Aranjuez

www.turismoalcala.es
www.sanlorenzoturismo.org
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San Lorenzo de El Escorial

San Lorenzo de El Escorial is distinguished by its extraordinary artistic heritage, its cultural offer and its magnificent location in the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range. It also boasts major natural and landscape attractions for mountain climbers and trekking fans. The Monastery and Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. The Monastery, constructed at the order of Philip III in the brief space of 20 years, boasts numerous spaces of extremely high historical, artistic and cultural value, such as the palace buildings of the Hapsburgs and the Library, the Basilica, the Courtyard of the Kings, the Pantheon of the Kings, where the remains of the kings and queens regnant of Spain lie, and the Gardens.

No visit is complete without a stroll around the Historical-Artistic Complex, where particularly of note are the Royal Coliseum of Charles III, the Seal of Philip III, from where it is said the monarch would view how the works on the Monastery were coming along, and a trip to the Luis Ceballo Arboretum Centre for Environmental Education, which offers guided walks and itineraries for nature lovers, the Herrera Forest and the Abantos Pine Grove away.

In order to increase visits to these three places, the Region of Madrid has designed a personal passport which you can pick up either from the tourist information offices in the Madrid About Info network or the tourist information offices in these three legacy cities.

The passport has three functions. It offers the holder special promotions and instant discounts on transport (Renfe Cercanías Madrid suburban rail and CRTM regional transport consortium), monuments, hotels, shops and other activities. It is also a pocket guide with practical information and maps to help you rediscover the three World Heritage sites. It also is a guarantee of quality of the services offered.

Alcalá de Henares

Cervantes's home town is an ideal place to explore, wandering the streets and squares, visiting the museums and monuments, eating in any of its fine restaurants, going shopping, having a cup of coffee or a drink as the sun goes down on one of the pavement cafes and purchasing a souvenir in the form of a typical local sweet, such as sugared almonds or costra da (layers of puff pastry and custard with a soft meringue top).

We can start at the Regional Archaeological Museum which offers guided tours, or take a trip back to Roman times at the Casa Hipolytus or the Complex of Monasteries of the Region of Madrid's Archaeological Sites Plan. Must-see include the Birthplace of Cervantes Museum, where the most human facet of this literary genius is recreated, the University of Alcalá, with its trilingual court, and the Corral de Comedias, which offers guided tours in addition to an outstanding range of theatre performances, along with the Interpretation Centre of Cervantes’ Universes and Laredo Palace.

In the religious sphere, of note are impressive buildings such as the Magisterial Cathedral and the Las Bernardas Monastery. Finally, nature lovers can enjoy “Los Cerros de Alcalá”, a protected area on the left bank of the Henares River, perfect for hill walking.

On the banks of the Tajo River, Aranjuez was the site the Bourbons chose to establish their spring residence as an admirer Joaquin Rodrigo dedicated to them in his famous Concierto de Aranjuez.

To really get to grips with the town you will need more than a day, as on top of the Palace and its gardens there are the areas around the Tajo River and the historical groves and orchards which in the past provided food to the Court and the produce of which we can today sample in the delicious dishes prepared by the local restaurants, some of them Michelin-starred.

In spring and autumn, catch the Strawberry Train to the town, which departs from the old Delicias station on the weekends. However, any time of year is good to discover its natural environment on foot, bike or horseback.

Aranjuez Cultural Landscape

The Region of Madrid has three places listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site: The Monastery and Royal Seat of San Lorenzo de El Escorial / The university and historical neighbourhood of Alcalá de Henares / Aranjuez Cultural Landscape.

San Lorenzo de El Escorial is a magnificent example of the creative spirit of Humanity. The size of the architectural ensemble and its value in relation to its natural environment make it a place of inexhaustible historical, cultural and symbolic value. Alcalá de Henares is able to present key elements for studying and learning more about Spanish language and culture through two millennia of history. Its contribution to universal culture warrants full recognition. Aranjuez is one of the foremost examples of a cultural landscape found in Europe. It affords the possibility of discovering and enjoying a unique setting, created through man’s interaction with nature, between the rural world and urban life and between forests and historical buildings.

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With the broad range of cultural offer and its magnificent location in the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range, it also boasts major natural and urban life and between forests and historical buildings.

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