

Network of Prehistoric Caves and Cultural Centres in Cantabria



El Castillo Cave, Gallery of the Discs (Puente Viesgo)

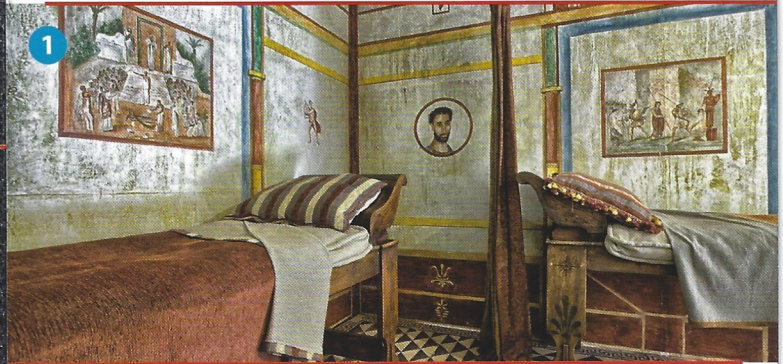
DOMVS Roman JULIÓBRIGA / TOWN

(Retortillo, Campoo de Enmedio)



JULIÓBRIGA
CIUDAD ROMANA

The **DOMVS** of **IVLIOBRIGA** is situated in the Roman town of the same name. It recreates in its design, size and distribution the so-called House of the Firedogs, with its Hellenistic ground plan and located only 200m away. This house was built in the late first century AD, the time of the town's greatest splendour. The **DOMVS** reproduces the main room, the triclinium, visible from the entrance to the house. It was used for meetings, banquets and as an office. The interior courtyard with its columns is surrounded by the lararium, for offerings to the gods; the cuina, where succulent meals were cooked; the cubiculum, a place to rest and where the family could be together; and the tavern, for the financial support of the family. On the second floor, the permanent exhibition displays the main archaeological finds in the town, connected with the daily life of its inhabitants. The history and urban layout of the town are explained during the visit.



Educational workshops are held for school groups.
 Visits to the Roman town are free of charge.

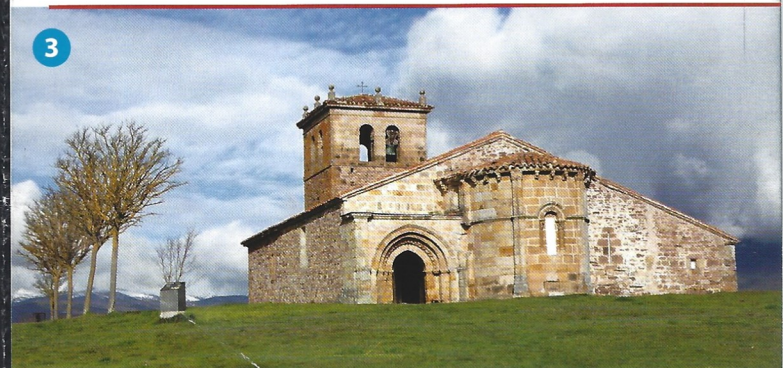
INTERPRETATION CENTRE OF THE ROMANESQUE

(Villacantid, Campoo de Suso)



CENTRO
D' INTERPRETACIÓN
DL ROMÁNICO

This centre is located in the church of Santa María la Mayor. This building is the result of different constructive phases, and the apse and the door of the Romanesque church built in the late twelfth century are still preserved. The corbels and capitals display representations of fantastic animals, such as griffons, and human scenes like the jousts of knights and Samson fighting the lion. Different audio-visual resources explain the different phases in the construction of the church, the work of stone masons and the techniques used in Romanesque architecture. The origin and development of the Romanesque in the region is explained with examples from the southern valleys, such as Santa María de Retortillo, built on top of the forum in the Roman town of **IVLIOBRIGA**.

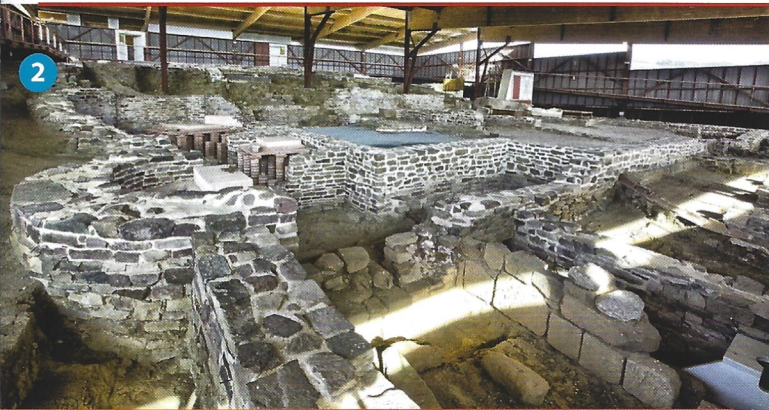


CANTABRIAN-ROMAN SITE OF CAMESA/REBOLLEDO



(Mataporquera, Valdeolea)

This luxurious Roman villa, with its baths, was built in the first century AD in the proximity of a town. Its large storage area gives an indication of the rural activity carried out there. The villa was abandoned in the middle of the third century AD and the land was used for a cemetery in the early Middle Ages. This is shown by the numerous pit and stone-lined graves, and a smaller number of sarcophagi, located around the foundations of a church of the same age. This consisted of a single nave and a rectangular apse. The history and distribution of the Roman villa is explained during the visit, highlighting the purpose and use of the different parts of the baths and the building techniques employed in Roman times.



Visits to the *Domus Iuliobriga* and the archaeological site of *Camesa/Rebolledo* are guided and last about 45 minutes. If both Roman sites are visited in the same day, the price of the visit to the second site is reduced.

TOWER OF PERO NIÑO

(Sovilla, San Felices de Buelna)



The Tower-Fortress of La Aguilera, also known as Pero Niño Tower, was built in the fourteenth century. It has an Interpretation Centre displaying information about the life of Admiral Pero Niño, 1st Count of Buelna, based on the book *El Victorial*, written in the fifteenth century by his lieutenant Gutierre Diaz de Games. The exhibition titled "*Pero Niño: life and adventures of a medieval knight*" begins by explaining the rich archaeological heritage in Buelna, especially the cave of *Hornos de la Peña*. Audio-visuals, optical games, holograms and touchscreen sound interactive programmes describe the chivalrous and courtly life of this eminent man during the reign of King Enrique III, within the historical context of the Kingdom of Castile in the late fourteenth century.



See the main archaeological, historical and architectonic sites in Cantabria



Roman town of Juliobriga (Retortillo)

Information and reservations:

(0034) 942 598 425

Buy your ticket in:



cuevas.culturadecantabria.com
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At least one day in advance and according to availability

9/367 Imprenta Regional de Cantabria

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CAVE COVALANAS

(Ramales de la Victoria)



The virtual absence of occupation levels in Covalanas Cave show that it was used almost exclusively as a shrine. The cave consists of a narrow and high passage 110 metres long and practically all the red paintings are situated about 65 metres from the entrance. The technical and stylistic homogeneity of the figures, nearly all of which were painted as dotted lines, and the relatively small number of depictions, suggest that they were all painted at the same time, about 20,000 or 25,000 years ago. In total the figures consist of 18 hinds, two horses (one is doubtful), a stag, an aurochs, an indeterminate animal and some signs.



UNESCO in 2008. These are El Castillo, Las Chimeneas, Las Monedas and La

CAVE LAS MONEDAS

(Puente Viesgo)



The cave was given its name after 20 coins from the time of the Catholic Monarchs were found there, connecting the cave with legends of treasures. It is 350 metres long, and the first 250 metres are visited. In addition to the prehistoric art, the cave is famous for the beauty of its geology, with large chambers in the first 200 metres containing colourful flowstone, columns, stalactites and stalagmites. The pictures were drawn with charcoal in a small passage near the entrance. The animals represented are characteristic of a cold climate, such as reindeer, which are very unusual figures in Palaeolithic art in northern Spain, horses, ibex and a bison. They have been dated to 12,300 – 11,500 years ago. No occupation levels contemporary with the paintings have been found, and the nearest levels of that age are in **El Castillo Cave**, 650 metres away.

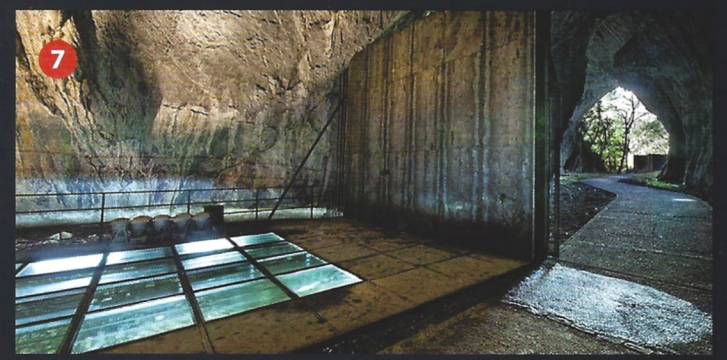


all ages. Tickets for both caves can be obtained at the entrance of El Castillo.

CAVE CULLALVERA

(Ramales de la Victoria)

Two kilometres from **Covalanas Cave**, near the centre of Ramales, this cave has a surprisingly large entrance, 14 metres wide and 28 metres high. The cave stays this size in the first 1,500 metres of its passages. The total length of the cave is now 12,100 metres and at one time it was among the longest caves in the world and the fourth longest in Spain. When it rains, the cave system becomes active and the River Calera appears inside the passage. The visit takes place along a 400-metre walkway that allows access for people with limited mobility. A yellowish figure of a horse was painted near the entrance. Some signs and series of dots are located in a side-passage 782 metres from the entrance, beyond the tourist part of the cave, while 1,179 metres from the entrance three horses were drawn with charcoal 13,000 years ago. These are contemporary with the figures in **Las Monedas Cave** and are the paintings furthest inside a cave in the Iberian Peninsula.



CAVE EL PENDO

(El Churri District, Escobedo de Camargo)



The first part of the cave is an impressive 45m in width and 22m in height. Its first occupants were Neanderthals, at least 84,000 years ago. After their demise, *Homo sapiens* lived in the cave between 40,000 and 12,000 years ago. Over 250 portable art objects have been found belonging to that period of time. They help to understand the way the cave was used as a meeting place for groups of people. Inside the cave and visible from the dwelling site, a frieze of rock 25m long contains 19 of the 24 red paintings in the cave. They include a herd of hinds, an ibex, a horse, two indeterminate figures and some signs. The wall would have been lit by daylight in the Palaeolithic, before the roof of the cave collapsed at the entrance. From the point of view of the choice of animals, technique and style, these paintings belong to the same artistic cycle as those in **Covalanas Cave**, dated to about 20,000-25,000 years ago.



CAVE CHUFÍN

(Riclones, Rionansa)



The name of the cave comes from the Moor Chufín who, according to local tales, hid treasure inside the cave. But the real treasure is the group of Palaeolithic drawings and paintings in the cave, particularly the engravings in the entrance, within daylight, next to a prehistoric dwelling. Nearly all the figures in this area represent hinds, many of them depicted with three deep lines. It is a clear example of an exterior group, dated to between 25,000 and 18,000 years ago. It is surprising to see a lake inside the cave, but this is a consequence of the Palombera reservoir flooding the valley. Several red paintings are seen around the lake. Most of these are signs, mainly rows of dots, rather than animal figures, although an aurochs, two horses and a stag can be seen, as well as a possible female figure. These are all at least 20,000-25,000 years old.



It is necessary to crawl inside the cave. The guide will provide hairnets and kneepads.

CAVE HORNOS DE LA PEÑA

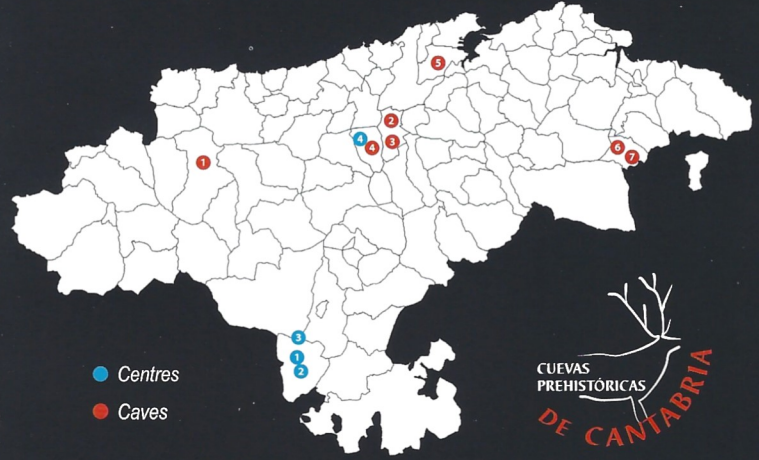
(Tarriba, San Felices de Buelna)



The cave is 100 metres long, but its interior chambers and passages are small and quite difficult in some places. The predominant techniques in the cave art are incised and finger engraving. The walls were decorated in an early phase at least 22,000 years ago, while most of the engravings inside the cave are more recent, about 15,500-13,000 years old. The entrance contains some very old Palaeolithic engravings, associated with the occupation levels, particularly the figure of a horse. Inside the cave, the most abundant figures are horses and bison, followed by aurochs, ibex and stags. In the furthest and most remote part of the cave is one of the few human representations in northern Spain, very similar to some engraved anthropomorphs on the ceiling in **Altamira Cave**.



To visit the cave it is necessary to book at least a day in advance. Visits are subject to availability. Hairnets must be worn during the visit and they will be provided by the guide.



- Centres
- Caves



Visits are guided in all the caves and last about 45 minutes, except at Cueva de Chufín, where the visits last about 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Covalanas, Hornos de la Peña and Chufín do not have electric lighting. The guide will provide torches at the start of the visit.

Non-slip comfortable footwear and warm clothing are recommended for the visits.

CAVES OF MONTE CASTILLO

Four decorated caves in Monte Castillo were designated as World Heritage by UNESCO. The ones that are open to the public are:

CAVE EL CASTILLO

(Puente Viesgo)



El Castillo was inhabited at least 150,000 years ago in one of the oldest occupation levels in northern Spain. The levels related to the disappearance of the Neanderthals and the arrival of *Homo sapiens*, dated to between 41,000 and 38,000 years ago, are of particular interest. A painting dated to at least 41,000 years ago currently represents the first phase in the decoration of the cave. About 300 metres long, the cave is decorated on practically all its walls, which display over 2,900 images, produced between 41,000 and 3,500 years ago and therefore representing 37,500 years of the symbolic ideas of humankind. Among many different kinds of depictions, signs are more abundant than animal figures. Of these the most frequent are bison, some of them contemporary with the bison in **Altamira Cave**. The 78 hand stencils, at least 37,000 years old, represent the humans who came into the cave.



In summer and Easter, activities connected with prehistory are held for people of all ages.