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Asturias
natural paradise

Introduction

#AsturianCulture

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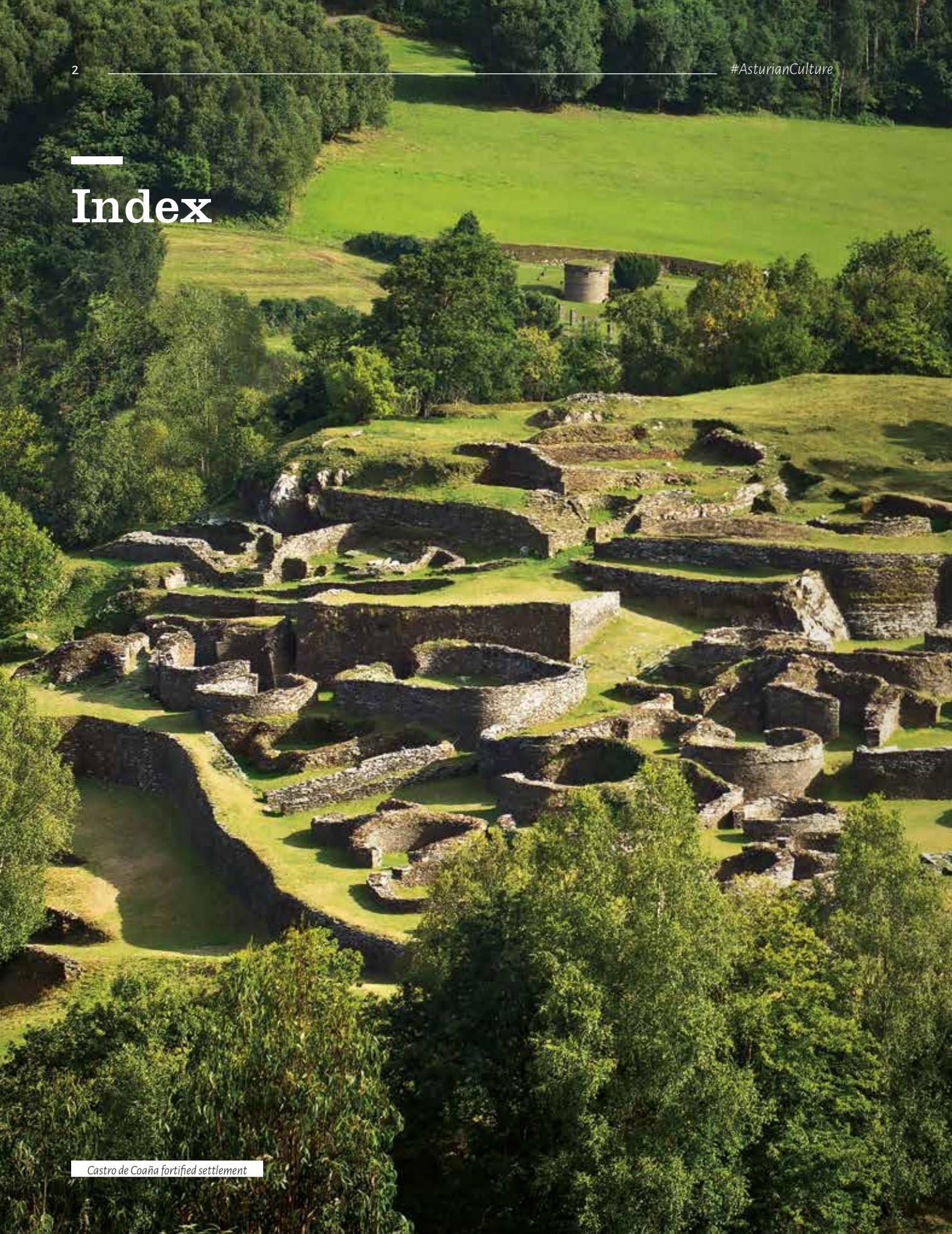
We all know that Asturias is an authentic natural paradise: that's why you're here. A landscape that has been formed, with effort and perseverance, by thousands of Asturians from prehistoric times to the present day. And we want to share with you in depth the legacy of our ancestors, our cultural heritage, explaining its meaning and how it defines us as a people and makes us proud.

Sometimes, this heritage reaches levels of international excellence: rock art, the St. James's Way and the art of the Asturian monarchy have been recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO. But Asturias is much more than that, because our villages have preserved outstanding cultural treasures, with the *hórreo* (typical granary) as the centrepiece; because of our enchanting coastal and inland villages; because the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was written with the blue ink of the ocean crossed by the emigrants and the black ink of the coal extracted from our mines. And because the present pulsates through modern equipment and is projected onto screens, a magnificent set for fiction, while we preserve our traditions in authentic festivals that we are always eager to share with those who visit us.

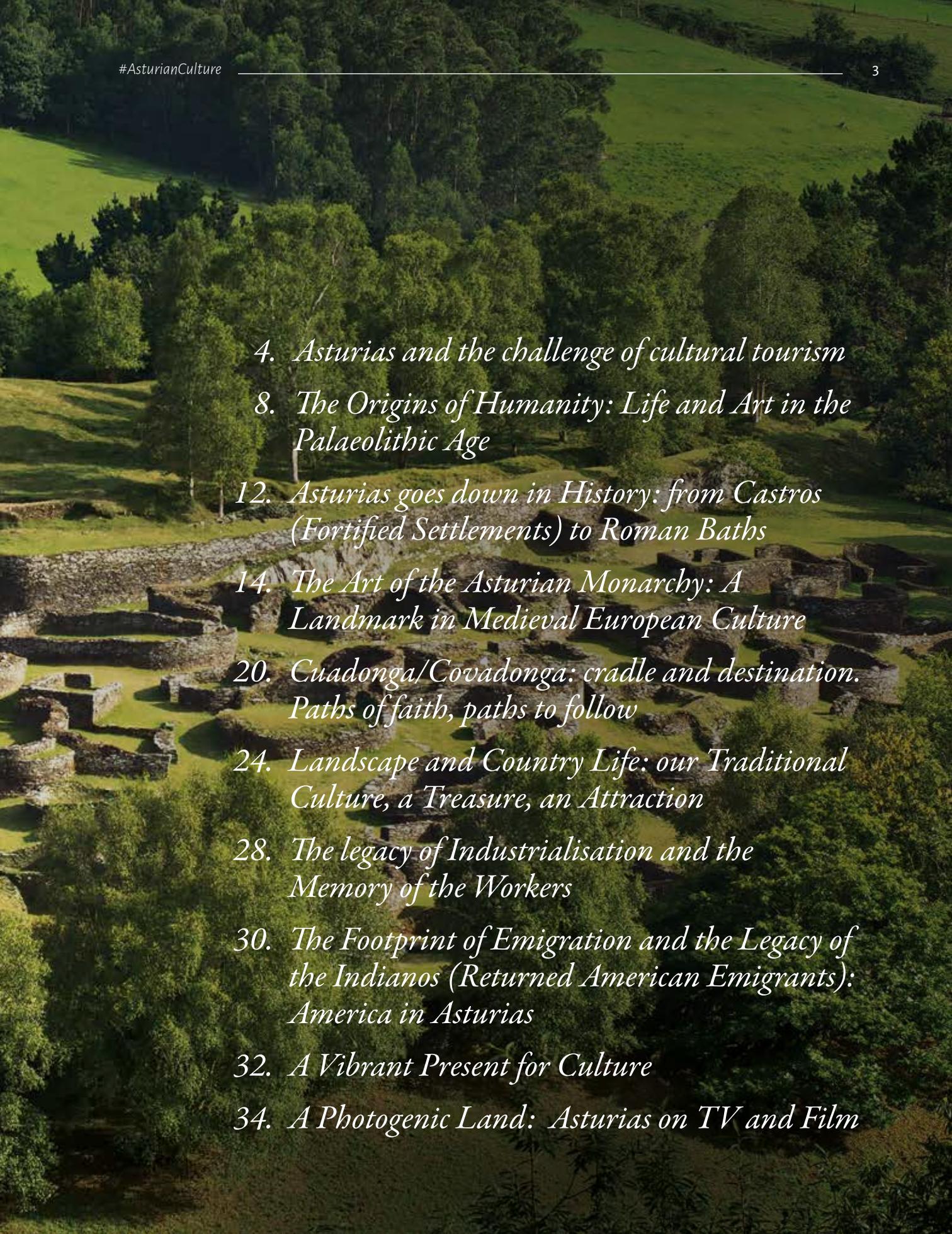
Therefore, whether you are visiting us for the first time or have returned to this earthly paradise and want to learn more about us, here is the key to a better understanding of our culture: this guide, written with the knowledge and love of a land we want to share with you, with photos which, although spectacular, cannot compare with the sensations you will experience when you visit the sites of Asturias in person.



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Castro de Coaña fortified settlement

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- An aerial photograph of a stone ruin, likely a castle or fortified settlement, situated in a lush green landscape. The ruins are made of dark stone and are surrounded by dense green trees and rolling hills. The scene is bathed in natural light, creating a vibrant and scenic view.
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It is a veritable challenge to guide the visitor who seeks the cultural essence of Asturias, because culture is knowledge, art, science, customs..., everything that characterises human beings and the peoples of the world.



"Recogiendo la Manzana" (Picking Apples). Nicanor Piñole (1923)

Asturias and the challenge of cultural tourism

We have selected various sites bursting with history, ancient paths, monuments of great artistic beauty, museum collections, deeply-felt traditional celebrations... because all together, they make Asturias a cultural paradise.

The cultural heritage of Asturias is not limited to a period or a style; so we have organised the information beginning with the origin of humanity and its artistic legacy in the Principality, which reached outstanding levels of quality in the Palaeolithic. Archaeology also provides us with interesting examples from the Neolithic period, with the study and restoration of fascinating sites such as the *castros* and showing us of the trace of the Roman occupation that introduced us to what we now call classical civilisation.



Statue of King Pelayo in the Royal Site of Covadonga

More recently, we come to the Middle Ages, with a Kingdom of Asturias that reached unprecedented importance in European culture and that also possesses great symbolic value: not just buildings, but outstanding constructions that housed other artistic treasures that we call "pre-Romanesque" and which today we observe with wonder. It was then that Cuadonga/Covadonga acquired such relevance in the formation of the territory and the Kingdom, which is why the Cave, the Sanctuary and imposing natural fortress are such a special attraction for those who visit us.



Tito Bustillo Cave Art Centre (Ribadesella)



Roman earring, 1st century AD. (Chao Samartín)

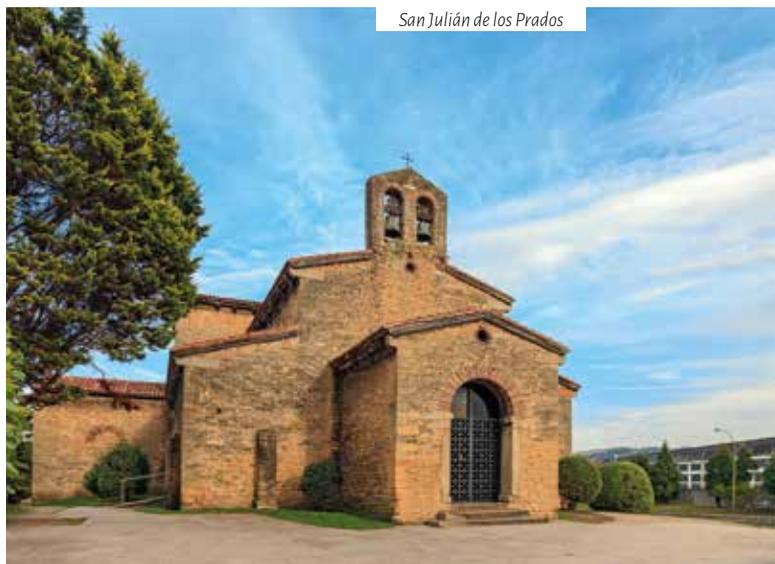


Old mining lamps

The 19th and 20th centuries were witness to an authentic revolution in Asturias. Coal triggered an industrial trend linked to metallurgy and other sectors, leaving a permanent mark on the mining basin and making the cities sites for production and working life. In areas where industry did not arrive, moving to America became an alternative for many Asturians, who on their return transformed their places of origin into picturesque Indianos's emigrant towns with functional schools and other services for their neighbours; that is why, from one end of Asturias to the other, the legacy of emigration is still to be seen.



Hórreo (granary)



San Julián de los Prados

Meanwhile, the historical trails, many of which are linked to pilgrimage and are of great historical significance, are ideal for exploring this beautiful region full of villages and towns where tradition is still very much alive: Asturian popular architecture can be seen in the houses, with their annexes and the *hórreos*, *paneras* or *cabazos* (typical granaries) grouped together in *quintanas* or *caserías* (farmhouses), but also in the numerous bridges, mills, fountains, washing places, churches and chapels;

a landscape and country life that invite us to enjoy the festivals or contemplate the unusual costumes that seem like part of an ancient world.



Indianos masions in Ribadesella/Ribeseya

The three cities of the central area, perfectly communicated with each other and with the rest of the region, offer outstanding features and attractions that encourage you to visit.

Oviedo is a beautiful medieval city with a remarkable Cathedral Basilica and important museums such as the Fine Arts Museum and the Archaeological Museum, with a middle-class urban widening that attracts visitors due to its layout and architectural quality. Gijón/Xixón is a lively modern city, with the traditional seafaring stronghold of Cimavilla and an attractive beach for taking a relaxing stroll or practising sports, as well as numerous cultural facilities and archaeological sites. Finally, Avilés is a unique city built around its estuary, with a historic centre of exceptional quality, in addition to the area of architectural innovation represented by the Niemeyer Centre, or the unusual attraction of one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the country.



Labour City of Culture



Juan Barjola Museum Collection

Many of those who visit us come with some image or another they have seen in a cinema or on TV, and the fact is that, in recent decades, Asturias has become a versatile film set, for both cinema and television. Therefore, we would like to guide you through these landscapes, so that you can feel like the characters of these films.

Thus, from prehistoric times to the present day, Asturias offers a wide range of resources covering different artistic styles, from cave paintings to the current avant-garde.



Filming in Bustiellu/Bustiello

If we add the well protected and preserved natural environment in which all this cultural heritage has been developed, you will understand why this guide is an invitation for you to travel, from East to West and from North to South, this land that many of us call paradise.



More information at:

asturiastourism.co.uk/AsturianCulture



The TITO BUSTILLO CAVE is a popular attraction in Ribadesella/Ribeseya: the karstic massif of Ardines, at the mouth of the river Sella, hid this cultural treasure until the discovery, in 1968, of these eleven ensembles of varied technique and covering a wide period of time, of which it is only possible to visit the main panel room, the most relevant because it contains nearly a hundred animal and symbolic representations. Access is limited in order to ensure its conservation, and to make up for these visitors are offered the resources of the nearby and well-equipped Cave Art Centre, a modern building in which numerous activities are offered, as well as the recommended visit to the Cueva de Ardines Cave, also occupied in prehistoric times and with a magnificent geological dome.

Violet horse with strips on his feet. Tito Bustillo Cave's central part of the Main Panel

The Origins of Humanity: Life and Art in the Palaeolithic Age

Our geographical position is such that we share with Cantabria and France a primitive and extraordinary artistic heritage: the first evidence of a spirituality and a capacity for graphic expression through painting or engravings that date back, in some cases, to the year 35,000 B.C.

These findings still have avenues of research to be explored, and five of these caves have been recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO. Some of them, located in the east and centre of Asturias, are equipped with attached facilities from which guided tours are organised to help visitors understand their extraordinary interest. We invite you to enter the caves that were home to those who preceded us in this natural paradise, but also to visit remarkable open-air funerary sites and soak up the magic of their beliefs and perhaps not so primitive life.

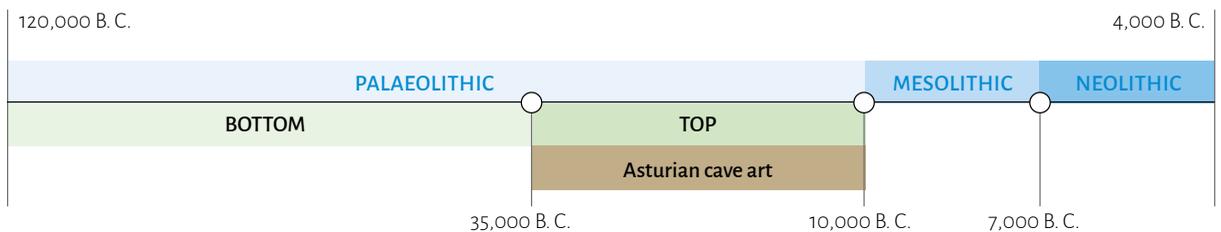


Deer. Main Panel of El Pindal Cave



On the eastern border of the Principality is the **El Pindal Cave** (Pimiango, Ribadedeva), very close to the Deva River and on the spectacular Cape of San Emeterio. Its open gallery overlooking the sea is partially visitable and it contains the remarkable zoomorphic representations of the Magdalenian period. It is equipped with an Interpretation Centre that provides a wealth of information on the history of this area and organises guided tours.

THE STONE AGE



Technique:

- 1 or 2 colours (black and red or yellow).
- Fingers, burnt branches or rudimentary brushes were used.

Theme:

- Animals (bulls, bison, horses, deer, bears...).
- Hands and sexual organs.
- Also abstract symbols.
- Fairly realistic style except with the human figures in which the sexual organs are exaggerated.

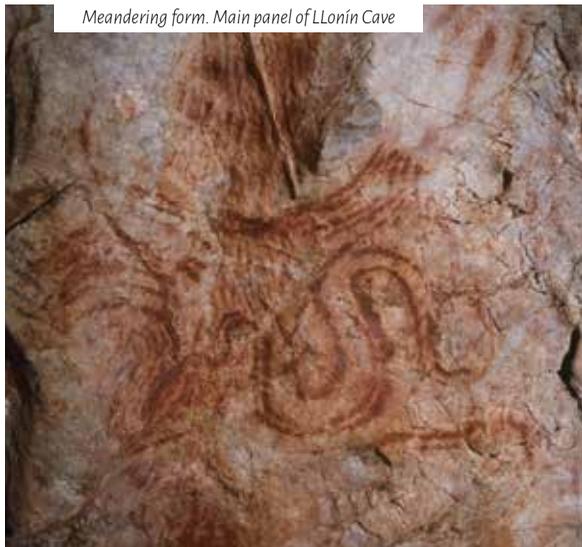




Paintings of the Camarín Chamber. Candamo Cave



The **La Peña Cave** (San Román, Candamo) is located in the lower course of the famous Nalón River, at the base of a limestone hill: it is the cave with the westernmost examples of Palaeolithic art in Europe. A short gallery leads to a large chamber that contains most of the art, in which the wall of the engravings and the so-called Camarín Chamber are the most outstanding features. It is essential a prior visit to the Interpretation Centre installed in the refurbished palace of the illustrious Álvaro de Valdés Bazán, from which the public who wish to enter the cave is directed and guided tours are organised.



Meandering form. Main panel of Llonín Cave

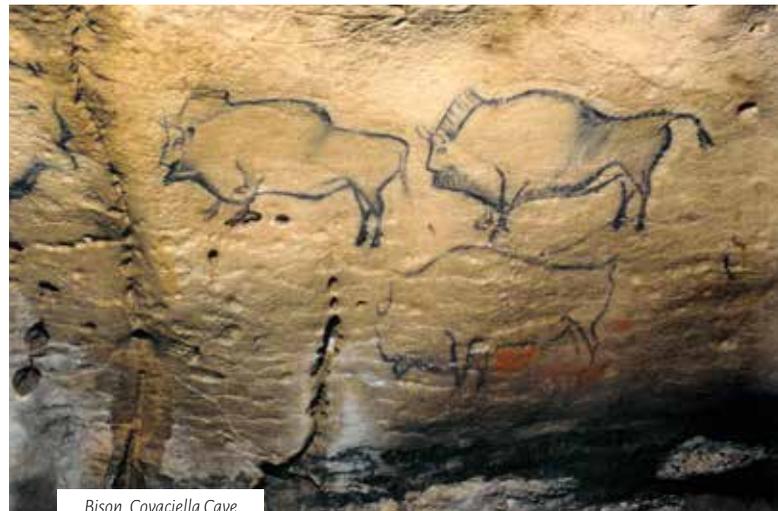


The **Llonín and Covaciella** caves complete this list of caves recognised as World Heritage, although the public is not allowed to enter for reasons of conservation and accessibility.

However, other sites from similar periods and with interesting artistic features can be visited in Asturias, enriching the tourist experience.

Experience and authenticity are assured.

We want to highlight here **La Loja** (El Mazo, Peñamellera Baja), with its attached Educational room, whose main panel exhibits five aurochs and a horse scratched on the manganese in the Magdalenian period, and the **El Buxu** cave (Cardes, Cangas de Onís), with a wealth of zoomorphic, anthropomorphic and geometric decoration, dating back to the Solutrean period.



Bison. Covaciella Cave

Carefully designed by the La Ponte Ecomuseum, there is a cultural tour, guided by professionals, around the village of Villanueva (Santo Adriano), with two areas that are important for their antiquity and uniqueness, both of which can be visited: in the **Conde or Fornu cave**, beyond the Aurignacian linear engravings, the strata reveal the coexistence of the last two human species to face the European glaciation (Neanderthals and Cromagnons). Meanwhile, stylistic continuity can be observed in the figurative art on the **Santo Adriano Rock Shelter**, which includes zoomorphic engravings.

Another site of interest is the beautiful surroundings of the **Idol of Peña Tú**, involving a fifteen-minute climb on foot from Puertas de Vidiago (Llanes). It is linked to a funerary area formed by 56 tumuli, spread over the Sierra Plana de la Borbolla Mountain Range. Sheltered at the bottom of a sandstone crag there are engravings and paintings, the most remarkable of which is the one known as the "idol", accompanied by another in the shape of a dagger.



If you are looking for modern facilities with an attractive, very participative programme that disseminates the art and culture of the Upper European Palaeolithic, even for children, you will find it in the **PREHISTORY PARK**, located in San Salvador d'Alesga/San Salvador de Alesga (Teverga). It presents a carefully designed exhibition for the enjoyment and education of visitors: after going through the visitor reception area, the gallery takes you back in time to discover ancient art, iconography and various artistic techniques, with faithful reproductions of paintings, as well as furniture and other artefacts. The visit ends with the so-called Cueva de las Cuevas Cave, where, in semi-darkness, the atmosphere and conditions of three impressive European ensembles of this cave art are recreated: the Tito Bustillo polychrome room, the fourth panel of the black room of Niaux (France) and the Camarín chamber of the Candamo cave.

The Palaeolithic period also offers other interesting features in our region, apart from paintings and engravings.

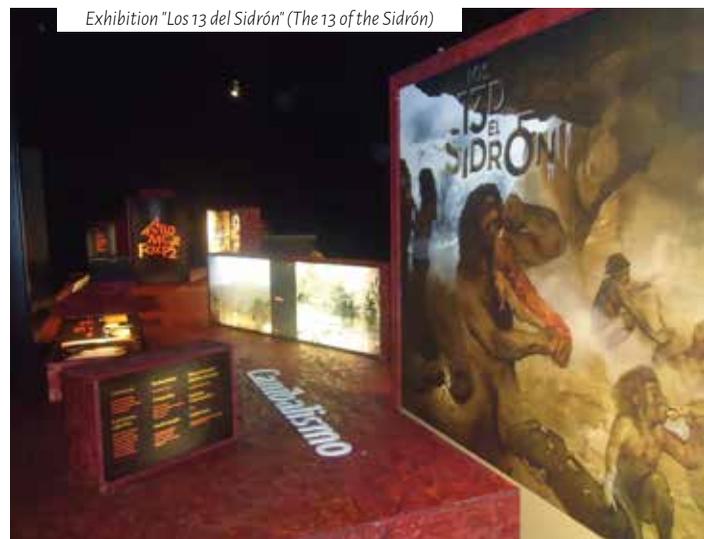
Burial mounds, such as those surrounding the Idol of Peña Tú, form landmarks on the terrain and are organically integrated into the landscape. A typical example can be found on the central coast, between Gijón and Carreño: the **necropolis of Monte Areo**, on a raised plateau with magnificent views over the Cabo Peñas region. In this ancient place of worship of the dead there are two outstanding dolmen areas (El Cierru Los Llanos and Les Huelgues de San Pablo), which are described in the nearby Neolithic educational room, in the Guimarán-Valle Rural Initiative Centre.



Megaloceros giganteus. Avín Glacial Fauna Interpretation Centre

Asturias is also a key region in research into our most mysterious ancestors: the Neanderthals.

In 1994, cavers found a pair of jaws, which led to a major research programme that documented the presence of thirteen individuals and provided important insights into their way of life and beliefs. This has been carefully reproduced in the exhibition "Los 13 del Sidrón" (The 13 of the Sidrón), installed in the **Visitor Reception Centre of Piloña "Tierra de Asturcones"**, in L'Infiestu/Infiesto.

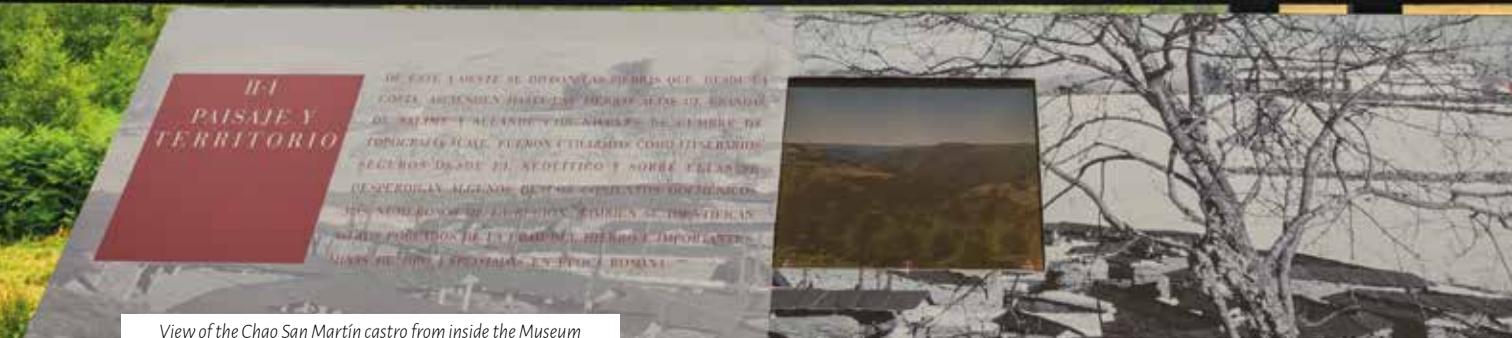


Finally, the natural conditions of this period are documented in the **Glacial Fauna Interpretation Centre**, located in Avín (Onís), in the old forge and **Cuevona de La Peruyal**.



More information at:
asturiastourism.co.uk/
AsturianCulture/RockArt

Asturias goes down in History: from Castros (Fortified Settlements) to Roman Baths



View of the Chao San Martín castro from inside the Museum

When the Romans arrived in Asturias, they found much of the territory organised into small settlements, the castros: the numerous remains of this castro culture and of the later Roman period are very important cultural treasures that you cannot miss. Archaeological sites in places of outstanding natural beauty, in some cases with specialised facilities or guided tours, are an enticement to go beyond the limits of the excellent **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF ASTURIAS** (Oviedo), an essential prologue or epilogue to this adventure.

If you would like to start by discovering how the Asturians lived in the past, you should travel to the West to visit **Chao San Martín**, an outstanding site with a museum in the municipality of Grandas de Salime. Traces of the Bronze Age can be seen, followed by a fortified settlement or castro dating from around the 7th century BC, which was later transformed by the Roman influence (roman baths and domus). The medieval occupation of this site, with a necropolis, completes the historical sequence revealed by archaeologists. The site is now open to visitors in a magnificent setting.



Os Castros (Taramundi)

There are numerous, magnificent examples of castros, especially in the Eo-Navia basin, and almost all of them can be freely visited.

The classic Castro de **Coaña** stands out for its didactic educational room and explanation of the site, while in the summer you should not miss the guided tours of **Os Castros** (Taramundi).

The Roman civilisation dominated Europe and reached us via the routes opened up by the legions, which facilitated trade, based on the precious metals extracted from our mines, and connected us with the world. The Via Carisa (BIC) or the so-called Camín de la Mesa are historic passages with defensive fortifications and camp areas. The **Astur Romano**

Festival in Carabanzo, which takes place in summer, recalls in an entertaining way the resistance of the local population to the invader: here, for one day, the other side can be victorious.

Isolated Roman villas or larger settlements have left their mark on Asturias: we suggest you visit the thermal **baths of Valduno** (Las Regueras), next to the parish church of Santa Eulalia, belonging to a villa from the 1st century A.D. and visible from the outside. In Gijón/Xixón, the large **Campo Valdés** complex, next to San Lorenzo beach, exhibits public baths converted into a "site museum". Without leaving the municipality of Gijón, you can also visit the **Roman Villa of Veranes**, where the most outstanding feature is the mosaic flooring in one of the rooms of this important site; or the **Campa Torres** archaeological park, where you can learn about the transition from protohistory to Roman times.

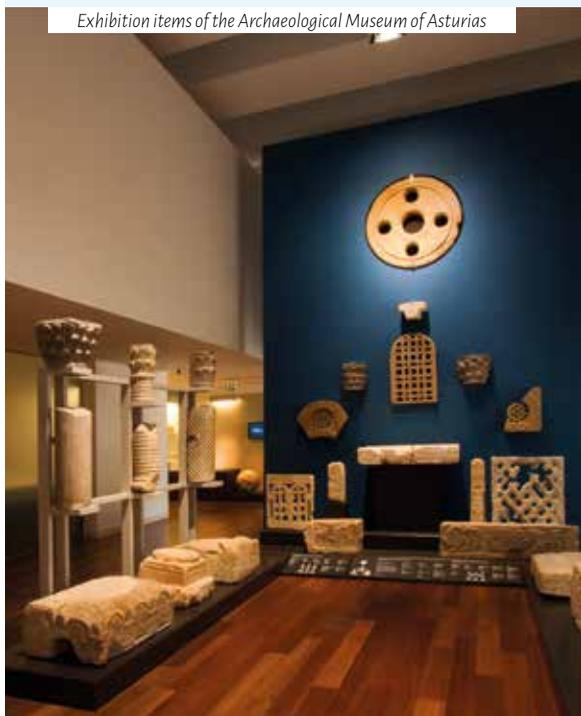


Campo Valdés Roman Baths

The mineral deposits that attracted the attention of the Romans will also impress you. At the foot of the Angliru, a legendary cycling peak, you will discover a landscape of mine shafts and ancient galleries: these are the **Texeo Mines** (Llamo/L.lamo, Riosa), rich in copper, but also in cobalt and nickel. Information panels and a sculptural viewpoint await you on the attractive pedestrian route.

If you are interested in the history of this region, you should visit the renovated **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF ASTURIAS** (Oviedo): next to the old cloister of the monastery of San Vicente, its original premises, a modern building was built with simple lines and filtered light in which a large permanent exhibition is displayed, ranging from prehistoric to medieval times, with numerous artefacts and modern museum techniques. One of its rooms features Asturian archaeological resources, among which those that are World Heritage Sites stand out. The recreation of the cell of Father Feijoo, an illustrious Asturian and abbot of this ancient monastery, is something you should not miss during your visit.

Exhibition items of the Archaeological Museum of Asturias



Panning at the Gold Museum of Asturias

However, gold was our main attraction for the Romans: more than 50,000 kilos of this precious metal were extracted from Asturias between the 1st and 4th centuries AD.

To test your panning skills, you can go to the **Gold Museum**, in Navelgas (Tineo), with a workshop that will appeal to young and old alike. Another good option is the **Aula del Oro**, an interpretation center in Belmonte/Balmonite, where the development of mining and metallurgical techniques is exhibited. Finally, the natural monument of **As Covas de Andía Caves** (El Franco), with guided tours, takes you into a forested limestone landscape, perforated by ancient gold galleries from the Roman period.

It might seem that the term pre-Romanesque defines a period that is still incomplete, prior to the hegemonic Romanesque; however, it actually refers to the brilliant final stage of traditions that go back to paleochristian art, that stem from the classical world and that demonstrate Asturias' participation in the European cultural avant-garde of the Early Middle Ages. We possess works dated between the 8th and 10th centuries that attest to the development of the Kingdom of Asturias, comparable to that of the Byzantine or Carolingian courts, but also of small monastic communities, demonstrating an intellectual wealth whose artistic legacy we now appreciate. These promoters had the backing of expert artists, with great technical mastery and symbolic capacity, integrating sculpture and painting or safeguarding the delicate goldwork.

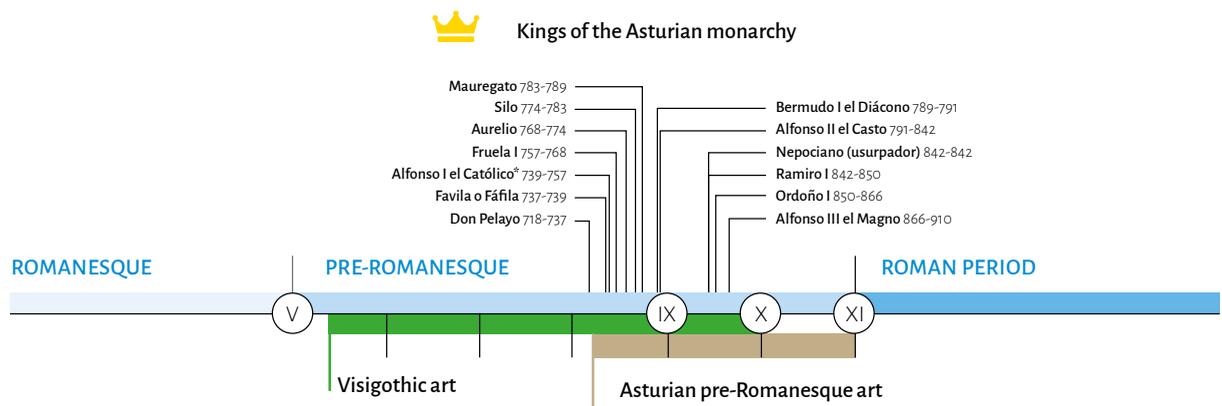


The Art of the Asturian Monarchy: A Landmark in Medieval European Culture

The motto "Asturias, Natural Paradise" (the longest-lasting Spanish tourist brand), along with the well-known logo, created by the designer Arcadi Moradell in the 1980s, brilliantly sum up the essence of this region - its geographical diversity and the symbiosis between nature and culture, represented by the most characteristic window of the Asturian Pre-Romanesque - which has become the emblem of all Asturians and the heritage of all those who visit us.

It is considered to be the most complete and homogeneous ensemble of late medieval architecture in Western Europe, geographically concentrated and exceptionally well preserved in its original state, factors that make it unique. It was developed at the height of the splendour of the emirate of Cordoba and transcended its time, influencing later European architecture. Not

surprisingly, back in 1985 Unesco added several of these works to its World Heritage list, extending the list in 1998 to the six ninth-century Asturian monuments that enjoy this status today. In addition to these, there are other outstanding constructions and works of art to be discovered in various municipalities.



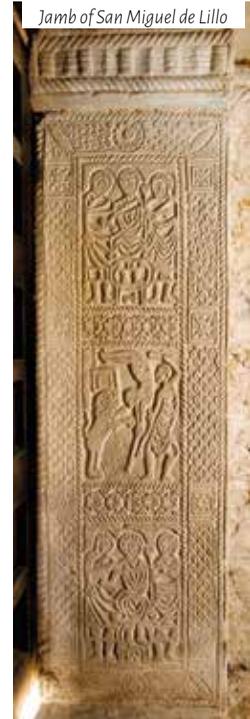
Highlights of pre-Romanesque art:

- Constructions with semicircular arches.
- Masonry walls with external buttresses.
- Basilica plan with three naves with the central nave of a different height from the side naves.
- Impressive pictorial decoration.
- Lattices in the windows of three arches at the leading end and central chambers.





San Miguel de Lillo



Jamb of San Miguel de Lillo



Exhibition at the Asturias Pre-Romanesque Centre



After leaving the **Asturias Pre-Romanesque Reception and Interpretation Centre**, you can take the guided tour to **San Miguel de Lillo** and **Santa María del Naranco**, both Unesco World Heritage Sites, on this hill that dominated the early medieval Oviedo and where Ramiro I carried out major building work on a royal residence.

The church of San Miguel was an ambitious work of which approximately one third now remains: after partially collapsing at the end of the 9th century, the remaining structure was shored up and a modest chapel built on the eastern flank, making the ensemble difficult to understand.

Asturias Pre-Romanesque Reception and Interpretation Centre

Located on the slopes of Mount Naranco, this outstanding example of cultural heritage is well worth a visit: a wide range of museum exhibits (panels, chronograms, photos, models, audiovisual media...) as well as specialised bibliography and frequent workshops for children.

Its sculptural adornment features reused pieces; it has a pair of original lattices and includes about twenty column bases with symbolic representations of the evangelists in sections defined by the tracery, representing a landmark in the early European Middle Ages. You will be welcomed by the monolithic porch jambs, carved with various motifs of Roman circus games, as striking as the samples of their original painting that survive inside.

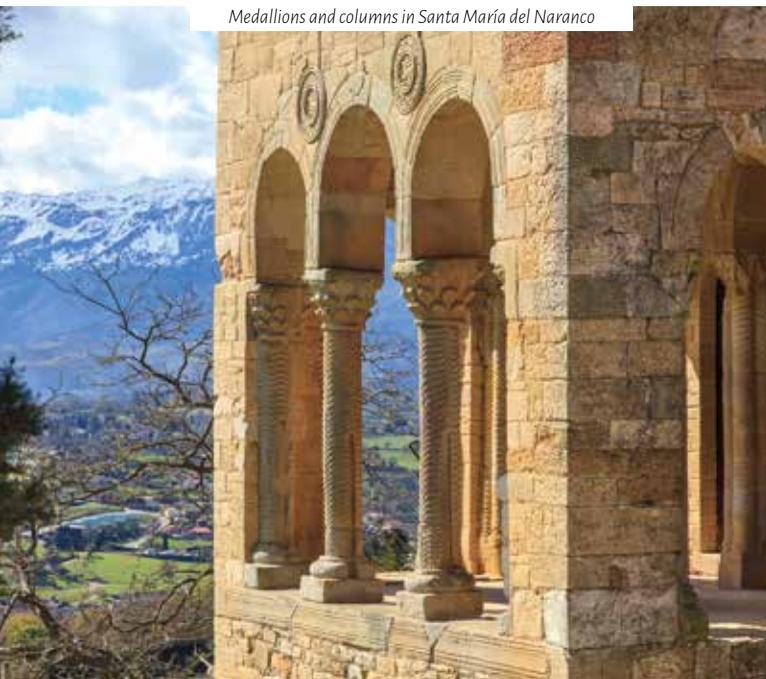


A short stroll takes you to **Santa María del Naranco**, an outstanding work that is still enigmatic today, as it does not match the typical architecture of other churches. Originally, it must have had a secular purpose, although its religious use is documented from the early 12th to the early 20th centuries.

This splendid monument has a strictly symmetrical layout, with a mathematical harmony that complements the form of its numerous windows.

It consists of two floors with three rooms on each of them, where the sculptural adornment is surprisingly homogeneous and profuse, both on the columns and on the 32 unique medallions, plaques, crosses and traceries.

Medallions and columns in Santa María del Naranco



In the centre of Oviedo, there are other outstanding buildings to be seen: firstly, you can visit **Santullano** (San Julián de los Prados), a large, well-proportioned church with a triple portico, triple nave and triple apse. Its floor plan is that of a basilica (it has three naves) and its external appearance, clad to conceal the rigging, was different from what we see today.



Interior of San Julián de los Prados

Its interior is quite remarkable, as it is the most important early medieval pictorial ensemble in Western Europe, both for its size and state of conservation and for its varied repertoire (geometric, floral, architectural) in the form of frescoes following patterns from classical Pompeii and late antiquity.



A short distance away is the **Foncalada**, strange and mysterious even today: a unique example of early medieval water architecture in Europe, humbly nestled among the urban fabric, dating from the first half of the 9th century. Where the waters that supplied this complex flowed from, where the canal that fed it ran (only a part was discovered in the excavations of the 1990s) and what purpose its construction served are still unknown today. Before you stands the edicule or temple, with an inscription on its front that is still legible, before which lies an elongated pond.



Foncalada Fountain



Angels' Cross



Outside the capital, in the municipality of Lena and in a charming rural setting, is **Santa Cristina de Lena**, which has in its vicinity a specific educational room, installed in a beautiful old railway station.

The list of monuments recognised by UNESCO and located in Oviedo is completed by the Holy Chamber: an ark and treasure, because besides its undeniable architectural value it contains the most precious pieces of goldwork of this period, with an enormous symbolic value for Asturias.



Inside the Salvador Basilica Cathedral in Oviedo, with a whole lesson in the history of art carved into its walls, is the Holy Chamber, made up of two superimposed and independent chapels: the lower one, known as the Santa Leocadia Chapel, is a vaulted crypt, with a nave and presbytery, which houses the tombs of the holy martyrs Eulogio and Leocadia. Above it there is another sanctuary known as the chapel of San Miguel, successfully rebuilt after the 1934 Revolution and extremely well restored, thus recovering the 12th-century vault supported by columns on whose shafts an apostolate, a masterpiece of peninsular Romanesque art, is carved. Inside can be found the Holy Shroud and **three goldsmithing masterpieces** from the 9th and 10th centuries: the Angels' Cross, the earliest of the three; the Victory Cross, which is the emblem of Asturias, and the Agathas' Box.



Outside view of the Holy Chamber

This church, also designated by UNESCO, is unique for its complex spatial layout, which is due to its use by a monastic community, confirmed by the rich iconography of its interior carvings or by the technical mastery of its design, and which can now be enjoyed in its full splendour after various restorations.



Santa Cristina de Lena

The most outstanding features of the interior include a tribune, the result of an early renovation, and, above all, the triumphal arch that delimits the presbytery, with three windows over reused columns, whose tympanums contain openwork lattices and beneath which are the chancel boards and barrettes with incomplete inscriptions resulting from a plundering. The mystery and grandeur of church architecture in an incomparable setting. Nevertheless, a perfectly organised, deeply spiritual society, with an open mentality and aware of the value of art in representing power; Asturians who interact with other territories and governments, thus asserting their own character... all this cannot be represented by these six pieces chosen by Unesco, however exceptional they may be.

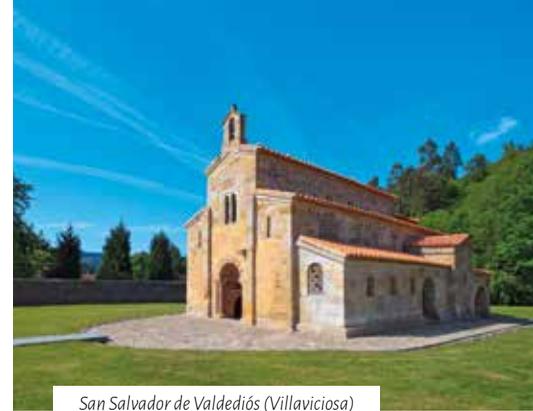
You will almost certainly want to discover more, and we therefore recommend you other buildings and works that you cannot miss. In the Cathedral itself you can find the



Pre-Romanesque Museum (Salas)



Victory Cross



San Salvador de Valdediós (Villaviciosa)

Old **Tower of San Salvador** a sturdy fortification, probably contemporaneous with the Holy Chamber, used to defend it from Norman or Moorish attacks; and in the nearby church of **San Tirso** you can see a front wall with a beautiful, reused triforium window, which is an icon of ancient Oviedo. Within the municipality of Oviedo it is also worth visiting another church, **Santa María de Bendones**, whose restoration was very controversial.

In this central area of Asturias two basilicas are worthy of attention: that of **San Pedro**, in the **meanders of the Nora** (Las Regueras), and that of **Santo Adriano de Tuñón** (municipality of Santo Adriano), containing interesting pictorial remains and with guided tours from the La Ponte Ecomuseum.

Santiago de Gobiendes, in Colunga, and **San Salvador de Valdediós** (which is extraordinarily well-preserved, and is very close to the monastery, which cannot be missed), **San Salvador de Priesca**, **Santa María de Arbazal** and **San Andrés de Bedriñana**, all of them in Villaviciosa, are also very attractive examples. **Santianes de Pravia** (Pravia), with its neighboring Pre-Romanesque Museum, had a unique foundational tombstone, known as the acrostic of King Silo. There are also isolated features, fragments of missing churches, sometimes of very high quality: the set found in the church of **San Martín** (Salas) can be seen in the Pre-Romanesque Museum of the capital of the municipality, and you can see an excellent finely worked carved column slab in **San Tisu/San Tirso** (Candamo) and a valuable altar in **Quinzanas** (Pravia).

We conclude this tour of the early medieval Kingdom of Asturias overlooking the sea from the **castle of Gauzón**,

located on the Peñón de Raíces (Castrillón). An **archaeological site** with an ancient fortress on the original coastline, an advance stronghold of the court of Oviedo against pirate attacks; there are guided tours of the site and an Interpretation Centre next to the former monastery of Santa María de la Merced. Behind its imposing walls was located a palace for the use of Alfonso III and Doña Jimena, which included the goldsmith workshop where the Victory Cross was made in 908. It is currently undergoing a long process of archaeological excavation, combined with the restoration of its monumental features, which will undoubtedly yield new data to learn about the origins of the Asturian monarchy.



More information at:

asturiastourism.co.uk/

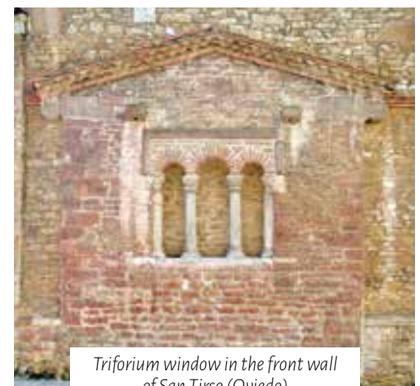
[AsturianCulture/Pre-romanescque](https://www.asturiastourism.co.uk/AsturianCulture/Pre-romanescque)



Santianes de Pravia (Pravia)



San Pedro del Nora (Las Regueras)



Triforium window in the front wall of San Tirso (Oviedo)

The geographical conditions that make Asturias a stronghold of nature in which mountains and sea rub shoulders have been preserved since ancient times by different means: first by Roman roads, then by medieval roads, some for religious pilgrimage, and finally by roads and railway cuttings that have connected us with our environment in each period. Some of these historical routes have been revived in recent times by proving to be excellent tourist trails: the path followed by so many pilgrims was also a trade route and cultural link between different territories, and has now been effectively recovered. And speaking of faith and history, you must also visit the Royal Site of Covadonga, the most visited landmark in Asturias, which provides an insight into the origin of the Asturian royal lineage and the legends and chronicles that seek to explain the beginning of the Reconquest.

Cuadonga/Covadonga, cradle and destination. Paths of faith, paths to follow

The Cuadonga/Covadonga complex is harmoniously set in a rugged landscape, and its foundational core is a natural cavity in Mount Auseva under which flows a waterfall with the waters of the river Las Mestas immersed in the Vega de Orandi, known as the "chorrón", which flows into a pond and spring (known as the Fuente de los Siete Caños (Spring of the Seven Spouts) or, more popularly, the Fuente del Matrimonio (Spring of Marriage). Another waterfall, the so-called "ponytail", also roars spectacularly after rainy days, pouring its waters over the Prince's Park.

This combination of cave and spring could be at the origin of the name itself, which many refer to as cave and lady, since from here the Virgin would protect the Asturian warriors who managed to repel the Moorish attack, thus establishing at this site the Kingdom of Asturias, of which Pelayo will be the first leader.

Access to the most traditional **Holy Cave** involves climbing the "stairs of promises", which many pilgrims climb on their knees in fulfilment of a promise: it has a Romanesque-inspired chapel from the 1940s with the image of the Virgin of Covadonga, which we popularly and affectionately call "la Santina" (sixteenth-century work donated by the Cathedral of Oviedo, which replaces the original one, destroyed, like the rest of the works on this site in a very serious fire in 1777),



Our Lady of Covadonga "La Santina"



The Holy Cave

In terms of faith and paths, in the case of Asturias there is an indisputable milestone called **Cuadonga/Covadonga**: cradle and destination, a landmark for those born here, a centre of attraction that visitors cannot miss. Its value transcends the Christian faith, as there is proof of an ancestral cult in which the wonders of nature led people to believe in the invisible, and it is located in a magnificent setting (protected as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO), the scene of fundamental episodes in the history of our country and endowed with a remarkable monumental heritage. "**Centenary of Covadonga 2018**" was the motto that in this exceptional year combined a triple commemoration with numerous activities: that of the 1,300 years of the creation of the Kingdom of Asturias, the centenary of the canonical Coronation of Our Lady of Covadonga, and the centenary of the creation of what was then called Covadonga Mountain National Park, the first protected natural area in Spain.



Sculpture of King Pelayo and the Basilica Collegiate Church of San Fernando

accompanied by meticulously carved religious furniture. The sepulchres found here are those of Pelayo himself, his wife, his sister and Alfonso I and his wife (Pelayo's daughter).

Another must-see is the **Basilica** itself, a magnificent temple that seems to defy gravity and dominates the landscape majestically, with its characteristic pink colour, typical of the griotte limestone of the mountains, which makes it merge perfectly into its natural environment. It was designed by F. Aparici, was consecrated in 1901 and is neo-Romanesque in style, very much in keeping with the tastes of its time. It is preceded by an esplanade with the emblematic 1965 **sculpture of Pelayo** by Gerardo Zaragoza, something which has to be seen along the way. **The Collegiate Church of San Fernando** and the **Museum of Covadonga** cannot be missed when visiting the Royal Site, nor can the spectacular route that starts from the **marble lions** that guard the entrance to the Sanctuary and crosses the beautiful **Prince's Park**,



Collegiate Church of San Fernando



Prince's Park

defined by a magnificent path over wooden bridges through lush vegetation, passing by important buildings such as the old **Pilgrims' Inn**.

Given their religious and cultural significance, there are many pilgrim's ways leading to Cuadonga/Covadonga that are still travelled today by believers and athletes.

Original crown of Our Lady of Covadonga Museum of Covadonga



The **pilgrim's way**, seven stages covering the 104 kilometres between Oviedo and Cuadonga/ Covadonga; the **andariega route**, which reaches this destination from Gijón/Xixón over 75 kilometres spread over three days, and the **historic route linking Llanes and Cuadonga/ Covadonga**, which passes through natural landscapes of outstanding beauty. There are also other paths in the surroundings of this Royal Site which are less physically demanding but of great enjoyment for the visitor: the **path from Muñigo to Cuadonga/Covadonga**, the **trail to the Cruz de Priena** and the one that climbs the **Vega de Orandi**, together with the busy **path to the Lakes of Covadonga**, which beckon you from the heights to put the finishing touch to your visit to this magical place.



"San Salvador" in the Cathedral

But the path par excellence is the now hegemonic **Camino de Santiago**, whose passage through Oviedo was a foundational milestone: it was our Asturian king Alfonso II who went to Iria Flavia to see the newly discovered sepulchre of the Apostle, becoming the first pilgrim to Compostela and inaugurating the **Original Way**. As the saying goes: "He who goes to Santiago and not to the Salvador visits the vassal and not the Lord", which is why the Holy Basilica in Oviedo is a major milestone in this pilgrims' way that is travelled for various reasons, but with an underlying component of spirituality and personal improvement to overcome the obstacles along the way.



Monsacro Chapels

A route that crosses a variety of landscapes and is full of spiritual, symbolic and transcendental features, on which you will discover not only the Cathedral of Oviedo, but also various churches of medieval origin, old hospitals, historical bridges, beautiful villages and picturesque towns, while walking at a gentle pace oblivious to the hustle and bustle of the modern world. As far as infrastructure is concerned, various public and private hostels and tourist offices will attend to the pilgrims in their daily needs.

The Pilgrimage Routes

The name **Camino de Santiago** (St. James's Way) covers a wide range of routes in Asturias: on the one hand, we have the Original Way (or *Camino del Interior*, which goes from Oviedo to the port of Acebo) and, on the other, the **Coastal Way** (crossing the municipalities bathed by the Cantabrian Sea, from Llanes to Vegadeo), which includes a connecting branch to the capital, from Villaviciosa, in two stages. Both the Original Way and the Coastal Way were declared World Heritage by UNESCO. In addition, we must consider the so-called **Camino del Salvador**, which links the French Way from León with the Original Way in Oviedo: it is organised in three stages and is considered to be of Cultural Interest.

There are also other important routes in the region: one of them connects the Cathedral with the chapels of El Monsacro, an example of communion between nature and medieval culture in the municipality of Morcín, crossing the municipality of Ribera de Arriba. It is the **Route of the Relics or "of the 20,000 steps"**, which links those sacred vestiges of the Holy Chamber with what is believed to have been their original location in the mountains, from where they were transferred by Alfonso II the Chaste: seventeen kilometres separate these two important landmarks of the history and art of the Principality.

The so-called mountain **Route of San Melchor** consists of three stages, between Oviedo and Cortes (Quirós), where the only Asturian saint was born: following the foothills of the Sierra del Aramo, it leads to the monastery located in his native town, crossing Ribera de Arriba and Morcín, with a variant that leads to the town of Bermiego.

These historical routes are not of exclusive interest to pilgrims: the visit to Asturias may include partial routes of one or more stages for the cultural and natural enjoyment of the visitor.



More information at:
asturiastourism.co.uk/Covadonga



asturiastourism.co.uk/StJamesWay



The highly praised landscape of Asturias cannot be understood without taking into account the imprint of the country folk on the terrain: it is the result of the way we have occupied and worked on the land while respecting the natural environment for thousands of years. Even in places that might seem untouched, the expert gaze discovers the subtle effects of human activity, using its resources wisely in a sustainable way, something as traditional as it is modern. Asturian territory has been occupied for centuries in the form of scattered caserías (farmhouses), villages and towns that always welcome visitors: this habitat, as dispersed as it is varied, never fails to surprise. You should not fail to visit these settlements during your stay in Asturias as they preserve traditions, possess valuable ethnographic features and conserve popular architecture, in which our hórreos (typical granary), paneras and cabazos, which are our most distinctive landmark, are always present.

Landscape and Country Life: our Traditional Culture, a Treasure, an Attraction

As an integral part of our landscape, the hórreo has become an authentic symbol of our land, because it is both a treasure chest and a treasure. A work of carpentry assembled with care, capable of protecting the harvest from humidity and rodents, but also serving as a pantry and storeroom, it was also common to use it as a spare room for the traditional house, of which it is always an essential feature. The Asturian model of raised granaries, built by humans since the invention of agriculture, are of a special and almost perfect type: they arose in the Middle Ages, with a square floor plan and a pyramidal roof, with harmonious proportions and tremendous stability, and countless examples dating back to the 16th century are still standing.

There are several ways to learn the secrets of this emblematic construction and its closest relatives, such as the panera (more modern than the hórreo, they have a rectangular floor plan and are used to store the large maize harvests) and the cabazo (a north-western maize drying shed).



Hórreo Interpretation Centre

First of all, you should visit the **Hórreo Interpretation Centre in Cüeñu/Bueño** (Ribera de Arriba), equipped with various information resources (such as an enormous model for grown-ups and children to assemble and excellent audiovisual material), perfectly completed by a walk through this central Model Village which has 47 hórreos and paneras. You should also not fail to visit certain Asturian towns with impressive collections in their beautiful houses: **Tuña**, in Tineo; **Caliao/Caleao**, in Caso; **Barcia**, in Valdés, and, of course, **Espinaréu/Espinaredo**, in Piloña, and **Sietes**, in Villaviciosa, are not to be missed. Wherever you go, you will see them and fall in love with them.



Museum of the Pueblu d'Asturies

The **Pueblu d'Asturies Museum** (Gijón/Xixón) is the custodian of tradition and its flagship institution: since its creation in 1968, its mission has been to preserve and disseminate the historical memory of our region, in its social and political aspects. This large landscaped and tree-lined estate houses a splendid collection of pieces in various different buildings: the former Asturias Pavilion at Expo-92, with its exhibition on domestic life in this land; the González de la Vega house, which houses the Bagpipe Museum, and the Valdés house, where the Asturias Photo Library is located,



Grandas de Salime Ethnographic Museum

as well as diverse traditional constructions, among which hórreos and paneras of various periods stand out, and the bowling alley or "el tendayu". It is the headquarters of the **MEDA Network**, made up of interesting facilities scattered throughout the Principality, which are excellent reasons for you to cross it from one end to the other: **thirteen very interesting ethnographic museums** distributed throughout Asturias, from **Grandas de Salime** to **Quirós**, from **Somiedo** to **Gozón**, or from **Caso** to **Navia**.

Water, fire and wind in the west of Asturias

Centuries ago Asturias starting using the earth, water and fire as resources to develop techniques that turned the west of this region into a place where the hard work carried out in mills and forges achieved high standards of quality, creating a cultural heritage halfway between craftsmanship and industry, which we have been able to preserve until today.



Taramundi Knives



Os Teixois

Beyond the Navia basin and up to where the River Eo marks the border of our Principality, there are many places with attractive facilities in an area that can boast to be the cradle of Spanish rural tourism. We encourage you to let yourself be captivated by the spell and force of water in the **OS TEIXOIS ETNOGRAPHICAL COMPLEX** (Taramundi), equipped with a variety of hydraulic devices and declared an Asset of Cultural Interest: it consists of a trip hammer, a mill, a grinding wheel, a small power station and a fuller.

In the municipality of Taramundi there is also the attractive **Museum of the Mazonovo Mills**, where eighteen mills are exhibited, or the **House of Water**, in Bres, which is housed in an old school of excellent workmanship set up by the *Indianos* returned American emigrants.

Iron work defined the future of these lands, and it is still possible to see that traditional craft in authentic locations where this know-how is still conserved: it is well worth a visit to the old **forge of Mazonovo**, an 18th century trip hammer in Santalla d'Ozcós/Santa Eulalia de Oscos, where tourists can forge a nail and take it home as a souvenir, or the **forge in Suarón or Meredo**, set in a beautiful recreational area by the river in A Veiga/Vegadeo.

Santalla d'Ozcós/Santa Eulalia de Oscos is also **home to the Birthplace of the Marquis of Sargadelos**, an exhibition space dedicated to the life and work of this illustrious industrialist who built one of the first cast iron foundries and earthenware factories in Spain here in the late 18th century.

All kinds of tools were forged with iron, especially knives.

To enter the world of the "navalleiros" (knife makers) you have to return to Taramundi and visit the **House Museum of Traditional Cutlery**, in Pardiñas, or the **Ethnographic Museum in Esquíuos**, where you can contemplate its fascinating collection and have the opportunity to visit a renowned workshop where the traditional and famous knives are still made.



Village scenes

Enjoying our Heritage: Feeling and Sharing the Fiesta

The feelings of a country land and its people, amongst other things, can be traced in its celebrations: the festival bursts and embraces everyone, locals and foreigners. In Asturias, traditional festivals continue to be genuine and are shared with extraordinary generosity with foreigners thus becoming important reasons to come back. It is not just joy: there is a ritual background, a sense of belonging from in which strong emotions arose.

Asturian celebrations have the uniqueness of our Atlantic cultural background, over which the patina of Christianisation is superimposed; they are rooted in nature, in its rhythms and in its symbols.

On a day of festivity there is a liturgy that is repeated: **the romería or "jira"**, a pilgrimage to the sacred place (a temple that is usually associated with a tree, cave, fountain or geographical landmark probably associated with pre-Christian worship), followed by a procession in which an image is accompanied by the "ramu" (wooden frame decorated with laurel or flowers, bread and ribbons). Both are carried on foot by members of the community and the bread is then auctioned ("**la puya'l ramu**") to the highest bidder, thus raising funds for the celebration of the next festival. The beginning of the fiesta is marked by letting off "volaores" or rockets that resound thunderously through the

narrow valleys until the food arrives, based on traditional dishes, shared with family or friends and to the sound of the music that precedes the street party: bagpipes and drums accompanying the traditional Asturian song or tonada. Some special domestic chores, traditions linked to the harvest, the sacrifice of livestock or the production of cider, which took place in the farmhouse in a festive manner and with the participation of several generations, have become an increasingly popular collective celebration: the "amagüestu" or "magosto" (chestnuts roasted with sweet cider in autumn), the "esfoyón" or "esfoyaza" (stripping and stringing up "panoyes" or corn cobs), the "samartín" (or slaughter of the "gochu", the pig, a basic part of our diet) and the culinary and festive event par excellence: **the "espicha"**, which involves the opening and tasting of the new, as yet unbottled cider, accompanied by various dishes. All of them are present in our highly appreciated cuisine, which is, of course, another cultural feature of this land.



More information at:

asturiastourism.co.uk/RuralTourism



Santa María Magdalena Festival in Llanes

On the day of the fiesta, the townsfolk dress proudly in the traditional costumes of Asturias, the "**TRAXE'L PAÍS**" that is an integral part of our culture and has local variations in the east and west of the region, where the so-called "porruanu" and "llaniscos" costumes have achieved recognition as an Asset of Cultural Interest; a set of very elaborate and expensive garments that are donned in an authentic ritual, that are an expression of our identity and that have an enormous symbolic value for the region: a pride for those who wear them.

The legacy of Industrialisation and the Memory of the Workers

Many of you come to Asturias looking for our roots as an industrial region: the mines, the iron and steel industry, the factories that placed us on the map of the contemporary world and made us a people who fight for their rights. It is not an industrial history: it is a human history that conveys emotion and of which we are proud.



La Malva power station (Somiedo)

Asturias preserves its working memory not only through its museums: our history goes beyond buildings and expresses itself through the landscape itself. Green ways through old railway cuttings, factory complexes that are virtually cities, towns or neighbourhoods that have become cultural and tourist resources.

Coal, the black treasure that still lies beneath our feet, is the origin of this whole process. It can be discovered through the first vertical shaft that was drilled in Asturias on the shores of

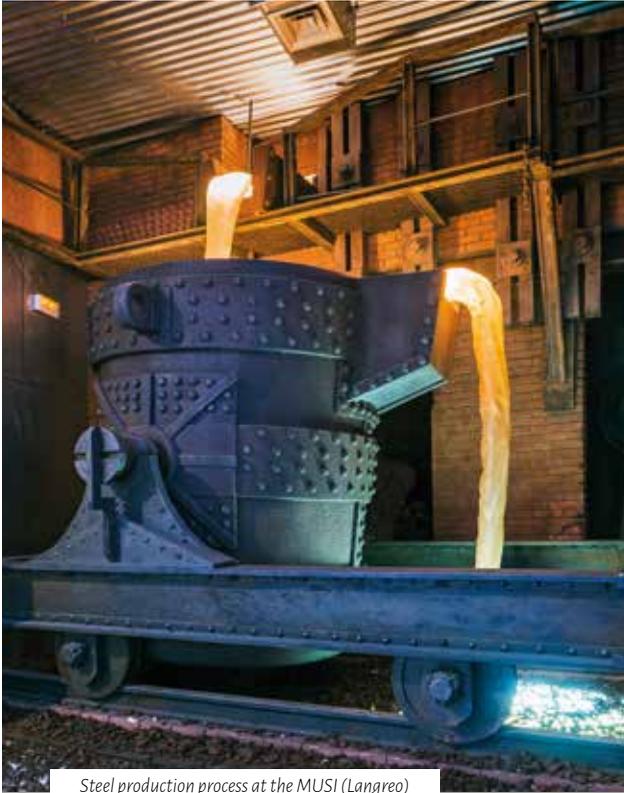


Samuño Valley Mining Ecomuseum (Langreo)

the Cantabrian Sea: the modern **Museum of the Arnao Mine** (Castrillón) is an essential visit, as well as the guided tour offered at the Interpretation Centre in the **mining town of Bustiello** (Mieres), an artistic jewel and unique example of industrial paternalism linked to the Marqués de Comillas, with its splendid chapel, the "mining cathedral".

As for the railways, an ideal attraction for families, you should visit the Samuño Valley Mining Ecomuseum, and for the more adventurous, who want to feel like miners for a day, there is the descent into the Pozo Sotón Shaft.

An experience offered by the **Mining Museum**, with its mine tour for all ages, and the opportunity to walk around and understand the landscape with a guide, in the **Turón Valley**.



History was also forged with **iron**, a mineral that we extracted and processed with a powerful metallurgical and iron and steel industry that is still present in the region today.

*A reference point is the **Iron and Steel Museum (Langreo)**, installed in the old and imposing cooling tower of a steel mill, with a highly instructive exhibition.*

This iron was processed in blast furnaces, of which we keep an exhibition at the **Quirós Ethnographic Museum**: its ample facilities show the transformation of the rural world through industrial activity. And we encourage you to visit the emblematic Cabo Peñas and discover the hidden and beautiful **cove of Llumeres (Gozón)**: it was the longest running mine of this mineral, and visitors can still see a minehead on the shores of the sea and the jetty from which loaded ships set sail for the port of Gijón.

In our industrial history we have been a source of energy: the old hydroelectric plants and the modern power stations are today an indisputable cultural attraction, enhanced by their location in beautiful mountain areas.



*The century-old **La Malva power plant**, in Somiedo, in operation and recently turned into a museum, is the magnificent origin of our electricity generating capacity.*

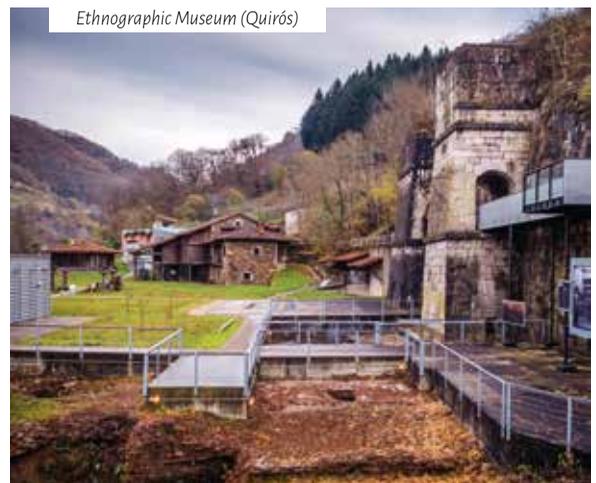
Also in the Southwest, and the epitome of the great works of the post-war period, you can find the **Grandas de Salime Hydroelectric Plant**, a masterpiece by Vaquero Palacios that combines art and engineering: you can admire it from the neighbouring hanging viewpoint or arrange a visit.

They are not isolated features: industry was interconnected by the railways, defying the difficult terrain. To understand their importance in our industrial development, there is nothing like a visit to the **Asturias Railway Museum (Gijón/ Xixón)**, with a very extensive collection ideally exhibited in an old station. Outside its walls, old railway cuttings have become greenways crossing beautiful landscapes: **La Camocha**, in the same municipality; Fuso la Reina, in Oviedo; Santa Bárbara, in Nalón, or in the West, the Eo (San Tirso de Abres) or La Pereda a Peñamiel greenways.



More information at:

asturiastourism.co.uk/IndustrialTourism



The Footprint of Emigration and the Legacy of the Indianos (Returned American Emigrants): America in Asturias

In Asturias you can experience the echoes of the Caribbean and feel the warmth of America: the ocean that so many crossed looking for a new life, dreaming that it would be better, brought and carried away letters, stories, some savings, the occasional fortune and a culture that is now a tourist asset of which the houses of the Indianos are the main attraction.

Villa Anita (Boal)

This unique bourgeoisie, which had seen other horizons but had not forgotten its origins, possessed dwellings in keeping with its new status:

they are the picturesque mansions of the American emigrants that even today leave us speechless and pepper the rural landscape from East to West, authentic palaces among meadows and villages.

Those who left and triumphed acted as patrons, offering opportunities to their fellow countrymen; other more modest emigrants joined forces in exile to succeed, and also

financed various works that contributed to the progress of our land, especially improvements in urban planning (roads and highways, parks or squares, cemeteries), casinos, schools and even doctors' surgeries. We owe them a lot: we all benefit from their efforts.

An ideal place to learn about this phenomenon can be found in the **Emigration and Public Instruction Interpretation Centre**, located in San Llouguís/San Luis (Boal). It is housed in an old school paid for in the 1920s by the Sociedad de Naturales del Concejo de Boal in Havana (there are another twenty in this municipality) and manages to convey through its guided tours and a classroom containing original materials from those centres, the immense importance of their contribution to education and life. From here, the visitor can observe the architecture of emigration in the village of Bual/Boal itself: the old wash house that this collective financed can now be visited and there are beautiful villas, such as the picturesque "Villa Anita".



Indiano mansion converted into accommodation

In fact, the American footprint can be seen in every installation and crosses Asturias from end to end, inviting people to drive or take a leisurely stroll through villages or neighbourhoods that are authentic lessons in architecture. It also allows you to understand the intangible changes that made us move from traditional rural life to the modern customs of the contemporary world, imagining the enormous impact that those characters had on the society of their time. Some of these houses have become excellent hotels or renowned restaurants that allow you to get an even closer look at this remarkable cultural legacy.



Emigration and Public Instruction Interpretation Centre (Boal)

Another place that should not be missed is **Llanes**, with its wide offer of Indiano sites with online support (3D virtual tours via the Internet) where the capital of the municipality itself offers noteworthy examples on both sides of Avenida de la Concepción, such as the Casa de los Leones, "Villa Concepción", the Palace of the Marquise of Argüelles, the now famous Partarrú Palace and the Casa de los Junco; but also the houses on Avenida de la Paz, the Casino itself and countless urban improvements.

In **Ribadesella/Ribeseya**, and overlooking the popular beach of Santa Marina, there is an important group of mansions that mark the beginning of the summer on the Asturian coast, sponsored by the Marquises of Argüelles. The route is marked out with information panels that provide the necessary data for a lesson in the history of architecture on the seafront.



The Yellow House (Pravia)

In **Somao** in the municipality of Pravia, there is an outstanding viewpoint over the mouth of the Nalón, a landmark of Asturian cultural heritage: clustered along the roads are numerous "hotels" with large estates (the Yellow House, the Marciel, "Villa Radis"...), as well as a civic center consisting of schools, a cinema and a church promoted by residents who emigrated to Cuba. You can continue this pleasant walk with outstanding views along the nearby **Riberas de Pravia** (discovering "Villa America", "Vistahermosa", "Villa Pilar"...) or through the village of Pravia itself, which boasts superb examples in the Prahúa area.

It is also worth discovering **Malleza**, "the little Havana", and **Mallecina**, both in Salas, especially if at the time of their Indiana Fair: the town is filled with memorabilia, among



La Quinta Guadalupe (Ribadedeva)

The ideal facility for discovering the momentous history of the American migration phenomenon is the **INDIANOS ARCHIVE FOUNDATION-EMIGRATION MUSEUM**, which has been devoted for thirty years to the preservation of the memory of this collective (travel, history of the American Centres, philanthropic work, etc.) and is installed in a sumptuous 1906 house, very well decorated and with a beautiful garden, built by the "Mexican" Íñigo Noriega. It is located in Colombres (Ribadedeva), a town whose excellence earned it the Pueblo Ejemplar de Asturias award in 2015. Here, the square, the town hall, the church, other mansions, etc. are thanks to American money: they are all fine examples of this sponsorship included in the Indiana Footprint Route. There is nothing like visiting it at the time of the Indianos Fair, organised by the city council and associations since 2008, each year's event being devoted to a country that once welcomed us.

which are the classic American cars reminiscent of the Cuban "haigas", and some of these unique houses built by emigrants open their doors for a busy guided tour. In this same central area of Asturias, the lively village of Grau/Grado also boasts dwellings whose sumptuousness is rooted in America.

A little further to the West, the neighbourhoods of Villar and Barcellina, in the village of **Lluarca/ Luarca** in the charming municipality of Valdés treasures a tiara of jewels in the form of magnificent mansions, designed by renowned architects, such as "Casa Guatemala", "Villa Argentina", "Villa Carmen" (associated with the Asturian Nobel Prize winner, Severo Ochoa), "Villa Excelsior" and "Villa Rosario", to name but a few.

However, other chapters of this history of emigration can be read in different places: **Piloña** (passing through Villamayor, Sebares/Sevares or Coya), **Caravia** (hiking trail from Duestos to Duyos) or, for example, **Cabranes** (where the Club Cabranense built schools, and where you can see the history of instruction in the **Rural School Museum of Asturias**), **Cudillero**, **Coaña**, **Navia**, **El Franco** and **Castropol**, a magnificent cherry on top of this colourful, exotic and authentic cake of art and culture.



A Vibrant Present for Culture

Oviedo Museum of Fine Arts

In the cities of Asturias, a long and rich past coexists with a present of modern or renovated facilities. We find magnificent buildings exhibiting permanent collections or temporary exhibitions, providing dynamic centres both in terms of their various outreach activities (which include the necessary heritage education) and the production of their own events, which can be considered first class urban attractions. This list is made up of the classic renovated ASTURIAS FINE ARTS MUSEUM, located in Oviedo; the imposing LABOUR CITY OF CULTURE, on the outskirts of Gijón/ Xixón, and the well-known NIEMEYER CENTRE, in Avilés, a remarkably modern construction. They are as diverse in their design as in their purpose, being three attractions for visitors, who should not miss their cultural offer, and are the culmination of the city tourist offer. However, there are also other museums with important historical and artistic collections and sites that demonstrate the vitality of contemporary creation.

In the capital of the Principality, the Asturias Fine Arts Museum is an essential part of every tourist's agenda.

In addition to its original facilities (the Velarde Palace and the Oviedo-Portal House), near the Cathedral, new buildings were added, designed by the renowned architect Patxi Mangado, in a space bathed by a subtle play of light, with a staircase linking its different floors and a remarkable double façade as an urban backdrop. Its collection comes from the funds of the Provincial Council and the Museum of Paintings of the Provincial Academy of Fine Arts, greatly expanded through various acquisitions and donations such as those of Pedro Masaveu and Plácido Arango to the more than 15,000 pieces it exhibits today. Its gallery of masterpieces, available online, is a prelude to the visit: an Apostolado del Greco, works by Zurbarán, Goya, Dalí and Picasso, as well as great Asturian painters such as Carreño Miranda, Regoyos and Luis Fernández.

The complex of the former **Universidad Laboral**, a masterpiece of the architecture of the Franco period, became the **City of Culture** a decade ago, preserving the striking features it was given by the architect Luis



Exhibition at LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial

Moya, to host new activities in its more than 130,000 square metres. This "universe" of stone can be visited on a guided tour that crosses the central courtyard, the core of the main porticoed rooms, providing access to both the theatre and the impressive church, in addition to the attraction of the panoramic lift that leads to the upper terrace of its observation tower.

The original workshops of this educational complex belong to Laboral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial.

A multidisciplinary institution that produces and provides access to the new cultural forms arising from the creative use of information and communication technologies, which together with the Fine Arts Museum have been integrated into the so-called "**Pentagon of Art**", a system associated with the **Barjola Museum** (located in an old Gijón palace, linked to the Trinity Chapel, converted into an exceptional arts building dedicated to the figure of this Extremadura painter who was part of the avant-garde in the mid-twentieth century, and contributing to the creation of new works by young artists) and the **Sala Borrón**, the most recent of the group although already with 30 years of history, an art gallery whose temporary exhibitions reflect the vitality and trends of contemporary creation. As a whole, they reveal the quality and variety of the works they house and offer a very modern perspective.

Avilés, meanwhile, received a gift from a genius: the Niemeyer Centre project.



Niemeyer Centre (Avilés)



"The foal in the pen." Evaristo Valle (1918-1919)



Nicanor Piñole Museum (Gijón)

It was donated by Oscar Niemeyer, a leading figure in the Modern Movement, after receiving the Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts. It was inaugurated in 2011 and is the only work of the Brazilian prizewinner in our country. It comprises a large, high-capacity auditorium, with a modern stage, which can either be viewed from the inside or rotated to face the public square. The so-called dome corresponds to an open-plan exhibition space, with its sculptural spiral staircase. An observation tower is the prominent feature of this esplanade and contrasts with the remaining sinuous volumes, with the winding multipurpose building completing the list of constructions.

However, there are still other facilities in which art is lord and master. Gijón offers a couple of museums devoted to the work of two painters of great importance for Asturias because of their quality and ability to reflect its landscapes and people, thus captivating locals and visitors alike. We are referring to the **Nicanor Piñole Museum**, located in the former Pola Old People's Home in Plaza Europa, which contains more than 4,000 works by this great artist from Gijón, and the **Evaristo Valle Museum**, located in a magnificent estate in the Somió district, which has large and splendid gardens where sculptures are exhibited and contains an extensive collection of works of this sensitive and remarkable painter.

In addition, in the historic district of Cimadevilla stands the **Birthplace of Jovellanos**, a key figure of the Spanish Enlightenment and illustrious citizen of Gijón. It includes pieces that recreate the original atmosphere of this noble house, making its legacy known, in addition to a wide variety of both Asturian and foreign painting and sculpture from donations such as that of the Lledó - Suárez.



More information at:

asturiastourism.co.uk/AsturianCities

A Photogenic Land: Asturias on TV and Film

Asturias has been shown to the public in television series and films that astonish the professionals who discover this attractive and versatile natural film set with its enormous variety of landscapes that allow them to recreate past times, dream up future worlds or simulate distant places in our region.



Scene from "Bajo la piel del lobo" (Under the Wolf's Skin)

This coast that we are proud to have preserved like no other in Spain, these mountains that are conserved as Protected Landscapes or Natural Parks, these ancestral villages or these beautiful towns, together with the numerous obsolete or active industrial complexes, have become a major attraction for directors, scriptwriters and producers.

The most international of them, Woody Allen, a New York filmmaker who discovered us when he received the Prince of Asturias Prize for the Arts in 2002, decided to shoot part of his film "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" here.

Ambitious national productions such as "**La señora**" were also set here (Colombres' red house was virtually a star, Cadavedo provided the sea views and Aller offered its mining landscape), but also the historical fiction "**Carlos V**" that had to be recreated on our coast (Ribadedeva and Llanes).

Films have been set in the central Asturian basin, showing its unique landscape and the strong personality of its people: social drama and a humour as black as coal emerge in films such as "**Pídele cuentas al rey**", "**Carne de gallina**", "**Cenizas del cielo**" and "**La torre de Suso**", and the director of the latter, Tom Fernández, maintained his commitment to Asturias in



Clapperboard of "La Zona"

"**Para qué sirve un oso**", shot in Teverga, Quirós, Proaza and Somiedo.

Recently, activity has been particularly intense: "**Cantábrico. Los dominios del oso pardo**" (Canabria: domain of the brown bear) has shown the beauty and richness of the nature of our land, a prime habitat for wildlife. A couple of series stand out among other recent productions: "**El padre de Caín**" (Salvador Calvo, 2016), shot in Oviedo, Gijón/Xixón and Avilés, converted into corners of a Basque Country in the "*años de plomo*" (a period of the Basque history between 1.968 until the end of last century), and "**La zona**" (Jorge and Alberto Sánchez Cabezudo, 2017), which covers more than 160 locations, giving prominence to a deserted town in Pravia, the post-industrial landscape of the municipality of Langreo and the Soto de Ribera power station, as the epicentre of the nuclear catastrophe.

When you discover an exciting story on the screen that makes you dream, tremble or cry, you instinctively seek to rediscover those characters and experiences in the real world: that's why we want to see ourselves on that stage, transcending the image and feeling the place, emulating the characters that gave life to it. We have experienced this in Asturias, and that is why we have designed tourist routes such as **"Llanes de cine"**, which includes several itineraries through the numerous locations of the municipality: here, Oviedo's Gonzalo Suárez filmed **"Remando al viento"** and **"El portero"**; the Oscar winner José Luis Garci filmed **"El abuelo"** and **"You're the one"**, and here stands the fantastic palace known as Partarrío, which was home to J. A. Bayona's disturbing **"El Orfanato"**. The success of the **"Doctor Mateo"** series, which made Llastres/Lastres and its surroundings a familiar image for millions of viewers, also prompted the Colunga Town Hall to design a route that connects the locations in which this well-known country doctor lived and worked.



Another filmmaker who has succeeded in showing the beauty of this land is the Oviedo scriptwriter and director Sergio C. Sánchez in the recent **"Marrowbone"** (2017): a cast of British actors gives life to a suspense story, with moments of terror, set in Maine in the sixties by the magic of cinema. The beautiful Arango valley in Pravia, the tower transformed into that peculiar house and the town that was recreated in the old Vega Arms Factory demonstrate the enormous versatility of Asturias for filming purposes. **"Bajo la piel de lobo"** (2017), by Samuel Fuentes, also from Asturias, opts for the spectacular scenery of the west in municipalities such as Pesoz, los Oscos, Villayón and Taramundi to film the adventures of a trapper from the early 20th century, brought to life by the popular Mario Casas.

Reciprocally, the film industry also attracts Asturians, who in autumn meet with independent cinema and international news at the **Xixon International Film Festival (FICX)**, and also celebrate **several short film festivals** (in places like Avilés, Ribadedeva and Redes Park, to name just a few) or unique events with auteur filmmaking such as **Puertas filmfest**, in Cabrales. In several towns there are popular **open-air summer cinema sessions**, such as those offered year after year, among the hórreos, by the residents of Cüeñu/Bueño (Ribera de Arriba), or those of the old coal loading bay of San Esteban de Pravia (Muros de Nalón) or the Les Conserveres de Candás park (Carreño), all of them places of great significance from a cultural point of view.



Shooting of "The Secret of Marrowbone" in Trubia

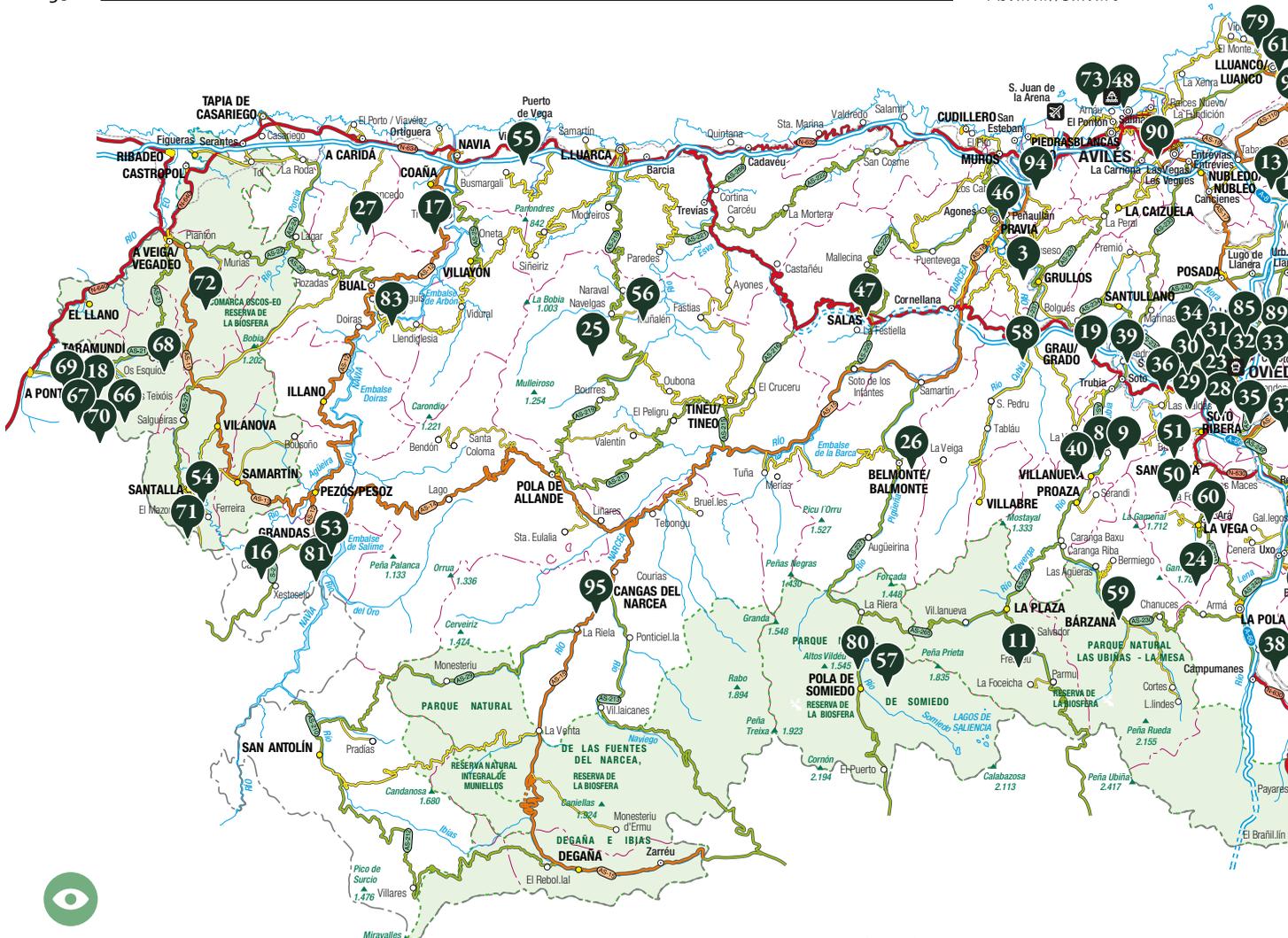
Asturias has preserved, for their cultural value, a few historical cinemas that testify to a common past and an extraordinary popularity that has survived with difficulty the new habits of consumption and leisure: old and quaint, such as the **Clarín Theatre Hall** in Sotu/Soto del Barco, and the **Toreno Cinema** in Cangas del Narcea; with a historical touch, such as the **Riera Cinema Theatre** in Villaviciosa; spacious and emphatically modern, such as the **Felgueroso Cinema** in Sama de Langreo, and functional and austere, such as the **Prendes Theatre** in Candás. All of them maintain an active cultural programme that does not neglect their original use as cinemas.



Xixón International Film Festival



Felgueroso Cinema (Langreo)



Don't miss...

Centro de A Origins of Humanity

1. Cave Art Centre and Tito Bustillo Cave (Ribadesella)
2. Interpretation Centre and Pindal Cave (Ribadedeva)
3. Interpretation Centre and Cave of La Peña (Candamo)
4. La Loja Educational Classroom (Peñamellera Baja)
5. Llonín Cave (Peñamellera Alta)*.
6. Covaciella Cave (Cabrales)*
7. Buxu Cave (Cangas de Onís)
8. Cave of the Count or Fornu Cave (Santo Adriano)
9. Santo Adriano Rock Shelter (Santo Adriano)
10. Idol of Peña Tù (Llanes)
11. Prehistory Park (Teverga)
12. Monte Arco Necropolis (Carreño and Gijón)
13. Guimarán-Valle Rural Initiative Centre (Carreño)
14. Piloña "Tierra de Asturcones" Visitor Reception Centre (Piloña)
15. Glacial Fauna Interpretation Centre and Cuevona de la Peruyal (Onís)

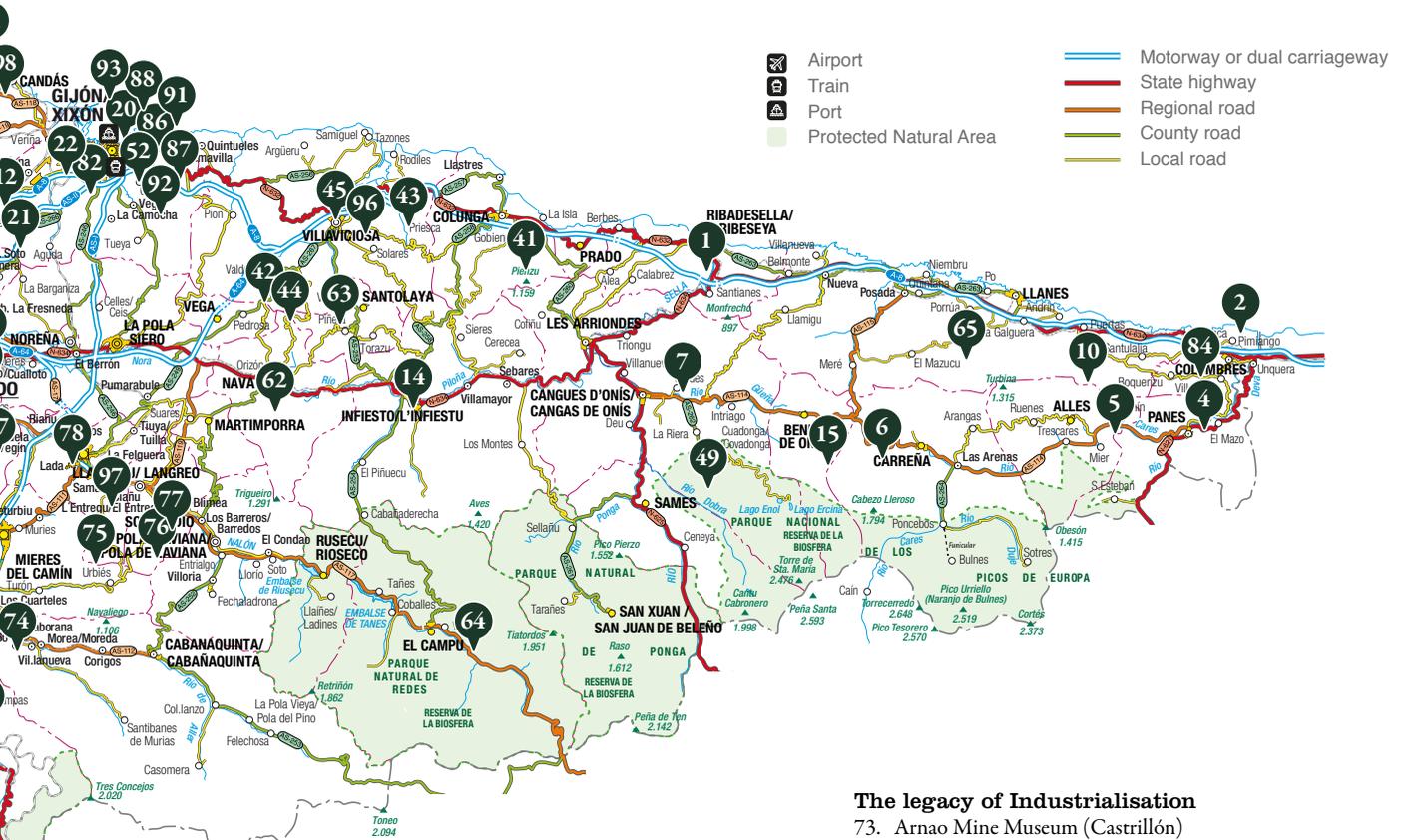
From the Castros (fortified settlements) to the Roman baths

16. Castro Chao San Martín fortified settlement (Grandas de Salime)
17. Castro de Coaña fortified settlement (Coaña)
18. Os Castros (Taramundi)
19. Valduno Roman Baths (Las Regueras)

20. Campo Valdés Roman Baths (Gijón)
21. Veranes Roman Villa (Gijón)
22. Campa Torres Archaeological Park (Gijón)
23. Asturias Archaeological Museum (Oviedo)
24. Texeo Mines (Riosa)
25. Gold Museum (Tineo)
26. Gold Educational Room (Belmonte de Miranda)
27. As Covas de Andina Caves (El Franco)

The art of the Asturian monarchy

28. Asturias Pre-Romanesque Reception and Interpretation Centre (Oviedo)
29. San Miguel de Lillo (Oviedo)
30. Santa María del Naranco (Oviedo)
31. San Julián de los Prados "Santullano" (Oviedo)
32. Foncalada Fountain (Oviedo)
33. San Salvador Cathedral (Oviedo)
34. Old Tower of San Salvador (Oviedo)
35. Holy Chamber (Oviedo)
36. Church of San Tirso (Oviedo)
37. Santa María de Bendones (Oviedo)
38. Santa Cristina de Lena (Lena)
39. San Pedro de Nora (Las Regueras)
40. Santo Adriano de Tuñón (Santo Adriano)
41. Santiago de Gobiendes (Colunga)
42. San Salvador de Valdediós (Villaviciosa)
43. San Salvador de Priesca (Villaviciosa)
44. Santa María de Arbazal (Villaviciosa)
45. San Andrés de Bedriñana (Villaviciosa)



- 46. Santianes de Pravia and its Pre-Romanesque Museum (Pravia)
- 47. Salas Pre-Romanesque Museum
- 48. Gauzón Castle Archaeological Site (Castrillón)

Paths of belief

- 49. Royal Site of Covadonga (Cangas de Onís)
- 50. Monsacro Chapels (Morcín)

Traditional culture

- 51. Hórreo Interpretation Centre in Güeü/Bueño (Ribera de Arriba)
- 52. Muséu del Pueblu d'Asturies (Gijón)
- 53. Grandas de Salime Ethnographic Museum
- 54. Birthplace of the Marquis of Sargadelos (Santa Eulalia de Oscos)
- 55. "Juan Pérez Villamil" Ethnographic Museum (Navia)
- 56. Vaqueiro Museum (Tineo)
- 57. Somiedo Ethnographic Ecomuseum
- 58. Grado Ethnographic Museum
- 59. Quirós and its region Ethnographic Museum
- 60. "Llechería" Ethnographic Museum (Morcín)
- 61. Asturias Maritime Museum (Gozón)
- 62. Cider Museum (Nava)
- 63. Rural School Museum (Cabranes)
- 64. Wood and Beekeeping Museum (Caso)
- 65. Ethnographic Museum of Eastern Asturias (Llanes)
- 66. Os Teixois Ethnographic Complex (Taramundi)
- 67. Mazonovo Mills Museum (Taramundi)
- 68. Bres Water House (Taramundi)
- 69. House Museum of Traditional Knife making (Taramundi)
- 70. Esquíos Ethnographic Museum (Taramundi)
- 71. Mazonovo forge (Santa Eulalia de Oscos)
- 72. Blacksmith's workshop in Suarón or Meredo (Vegadeo)

The legacy of Industrialisation

- 73. Arnao Mine Museum (Castrillón)
- 74. Bustiello Mining Village Interpretation Centre (Mieres)
- 75. Samuño Valley Mining Ecomuseum (Langreo)
- 76. Sotón Mineshaft (San Martín del Rey Aurelio)
- 77. Asturias Mining and Industry Museum (San Martín del Rey Aurelio)
- 78. Iron and Steel Museum (Langreo)
- 79. Llumeres Cove (Gozón)
- 80. La Malva Power Station (Somiedo)
- 81. Grandas de Salime dam and hydroelectric power station
- 82. Railway Museum of Asturias (Gijón)

The Footprint of Emigration

- 83. Emigration and Public Instruction Interpretation Centre (Boal)
- 84. Indianos Archive Foundation - Museum of Emigration (Ribadedeva)

A vibrant present

- 85. Asturias Fine Arts Museum (Oviedo)
- 86. Laboral, Ciudad de la Cultura (Gijón)
- 87. LABoral, Centre for Art and Industrial Creation (Gijón)
- 88. Barjola Museum (Gijón)
- 89. Borrón Hall (Oviedo)
- 90. Niemeyer Centre (Avilés)
- 91. Nicanor Piñole Museum (Gijón)
- 92. Evaristo Valle Museum (Gijón)
- 93. Birthplace of Jovellanos (Gijón)
- 94. Clarín Theatre Hall (Soto del Barco)
- 95. Toreno Cinema (Cangas de Narcea)
- 96. Riera Cinema Theatre (Villaviciosa)
- 97. Felgueroso Cinema (Langreo)
- 98. Prendes Theatre (Carreño)

** For reasons of conservation these caves do not allow access to the public.*

Asturias



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