

-THE TOURIST GUIDE-

-THE ALTAMIRA-LOS VALLES ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES-

(la Mancomunidad de municipios Altamira-Los Valles)

(The location in the autonomous community of Cantabria),(mapa).

The Altamira-Los Valles Association of municipalities is situated in the north-western zone in the Cantabrian province. This is composed of 3 municipalities:

*Cartes

*Reocín

*Santillana del Mar.

The worry of its neighbours for its history, its heritage and its ancestral traditions, has let it conserve the essence of centuries of life, that the visitor can enjoy in the middle of an idyllic natural space in this community from more than 15000 inhabitants. The beauty of the community is in its inside, when we walk round its wonderful orography calmly, where its prehistoric caves, its manor-houses of famous surnames, its palaces, its churches and its hermitages have left a special charming that oozes very ancient mysteries.

(THE ALTAMIRA-LOS VALLES ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES(CARTES, REOCÍN AND SANTILLANA DEL MAR))

-CARTES-

The Cartes municipality is situated in the Besaya area and it has an extent of 19 km² with a population that surpasses 4700 inhabitants, who are distributed into the 11 villages: Cartes (capital of the municipality), Santiago, Riocorvo, Yermo, Corral, San Miguel, Mercadal, Bedicó, Sierra Elsa, Mijarajos and La Barquera. From this artistic point of view, Cartes has got a Romanesque church, Sta. M^a de Yermo, situated in the area of the same name.

Moreover, it has 2 magnificent historic sets that they are cultural interest well, which are localized in the Cartes and Riocorvo areas from 1985 and 1981 respectively.

(THE ROYAL WAY, CARTES)

(GOING FOR A WALK ON THE ROYAL WAY, WE WILL FIND THE FAMOUS TURRETS OF CARTES, EMBLEMATIC BUILDING OF THIS MUNICIPALITY).

-REOCÍN-

The Reocin municipality is situated in the western coast and it comprises a territory from more than 32 km² in which more than 7000 inhabitants live and they are

distributed in 12 centres:Puente San Miguel(capital of the municipality),San Esteban,Cerrazo,La Veguilla,Golbardo,Caranceja,Barcenaciones,Helguera,Reocín,Quijas,Villapresente and Valles

This municipality so far as the history of Cantabria is concerned,the meeting-house was established in Puente San Miguel,where the Cantabrian province was constituted on 28th July 1778.

As regards religious heritage,the San Adrián de Valles church,which is documented in the year 823 and San Juan Bautista from Barcenaciones of the XVII th century attract their attention.In the civil environment the Bustamante tower and palace in Quijas stand out as an artistic historic monument.

(On 3rd Wednesday of every month,Botín family's historic garden can be visited in Puente San Miguel,which is declared as cultural interest well).

(Meeting-house,Puente San Miguel(Reocín)).

(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)

The Santillana del Mar municipality is situated to the coastal western border with more than 4000 inhabitants over a surface of 28 km² that is distributed in 11 centres of population:Arroyo,Camplengo,Herrán,Mijares,Quevedo,Santillana,Ubiarco,Vispieres,Viveda,Riaño and Yuso.

One of the attractions which Santillana del Mar counts for the tourism is Altamira,because of its cave which is declared as humanity heritage by the UNESCO in 1983,that has paleolithic paintings of international reknown prestige.The Santillana small town which has an architectonic and urbanistic medieval heritage very well conserved,where the set of its manor-houses and towers points out because they simbolize the noble power of the epoch.

The growth of the small town,which was declared artistic historic set in 1943 was produced from Santa Juliana collegiate,heirloom of the Romanesque in Spain.

There is a Prehistory museum in Santillana in which there is an exact copy of the Altamira cave and also activities for children.At 800 metres from the centre of Santillana del Mar,the zoo is situated,which is a biological complex,where hundreds of species live together in a singular environment.You could go for a walk through a tropical jungle among hundreds of butterflies or visit a thematic park(reindeers,bisons...).

(PAVED STREET(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

To visit.-The human presence in the community dates back to the prehistoric epoch,as the found rests testify it in the Altamira caves in Santillana.In the Estación cave,the Santa Clotilde one in Quijas and the Gurugú one in Bedicó.The Altamira cave is the knownest one from all of them.It is then considered as the"sixtine chapel of the rock art".There are paintings,bones,ceramic ornaments in its interior... because our ancients were witnesses of their stay inside them.

(BISON,ALTAMIRA CAVES(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

But in addition to the archeological heritage and the rock wealthy paintings,the traveller not only can entertain himself with extraordinary landscapes,full of trees as in the

Dehesa-Rupiola mountain, but he can enjoy the most interesting, civil and religious architecture, which is an example from many years of nobility.

The inhabitants from the community are proud of the 2 Romanesque churches that they have: the Santa M^a de Yermo monastery in the Cartes municipality. The church was built between the XIIth and the XIIIth centuries, where there was an ancient monastery founded in a deserted spot by the bishops Ariulfo and Severino (from there, Yermo).

(THE STA.M^a. de YERMO CHURCH(CARTES)).

Nothing is conserved from the ancient monastery, having disappeared by erecting the present church in the XIIIth century. The triumphal ornamented arch points out in its interior with depicted capitals. It is composed by an only nave (the same that the rest of Romanesque churches in the Besaya river), with a vaulted apse and presbytery. It was declared as National artistic monument in 1930.

(VIEW OF THE BESAYA RIVER(RIOCORVO)).

(COLLEGIATE OF SANTA JULIANA(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

The Santa Juliana Collegiate is founded in Santillana next to this one, some monks who brought Santa Juliana's relics had to erect an hermitage and a monastery here. It became the most important in Cantabria with nobility's help in the Middle Ages.

It is about a monument, built with block of stone of sandstone. Some buildings were added to it in the XVI-XVIIth centuries as la loggia over the southern wall, the sacristy and the house of the abbot, these ones have to adapt themselves to the medieval spirit of the monument.

We can go in, crossing a small wall area in which a wide stone staircase with 2 lions at both sides of the main entrance. The visitor is facing the Southern wall of the collegiate where the oldest part of the church itself is open, it has even archivolt and reliefs over them, they are very damaged and small almond-shape "pantocrator" (God as centre of the Universe and creator) held by 4 flying angels.

It is gone into the cloister, by the left nave, which is added to the Northern wall of the church at the end of the XIIth century. The visitor can experiment on the context of the Middle Ages.

Defensive towers and strong manor houses were erected in the municipalities of the community, as proof of the power and control in the territory: an example of this power are the Quijas tower (perhaps the oldest one), the San Telmo turret in Ubiarco, the Villapresente tower, the Beltrán de La Cueva tower, the Merino tower, the Velarde tower in Santillana del Mar. But the turrets of Cartes are perhaps the most emblematic buildings. It is a fortification of the XVth century which was Captain Velarde's residence in Cartes.

The biggest development of the civil architecture took place in the XVII-XVIIIth centuries, to a large extent, Spaniards who have made good in America et "jándalos" (Andalusian people who emigrate and afterwards they came back to their land) who by returning to its origin village, built palaces and manor houses as the Peredo Palace in Santillana, the Mijares Palace in Mijares, the Peredo palace in Viveda, the Velarde palace in Santillana... As for manor houses, they appear scattered along the all municipalities of the community.

(THE QUIJAS MEDIEVAL TOWER(REOCIN)).

To visit.-We can find the Peredo-Barreda(the present Cantabrian saving bank branch)on the left hand in Sto. Domingo street in Santillana del Mar and on the right hand,the Villa manor house.Further on,the street branches off.The Juan Infante street,flanked by houses with balconies,full of flowers,leads into the Main Square,one of the most representative corners in the small town.We can find the Aguila and the Parra Manor houses.The Altamira bison erects in front of them.Facing to both of them is the Gil Blas paradior,which was the Barreda Manor house in ancient times.At few metres of distance,we can find the town hall.The Velarde tower erects itself in the Carrerastreet,et on the left hand,we pass by the Cantón street before the Valdivielso Palace from the XVIII th century,which is nowadays a hotel.At both sides of the street,several typical houses of the village are erected as the Leonor de La Vega manor house and next to this one is the “hombrones” Manor house.We will go down the Río street till we find the Cossio and the Quevedo Manor House on the right house,facing to them the”Abades”Manor House and closing the view the wonderful Santa Juliana Collegiate. The Santillana del Mar small town is qualified as an artistic historic set from 1889.

(THE ARENAS SQUARE(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

(ANCESTRAL HOUSE OF BARCENACIONES(REOCÍN)).

The municipality of Cartes also has 2 magnificent historic sets which are declared as cultural interest well,localizad in Cartes and Riocorvo.All the houses are organized around a street (Royal way).We can find the Obregón Manor House,the Oviedo Manor House,the Capitán Velarde Manor House in it.Riocorvo is established along the old way which joined Reinosa with the Cantabrian coast as Cartes as well.It has several buildings of great interest.Among them are the Velarde Manor House from the XVII th century,restored afterwards(it is registered in the construction in 1752):the Alonso Caballero Palace,a 3 storey building and rectangular floor,ornamented with Alonso family's coats of arms,whose building dates back from the Middle of the XVIIIth century and the so called:”the pulpitos Manor House which is also from the XVIIIth century.

Manor houses also appear along their villages in the municipality of Reocin,but the most outstanding are the 2 end of century private residence examples situates in the middle of spectacular botanic gardens:the Quinta de San Raimundo in Barcenaciones and the Botín Manor House in Puente San Miguel,where there is an amazing botanic garden.The only cultural interest well with the category of Cantabrian historic garden.We mustn't forget the meeting-house in Puente San Miguel,relating to the history of Cantabria.

To go for a walk.-

The geographical situation of the community of Altamira Los Valles municipalities lets us enjoy some places in which nature fills up everything.The “coastal route” is an example of it.It runs by all the coastal line from the Santa Justa beach till Calderón port.This place has a great beauty,where coves and reefs and the beach are the outstanding note.We can stand out the Santa Justa hermitage,which is situated under a

natural arch ,taking advantage of a geological fault which gives it a very particular aspect.

Another way of interest is the San Cipriano ascent.It´s a way,full of history by which we access till the hermitage with the same name,where saint´s feast is celebrated,each 16 th September.This feast is catalogued as regional touristic interest.

Another route is the which one goes from the Solatorre forge till the Cinchu fountain.This path starts from the Cerro village,after climbing the Cildá hill ,where we can enjoy an amazing view from the coast.We will go by the Camarao,the Bustamante Palace-tower until we arrive at the Cinchu fountain.

Apart from these 3 routes ,there are other 9 ones in the community.We can get more information in the Altamira-Los Valles community web page.

(THE SANTA JUSTA BEACH AND HERMITAGE(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

(THE SAN CIPRIANO FEAST IN COHICILLOS(CARTES)).

-THE REGIONAL FEASTS-

Each village devotes to its saint patron with “verbenas”(open-air celebrations),on the eve of a saint´s day,”romerías”,religious pilgrimages to chapels or shrines associated with particular saints of the virgin and playful actions,many of them have hundreds years of tradition.Mais the Cavalcade of the 3 wise men in Santillana del Mar(5th January),San Benito in Barcenaciones(11th July) and San Cipriano in Cohicillos(16th september) are the feasts of the community,which are catalogued as Regional Interest feasts and on 28th July,the day of institutions in Puente San Miguel.

(THE INSTITUTION DAY(PUENTE SAN MIGUEL)).

(THE CAVALCADE OF THE 3 WISE KINGS(SANTILLANA DEL MAR)).

The Altamira Los Valles community of municipalities is founded in April 2006 with the aim of joining efforts among the 3 municipalities which make up it(Cartes,Reocin and Santillana del Mar) to get social,cultural,economic and environmental projects of common interest.

This guide is fruit of the interest of this community to invigorate the tourism and to show the beauty of the community and the historic,artistic and cultural heritage of our land.Moreover it tries to bring us nearer the most representative places through a short run by our geography.