



# Aragón

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Tiempo de Ensueño (p394)
- ➔ La Tasca de Ana (p378)
- ➔ El Ciclón (p367)
- ➔ La Tea (p383)
- ➔ Casa Pardina (p386)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hostal Un Punto Chic (p387)
- ➔ Casa del Infanzón (p371)
- ➔ Hotel Sauce (p366)
- ➔ La Casa del Tío Americano (p394)
- ➔ Hotel Barosse (p378)

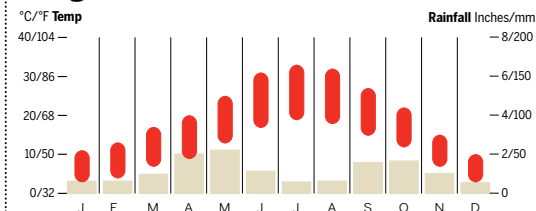
## Why Go?

Landlocked and little known, Aragón is one of Spain's most surprising regions. It's in Aragón that the Pyrenees take on an epic quality, from shapely peaks to deep, deep valleys where quiet rivers meander through forests and past small hamlets that seem unchanged by the passing of time. Stone-built *pueblos* (villages) such as these are an Aragonese speciality: all across Aragón, you'll find numerous candidates for the title of Spain's most beautiful village.

Connections to the past also overflow from the cities, whether in Mudéjar Teruel or in Zaragoza, a city bursting with contemporary vigour yet replete with soaring monuments to Roman, Islamic and Christian Spain. There are also world-class activities – hiking, canyoning and skiing – for those eager to explore the region under their own steam. But Aragón's calling card is its sense of timelessness; it's the sort of place where Old Spain lives and breathes.

## When to Go

### Zaragoza



**Feb** Teruel's Fiesta Medieval returns you to the Middle Ages.

**Mid-Jun–early Sep** The best time to hike the high country of the Aragonese Pyrenees.

**Oct** Zaragoza's Fiestas del Pilar combine the sacred with the city's famed love of revelry.

### DON'T MISS

Tasting the locally produced wine. They may not be as well known as the 'two Rs' (Rioja and Ribera del Duero), but there is some seriously good quaffing to be had...

## Top Five Food Experiences

- Picking up a wheel of local Sierra de Albarracín **cheese**
- Sampling the local **jamón** (ham) at a Teruel tapas bar
- Buying a **chocolate** stiletto shoe at Zaragoza's top choc shop, Fantoba (p368)
- Tasting **wine** at a Somontano bodega
- Stocking up on local **game pâtés** at village delicatessens

## Snails

With France just up the road, it's no surprise, perhaps, that *caracoles* are an Aragonese speciality. Try them!

## Best Places for Outdoor Activities

- **Campo** (p384) Rafting, kayaking, canoeing
- **Castejón de Sos** (p385) Paragliding
- **Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido** (p379) Hiking, mountain climbing
- **Aragonese Pyrenees** (p370) Skiing, snowboarding

## Birds Aplenty

Aragón's diverse landscape of snowcapped mountains, wide river valleys, shallow lagoons and thickly forested woods are home to a rich variety of birdlife. This is one of the best regions in Europe for raptors, and birdwatchers flock here to catch a glimpse of red-and-black kites; Egyptian, griffon, and threatened lammergeier vultures; and, in the highest peaks, that majestic king of all birds: the golden eagle.

By contrast, the natural lake of Gallocanta is the winter home to some 70,000 cranes and other waterfowl, while the forests of pine and beech trees create the perfect habitat for the black woodpeckers who produce a steady drumroll for the honey buzzards that circle lazily overhead. But these are only a handful of the feathered friends to be spied here – more than 360 varieties at latest count. Serious twitchers can check the [www.aragonbirding.com](http://www.aragonbirding.com) website which documents sightings and species in more detail.

### STAYING ACTIVE IN ARAGÓN

The high point, literally, to anyone's experience of Aragón has to be the breathtaking Aragonese Pyrenees, arguably the wildest and most stunning range either side of the Spain–France border. And there are plenty of chances to get up close and personal with the peaks with rock climbing, mountain trails and snowy slopes promising year-round scope for adrenalin-charged outdoor activities.

Serious hikers can also embark on a section of the famous coast-to-coast GR11 trail, while folk who prefer a more gentle Sunday-morning-style stroll can head for the foothills, particularly around the solid stone village of Torla, and the stunning Parque Nacional de Ordesa with its waterfalls, crystal streams and limestone cliffs and canyons. Water-sports junkies can also take the plunge with white-water rafting, kayaking and canoeing in the Ríos Gállego and Ésera, while picturesque stone villages throughout this region ensure that R&R (and refreshments) is never too far away.

## Top Museums

- Museo del Foro de Caesaraugusta (p364), Zaragoza – fascinating reconstruction of a Roman forum.
- Museo Origami (p364), Zaragoza – the art of folding paper reaches its pinnacle at this one-of-a-kind museum.
- Museo Diocesano (p375), Jaca – an extraordinary collection of original Romanesque frescoes.
- Museo de Juguetes (p393), Albarracín – children (and adults) will enjoy this trip down the memory lane of toys.
- Museo de Zaragoza (p365), Zaragoza – superb range of exhibits ranging from Goya paintings to Roman mosaics.