



The Fuentes Carrionas Massif is home to the highest peaks in Montaña Palentina (2451 m) and Curavacas (2524m).

Despite the intense human intervention in the region throughout history, its **high mountain landscape** is still of great natural value. There are **holm oak and juniper groves**, as well as **beech, oak and birch forests**. This variety of ecological conditions also translates into a striking diversity of fauna, which is in a remarkably good state of conservation, being representative in this respect the presence of the **brown bear**, a species catalogued as "endangered".

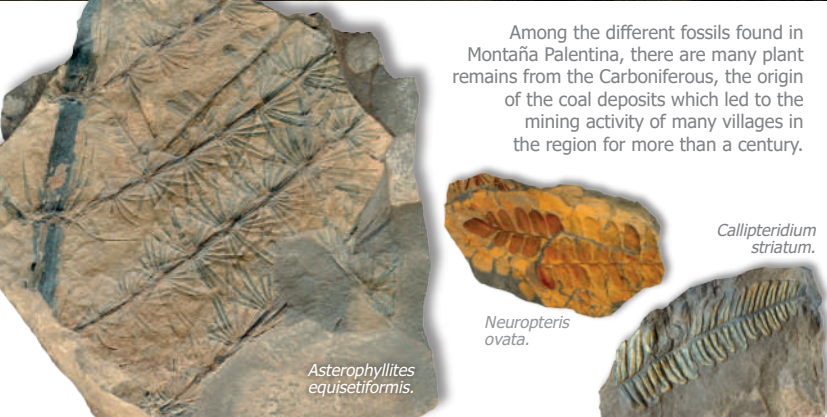


Montaña Palentina

The Montaña Palentina Natural Park, with an area of 78,179 ha, is located in the far north of the province of Palencia (Northern Spain). This mountainous area belongs to the **Cantabrian Mountains** and is divided by the basins of the **rivers Carrión and Pisuerga**, the former being dominated by steep slopes with little vegetation cover, while in the latter, there are more extensive wooded areas, established on a less accentuated relief.

Along with the great natural sights, visitors will discover hermitages, monasteries and **Romanesque** churches throughout the area, as well as small villages with well-preserved traditional architecture, especially those furthest away from the mining centres. The Natural Park covers the municipalities of Vellilla del Río Carrión, Triollo, Castejón de la Peña, Dehesa de Montejo, Cervera de Pisuerga, Palentinos, La Pernia, San Cebrán de Mudá, Brañosera and Aguilar de Campoo.

Brief description of the Natural Area



This is a geologically complex and fragmented area, ultimately marked by glacialism, very active in Montaña Palentina, and often overlapping with other modelling, including that of karstic origin. The last glaciations, some ten thousand years ago, have left their mark in the form of cirques, moraines, basins, imposing glacial valleys and grooves carved into the rocks, which add singularity and beauty to the landscape. The action of water and ice, for its part, has capriciously sculpted the hard limestone mountain rock, giving rise to a karst landscape based on reliefs with abundant grooves and ridges, lapices and dolines, depressions forming caves and deep and dangerous abysses.



Undoubtedly, the main feature of the landscape here is water. As they pass through the Natural Park, the rivers Carrión and Pisuerga have modelled abrupt and rugged reliefs, contrasting the valley of the Carrión with steep slopes with little vegetation cover and a predominance of rock, with the extensive forests of the Pisuerga basin, set on a gentler relief.



Geology and relief



In the protected area there are beech and oak forests, aspen, birch, yew, and holm oak groves. Two forest formations stand out because they are considered to be relicts: the Peña Lampa juniper grove - a mass of Spanish juniper - and the Pine Forest of Vellilla del Río Carrión, which is completely different from the reforested pine masses. These trees are accompanied by hazels, which come to form almost pure hazel groves in the valley bottoms; hawthorns, blackthorns, rose bushes, alpine buckthorns, holly trees, whitebarns, etc. Among the scrubland, the most important are the savin junipers, brooms, scorpion brooms and especially the heaths. As far as herbaceous formations are concerned, the matgrass and grasslands are of particular importance, together with the community of crags, rocky grounds and peatlands.

Vegetation and flora

It is a relatively large area of remarkable natural value and unique biological quality, in which the coexistence of humans and their activities is made compatible with the dynamic processes of nature, through a balanced and sustainable use of resources.

What is a Natural Park?

It is a rural area with special natural values which must be preserved through sustainable development models.

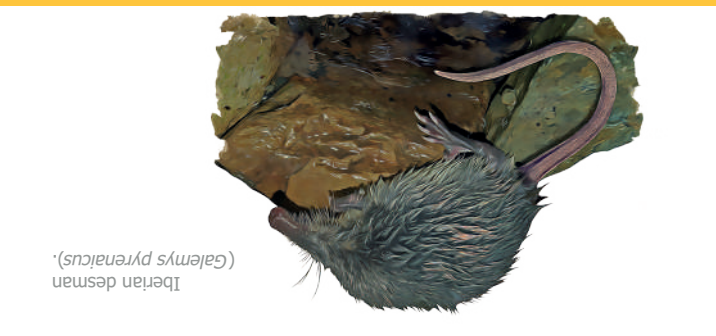
Why is Montaña Palentina protected?

Because it is an excellent example of a high mountain landscape of great faunistic, botanical and cultural value.

Because it has one of the northernmost masses of Spanish juniper in Europe, dense yew woods and a natural pine forest, together with Cantabrian Mountains flora endemic species such as *Artemisa cantabrica*, *Echium cantabricum* and *Primula pedemontana*.

Because it is the habitat for endangered fauna species such as grey partridge, middle spotted woodpecker, broom hare, Iberian desman and the emblematic brown bear.

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Hiking trails

The Montaña Palentina Natural Park has a varied network of trails of varying difficulty, which allows visitors to discover the diverse natural and cultural values of the Natural Area. All these trails are properly signposted.

A few tips

Camping is not permitted within the boundaries of the protected area. Motor vehicles may not be driven on roads and tracks with restricted access.

If you are planning to go on a hike in the mountains, prepare the appropriate footwear and clothing. Keep the rubbish you produce in a bag and deposit it in the first container you find.

Close the gates of livestock fences after crossing them.

It is not advisable to drink water from streams or rivers; there are fountains in the villages and some recreational areas.

Avoid disturbing animals that cross your path, whether they are wild or domestic. If you don't make noise, you will see many species. You should also be aware that if you go with your dog, you are responsible for any damage or accident it may cause; you must keep it under control.

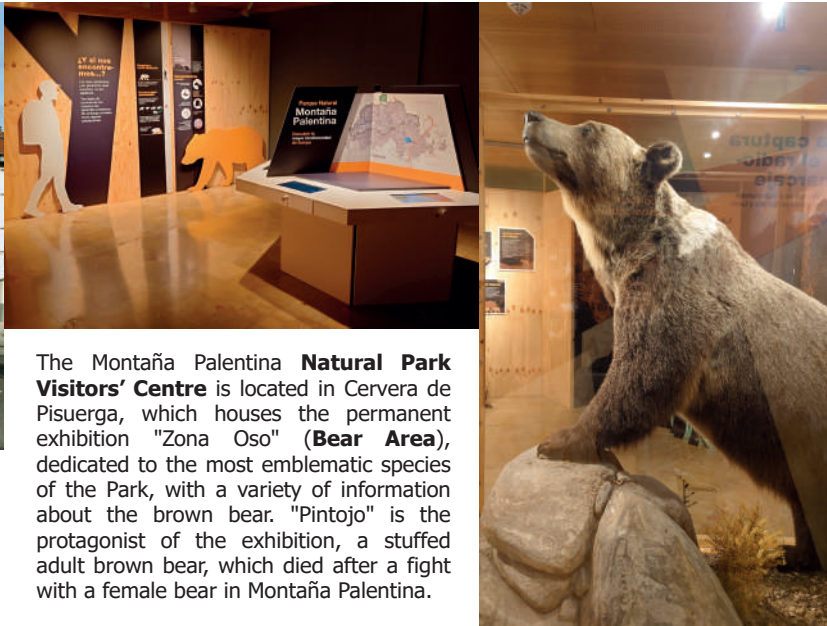
It is forbidden to light fires inside the Protected Area.

Do not pull up plants; you can always photograph, draw or observe them without further ado, both you and whoever comes after you.

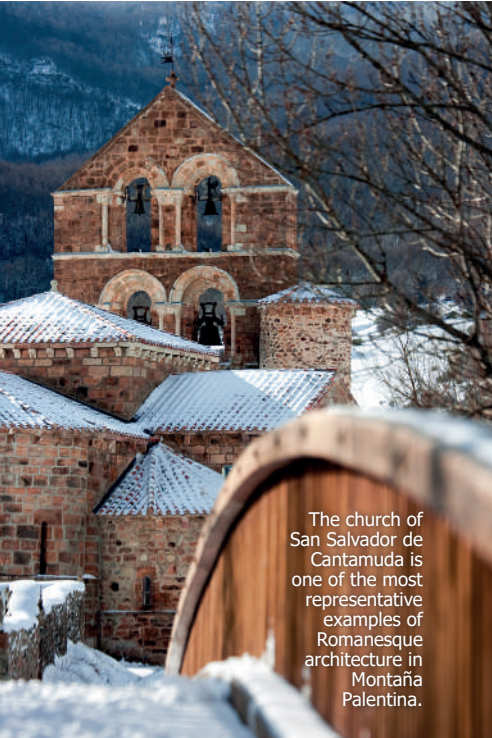
Contribute so that we can all enjoy the environment!



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Trails and public facilities



The rich ethnographic and folkloric heritage of the region includes a valuable legacy of customs, traditions, legends, romances, costumes, trades and constructions closely related to the traditional uses and lifestyles of the mountains.



Nevertheless, there are still good examples of popular architecture in the area, some of them as unique as 'La Benina' in Valcobero, a traditional house with a distinctive rye thatched roof. In La Castillería, the mountain architecture is still in good condition. Throughout the Natural Park there are also some of the jewels of the magnificent Romanesque architecture of Palencia, such as the churches of San Salvador de Cantamuda and Valberzoso. In addition, important vestiges of past cultures have been preserved: in Cervera de Pisuerga, the cave hermitage of San Vicente; in Vellilla del Río Carrión there are Roman gold mining infrastructures and an altar from the same period next to 'La Reana', a Vandalian spring.

Social and cultural heritage



Fauna

