

7 Santa Mª de Los Arcos. Tricio
This basilica is the oldest religious monument in La Rioja. It was originally a Roman mausoleum from the 3rd century, which botanical garden has seven zones with 600 Between Azofra and Hormilla, this new rose garden, pond, poplar grove, and green house.



6 Cistercian abbey of Cañas
A Cistercian abbey, one of the first in Spain. What is striking about the monastery's church is its great lighting through large windows. Tomb of the Blessed Lady Urraca López de Haro.



4 Alcazar, Castle and Caves
The Alcazar was the residential center of the medieval dukes of Najera, the fortification of the castle, the walls of Najera, the fortification of the Alcazar, and the artificial caves carved in the canyon walls that guarded them from behind.



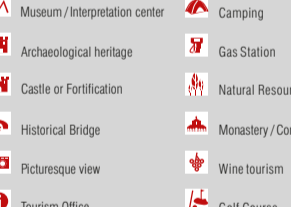
2 Najarriense Museum
You can see objects that are Roman, Main monument of the city. It is worth highlighting the cave of the virgin, the Royal Pantheon, the church of the monastery and the cloister of the knights.



3 Church of Santa Cruz
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Main monument of the city. It is worth highlighting the cave of the virgin, the Royal Pantheon, the church of the monastery and the cloister of the knights.



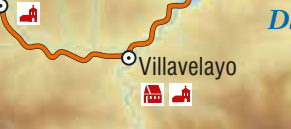
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- 12 Monolith of Fernando III
- 13 Hotel San Fernando
- 14 Hotel Hispano Inn
- 15 Ciudad de Najera Inn
- 16 Camping "El Ruedo"
- 17 Pilgrim hostel
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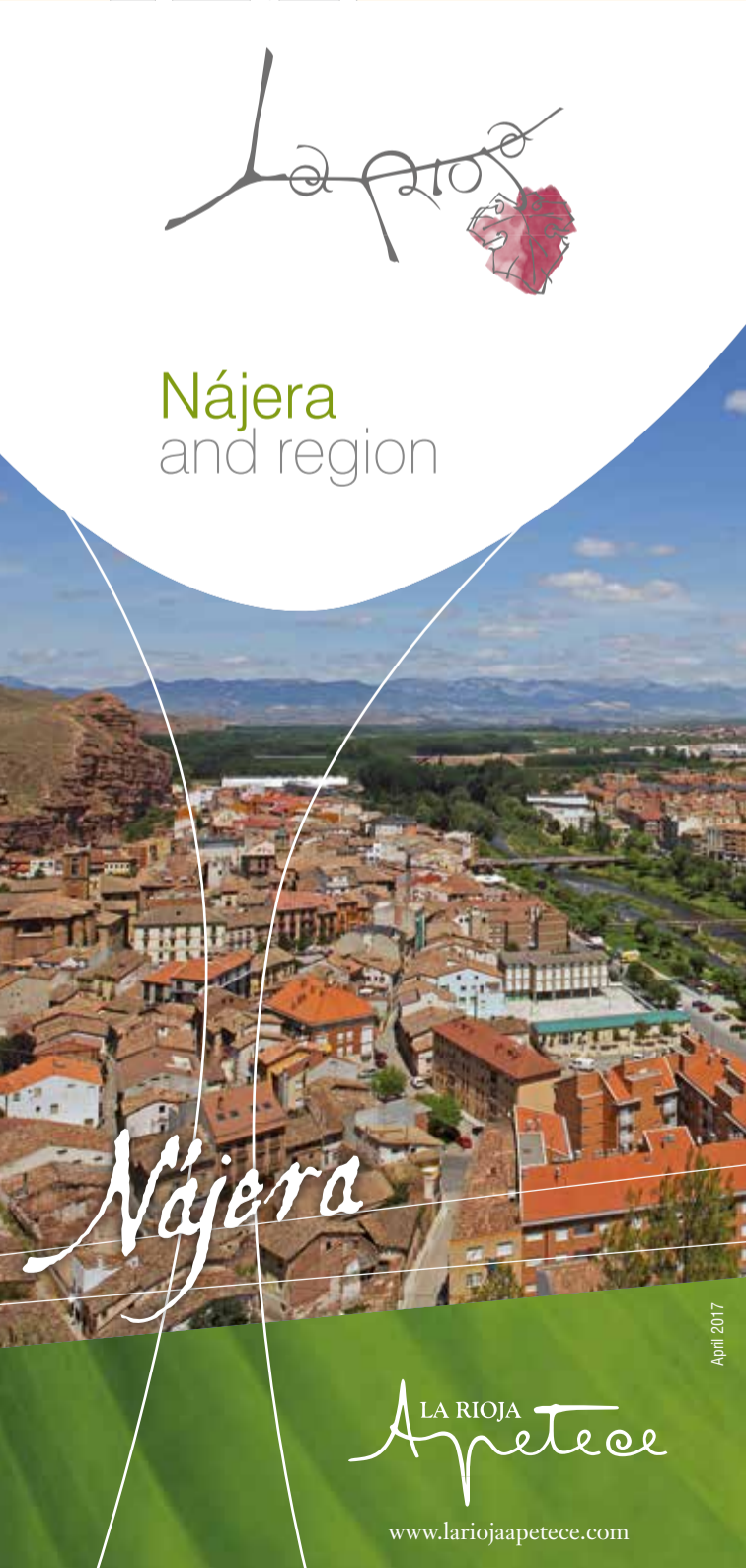
Visits are a Must!



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Nájera
Birthplace of Kings
St. James's Way, Cañas, San Millán, Roman Tricio

A little about the history of Nájera

The name "Nájera" comes from the Arabic word **Naxara**, meaning "a place between crags." Based on findings from prehistoric sites, the valley of the Najerilla was inhabited by humans from the Upper and Lower Paleolithic. Celtic tribes had also settled there. Around 714, the Arabs turned Nájera into a stronghold and bastion of La Rioja Alta. In the year 918, the **kingdom of Nájera** was established when the King of Pamplona, Sancho Garcés, gave his son, García Sánchez, the land of the Ebro, from Miranda to Tudela. It was once again occupied by the Arabs and later reconquered by King Ordoño II, and given to García Sánchez. At that point, the Navarre court was established in Nájera, thereby becoming the **capital of the kingdom and birthplace of kings**.



Santa María la Real of Nájera and Najerillense Museum

Convent of Santa Elena

Lady **Aldonza Manrique de Lara**, the daughter of the dukes of Nájera, founded the monastery in the middle of the 16th century, outside of the city, and none of it has been preserved. The current complex consists of a church, cloister, and other monastic quarters within the enclosed monastery. The **church** of the monastery (from the 17th century) is the only area that can be visited. The **main altarpiece**, a Baroque work by Mateo Rubalcaba, is comprised of a pew, a body with three sections and an attic. In the center of the body, the sculpture of St. Helena stands out.

The **wrought iron bars** located at the foot of the church, comprised of two bodies and dated 1660, separate the area open to the public from the enclosed monastery where the Franciscan Clarist Sisters currently live.

Tel.: Convento de Santa Elena: 941 363 183

Hiking and sport tourism

El Rajao, Matute and Tobía

The recreational area of **El Rajao**, near Matute and the crags of Tobía, is an ideal starting point for hiking or mountain biking, as well as for enjoying a day outdoors. Touring this area, which is especially beautiful in autumn, allows you to enjoy the dense ochre-colored forests, small cascades and streams.



Matute

Sports in the vineyards

A different way to enjoy the wine of La Rioja is by playing sports in the midst of the characteristic vineyard scenery, which varies greatly based on the season of the year. There are many options: In **Uruñuela** you can take guided tours of the vineyards. In this area you will also find **bike paths between the vineyards**. Starting from **Navarrete** and always between vines and grapes, you can go **horseback riding throughout the Nájera region**... contact the sport tourism companies that offer these services around Nájera. (www.rutasentrehayedos.es)

Wine tourism in Nájera and surrounding area

Visits to the wineries

Both in **Nájera** as well as in other nearby towns such as **Badarán**, **Ventosa** or **Navarrete** there are **wineries that offer tours** where you can learn how one of the best wines in the world is produced and aged in oak barrels. Pick a winery and immerse yourself in the Riojan wine culture.



Santa María La Real

The monastery was founded by King **García Sánchez III "the one from Nájera"** along with his wife, Lady Estefanía de Foix, and they ordered its construction in 1052. The origin of its founding is lost in the legend that explains how the monarch, while hunting, pursued his prey until he reached a cave where he found a mysterious image of the Virgin and, next to her, a vase with lilies, a bell and a lamp. When the king reconquered Calahorra from the Muslims, he built the monastery of Santa María La Real as an offering to the Virgin that had helped him. In turn, he instituted the **Military Order of the Knights of the Terraza** or of the **Jarra**, one of the oldest orders in Spain. In 1079 **Alfonso VI of Castile** incorporated the monastery into the Benedictine order of Cluny, along with the group of priests that lived there since its founding, and they remained there until the Ecclesiastical Confiscations of Mendizábal in the year 1835. Since 1895, a community of **Franciscan Friars** has been in charge of the monastery.

The present-day **church** of the monastery dates back to 1516, and consists of three naves and a transept. The **original cave** in which the legend states that the Virgin appeared, is located at the foot of the nave, and the image overlooking it is that of Our Lady of the Roses, from the early 14th century. In its entrance is the **Royal Pantheon** that holds twelve graves from two dynasties: "the Abarcas" or "Jimenas" from the 10th and 11th centuries, and the dynasty of García Ramírez "the Restorer," from the 12th and 13th centuries. Among them, it is worth highlighting the **tomb of Lady Blanca of Navarre**, which is a true Romanesque jewel from the 12th century. The **altarpiece** of the main chapel is from the late 17th century, has a Baroque style, and in the center has a projecting sculpture of Santa María La Real holding the boy on her left knee. The choir from the early 16th century is a Catholic Monarch style. The **chair set carved** in walnut wood is a florid Gothic masterpiece. In the priory chair, we can appreciate the polychromed figure of King García.

The **Cloister of the Nights** for centuries has been a burial site of many nobles. The most noteworthy among them all is the **grave of Lord Diego López of Haro** with his lying sculpture from the 13th century, and at its feet, the Gothic sarcophagus of his wife, Lady Toda Pérez of Azagra. The harmonious mix of styles such as the florid Gothic style of the vaults and the plateresque style of the **openwork tracery** has made this a striking architectural work that is worth a visit. In the 19th century, the monastery was used as infantry barracks, a theater, public works warehouse and storage facility, until 1889, when it was declared a **National Monument**.

Tel.: S. María La Real: 941 361 083

Visits from Nájera

San Millán de la Cogolla

This visit is a must, being that this is the main cultural landmark in La Rioja, declared a World Heritage site in 1997. The most unique and remarkable fact about San Millán de la Cogolla is that this is where the first words were written, that have been found, in the Romance language that in the present day is known as Castilian or Spanish. In this town, you can visit the monasteries of Suso and Yuso. The first one requires a reservation in advance, since visits are limited. Tel. For reservations: Monasterio de Suso: 941 373 082, Monasterio de Yuso: 941 373 049

Tricio

Its main monument is the Basilica of Holy Mary of the Arches, the oldest religious monument in La Rioja. Originally, it was a Roman mausoleum from the 3rd century, and converted into a Christian basilica in the 5th century, reusing architectural components from the ancient Roman city of Tritium Megallum, or Tricio the Great, which spanned across the present day towns of Tricio, Nájera and other nearby localities. Underground, below the basilica, graves with Paleochristian tombs were discovered from the 5th and 6th centuries, in addition to some Roman sarcophagi from the 1st to 3rd centuries A.D. that were reused, and other medieval ones; as well as Roman funeral steles and another Paleochristian one. In the chancel, there are preserved remains of Romanesque paintings from the late 12th century repainted over the original Paleochristian ones from the 5th century. The building has a basilica-shaped structure with a longitudinal layout consisting of three naves and a quadrangular chancel. The side naves are separated from the central one by a series of arches supported by Corinthian columns formed by fragments of Roman columns from the 1st century. In the 18th century, the interior of the Basilica was covered with Baroque plasterwork. The original sculpture of the Virgin of the Arches, a black pre-Romanesque Virgin from the 11th century, is located at the parish church of Tricio. Tel.: S. M. de los Arcos: 636 820 589



Romanesque Painting of Holy Mary of the Arches

Cañas

This Cistercian abbey is one of the first ones that was founded in Spain. Felipe Díaz de Haro, IX Lord of Vizcaya, and his wife, Lady Aldonza Ruiz de Castro, in the year 1170 donated the towns of Cañas and Canillas to the nuns of the monastery of Hayuela in order for them to found an abbey at this location. There were three stages in the construction of the monastery: The Romanesque, of which there are only vestiges remaining, the Gothic (second half of the 13th century), which corresponds to part of the church and the chapter house, and finally the post

Najerillense Museum

This museum has archaeological, artistic, and ethnographic items from the Nájera area. It is located at the former **Palace of Abad** of Santa María La Real and it was connected to the monastery through a projecting passage over the street. The collections come from excavations, exploration, fortuitous findings, donations and purchases. The items have been grouped into sections: Prehistory, Pre-Roman People Groups, Rome and Middle Ages. They keep a collection of medieval, Hispano-Muslim, Jewish and Christian pottery. The **ethnographic collections** comprise a rich and varied ensemble that brings together and bears witness to the jobs, trades and traditional ways of living of the Najerilla region. The museum has a small collection of paintings with three works that stand out: an oil panel painting from the 15th c. (The Miracle of Mass by San Gregorio) and two **Flemish copper-based paintings** from the c. 18th c.

Tel.: Museo Najerillense: 941 360 101



Najerillense Museum



Royal Pantheon of Santa María la Real of Nájera

Church of Santa Cruz

Even though it dates back to 1054, the current temple was dedicated in 1611. It is built out of ashlar stone and consists of three naves and nine altars. Also, it holds the **relics of San Prudencio**, among other saints, and paintings from Santa María la Real.



Cistercian abbey of Cañas

16th century stage in which construction of the central nave was resumed, and the two side ones remained incomplete. Many of the church's stones still retain the mark of the stonemason that carved them.

What is striking about the monastery's church is its great lighting through large windows. The large Renaissance altarpiece, a work by Andrés de Melgar and Guillén de Holanda, was ordered by Lady Leonor de Osorio to be built around 1523 as a type of triptych. Its theme is based essentially on Mary. The façade of the chapter house stands-out because of its unique beauty, and its three pointed arches are decorated with plant motifs. One highlight of its interior is the Gothic-style grave from the early 14th century of the Blessed Lady Urraca López de Haro, the daughter of the founders who became a nun at a very young age and was the fourth abbess of the community. She died in the year 1262, and her incorruptible body was preserved.

The community of Cistercian nuns that have lived continuously in the monastery since its founding spend their time doing manual work and praying. They decorate porcelain, make sweets, craft rosaries, and have some small guest quarters. Tel.: Abadía de Cañas: 941 379 145

Anguiano and Valvanera

Already documented in the 11th c., Anguiano is the municipality that is home to the patroness of La Rioja, the Virgin of Valvanera, and she belonged to its monastery, which was granted by Alfonso VI as a concession of pastures. One of the highlights of this municipality is the bridge of Cuevas, with only one arch, from the 18th century, with a height of thirty meters above the river. However, what has undoubtedly made this Riojan town internationally famous is its dancers on stilts.

The name of the monastery, Valvanera, comes from a Latin expression "Vallis Venaria," which means "valley of the water veins." The construction of the shrine came about as a result of the discovery of an image of Holy Mary from the 9th century by a repentant thief named Nuño Oñez. This monastery is the site where the Riojanos express their Marian devotion. Throughout the year, the so-called Valvaneradas are held, in which the faithful participate by walking up to this site from different points in La Rioja. Tel.: Monasterio de Valvanera: 636 377 044



St. James's Way

Panoramic view of Azofra

On the Way, before arriving in Nájera, a mount stands out from the rest: the mythical "**Poyo Roldán**", the stage for another version of those evocative legends of battles between medieval knights that are so widespread in the areas of the St. James's Way where the Order of Cluny had the greatest influence. It is the story that narrates the battle between the **giant Ferragut** and Roldán, a knight at the service of Carlomagno.

In order to get to the historic quarter of Nájera, we must go down **San Fernando street** until we reach the Najerilla river and cross the bridge, which is also said to be a work of San Juan de Ortega. In the period between the years 918 and 1076, Nájera was the most important political center of the Reconquest.

The St. James's Way departs from Nájera through Costanilla street, which begins at the monastery of Santa María la Real. Upon arriving in the town of **Azofra**, we find that the two main streets, Mayor or Real and Sol Street, are also another part of the St. James's Way. Looking over the church's main altarpiece, we find an image of St. James with the features of a pilgrim. We depart from Azofra drinking water from the **Fountain of the Pilgrims**.

One kilometer later, the impressive **Scroll of Azofra** appears. These monuments are related to the period in which the groups of settlers that formed core urban areas became legally structured. As their administration became increasingly autonomous, it was necessary for them to obtain their own legal instruments. This scroll serves as a reminder about the sword of justice, which is stuck in the ground with the objective of deterring the criminal before the crime is committed.

We pass **Cirueña** and its splendid meadow of Pyrenean oak and a dirt road will take us to the place where the remains of one of the most emblematic saints of the Way are resting: **Santo Domingo de la Calzada**.

Don't miss out!!

Furniture Fair

The carpenter tradition of Nájera is well known. A significant amount of **furniture factories** are concentrated in this town, and for that reason, the Furniture Fair has become an annual event that is celebrated during Holy Week and offers visitors, in addition to being able to purchase furniture at special prices, the chance to enjoy many activities related to cuisine, culture and art that are scheduled on these days.

Medieval Studies at Nájera

The main attraction in summer is the theatrical performance of the "**Kingdom of Nájera**" in which the people of Nájera participate as the main characters. Also, on these days, the **International Meetings of the Middle Ages** are held, as well as other performances and cultural expressions that include exhibitions, visits, etc. (www.amigosdelahistorianajerillense.com)

Dancers of Anguiano

This spectacular dance, declared to be of national interest, is done on 45-centimeter high **wooden stilts** by eight young dancers from the town who, wearing colored vests and yellow skirts, head down the stone-paved hill, starting at the church and finishing at the Anguiano square. Every **22nd of July**, the Festival of Magdalena is held in the morning and afternoon, as well as the last Saturday of September. There are written documents about the dance of Anguiano that date back to 1603, although it is believed to have a much older origin. In any case, it is the **oldest expression of folk in La Rioja**.



Monastery of Valvanera

