

Rionansa is an important crossroads in Cantabria, as well as a **means of communication** between the Nansa and Saja valleys, Liébana, the Castilian meseta and the west coast. The territory is comprised of **16 towns: Arenas, Las Bárcenas, Cabrojo, Celis, Celucos, Cosío, La Cotería, La Herrería, Obeso, Pedreo, Los Picayos, Riclones, Rioseco, Rozadío, San Sebastián de Garabandal and Puentenansa.**

Did you know that Rionansa is one of the municipalities in the region that **hides the most underground treasures**? For one, there's **El Soplao cave**, a geological marvel that is shared with the municipalities of Herrerías and Valdáliga. Then, there's also the **Moro Chufín, Micolón and Porquerizo caves**. These latter caves were inhabited by man in **Prehistoric** times who left their mark with paintings and etchings inside the caves. Both the **Chufín and El Soplao** caves are **open to the public** and we **highly recommend visiting them.**

When it comes to **architecture**, a few places come to mind, like the **14th century Rubín de Celis Tower** in Obeso, **La Herrería bridge from the 18th century** in Celis and **grand houses** in **Cosío, Celis** or **San Sebastián de Garabandal.**

Finally, it wouldn't be a rural area without **cattle** and that's why there's the **San Miguel livestock fair**, which is a benchmark in the whole region. **Don't you want to visit Rionansa?**


Now, we'll **reveal** more details about the **ESSENTIAL** places you need to **EXPLORE**, and interesting facts that will make your visit more fun.




ESSENTIALS

① CHUFÍN CAVE


If you want to **experience what it was like to live in Prehistoric times**, then come to Chufín cave! In 2008 it was declared a UNESCO **World Heritage site**. It's located next to the **Palombera reservoir** in **Riclones**, where the **Lamasón River** (also known as Tanea River) and the **Nansa River** meet. It's a place that will take your breath away! In the **corridors** of the cave, there are engravings of **deer, bison and other signs** from **15,500 B.C.** You have to wear a helmet and kneepads **inside** because you have to **crawl about 4 meters**. Once inside the cave chambers, there's a **small lake** and **red paintings** on the walls. We won't tell you about the end of the tour...you'll have to come see it for yourself!

 **Legend has it** that the **Chufín Moor** hid treasure deep inside the cave. No one has ever found it, and if they have, they've kept it quiet.

 For more information and reservations visit: [Chufín Cave](#)

2 COSÍO

Cosío is a village where the **Vendul and Nansa Rivers meet**. Throughout their courses, there were hydraulic mills and a forge. Its **houses and mansions** are typical examples of traditional “**montañes**” **architecture**. For instance, there are 17th century buildings like the Cosío family home, which is known as The Tower because of its defensive appearance; or San Miguel church. There’s also the La Panda House which is from the **18th century**. Furthermore, Cosío was named **Most Beautiful Village in Cantabria** in 2016.


 Several **bridges** cross over the **Vendul River**. We recommend going to the one that crosses near the church, as it has great panoramic views of Cosío so it’s **the perfect place to take a photo!**

3 SAN SEBASTIÁN DE GARABANDAL

Garabandal is known as a **religious destination** due to sightings of the **Virgin Mary** in the **1960s**.


Four young girls claimed to have witnessed the apparition of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. People from all over the world including The United States and Canada have come to visit. Additionally, San Sebastián has well-preserved ‘**montañes**’ **architecture** from the 17th and 18th century. For more information, visit [San Sebastián de Garabandal](#)


Shortly before reaching the village, there’s the **Emigrant’s Mother monument**, honoring those who went to America in search of success.

 Did you know that near Garabandal, at the foot of the **Peña Sagra mountains**, there are **megalithic** remains? The one that stands out the most among all of them is the **El Hoyo de la Gándara idol**.

4 LA TEJERA VIEWPOINT

Puentenansa is the **point where many roads intersect**, like the road that connects the **Nansa valley with Lamasón** via the **Collado de Ozalba (also known as Jozalba)**. Shortly before reaching the top of Ozalba, you’ll see the **La Tejera recreational area**. From here, you can see panoramic views of different mountains, like the **Sierra del Escudo de Cabuérniga** and the **Collada de Carmona**, and the villages of **Obeso, Puentenansa, Rioseco, Pedreo and Carmona**.

 In **Obeso** there’s a 14th century building that stands out from all the rest: the **Rubín de Celis Tower**.


 There’s an information **panel** which will help you understand the landscape.

5 EL SOPLAO CAVE

The municipalities of **Herrerías, Rionansa and Valdáliga** share a **subterranean world**: the El Soplao cave. **At the beginning of the 20th century**, a group of miners discovered El Soplao while they were looking for zinc. Its **geological richness** is its greatest attraction. The cave is covered in **speleothems** like stalactites, stalagmites, flowstones and columns, although the **eccentric** ones are the most striking and amazing.


There are **3 types of tour visits**:

- The **tourist visit**, which is fully accessible. The first few meters are accessed with a mining train and the rest is done on foot. The tour lasts almost an hour.
- The **adventure visit**, on which you visit less accessible parts of the cave. A helmet, coveralls and boots are provided. The tours lasts 2 and a half hours.
- The **mine visit**, which is for those who are fearless because there's a via ferrata inside the cave. It also requires you to be physically fit.

 For more information and reservations visit: [El Soplao Cave](#)

6 SAN MIGUEL LIVESTOCK FAIR

There's no better way to get to know a place's traditions than by going to a festival. The **San Miguel livestock fair** is held on **September 29th**, and it's when livestock, folklore and tradition come together. It takes place on a field called "**Prao Socoyo**," along the CA – 281 road between Puentenansa and Cosío. The majority of the cattle are **Tudanca cows, a breed native to Cantabria**. However, of course, there are other cow breeds as well, like Charolais, Limusin, Swiss Brown, Asturian Valley, Asturian Mountain, and other mixed breeds. During the day there's a wide variety of activities, like an **artisan market, a contest in which cows pull and drag rocks, a folk song concert, and open-air dances**.

 One of the most striking moments which the most people gather to see is the cattle's entrance to and exit from the fairgrounds. **It's truly like watching a parade!**



EXPLORING


Here are some suggestions of interesting things to see in Rionansa.


1 INDUSTRIAL ARCHITECTURE

For centuries, the water of the Nansa River has been used to make **grinders, fulling and water mills**, and **iron foundries** run; and in the **20th century** it was used to move turbines and **produce electricity**. It's one of the rivers that has been **most modified by the hand of man** with the construction of **reservoirs, diversion dams** and **falls** along its course.

There were **hydraulic mills** in Rionansa, of which there are still some remains today, like the Jacoba mill in Cosío.


There are two hydroelectric power plants: in **Rozadío and Celis**. The **plant in Rozadío** has a 13km long penstock that captures the water from the La Lastra reservoir. It's the main plant that gets electricity through other falls to distribute to Torrelavega and Los Corrales de Buelna.

 The **power plant in Celis** was opened in 1952 and its penstock is 10 kilometers long.

 Both produce electricity through **falls**, meaning that water passes through the pipes onto a turbine, causing it to move and thus producing electricity.

2 THE EL HOYO DE LA GÁNDARA IDOL

Before reaching **San Sebastián de Garabandal**, there's a path on the right that goes up to the foot of the **Peña Sagra mountain** and the **Tánago cabins**. It's an incredible landscape with lots of hidden gems like **menhirs and megaliths** from the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic period. Among these different structures, the most unique is the **El Hoyo de La Gandara idol**, a rock from the glacial period located next to an artificial canal. On the eastern side of the rock which faces Peña Sagra, there are **geometric engravings**. The landscape and the place's symbology are both highly recommended.

 To see it, you should download the directions or the coordinates of the idol.

3 LA HERRERÍA BRIDGE

La Herrería bridge is in La Herrería, along the road that connects Celis and Riclones. In 2004 it was declared a **Cultural Interest Asset**. Juan Gutiérrez Rubín de Celis—an **Indiano** who went to Mexico—funded it in the **18th century** for 8,000 pesos. If you visit, you'll see that it has a small "**santuco**" with the Heart of Jesus. The "**santucos**" are small

shrines with religious imagery that are set along the main roads. They were a way to protect the walkers' souls.

👁️ There was a **grinding mill and fulling mill** under the bridge. **Corn was ground** in one mill, while the fulling mill **felted** woolen fabrics turning them into cloth.