

Family Time in the Sierra

- And if you'd like to round off your day, take a look at our sections on:

Where to eat and Where to stay: because nothing beats recharging in a good mountain restaurant or unwinding in a place full of character. In the Guadarrama mountain, adventure isn't just found on the ground... it's up in the trees too!

More information:

<https://sierraguadarrama.info>



Explore, dream and learn together in the Guadarrama mountain

In the Guadarrama mountain, every day has the potential to become an adventure. Easy-going paths invite family strolls, hidden viewpoints reward curious explorers, and stories whispered by stones and forests spark young imaginations. The Guadarrama mountain is a place to share, to laugh, to learn and to feel excited together. A destination designed with families in mind.

That said, to make the most of your visit, coming well prepared is key:

Wear comfortable clothing and proper footwear for the mountains. Carry water and a light snack. Protect little ones from sun, cold or rain. And try to avoid days of extreme heat or unsettled weather.

Before setting off on your adventure, take a moment to read the Good Practice Code for the Mountains: with small gestures, we can all help keep the Guadarrama mountain alive and healthy, a place where nature and families continue to meet.

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FAMILY ROUTES

Fun, easy-going trails to enjoy together

From Manzanares El Real to Mataelpino along the Camino de Santiago

Can you imagine walking a stretch of the historic Camino de Santiago with your family right in the heart of the Guadarrama mountain? This route links two charming villages — Manzanares El Real and Mataelpino, through a landscape of open dehesas, meadows and bubbling streams, where cows and horses still graze freely.

It's an ideal family walk: easy, short and full of little discoveries. Along the way, children can spot traditional irrigation channels carrying water, get up close to farm animals, and learn how, for centuries, shepherds guided their flocks along these drovers' roads, the true motorways of transhumance.

 **Linear route. 7,2 km**
Easy difficulty

Family tip

When you reach Mataelpino, treat yourselves to a warming hot chocolate in the village square or enjoy a hearty mountain dish in one of its friendly, family-run restaurants.



The Poets' Viewpoints in the Fuenfría Valley

A walk full of history, nature... and poetry! This circular route invites you to explore the Fuenfría Valley, one of the most iconic corners of the Guadarrama mountain.

The path winds through pine forests, following sections of the old Bourbon Road and the Republic Road. It is clearly waymarked with orange circles painted on the trees, perfect for turning the walk into a fun treasure hunt for younger explorers.

Here you'll also find one of the best-preserved stretches of the Roman Road (1st century AD) that once linked Segovia with Titulcia. Walking along it feels like stepping back in time, treading the very stones laid by the Romans almost 2,000 years ago. The grand finale comes at the Poets' Viewpoints, paying tribute to writers such as Vicente Aleixandre and Luis Rosales. From these natural balconies, the views over the forests and mountains of the National Park are simply breathtaking.



 **Circular route. 7,8 km**
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Bring a notebook or sketchpad and encourage children to write a short poem or draw the landscape from the viewpoints. Who knows, they might just feel the inspiration of the great poets!

From the Santillana Reservoir to Cerceda along the Cañada Real

This route is perfect for adventurous families looking for something a little different, right in the heart of nature. It starts at the Santillana Reservoir, beside Manzanares El Real, and follows the historic Cañada Real, a route used for centuries by shepherds and transhumant livestock.

The trail winds through holm oaks and junipers in an atmosphere steeped in history and tradition. Along the way, the Sierra de Hoyo unfolds before you, its slopes cloaked in Mediterranean woodland. A perfect setting to stop, take a breather and enjoy the views together.

Although it can be done on foot, this route is especially recommended for mountain biking, turning it into a fun, lively experience for all the family.

 **Linear route · 8.6 km**
(one way)
Moderate difficulty

Family tip

Plan the route as a mini cycling expedition and finish with a traditional meal in one of Cerceda's local restaurants, the perfect reward after the adventure!



From Moralzarzal to Collado Mediano climbing up to the Telégrafo hill

If you're looking for a route that blends nature, history and sweeping views, this walk up to Telégrafo hill is ideal for a family day out. The trail starts in Moralzarzal and heads towards Collado Mediano, climbing gently along mountain paths until reaching the historic Telégrafo Óptico.

From this strategic vantage point, you can enjoy wide views over towns such as Alpedrete, Collado Mediano and Guadarrama, with El Escorial and Monte Abantos rising majestically in the distance.

The Telegraph Tower is a fascinating and little-known piece of history. It formed part of the Madrid-Irún line, a 19th-century communication system that transmitted messages using optical signals. Each tower stood about 11 km from the next, and the operators worked tirelessly from dawn to dusk to keep the network running.

The route is easy, ideal for walking with children or cycling on mountain bikes, while soaking up the scenery and the charm of the surrounding mountain villages.

 **Linear route. 11,1 km**
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Round off the walk by exploring the history of the tower and amaze the children by explaining how, almost 200 years ago, messages were sent "at full speed" with no internet and no mobile phones!



From Collado Mediano to the viewpoints of La Cobañera and Sierra del Castillo

Looking for an easy plan close to the village, with unforgettable views? This walk from Collado Mediano is perfect for enjoying as a family, even with younger children.

The path climbs gently towards the viewpoints of La Cobañera and Sierra del Castillo, set halfway up the mountain, and reveals lesser-known panoramas that never fail to surprise.

From the first viewpoint, looking south, the broad basin of the Guadarrama River stretches out before you. From the second, facing north, the majestic peaks of Siete Picos, Bola del Mundo and La Maliciosa rise into view. A natural spectacle, without the need for long hikes!

Thanks to its proximity to the town centre, this walk can easily be combined with a relaxed village plan: enjoying a cold drink, sampling traditional mountain cuisine or discovering the charm of Collado Mediano.



Circular route. 5,5 km
(out and back)
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Bring a pair of binoculars so children can have fun spotting mountains, villages and birds of prey from the viewpoints, like a mini mountain safari!

From Alpedrete to Collado Mediano through ancient quarries

A short, easy walk that blends history, nature and sweeping views. This route links Alpedrete and Collado Mediano along paths flanked by old quarries that, for centuries, supplied the stone used to shape many of the Sierra's villages.

As you walk, the Telégrafo hill comes into view on the right, crowned by its historic optical signal tower. Straight ahead rises Castillo hill, and further beyond, the imposing summit of La Maliciosa (2,227 m), one of the most iconic peaks of the Guadarrama mountain.

An ideal route for families looking for a calm, characterful outing, connecting with the area's quarrying heritage and enjoying postcard-perfect panoramas.



Linear route. 4,1 km
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Make the most of your arrival in Collado Mediano by recharging in the Plaza Mayor, where children can relax while adults savour the local cuisine.



From Alpedrete to Los Molinos along the shepherds' paths

A walk steeped in tradition and nature. This route links Alpedrete with Los Molinos along the historic Cañada Real Segoviana, one of the great transhumance routes where, for centuries, flocks of sheep and goats were guided by mountain shepherds.

Today, it's a pleasant trail bordered by working farmland which, in spring, turns into a burst of colour: green meadows sprinkled with wildflowers. For younger walkers, it feels like stepping into a rural storybook, discovering the landscapes that shaped shepherding, one of the oldest and most emblematic ways of life in the Guadarrama mountain.

An easy route, perfect for families at any time of year, combining fresh air with the living history of the mountains.

 **Linear route. 7 km**
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Explain to children how transhumant shepherds lived and travelled. Turn the walk into a game: who can spot the first tracks of cows, sheep or horses along the path?



A walk along the shores of the Santillana Reservoir

A plan that brings together nature and culture in a single outing. The Santillana Reservoir, in Manzanares El Real, is a true haven for bird lovers. Species such as the mallard, red-crested pochard, great crested grebe and great cormorant find refuge here. With a little patience and a pair of binoculars, children will love spotting and identifying the different water birds that inhabit the area. The walk follows the reservoir's shoreline all the way to the dam, offering calm, soothing views throughout.

But nature isn't the only highlight. This route also comes with a cultural gem: the impressive Castle of the Mendoza, the best-preserved medieval castle in the Community of Madrid. Declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 1931, it's the perfect way to round off the day. The route is easy and ideal for families year-round, blending outdoor walking, wildlife watching and a touch of living history.

 **Linear route. 10 km**
(out and back).
Easy difficulty

Family tip

Bring binoculars and turn the walk into a bird-spotting challenge. Who will be the first to find a red-crested pochard or a black-headed gull? And don't forget to finish with a visit to the Castle of the Mendoza, a direct trip back to the Middle Ages!



Parada del Rey via Monte Aguirre and La Raya

In Miraflores de la Sierra you'll find one of the most complete family-friendly routes in the area: the Parada del Rey trail, a walk that blends history, woodland and... birds of every shape and size!

The route leads through the Pinar de Aguirre, open dehesas, the intriguing Corro de los Doce Hermanos, and the oak woods of La Raya, offering a surprising variety of landscapes in a single walk. This is a well-preserved natural setting, ideal for birdwatching, an activity that captivates children and adults alike. Here you may spot large birds of prey such as the golden eagle, griffon vulture or red kite, as well as smaller woodland birds like the great spotted woodpecker, crested tit or Eurasian nuthatch.

As the seasons change, so does the list of species, making Miraflores de la Sierra a destination worth returning to at any time of year.



Circular route. 10,1 km
Easy-moderate
difficulty



MUSEUMS, TRAINS AND POETS

*A journey through
history, nature and poetry*

Cercedilla The Power Station

Set in the natural surroundings of Las Dehesas, the power station is a gem of Madrid's industrial heritage. This former hydroelectric power station, inaugurated in 1925 at the initiative of the local council, supplied electricity to Cercedilla for more than half a century.

Today, transformed into a visitor and interpretation centre, the Power Station preserves its original machinery intact — entirely manufactured in Spain — and offers a fascinating insight into the history of hydropower. Through models, interactive panels and educational materials, visitors can discover the ingenious system used to capture and channel water, and how this source of energy became a driving force behind the town's development.

► Ctra. de las Dehesas s/n
Bookings: 918 523 718 | oficinadeturismo@cercedilla
Guided tours available
(advance booking via the website is recommended)



Cercedilla The Nature Train

A truly unique experience where the train becomes both classroom and window onto the Guadarrama mountain. The Nature Train invites you to discover the area's rich natural and cultural heritage, sparking curiosity and encouraging respect for the environment. The journey begins at Cercedilla station, inside a restored historic electric carriage converted into a small screening room. Here, an audiovisual presentation introduces participants to the mountain's history, landscapes and biodiversity.

The adventure then continues aboard the narrow-gauge railway from Cercedilla to Puerto de Navacerrada and Puerto de Cotos, a scenic journey of around 40 minutes through striking mountain scenery, accompanied by explanations from the team at the Fuenfría valley Visitor Centre.

On arrival at Puerto de Cotos, a guided walk takes place through the lower slopes of Peñalara, an area of outstanding beauty and environmental value, before returning to Cercedilla by train in the early afternoon.

► **Bookings** Operates in summer only.
Fuenfría valley Visitor Centre: 91 852 22 13 (Monday to Sunday, 9:00 a 20:00)
RENFE Cercanías Madrid – Group Coordination
Office: 91 506 63 56.



Poets' Routes: in the footsteps of Giner de los Ríos and the Generation of '98

The Guadarrama mountain is more than scenery, it is poetry, thought and freedom. One of its greatest champions was **Francisco Giner de los Ríos**, founder of the Libre de Enseñanza institution. For Giner, nature was the finest teacher, and the mountain the perfect classroom. From 1883 onwards, he explored these mountains on foot with students and friends, among them Cossío, Vida and Salvador Calderón, crossing passes such as Navacerrada, Cotos and Siete Revueltas. These walks were far more than excursions: they were formative journeys. They inspired an entire generation of artists and intellectuals, including writers of **the Generation of '98**: Unamuno, Azorín, Pío Baroja, and above all **Antonio Machado**, who devoted verses to his mentor Giner and to his beloved mountain.

Today, many places across the Guadarrama commemorate these poets and thinkers: the **Fuente de Cossío** at Puerto de la Morcuera, the **Refugio Giner** in La Pedriza, the **Fuente de los Geólogos** at Navacerrada, or the **Refugio Zabala** on the slopes of Peñalara. Routes such as the **Camino del Tolmo**, where the Peñalara Society placed a plaque in memory of Giner de los Ríos, are still imbued with his spirit. We therefore invite you to follow **the Poets' Routes**: trails with soul, where nature and words come together. Paths that lead you back to free thought, quiet beauty... and the most literary side of the Guadarrama mountain. *más literaria.*

- **Cossío spring**
At Puerto de la Morcuera, beside the M-611 road. Easy access.
- **Giner de los Ríos refuge**
In the very heart of La Pedriza. Challenging route.
- **Geólogos spring**
Beside the M-601 road on the ascent to Puerto de Navacerrada. Easy access.
- **Zabala refuge**
On the climb to Peñalara Peak. Moderately easy route, starting from the Cotos car park.
- **Tolmo road**
An easy 6 km route (out and back) from the Canto Cochino car park (check access times for this car park).

Tree adventures **Fly safely through our forests**

If you're someone who loves excitement and adrenaline, the Guadarrama mountain is your place. Here, you can have fun zipping down zip lines surrounded by unique landscapes and charming villages.

Learn in nature **Discover, appreciate, enjoy, and protect...**

The Guadarrama mountain is much more than a natural paradise; it's a vast outdoor classroom. Here, whole families have the opportunity to discover the natural, geological, historical, and cultural values of the mountains firsthand. Whether walking through its forests, birdwatching, following the trail of water, or visiting its educational centres, every experience turns into a lively and exciting learning adventure.

Visitor Centres: the gateway to the mountain

- ▶ **La Fuenfría Visitor Centre** (Cercedilla): Surrounded by Scots pine forests, it offers interpretive trails, permanent and temporary exhibitions, an audiovisual about the valley, and learning spaces such as a library and educational classroom.
- ▶ **La Pedriza Visitor Centre** (Manzanares El Real): It offers a "Journey through the Sierra de Guadarrama" with permanent exhibitions and open-air themed areas, including an adapted route for people with visual impairments. It also has an Information Point for visitors, providing brochures, maps, and advice on enjoying the mountains safely.

Astronomy in the Guadarrama mountain **A sky full of magic for the whole family**

As night falls, the **Guadarrama mountain** transforms into a unique setting. Far from the light pollution of the city, here you can still enjoy a clear, dark sky full of stars, perfect for discovering the beauty of the universe with your family. From simple stargazing to astronomical

spectacles such as eclipses or meteor showers, every night can turn into an unforgettable adventure. Moreover, several local companies organise activities for all ages: night-time hikes under the moonlight, telescope observations, astronomy workshops, or mythological routes to uncover the stories behind the constellations.

Adventure activities in the Guadarrama mountain unlimited fun in the heart of nature

If you're someone who enjoys excitement and adrenaline, the Guadarrama mountain is your place. Here, you can have fun playing paintball, surrounded by stunning landscapes and picturesque villages.

Paragliding in the Guadarrama mountain **The thrill of flying freely like the birds**

For those seeking an unforgettable and adrenaline-filled experience, the Guadarrama mountain offers the chance to paraglide over unique landscapes. This activity is perfect for the adults in the family, ideal for those who want to feel the freedom of the air and experience the mountains from a whole new perspective. Imagine taking off and gliding from cloud to cloud, peak to peak, as you share the sky with griffon vultures, eagles, and falcons. The only sound is the wind and the thrill of flying.

