

Next to the Cantabrian Sea we can find the municipality of Comillas. Let's start with the towns that make up the municipality: **Comillas, La Rabia, Rioturbio, Rubárcena, Ruiseñada y Trasvía**. Although its past is linked to the sea, with whale hunting playing a very important role, the 19th century was its greatest period of economic growth. The key figure is **Antonio López, 1st Marquis of Comillas**. Born into a humble family, he emigrated to **Cuba** at an early age, and it's there where he managed to make a fortune and become one of the most prominent **Indianos** (a Spanish emigrant who becomes rich in Latin America) of the time. Among the companies he founded are The General Tobacco Company of the Philippines, Hispano Colonial Bank, and **The Transatlantic Company of Spain**, which was a shipping corporation. In Cuba he met a Catalanian Indiano named **Andrés Bru**. They maintained a professional relationship that later became familial after Antonio married Andrés's daughter, **Luisa Bru**. Upon his return to Spain, he turned that small fishing port where he was born into a **summer resort** where even **King Alfonso XII of Spain** was invited. Lopez's son-in-law **Eusebio Güell**, was responsible for bringing Catalanian Modernism to Comillas, a style that was still in its infancy at the time. Consequently, this brought artists of high caliber such as **Joan Martorell, Domènech i Montaner, Llorens i Masdeu, Cascante, Llimona** and world-renowned genius, **Antonio Gaudí**, to work here.

Besides the beautiful architecture, nature is another value that's important to the municipality, as part of its territory is within the **Oyambre Natural Park**. Two of the best places where you can enjoy this environment of high ecological value are from the **La Rabia Estuary** and **Monte Corona**.


Next we'll reveal more of its ESSENTIAL information and also clues and fun facts to get to know this municipality a little better.



ESSENTIALS

① SOBRELLANO PALACE ITS CHAPEL-PANTHEON


The first building that was constructed was the **Chapel-Pantheon**. The first Marquis ordered it to be built in order to bury his oldest son, Antonio, who died very young. It was inaugurated in **1881** in the presence of Alfonso XII. A year later in 1882, construction began on Sobrellano Palace and it was completed in **1888**. Both projects were designed by architect **Joan Martorell**.

 If you're up for going on a guided tour, you could see some **dragons** designed by a great, modernist genius...

 More Information and Reservations: [Palacio de Sobrellano](#)

② MAJOR SEMINARY OF COMILLAS


In front of Sobrellano Hill—where the Palace and Chapel-Pantheon are located—you can find the **Major Seminary** belonging to the Old University of Comillas at the top of La Cardosa. Its construction began under the 1st Marquis; however, after his death, his son **Claudio** the 2nd Marquis of Comillas finished the project. Initially, it was going to be a high school, however, it ended up being the Pontifical University. Artists like **Joan Martorell**, **Cristóbal Cascante** and **Domènec i Montaner** participated in its construction.

 In Spanish there's an expression, "**ponerle el cascabel al gato**," which means "**put the bell on the cat**." That's what you'll have to do if you take the guided tour: you must look for the mouse, the cat and the bells. Then you'll find out the meaning behind the expression.

 More Information and Reservations: [Palacio de Sobrellano](#)

③ EL CAPRICO DE GAUDÍ


Originally called **Villa Quijano**, the Capricho is a historical landmark in Comillas. The owner was **Don Máximo Díaz de Quijano**: Indiano, lawyer, musician, and brother to the 1st Marquis of Comillas' sister-in-law. It's one of the first projects undertaken by Gaudí when he was just 31 years old. Outside of Catalonia there are only 3 complete works by Gaudí and we have one of them here. It's a colorful building covered in ceramic tiles with sunflowers and full of symbolism.

 Book a guided tour if you want to find out all of its secrets (and there's a lot of them!). We'll give you one hint: the owner was a musician and the key components to reading music are the staff, treble clef, and musical notes; all of which can be found on the front of the building.

 More Information and Reservations: [El Capricho de Gaudí](#)


④ LOS TRES CAÑOS FOUNTAIN

This fountain is a design by architect **Domènec i Montaner** and was built in honor of Don Joaquín del Piélago, son-in-law of the first Marquis. This also served as a significant economic contribution for bringing water to Comillas.

 If you take a look at the top, you'll notice that besides being a fountain, it's also a **lamppost**. This small touch of light symbolizes that Comillas was the first town in Spain to have **electricity**.


5 PUERTA DE MORO (MORO GATE)

Also known as **Puerta de los Pájaros (Birds Gate)**, this is place a bit further from the center, but well worth the walk there. This is the entrance to the Moro House. **Gaudí**, the architect, designed it for a villa in Barcelona. Years later, architect Julián Bardier took up the blueprints and constructed it in Comillas.

 If you get around to visiting it, you'll see that it has three openings: a gate for carriages, another for people, and, just above that, a circular hole for **birds**.


6 MIRADOR DE SANTA LUCÍA (SANTA LUCÍA VIEWPOINT)

The lookout point can be found next to the hermitage of **Santa Lucía**. Here we have panoramic views of part of the coast and the beach of Comillas. It's no coincidence that the watchmen chose this spot for whale watching.

 If you want to know more... follow the signs of the **Ruta Ballenera (The Whale Route)**.


7 SAN CRISTÓBAL CHURCH

Next to the old town hall, in one of the most picturesque squares in Comillas, you can find **San Cristóbal** Church. Legend has it that a conflict with the Duke of the Infantado, caused the people of Comillas to abandon the old church (which is now the cemetery), and get to work constructing the new one.

 If you come and visit inside, you'll see that there's no altarpiece in the main nave. Also, at the entrance there are some shells of a mollusk called **Tridacna gigante** (giant clam) brought from the Philippines.


8 GÜELL Y MARTOS PARK

This is one of the best places in Comillas where you can get a panoramic view of the **coast, the port and the beach, the cemetery with its iconic angel, and the mansion of the Duke of Almodóvar del Río**. If you stand at its lookout point, it feels like you're at the bow of a ship and accompanied by someone very special. We're referring to a monument in honor of the 1st Marquis of Comillas, which was made by **Domènech i Montaner** and **Cristóbal Cascante**.

 An interesting fact about the monument is that it used to have some bronze figures that were melted down during the Civil War to make ammunition.


9 BEACH AND PORT OF COMILLAS

We recommend having the complete beach experience: sunbathing, going for a swim, a walk and having some delicious ice cream! For centuries the port was important because of **whaling**, although **sphalerite** and **calamine** (minerals which can be found very close to Comillas) were also transported from the dock. Nowadays it continues to function as a fishing port. If you look towards the breakwater, you can find a commemorative plaque dedicated to distinguished Comillas native **Jesús Cancio**, “Poet of the Sea”.

 If you walk between the port and the beach, you’ll notice a woman carrying a basket. This monument pays homage to the fishing profession and this statue is dedicated to the **fishing women of Comillas**.


10 THE CEMETERY

The cemetery was built upon the **old church** of Comillas. Legend has it that in the 17th century, a woman who routinely sat on one of the church pews was forced to move so that the Duke of the Infantado could sit down. The town got upset and decided to abandon the church and build another one: San Cristóbal Church. In 1893, **Domènech i Montaner** designed the changes and added the surrounding wall which makes the church ruins stand out. One of the symbols of the cemetery is the sculpture of the **Guardian Angel** made by Catalan sculptor Llimona.

 We invite you to come inside and visit, where you can see a **mausoleum** designed by Domènech for the family of Don **Joaquín del Piélago**, son-in-law of the first Marquis of Comillas.

11 LA GARITA VIEWPOINT

The **port of Comillas** was guarded by a series of **sentry boxes** (“garitas”) and a fort with artillery pieces. That’s where it gets the name La Garita Point, also known by its geographical name, **Moría Point**. From here you can see Suances on the east and Oyambre Cape on the west. **On sunny days** you can even see the Picos de Europa (The Peaks of Europe).

 We recommend watching the **sunrise and sunset** from here.



EXPLORING

OYAMBRE NATURAL PARK

Can you imagine over **5700 football fields** together? Well, that's approximately how big Oyambre Natural Park is! The park covers two areas within the municipality of Comillas: one being the **La Rabia Estuary**, which is the mouth of the Turbio River, and the other, part of **Monte Corona**. To fully enjoy this environment, we recommend walking or cycling. There are several trails at the following link from the tourist website of Comillas.

[Hiking in Comillas](#)

 Here we'll highlight two of them:

1. Comillas - Rioturbio

This easy stroll starts in Comillas, where you walk in the bike lane to La Rabia Estuary. After that, you walk along to road until you reach Rioturbio. Before you reach the town, you'll cross the tail-end of the estuary, a very special place where migratory birds arrive at the end of summer.

2. Comillas - Monte Corona

Here there's a greater incline. You follow the same route as the previous one, and once you reach Rioturbio, you follow the road until you reach a bridge. Without crossing it, take the path on the left to go up to San Esteban Hermitage.

There are several points where you can see the park from a **bird's eye view**:

- **TRASVÍA**

If you leave the car parked in the town, you can take a path that leads to the rocks where the La Rabia Estuary meets the Cantabrian Sea. The views are out of this world! On a clear day you can see: the Picos de Europa, the beach, Oyambre Cape, La Rabia Estuary, and the Zapedo Marshes (Capitán estuary) and of course, the Cantabrian Sea.

- **SAN ESTEBAN HERMITAGE**

Located in the heart of Monte Corona, San Esteban is a place with breathtaking views! From the lookout point, there are arrows to help indicate the sites you are looking at: Peña Vieja, Caviedes, the Naranjo de Bulnes, Labarces, Lamadrid, Sierra del Cuera, San Vicente de la Barquera, La Revilla, El Tejo, the Pontifical University, Ruiloba...It's a spectacle for all of your senses.