

## Ponferrada



Declared a Historic Site in 1976, it lies in the heart of the Bierzo region. Low-lying lands dotted with valleys lead to steep gorges and sheer faces. Site of an Iron Age fortified settlement, its origins date back to the 10th century, when the Knights Templar built a fortress. A town would spring up, huddled around this castle that defended the Pilgrims' Way of Saint James. This magnificent fortress is perfectly conserved, thanks to ongoing extension and renovation work throughout its history.

Ponferrada's rich history offers visitors the chance to discover many other, equally interesting sights. Indeed, they will be fascinated by the Basilica of La Encina, Calle del Reloj, site of one of the towers of the city wall, Plaza del Ayuntamiento, which, as the name indicates, is presided over by the magnificent City Hall, El Bierzo Museum, housed in the former Royal Prison, as well as the monasteries, such as Santiago de Peñalba, or churches such as the Mozarabic Santo Tomás de las Ollas, or the Romanesque Santa María de Vizbayo.

The Romans also left their mark on the landscape. Las Médulas was the greatest gold mine in the Iberian Peninsula, creating a unique setting and relief of truly breathtaking beauty. Imposing clay mounds covered with chestnut trees tracing an irregular pattern in reddish and green tones create an area of unique and matchless beauty that has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Good of Cultural Interest

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5,274