Spain Pain BY TRAIN







► FRANCIA STATION BARCELONA

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Front Cover: Al-Andalus train, Linares (Jaén) Photo courtesy of Renfe Back cover: Malaga Cathedral Photo: pabkov/ 123rf.com

CONTENTS

Introduction

Fly by HST	4
From Madrid to Barcelona	
Southwards	
Northwards	
Eastwards	
Great routes, full of luxury	14
Transcantabrian Grande Luxe	3
Classical Transcantabrian	
Al Andalus	
Other routes by train	21
Pilgrim Train	
La Robla Express	
Cervantes by Train	
More railway experiences	
Interrail: a different way of travelling	27

3



Enjoy Spain's incredible railway infrastructure when you travel. The National Network of Spanish Railways (RENFE) connects all the major cities and Spain's different communities with Madrid.

You'll love the high-speed trains (AVE in Spanish) for discovering Spain's major cities. You'll be able to travel long distances in such a short time and when you arrive punctually at your destination you'll be full of energy and ready to explore new places and enjoy exquisite cuisine. For example, in a single day you can have a quiet breakfast in Madrid and then have dinner while enjoying a Flamenco show in Seville.

Experience the pleasure of travelling in a **luxury train**. Admire the countryside from the dining car while you enjoy the best cuisine Spain has to offer. You'll love the **Transcantabrian**. You'll discover Green Spain aboard a real railway gem: trains equipped with spacious suites with en suite bathroom, hydro sauna, turbo massage, steam bath and much more. Another option is the **Al-Andalus**,

an opportunity to travel through central and southern Spain on board a genuine palace on rails. The belle époque décor, the luxurious 1920's-style saloon cars and the delicious cuisine will ensure that your trip is unforgettable.

There are other attractive routes to choose from which are full of surprises. Take the "Way of Saint James" in a completely different way on board the Pilgrim's Train. or discover the beautiful countryside in the north of Spain from the vintage La Robla Express train, which was built at the end of the 19th century to transport coal.

If you prefer day trips, there are many options to choose from. From Madrid you can take the **Strawberry Train**, a railway gem with wooden carriages that will take you to Aranjuez, a beautiful historical location. Then there's the **Medieval Train**, a dramatised journey to the monumental town of Sigüenza in Guadalajara.

So it's time to get started and sicover Spain by train.



FLY BY HST

If after visiting a city you'd like to "fly" to another one, take the HST. These trains fly through the Spanish countryside at full speed so you can make the most of your time. This network connects a large number of cities, so you can discover them and plan a tailor-made journey.

FROM MADRID

TO BARCELONA

The HST connects Spain's two main metropolitan areas: Madrid and Barcelona. You'll be travelling from the centre of the mainland to the coast in just two and a half hours. You can also stop off halfway and visit **Zaragoza**.

MADRID

Enjoy this vibrant capital full of art, history and entertainment. Take a stroll along the "Paseo del Arte" or "Art Promenade" which is packed with museums, palaces and exotic gardens. You'll have three of the world's most important collections of paintings right at your fingertips: the Prado Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofía. Take a stroll through the old historical quarter and discover the personality of neighbourhoods like Madrid de los Austrias. Chueca and the

"Barrio de las Letras" (Literary Quarter). You can do it by day or by night, there are so many options, including settling down on a bar's terrace, in a tavern or restaurant to enjoy delicious traditional cuisine and avant-garde gastronomy.

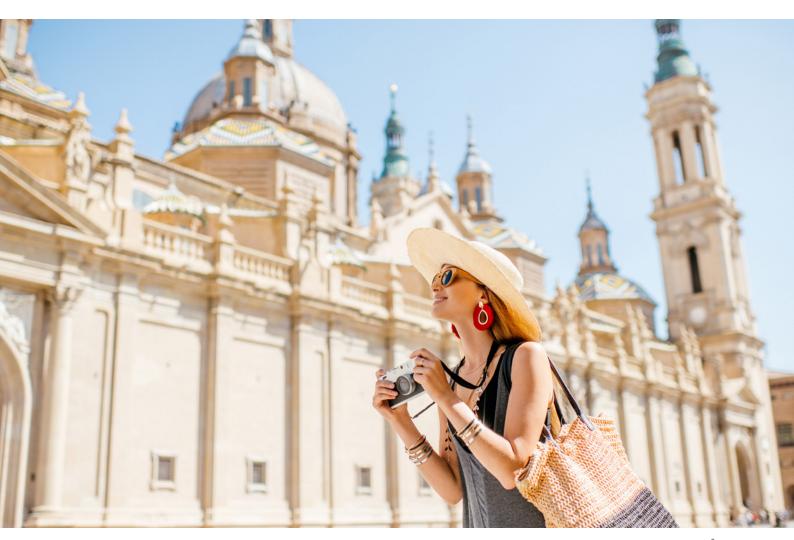
BARCELONA

You'll just love this cosmopolitan, avant-garde, Mediterranean city which is full of surprises. Moving around on foot or bicycle you can discover neighbourhoods such Las Ramblas and the seafront promenade. Deep in the renowned Gothic Quarter you'll feel like you're back in the Middle Ages. Take a leap forward to Catalan Modernism with Antonio Gaudí: you'll be impressed by his masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, and the Park Güell. Check out the city's incredible cultural agenda and sign up for exhibitions, concerts, functions... You'll love the cuisine in Barcelona which is a perfect blend of tradition and creativity. Give yourself a treat: try the craft pastries and sparkling wines. You can also take the HST to Barcelona from Malaga.









▲ THE CATHEDRAL-BASILICA OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL PILAR ZARAGOZA

ZARAGOZA

The capital of the Region of Aragon has a delightful historical old town located on the banks of the Ebro River. Stroll along the river bank and see the impressive bridges. Take a walk or cycle along the streets, boulevards and pedestrian promenades where you'll enjoy the intense cultural life and beautiful buildings like the city wall, the thermal baths and the Roman forum and theatre; the Aljafería Palace; the Basilica of El Pilar, a Baroque gem, and the Goya Museum. This will be a great opportunity for you

to enjoy some tapas (exquisite aperitifs served on small plates) by going from bar to bar. Zaragoza also has a surprising contemporary side consisting of buildings and bridges built for Expo 2008, like the river aquarium, the Aragón Pavilion and the Third Millennium bridge.

OTHER CITIES ALONG THIS ROUTE

Between Zaragoza and Barcelona there are stops along this route in Lleida and Tarragona, two Catalan cities. In the centre of **Lleida**, located on a hillside, you'll find a 13th century Romanesque

Gothic temple, the **Seu Villa** or Old Cathedral. This area has a varied and delicious cuisine: try the snails and the chocolate from Agramunt. If you're looking to take a dip in the Mediterranean along the Costa Dourada and enjoy some fresh fish and seafood then you really must visit **Tarragona**. Visit the historical old town, surrounded by 3rd century BC Roman walls, and see the marvellous Roman Amphitheatre next to the sea, an impressive archaeological World Heritage Site.

If you take the Madrid-Huesca HST you'll be in the delightful historical town of Guadalajara in 22 minutes, there you can try the lamb and the trout and buy the renowned honey from La Alcarria. Or stop off in Calatayud and enjoy the Mudéjar architecture in the historical old town. If you carry on as far as Huesca you can enjoy the historical old town and perhaps you'll be tempted to make an excursion or two up into the Pyrenees.

SOUTHWARDS

Start the day in Spain's capital and then carry on in Seville, in the heart of Andalusia, or in Malaga, on the shores of the Mediterranean. The Madrid-Seville and Madrid-Malaga HST routes connect a number of cities.

Before reaching Andalusia, the HST stops in two cities in Castile-La Mancha. In just less than an hour you could be in **Ciudad Real**, strolling through the historical old town and tasting the exquisite cheeses, wines and game dishes.





▲ MOSQUE-CATHEDRAL CORDOBA

CORDOBA

You'll just love this Andalusian city which was declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. The HST from Madrid will get you there in just over an hour and a half. Visit the beautiful historical old town, with fascinating narrow streets, squares and whitewashed patios, and you'll be dazzled by the monumental **Mosque-Cathedral**, a symbol of the Moorish legacy in Spain.

Try the local cuisine, like the refreshing Cordoba "salmorejo" (a tomato-based chilled cream soup), bread with olive oil and pickled anchovies. If you prefer something sweet, then try the Cordoba cake, sweet pastries and honey fritters: you'll discover the Moorish influence on Cordoba cuisine.

① You can also take the HST to Cordoba from other cities: Seville, Barcelona, Valencia, Malaga and Zaragoza.



▲ APRIL FAIR SEVILLE

SEVILLE

On a visit to the capital city of Andalusia you'll see how cheerful the people are and discover real architectural treasures like the **cathedral** and the **Real Alcázar**. You'll be 500 kilometres from Madrid enjoying the sunshine and the fine weather and it will only have taken you two and a half hours. While you're here you really should go to a *tablao* where you'll just love the Flamenco singing and dancing, a popular art form recognised by the UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage.

If your visit coincides with **Easter Week** or the **April Fair** you'll be able to take part in one the most impressive popular festivals in the country.

▼ CATHEDRAL OF SANTA MARÍA DE LA SEDE SEVILLE





It's only two hours twenty minutes from Madrid to the Mediterranean city where the amazing artist Pablo Picasso was born.



MALAGA

Stroll along the beautiful beaches, even in winter, and try the renowned "pescaíto frito" (typical little fried fish) and an "espeto", skewered sardines grilled over the embers. You'll also find exquisite and surprising avant-garde cuisine.

For total immersion in culture, here there are 35 museums, including the **Picasso Museum** and the **Pompidou Centre**. The historical city centre boasts a **Roman theatre**, the **Alcazaba** and delightful historic parks and gardens. From Mount Gibralfaro you'll get incredible views over the city.

For night-time entertainment you can try the town centre, or perhaps a quiet drink on the promenade. You could also seek refuge on the terrace of one of the hotels: from the top floor you can enjoy the lights of a city that never sleeps.

If you take the HST from Madrid to Malaga you'll be able to stop off in two small Andalusian towns. Puente Genil (Cordoba), is surrounded by olive groves and the Genil River runs through it, here you really have to try the quince jam of which the locals are really proud. If you're looking to discover palaces, convents, chapels and even a Moorish citadel, then stop over in Antequera. This delightful town in the province of Malaga also has Bronze Age monuments like the Antequera Dolmens Archaeological Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

① You can also take the HST to Malaga from Barcelona.



SEGOVIA

You'll arrive less than half an hour after leaving Madrid. The spectacular 1st century Roman aqueduct is your point of entry to the old town, a World Heritage site. A stroll through the charming narrow streets will lead you to impressive Medieval and Renaissance buildings like the Gothic cathedral.

The **castle** will loom up in front of you like something from a fairy tale, with its drawbridge, tower and large double windows. Segovia will tempt you with its extraordinary cuisine. Try the typical roast suckling pig, or broad beans from La Granja, accompanied by a Ribera del Duero wine.



Just over half an hour from Segovia and an hour from Madrid you'll come to **Valladolid**. You'll just love the historical Renaissance old town. The National Sculpture Museum is well worth a visit, and when you get hungry you can try a few of their renowned tapas.

If you're on the Spanish Romanesque trail then you have to visit **Palencia**, an hour and a half by HST from Madrid. The traditional cuisine includes roast suckling lamb, pigeon casserole and delicious vegetable stew.

LEÓN

This city in northwest Spain and capital of the province of León is also a stopover for Pilgrims on the Way of Saint James. If you take the HST from Madrid you'll get there in a little over two hours. The historical old town has Roman walls and there are two gems from its splendorous Medieval past: the cathedral, a magnificent Gothic building with splendid stained-glass windows, and the Basilica of San Isidro (also known as Spain's Romanesque "Sistine Chapel"). Make for the "Barrio Húmedo" (Wet District) which is what they call the district full of bars and restaurants, and enjoy some of the delicious cuisine León has to offer. Favourites are cured meats. chorizo sausages and mushrooms served as tapas, and taste some of the local wines with designation of origin: the León and El Bierzo regions.

EASTWARDS

If you're in Madrid but you're missing the sea, you can always take the HST to **Valencia** or **Alicante**. In less than two hours you can be strolling on the beach and enjoying a delicious paella.

You'd could also make a stop in Cuenca, in Castile-La Mancha, less than an hour from Madrid by HST. You'll be amazed by the impressive Hanging Houses on the rock walls. If you enjoy meat, here you'll find a variety of game-based dishes. Cuenca is also on the HST route to Albacete, the largest city in the Castile-La Mancha region.

HANGING HOUSES CUENCA



VALENCIA

You'll love this city with a wonderful climate and magnificent beaches. Stroll through the maze-like streets of the thousand-year-old district of El Carmen. Visit the Cathedral and the Silk Exchange, two Gothic gems. To spend some time surrounded by trees you should visit the Turia gardens, on foot or by bicycle. While you're here, you really shouldn't miss the City of Arts and Sciences, an impressive scientific and cultural complex which includes the Oceanogràfic, the largest aquarium in Europe.

⑤ For more information on HST routes and timetables, click here: www.renfe.com/ viajeros/larga distancia/productos/



▲ CITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES VALENCIA



▲ SANTIAGO CATHEDRAL SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

GREAT ROUTES, FULL OF LUXURY

Get on board a luxury hotel on rails and travel through the beautiful countryside. After enjoying a pleasant evening you can rest in absolute comfort in your *suite* while the train remains in the station. During the day you'll click gently along while enjoying five-star services, delicious food and entertaining activities.

The stops are planned so you can get the most out of the places along the route. There'll be a coach waiting to take you to visit charming places and enjoy select restaurants.

Enjoy the romantic experience of travelling by train in one of these incredible palaces on rails.



For eight days you can enjoy all the glamour of the great express trains of the 1920s, which were the inspiration for so many films and books, but with all the comfort of the 21st century. Discover the north of Spain travelling along the Cantabrian coast from San Sebastian (Basque Country) to Santiago de Compostela (Galicia) or vice versa.

You'll be able to rest in one of the 14 carefully decorated luxury suites and enjoy the beautiful landscapes as they pass by the window of your private lounge or the large windows in one of the original saloon cars from 1923, real gems of our historic railway heritage.

▼ TRANSCANTABRIAN GRANDE LUXE TRAIN ITINERARY





As you travel through the Basque Country, Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia you'll be able to enjoy the exquisite cuisine which characterises northern Spain. Both on the train and elsewhere, you'll get to try typical, traditional dishes prepared by internationally renowned chefs. From a typical white-bean stew and mountain casserole to baked fish, anchovies and seafood. And not forgetting sweets, pies, cured meats and the best wines of these regions. Those with special dietary requirements can request a special menu at the time of booking.

Each morning, after an exquisite breakfast on the train, a host of surprises await you: guided tours through the streets of delightful towns, museums and cathedrals, and charming restaurants.

The Bay of **San Sebastian** is surprisingly elegant, while Bilbao is a dynamic, avant-garde city. There you'll be visiting the impressive Guggenheim Museum and, in Santander, you may want to go into the Grand Casino. You can also visit some of the smaller towns such as Santillana del Mar which has a beautiful historic town centre, and Ribadesella with a delightful seafront promenade. Nature is also part of the schedule: there's the Picos de Europa National Park and the spectacular beauty of the Playa de las Catedrales beach in Galicia. Then there's Santiago de Compostela with its historic old town centre and the magnificent Gothic cathedral, the ultimate goal for thousands of pilgrims each year.



Back on the train, there'll be a live performance for you to enjoy, you can have a quiet drink in the saloon car or just take refuge in your luxury suite. As the trains stops during the night so you can get a better rest, you can always get off and stroll around at will.

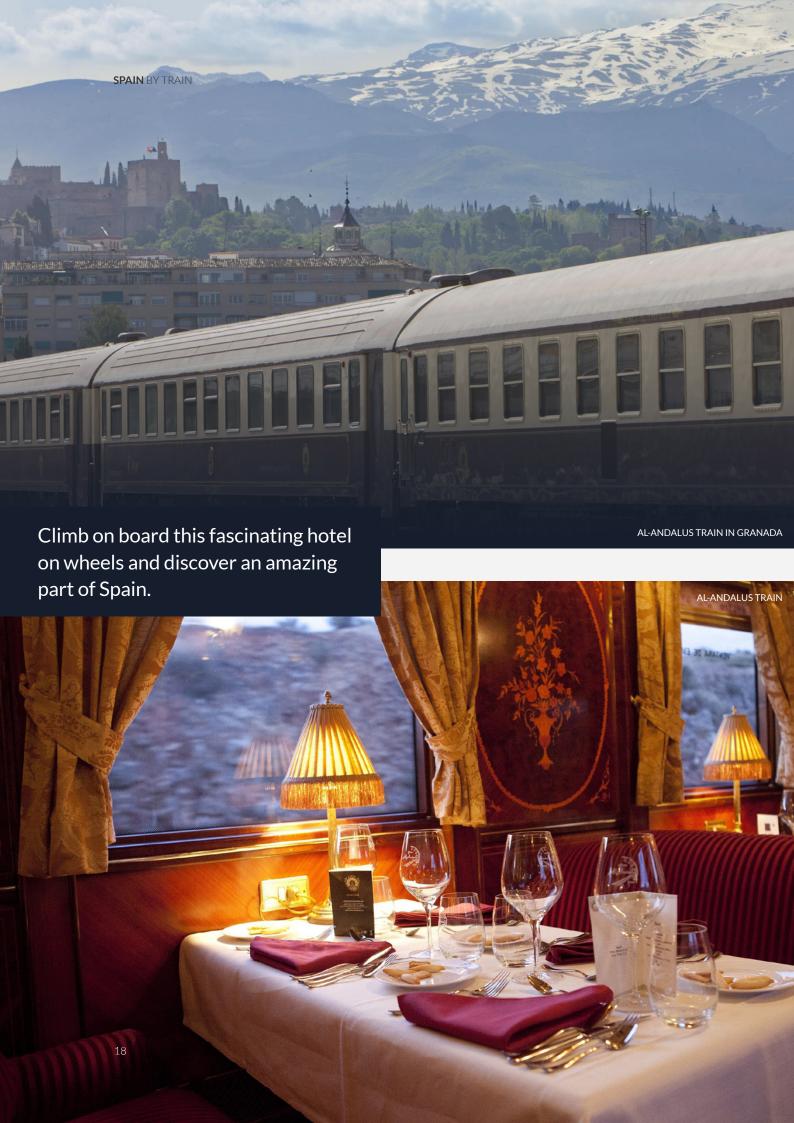
CLASSICAL

TRANSCANTABRIAN

Agreat alternative to the Grande Luxe is the Classical Transcantabrian which is a combination of the Cantabrian coast and the Castile-León interior. You can choose the 8-day trip from the city of León to Santiago de Compostela or perhaps something a little shorter: Santiago de Compostela to Santander or León to Santander.

▼ CLASSICAL TRANSCANTABRIAN TRAIN ITINERARY







▲ AL-ANDALUS TRAIN ITINERARY

AL ANDALUS

The Al-Andalus is one of the most comprehensive luxury trains in the world. It is like being taken back to the magical atmosphere of the *Belle Époque*. The *suite carriages* are the same as those built in France for the British royal family to travel between Calais and the French Riviera. A perfect blend of old-fashioned charm and up-to-date services.

In the saloon cars you can enjoy a delicious breakfast or dinner while enjoying the magnificent countryside. Relax and have a drink with a live show in the piano bar.

There are two routes to choose from: the Andalusia itinerary and the

Seville-Madrid itinerary. Choose the Andal-usia itinerary, to feel all the magic of the south of Spain. This journey starts and finishes in Seville. The capital city of Andalusia has an incredible historical old town with a Moorish legacy, a sunny climate and such friendly people. During this 7-day journey you'll get to try delicious local produce like olive oil, Sherry and Iberian cured ham from Jabugo. There'll also be traditional dishes like "gazpacho" and oxtail, and you'll get to try new versions of avant-garde Mediterranean cuisine in the delightful saloon cars or in carefully selected restaurants during the stops.

Every day you'll wake up in a different place where the most surprising activities will await you. For example, in **Jerez** you'll be attending a dance show to Spanish music where Andalusian horses are the stars of the show, all organised by the Royal Andalusian Academy of Equestrian Art. A stroll through the **Alhambra** in Granada will leave you speechless. You'll also visit some small towns which are true cultural gems, like **Úbeda** and **Baeza**, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

If you prefer the Extremadura and Castile regions, then choose the **Seville-Madrid itinerary**. You'll have six days to enjoy the local cuisine, such as the typical Castilian casseroles and roasts.

First you'll be marvelling at the beautiful city of Seville, and there'll be so much to do during the stops. In Mérida and Cáceres there are magnificent buildings from Roman times. As this region produces some of the finest cured ham in Spain, you'll have the chance to visit an estate which breeds Iberian pigs, and also the amazing natural surroundings. in the Monfragüe National Park. Before you arrive in the incredible city of Madrid, Spain's capital, two more surprises await you: A visit to the historical city of Toledo will just leave you speechless. The Jewish, Moorish and Christian legacies have left their mark on the amazing monumental architecture. The town of Aranjuez has a delightful Royal Palace and gardens, and you'll be able to raise a toast in a historical wine cellar.





LA ROBLA EXPRESS

OTHER JOURNEYS

BY TRAIN

There are numerous train journeys where you can enjoy the trip itself as well as discovering new treasures, be they long journeys or day trips. Always remember to check the departure dates. Choose the one you like, book in advance and... all aboard!

THE PILGRIM TRAIN

An original way to take the Way of Saint James. The Pilgrim Train is a five-day journey in a hotel on rails which sets off from Madrid for Santiago de Compostela and allows you to enjoy each day as you please. You'll need to to complete three stages of the Way on foot or by bicycle in order to get your Compostela Certificate (the document which confirms you have completed at least 100 kilometres on foot or 200 by bicycle). Make shorter stages or just feel free to discover the cities you pass through along the route.

You'll be transfered by a dedicated coach, from the station where the train stops to where a particular stage begins. You can have breakfast and lunch in the buffet car or in one of the restaurant cars. If you'd like a little fun, there's a saloon car specifically for entertainment.



▲ LA ROBLA EXPRESS

I A ROBI A

EXPRESS

Enjoy the art, landscapes and gastronomy of the north of Spain travelling on a train which has been converted into a hotel: La Robla Express. There are two itineraries to choose from, La Robla and Green Paradise, both last four days.

In your perfectly-equipped compartment, with modern décor, you have bunk beds to rest in and your own bathroom. Just like many other trains, the La Robla Express stops during the night so you can have a good rest.

Every morning as the train sets off, you can enjoy the landscapes through the large windows while you have your breakfast. Lunches and dinners are organised in typical restaurants, so you get to try the local produce and traditional dishes. The coach which accompanies the train will take you to places where there are guided tours, museums and monuments to visit and shows to enjoy. The tour includes all the entry fees as well as meals in the selected restaurants.

The La Robla itinerary follows the route of the old coal train from Bilbao in the Basque Country to León in Castile-León, or vice versa. You'll visit the impressive caves and karstic galleries in Ojo Guareña, in Burgos, where the remains of human settlement since prehistoric times have been found. You'll pass through beautiful landscapes in the Palencia mountains and discover charming little towns like Frómista with its renowned Romanesque church, an obligatory stop for pilgrims along the Way of Saint James.

▶ BURGOS CATHEDRAL



To discover the incredible beauty of the "Cantabrian Cornisa", between the mountain range and the sea, choose the **Green Paradise itinerary** which runs between Bilbao (Basque Country) and Oviedo (Asturias). You'll visit Medieval towns like the delightful Santillana del Mar (Cantabria) and seagoing towns like Laredo and Llanes (Asturias). You'll have a chance to take a boat ride to visit a canning factory where they produce the renowned anchovies from Santoña (Cantabria). You can admire the wild nature of the Picos de Europa National Park while sipping a traditional Asturian cyder. Apart from the modern city of Bilbao, vou'll also discover two beautiful cities in the heart of the Cantabrian coast: Santander and Gijón.





▲ SCULPTURE OF DON QUIXOTE ALCALÁ DE HENARES (MADRID)

CERVANTES TRAIN

Take a literary tour to Alcalá de Henares, the town where the author of *Don Quixote* was born. It only takes one day. This is a perfect excursion if you happen to be in **Madrid**: this modern suburban train leaves Atocha station, in Madrid, and arrives in **Alcalá de Henares** in less than an hour.

You'll be taken back to the Cervantes era even before you get on the train: a group of entertainers in period costumes from the Spanish Golden Age will welcome you on the platform and accompany you throughout the tour. They will act out passages from Cervantes: you'll certainly be immersed in a literary environment.

In Alcalá de Henares there will be guides waiting to take you to the most symbolic venues in the old town, like the house where the renowned author was born and inside the "Corral De Comedias", one of the oldest surviving open-air theatres left in Europe. You'll then have some free time to visit this historical city and perhaps to try some traditional Castilian cuisine. Before returning to the meeting point you might try some of the city's typical pastries, a "costrada" (flaky pastry with cream and almonds) or "rosquillas" (similar to doughnuts).

MORE RAILWAY EXPERIENCES



There are more suggestions for organised train journeys. Here are just a few of them.

While you're in Madrid, take the Medieval Train and combine history. theatre and gastronomy in a single day. It takes no time at all to reach Sigüenza in Guadalajara, you'll spend about an hour and a half immersed in a Medieval atmosphere surrounded by actors playing the roles of typical characters from the era: troubadours, stilt walkers, jugglers. You'll even be served typical sweets while you're on board. When you reach your destination you'll be shown around the town by local guides. You'll be fascinated by the majestic cathedral, the castle and the main square. There'll be typical dishes like traditional breadcrumbs and Castilian soup and for dessert you should try some Doncel egg yolks.



Another option while you're in Madrid is to climb aboard the **Strawberry Train**. This will take you to **Aranjuez**, a beautiful historic town just 48 kilometres from Madrid. This is a perfect excursion to go on with your family. You'll travel in carefully restored wooden coaches built in the early 20th century. Stewardesses in period costume will serve locally-grown strawberries.

There'll be programmed guided tours to help you discover the delights of Aranjuez, like the Royal Palace, the Longboat Museum and the Prince's Gardens. You can even take a boat trip on the Tagus River. If you get peckish, you can try some of the local produce and game, like asparagus, pheasant and quails, for example.

Far from Madrid in the north of the country there are some great rail journeys. How about enjoying the beautiful scenery in **Galicia** from the railway? There are a number of different routes to choose from: they are themed day trips which include the train journey, a specialist guide, activities, programmed visits and coach transfers where required.

If you'd like to visit cellars in wine-producing regions like **Ribeira Sacra** and **Valdeorras**, there are a number of

different wine routes. If you'd rather visit the region's historical and natural heritage then you have the route for the lighthouses, gardens and mansions, or those that take you to the cities of Lugo or A Coruña. The lamprey route will take you to the "pesqueiras", ancient constructions on the Miño River used for catching lampreys (an unusual fish that the Galician cooks turn into an exquisite dish). For relaxation, try the Thermal Ourense route which includes a session in its spa waters.



INTERRAIL:

A DIFFERENT WAY OF TRAVELLING

If you'd just like to take last-minute decisions about your holidays, then take out an Interrail pass: With this pass you have free travel in certain areas. There are different types with a different duration. In some cases advance booking is required or recommended. If you're a European resident, a One Country Pass such as an **Interrail España Pass** will enable you to travel in a single country (in which you are not resident), whilst with a Global Pass you can take trains in up to 30 different European countries. If you're not a European resident then you can take out a Eurorail Pass. There are special offers for young people, seniors and families. Children under 12 travel free of charge if accompanied by an adult.

With an Interrail España Pass you can take RENFE trains and the ferries to the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean

For a unique experience, travel around Spain with an Interrail pass.

For more information go to:

① www.interrail.eu/es/

(i) www.renfe.es

FOR FASIFR TRAVEL

Get a Renfe Spain Pass and you'll be able to travel all over Spain (providing you are not a resident) on HST, long distance and medium distance trains. The pass is valid for one month starting from the first trip and it can be booked up to 6 months in advance. The passes are for four, six, eight or ten trips.

There are two categories to choose from: business/club and tourist.

You can use this same website to book and buy any train ticket. Always remember: When you buy a long-distance ticket it includes the free use of suburban trains to reach the city centres and airports in Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga.

If you need any help when you travel, RENFE's **Atendo** service is available free of charge to help disabled passengers or those with reduced mobility. This will give you peace of mind when you get on and off the train and move about the stations.













