

**Peñarrubia** is surely one of the most mountainous municipalities of the region. It's made up of 7 villages: **Caldas, Cicera, La Hermida, Linares, Navedo, Piñeres and Roza**. In Peñarrubia you'll find paths that will lead you to **mythological creatures, waterfalls, hot springs, vias ferratas, medieval structures** and a hanging **BALCONY** that will certainly take your breath away. **Shall we visit?**

Its **geography** is marked by a long passageway that the **Deva River** has carved out in its search for the sea: the **La Hermida gorge**. At 21 kilometers, it's the **longest gorge in Spain** and one of the greatest **scenic routes** for those who love driving.

Peñarrubia has been inhabited since Prehistoric times, as evidenced by remains found in the Áurea cave in 2015. Another **sign** of its long history can be found within the **megaliths of Collado de Las Llaves**, a group of **5,000-year-old** menhirs and dolmens.

To understand the **strategic importance** of Peñarrubia, there's an essential fact you need to know: the stretch of road **between La Hermida and Panes** wasn't opened **until the 19<sup>th</sup> century**. Therefore, the **only way to access** Liébana was through the valleys of **Lamasón and Peñarrubia**. In the **Middle Ages**, a time fraught with **instability and battles**, several **structures** were built for **military** purposes. In the **Early Middle Ages**, the **fortress of La Bolera de los Moros**, or Mount Santa Catalina, was built as it was the perfect location for **controlling the gorge**. Centuries later in the **Late Middle Ages**, the lords' power grew and they built **military towers** in a defensive line to patrol the passage between the Deva and Nansa valleys. There were **three towers** within 1 kilometer of each other: **Verdeja, Piedrahita and the Pontón** in Linares. When the **stretch of road** that we all recognize today was **opened**, all of the villages except La Hermida were excluded from the main route between the coast and Liébana. This relative isolation helped preserved the area's traditional mountain architecture. So much so, that **Cicera** received the honor of being named **Most Beautiful Village in Cantabria 2022**.

After giving you a few broad brushstrokes of its history, we'll reveal more details about the **ESSENTIAL** things you need to **EXPLORE**, as well as some interesting facts and recommendations:



## ESSENTIALS

### ① MYTHOLOGICAL TRAIL "THE CREATURES OF MONTE HORZACO"

Located in **Monte Horzaco**, the trail is a **really fun** way to take a walk with the **family** and learn about **mythological creatures** like the **'anjana,' the 'arquetu' or the 'trenti.'**

Throughout the 1-kilometer journey, you'll have to look for 15 mythological creatures hidden in the forest. The last character has an extra special treat in store for you...**views that will leave you in awe!**





We'll leave you with a **link to the trail's website**, where you can find a **map** of the trail, family **activities** and more **information**. [\*\*Mythological trail of Peñarrubia\*\*](#)

## 2 LA HERMIDA AND THE GORGE

**Did you know that the rocks of the gorge** were once a seabed millions of years ago? When they reached the surface, the Deva River excavated those rocks leaving us with one of the most amazing places. Galdós described it as: **“They call it a gorge, but it can easily be called the esophagus of La Hermida because when passing through, one feels swallowed by the earth.”**


**At 21 kilometers, it’s the longest gorge in Spain.** But the route as we know it today (N-621) wasn’t completed until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the stretch between La Hermida and Panes was opened to facilitate the transport of wood and minerals from Liébana. In the middle of these limestone mountains is the village of La Hermida. Not only is this village the meeting point of the roads between the Deva and Nansa valleys, but it’s also known for its hot springs. We recommend you take in the beautiful sights, do the via ferrata or visit the remains of the San Pelayo Hermitage from the 13<sup>th</sup> century.


 The gorge is an area with significant environmental and geological value. Millions of years ago, ocean fish lived here, but today it’s home to Egyptian vultures, griffon vultures, salmon, trout and goats.

 The gorge runs through Asturias and Cantabria and is shared among the municipalities of Peñamellera Baja, Castro Cillorigo, Tresviso and Peñarrubia. More information here: [Geographic Mining Institute](#)

## 3 SANTA CATALINA VIEWPOINT

Known as **Santa Catalina or Bolera de los Moros**, this viewpoint is a **BALCONY that literally hangs over the La Hermida gorge**. The views from here are absolutely incredible: Picos de Europa (Peaks of Europe), Tresviso, Linares, La Hermida, Liébana and, right at your feet, the gorge. **It’s a breathtaking sight that you’re sure to never forget!**


 In the **Early Middle Ages**, a fortress was built in this strategic location to control and defend the passage to Liébana. Today, only ruins of the fortress remain.


 To get here, we recommend leaving your **car in the parking lot** and going up walking through the mythological trail.

## 4 CAMINO LEBANIEGO

We’re right in the middle of the **Camino Lebaniego**, one of the first **pilgrimage routes** with **its own credentials**. The reason so many people pass through is because they’re

trying to reach the **Monastery of Santo Toribio de Liébana** where the **Lignum Crucis**—the largest fragment of the True Cross—is located. It's an **Año Jubilar (Holy Year)** each time the day of **Santo Toribio—April 16<sup>th</sup>—falls on a Sunday**. In Peñarrubia, the Camino comes in through Collado de Joz and leads to **Cicera**; then, it goes uphill to **Collado de Arceón** and continues towards **Lebeña**.

 The **Camino Lebaniego** connects the **north** and **French routes** of the **Camino de Santiago** via the **Vadiniense Route**. All of these routes have been named **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.


 For more information, go to [Camino Lebaniego](#)


## 5 TORRE DEL PONTÓN (PONTÓN TOWER)

The **lord of Linares** was the owner and the lord of the valley of Peñarrubia. In order to control and defend his territory, he built a defensive line of 3 towers: **Verdeja, Piedrahita and Pontón**.

The latter is located in Linares and it's one of the most important medieval structures in western Cantabria and a sign of **feudalism\***. The tower is a fortress that was manned by few men and used mostly during skirmishes and small sieges.


**\*Feudalism:** In the Late Middle Ages, the King distributed land to the nobles in exchange for their support in the wars. The vassals, who, received protection from the feudal lord in exchange for their work, lived on these lands.


 If you decide to visit, you'll learn details like that its 4 corners are oriented to the cardinal points.

 Call to plan your visit: 669 194 493 (Luis) or 637 586 946 (Javier)  
Contact ACE Peñarrubia: [acepenarrubia@gmail.com](mailto:acepenarrubia@gmail.com) | Peñarrubia Town Hall:  
942 730 964

## 6 MEGALITHS OF COLLADO DE LAS LLAVES


Around **5,000 B.C.** the way of life started to change and property **symbols and burials** represented by megaliths began to appear. There are several theories about their purpose: worship, burial, boundary markers or the study of stars. In **Collado de Las Llaves**, a spot with exceptional views, you can find things like burial plots or **dolmens and menhirs**.

 If **you want to see it** for yourself, you have to go to the **village of Roza** and from there, go up a concrete track. It takes a great effort due to the terrain, but it's all worth it once you reach the top. More information at: [Megaliths of Collado de Las Llaves](#)

 Do you know where the **word 'megalith'** comes from? In Greek, '*megas-*' means 'big,' and '*-lithos*' means 'rock.'

## VIA FERRATA

The **via ferrata in La Hermida** is perfect for the brave souls looking for an **adrenaline kick**. It's a journey around the mountains where you climb both **vertically and horizontally** and where you can explore a **unique environment** while you cross bridges and climb iron cramps. To do this activity, **it's vital you have some basic knowledge** of climbing and you take your own equipment; however, you can rent the gear and hire a guide.

 The best route has a **35-meter long Tibetan bridge** and a hanging bridge that's 100 meters. It's a once in a lifetime experience!



## EXPLORING

### LAS AGÜERAS ROUTE

This could easily be called **the Resounding Route** due to the roaring sound of the consecutive falls of the **agüeras\*** of Navedo and Cicera. This **route is circular** and can be started from the gorge or one of the villages. In this case, the track we're including of the route starts in Navedo. The route follows the **old medieval road from La Hermida to the high villages of Peñarrubia**; the road was also used to extract minerals from Horzarco (or as locals call it, Jozarcu) forest. Throughout the trail you'll find **waterfalls** from the Navedo River. Shortly before reaching the road along the gorge, you'll see a bridge and a small power plant, a building that **produced electricity** for Navedo and Piñeres. **Be very careful** when you reach the road because you have to walk for about 1 kilometer and there's barely any shoulder on the road. A bit ahead of the parking lot by the **fishermen's shelter**, is the uphill path along the Cicera River. As you go up, you'll come across falls from the mills, as well as the **Conchapreta** and **Pozullanu** waterfalls. Once you reach **Cicera**, enjoy a nice walk through the town that was named **Most Beautiful Village in Cantabria 2022**. We've added the mythological trail up to the Santa Catalina

lookout to the track before you return to Navedo. This extra stop has a panoramic reward you're sure to enjoy.

\*Agüera: a small stream of water.



Technical information and recommendations:

- ▶ **Starts and ends:** Navedo / Cicera / Desfiladero La Hermida
- ▶ **Length:** 12 km
- ▶ **Duration:** 4 h
- ▶ **Level:** baja
- ▶ **Type of track:** circular
- ▶ **Incline:** -727 m. / -727 m.
- ▶ **Type of path:** road and path
- ▶ **Signpost:** partial
- ▶ **Drinking water:** a fountain in Cicera



Notes:

1. We recommend downloading the track of the route on your phone.
2. Wear good hiking shoes and take a walking stick.
3. Only leave your footprints on the ground: throw any trash you accumulate into the correct bin when you return.
4. Live in harmony with the environment: observe animals from a distance and respect the plants. If you walk quietly you may find some pleasant surprises.



[Descarga más información y track de la ruta AQUÍ](#)

## ② BRAÑA DE LOS TEJOS (THE YEW PASTURE)

The route to the braña de los tejos requires you to be physically fit because you climb **900 meters uphill for 8 kilometers!** From Cicera you should take **the Las Cordancas** forest trail, a cobblestone path that leads into an oak grove. You pass the remains of the **Santa Cilde hermitage**, **El Murón refuge**, groups of **cabins**, disused coal cellars and remains of **past mining activity**. Apart from oak trees, you'll also find grand beeches, birches, holly, rowans and, of course, **yews**. It's not common to find a yew forest like this one. These trees are **slow growing**, have very hard wood and were the sacred tree of the Cantabrians who lived here **over 2,000 years ago**. One of the characteristics of yews is their **toxicity**: **taxine**, the alkaloid it gets its name from (*Taxus baccata*), is fatal in concentrated doses. It's said that Cantabrians used it to commit suicide during the Roman invasion. **Nowadays, this alkaloid is used in chemotherapy treatments for uterine, lung and breast cancer.**

**The views are amazing** throughout the route: if it's a clear day, you can see everything from the Picos de Europa (Peaks of Europe) to San Vicente de la Barquera. To return, there's a trail near **Collado Arceón** that passes between forests and meadows. Another option is to take the same trail you came from.

The Climb to the Braña de los Tejos takes **place on the first Saturday of August**; it's an event that brings people from both valleys together. Make sure you save the date...



Technical information and recommendations:

- ▶ **Starts and ends:** Cicera
- ▶ **Length:** 14 km
- ▶ **Duration:** 5h
- ▶ **Level:** moderate
- ▶ **Type of track:** circular
- ▶ **Incline:** +962 m./ -962 m.
- ▶ **Type of path:** road and path
- ▶ **Signpost:** partial
- ▶ **Drinking water:** a fountain in Cicera



Notes:

1. We recommend downloading the track of the route on your phone and check the weather forecast beforehand.
2. Wear good hiking shoes and take a walking stick.
3. Only leave your footprints on the ground: throw any trash you accumulate into the correct bin when you return.
4. Live in harmony with the environment: observe animals from a distance and respect the plants. If you walk quietly you may find some pleasant surprises.



[Download more information and track HERE](#)