

In the middle of the **Camino Lebaniego** and at the bank of the **Nansa River** is the municipality of **Herrerías**. It's made up of the villages of **Bielva, Cabanzón, Cades, Camijanes, Casamaría, El Collado, Rábago, Otero and Puente El Arrudo**. You'll have the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities in **Herrerías**, like discovering the **underground world of the Soplao cave**, learning how an 18<sup>th</sup> century **iron foundry** was run or being a **pilgrim** as you walk along the **Nansa River path**.

The name **Herrerías** refers to the **large number of foundries** that there used to be in the municipality. Its **shield** depicts **an anvil and 8 silver horseshoes** referencing these primitive iron foundries.

Its **strategic location** was relevant during the **Middle Ages**; this is proven by the **medieval tower in Cabanzón**, which we'll talk about later.

In addition to **livestock**, **mining** is another economic activity significant to the municipality. Many men worked in what is now considered to be an underground gem: the **Soplao cave**. The cave was part of the **Florida Mining Group** from which **spahlerite and galena** were extracted. Nowadays, the cave has shifted from mining activity to being a tourist attraction. **It's definitely a must-see experience!**

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



## ESSENTIALS

### ① IRON FOUNDRY OF CADES

In the **18<sup>th</sup> century** a rural complex which consisted of an **iron foundry** and a **gristmill** was built next to the **Nansa River**. Its purpose was to **transform iron** into ingots and **corn grain into flour**. Nowadays, the foundry and mill are a **museum attraction that can be visited**. During the **guided tour**, you'll be able to see how a foundry worker and miller lived and worked. You'll also see a live **demonstration** of how the **force of the water** is capable of moving these **great hydraulic devices**.



Furthermore, on the guided tour you'll learn what a **"tocho"** (an iron ingot) is and how it was **used**. Moreover, the foundry has an interesting educational program for schools with workshops.



For more information and reservations visit the [Iron Foundry of Cades](#)


### ② EL SOPLAO CAVE

The municipalities of **Herrerías, Rionansa and Valdáliga** share a **subterranean world**, the **El Soplao cave**. **At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 it's a via ferrata inside the cave. It requires you to be physically fit.

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

### 3 CAMINO LEBANIEGO

It's not strange to see **pilgrims** passing through Herrerías; in fact, you may be one of them! That's because 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**. The Camino passes along the Nansa River path between Puente El Arrudo and Cades. Come experience what it's like to be a pilgrim for a day!

The **Camino Lebaniego** connects the **north** and **French route** 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](#)

### 4 THE NANSA RIVER PATH

If you're **keen on walking**, then we invite you to come walk along the **Nansa River path**, which not only used to be the **old fishermen's trail**, but also part of the **Camino Lebaniego**. It passes through the municipalities of **Val de San Vicente and Herrerías**, between the villages of **Muñorrodero and Puente El Arrudo**. It's **13 kilometers** which could be separated into **two legs**: the first from **Muñorrodero to Camijanes**, and the second from **Camijanes to the CA-855 road**, between Puente El Arrudo and Otero.

The **first stretch** is recommended for **families**, while the **second** one is of **moderate difficulty**. However, neither of them are suitable for a baby carriage.

### 1<sup>st</sup> leg: Muñorrodero – Camijanes

In **Muñorrodero**, in the area of the cabins and cemetery, take the path that leads to the **recreational area**, which is where you can leave your car. Then you return a few meters on foot to **start the route**. The trail runs **along the banks of the Nansa River** and it's not difficult. In fact, **there's even stairs and walkways** in several sections along the trail. However, just be careful if it's rained heavily because it's a **flood zone**. Throughout the hike, you'll see a **forest right along the river**, an area for **climbing** and **shelters and walkways** that **fishermen** used to cross the river. At the end of this leg you'll find the **Trascudia power plant**, which is where the Supino River reaches the Nansa River in the form of a **waterfall**.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> leg: Caminajes – Puente El Arrudo

To start this leg, you should take the **detour at Los Collados towards Trascudia**. Here, the trail has a greater **incline** and it's been preserved in its **natural state**. After passing **Tortorio bridge**, you'll reach the **Trascudia hydroelectric power plant**, which has been running since 1949. From that point on, you fully enter the path that runs through **holm oaks and a riverside forest**. You'll then reach an access area that's a little **more complicated**, **Peña Sancho**, where there's a cable to help you pass the rocky area. Once you reach the bridge that connects Puente El Arrudo and Otero, you can extend the walk to the Iron Foundry of Cades.

Technical information and recommendations:

- ▶ **Starts and ends:** Muñorrodero - Puente El Arrudo
- ▶ **Length:** 14 km
- ▶ **Duration:** 5h
- ▶ **Level:** easy
- ▶ **Type of track:** linear
- ▶ **Incline:** +341 m./ -266 m.
- ▶ **Type of path:** track
- ▶ **Signpost:** yes
- ▶ **Drinking water:** a fountain in Muñorrodero

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.



[Download more information and track of the route HERE](#)

## 5 EL COLLADO OR EL POETA VIEWPOINT

On the **CA-181** road near Camijanes, there's a sign that indicates a lookout point: **El Collado**. It's also known as **El Poeta (The Poet) lookout point**. Next to the parking lot are **the access stairs** that pass by holm oaks and end up at a terrace that overlooks the Nansa River. The **views** are incredible: **Cabanzón** and its meadows, the **Arria** massif, the sierras of **Cocón** and **El Cuera**, **Picos de Europa (Peaks of Europe)**, the **peak of Peñamellera** and the **Trascudia hydroelectric power plant** right next to the river. The **180°** sights are incredible!

The **Nansa River** is one of the rivers that has been **most modified** by the hand of man with different examples of **hydraulic ingenuity** like the **Trascudia plant**. The electricity produced here is transferred to the main plant in Rozadío; and from here it goes to **Torrelavega** and **Los Corrales de Buelna**.



## EXPLORING

Here are a few more suggestions to complete your visit to Herrerías:

## 1 BIELVA

A walk through **Bielva** is a beautiful display of typical **"montañes" architecture** and **traditions**. Apart from the beautiful mountain homes, there are two places with special significance: the bowling alley dedicated to **"The Lefty of Bielva"** and the **Santo Cristo de los Remedios chapel**.

**Bowling** is a **rural sport** that is mostly played in **Cantabria**. There are different **categories** of bowling like **"bolo pasiego," "pasabolo"** and **"bolo palma,"** which is the most common. The players form **bowling teams** that play in different leagues and competitions regulated by the **Cántabra Bowling Federation**. The key **elements** are: **the bowling alley, the pins, the balls** and, of course, **the bowlers**. In the **bowling world**, there's a hugely

important figure: Rogelio González **“The Lefty of Bielva”**. He was born in La Habana, like many children of emigrants. When he was a year old, his family **came from Cuba to Bielva** and he started bowling at a very young age. He was **ahead of his time** because, despite not having an athletic figure, he knew how to work his **mental strength** to **perfect his technique**, just like elite athletes of today. He’s remembered in Bielva with a **commemorative bust next to the bowling alley** and a **memorial** that’s celebrated every year.

👁 In his daily life, **Rogelio was right-handed** but he learned to bowl with both hands. In the end, he favored **playing with his left**, so he was nicknamed **“The Lefty of Bielva.”**

The **Christ chapel in Bielva** is another point of interest to visit. It was built in the **13<sup>th</sup> century** and inside there’s a wooden carving of **Christ Crucified**. Nearby are the **“Stairs of Christ,”** 309 stone steps that start from Puente El Arrudo and lead to the Cristo de los Remedios chapel, where those who had made promises to the Christ of Bielva used to climb.

👁 The **Cristo festival** and open-air dances are famous in the area due to the large turnout of people. It takes place over a number of days, but the two main days are **September 14<sup>th</sup> (which is the Cristo Grande)** and **September 15<sup>th</sup> (the Cristo Chicu)**.

## ② TOWER OF CABANZÓN

There’s a **medieval tower** in Cabanzón that belonged to the **Rábago estate**. It possibly formed part of a **defensive line** around San Vicente de la Barquera, along with the **towers in Estrada, Obeso** and those that have already disappeared in **Celis and Bielva**. It’s one of the few examples of a **tower with a defensive wall** protecting it. In the **15<sup>th</sup> century** the king ordered it be **clipped** at the top, meaning that its battlements were destroyed. It was named a **Cultural Interest Asset** and it’s currently on private property.


👁 Standing tall in Cabanzón is **La Encinona (The Grand Holm Oak)**, a huge tree near the church that is part of the **Unique Trees of Cantabria inventory**.

## ③ LA PALOMBERA VIEWPOINT

Coming from Venta Fresnedo, along the **CA-856** road, there’s a balcony that overlooks the municipality of Rionansa: the **La Palombera lookout point**. The **Camino Lebaniego** passes through this site, so it’s possible you may come across pilgrims traveling or resting around here. It’s the perfect spot to view the **Palombera reservoir** and see where



the **Tanea and Nansa Rivers** converge. Right at your feet, hidden among the vegetation, is **Chufín cave**, one the gems of the region and World Heritage Site.

 There are signs indicating the lookout and there's parking on both sides, making it easier to stop.