



CASTILLA Y LEÓN

General Description

- Castilla-Leon is not only the largest region of Spain, but as well the largest region of all European Union. Its area has 94.147 square kilometres, 20 % of Spain area. There are about 2. 800.000 Inhabitants.
The elevated plain is limited by the the mountain ranges Sistema Iberico to the east, Cordillera Central to the south, Cordillera Cantabrica to the north and by Duero river towards Portugal.
- It was the central area of Spanish medieval history, and its importance during that epoch is still evident in its cathedrals, monasteries, castles and fortified towns, many of which are preserved in perfect state.
- Tha capital is Valladolid situated in the center of the region and is the biggest city of the region
- Apart of its great monumental patrimony, Castilla-Leon offers as well natural parks and kilometres of practically virginal nature, with woods of oaks and cork-oaks.
- Gastronomy is distinguished by excellent meat, in particular of lamb, and vegetables like the famous creamy beans of Avila. Artisan and popular celebrations show a rich and varied folklore, often of archaical roots.



PROVINCES





BURGOS

- The city of Burgos has a population of 166,000. It is the capital of the province of the same name and situated 700 m above the sea level. The city is outstanding both for its exceptional historic and artistic heritage and for its geographical location (on the Route to Santiago) ensure many visitors, making it one of the most visited cities in Spain.
- Burgos is a richly historical city. Traces of its 1,100 years of existence are to be found on every corner. The most important monument is the Cathedral, declared by the UNESCO a World Heritage Monument, a true jewel of architecture. In fact it is the third largest cathedral in Spain. The construction of this master piece of gothic art began in 1221 and continued on for three centuries. There are many more important monuments such as the Cartuja de Miraflores, the Monastery of Las Huelgas, Saint Gil church, the arch of Santa María,.....
- Despite its size and extremes of climate, it is one of the most agreeable provincial capitals in Castilla y León. You shouldn't miss to visit as well the surroundings of the town, where you will find many villages of extraordinary historical-artistical value.
- Some of the specialties of Burgos include: roasted suckling lamb, succulent potpourri, garlic soups, Burgos style lentils, ground pork and Castille style trout, not to forget its wonderful blood sausage. A fine selection of red and rosé wines is available to accompany these regional specialities.

The province of BURGOS

- The province of Burgos is outstanding for the great variety of scenery, the number of villages of noteworthy historic and artistic interest.
- Perhaps the area which deserves most attention is the Sierra de Atapuerca, known internationally for its paleontologic discoveries. This rich geographical area, formed by caves and abysses, has been under research since 1980. The interdisciplinary studies in progress here are centered on the search of life forms, the history of the world and of Mankind, by researching the layers of sediment which have covered the area for over a million years until the superior Pleistocene period. More than 30 specialists from different Universities and Centres of Investigation from Spain, France, Great Britain and the United States are currently working here in what is an unprecedented archeological-paleontological dig.
- The presence of numerous human remains and tools has enabled researchers to discover a new species of homo, "Homo antecessor". They have also been able to study the diversity of 35 individuals of another species, "Homo Heidelbergensis" and to begin to understand the instruments they used and the technological advances made by these groups of humans.
- All this has led to the Atapuerca Mountain Range being recently declared World Heritage by the UNESCO . Two areas of study belonging to the Department of Historic Sciences and Geography the University of Burgos are participating in the Sierra de Atapuerca Research Project: Anthropology and Prehistory.



SPORTS

- There are many options for the practice of sports in this region, almost always having some connection with nature. In winter there are some ski-slopes in the mountains that surround the region.
- In summer there are a great many natural zones and parks for enjoyment, in which water normally plays a prominent part. The mountains of Castilla y Leon provide the ideal setting for such sports as trekking, bicycle and horseback touring, rafting and even climbing.
- The region offers many opportunities for shooting and fishing. There are also good golf courses and ground for autochthonous sports such as skittles and tuta.
- The most famous sportsmen are athletes such as Abel Antón (marathon), Fermín Cacho (1500 m), Marta Dominguez (5000 m) and Manuel Martinez (weight).

PROBLEMS

- Population in Castilla y Leon has been decreasing dramatically due to a slow-down in birth date. About 20 % of the population is over 65 years old. Population has concentrated in the main cities (Valladolid, Leon, Burgos and Salamanca), resulting in large empty rural areas

ECONOMY

- Agriculture had traditionally been the basis of economy in the region. Modern industry has developed recently in urban areas and, to a lesser extent, in smaller towns, together with a few traditional activities.
- Tourism is also achieving importance due to the appeal of the "Camino de Santiago" and the richness of natural and archeological heritage

WAY OF LIFE

- Public facilities such as schools, hospitals or roads are sometimes as scarce as population, especially in rural areas, although living standards have improved considerably and the average income is similar to the nation's nowadays.
- In spite of being so big, there aren't mayor differences in character or habits of the population. There aren't any dialects, either.
- The harsh continental climate makes people conservative and somewhat cold, but also honest and hospitable.