

Chapter 1 : Paleolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain - New World Encyclopedia

Under the name Cave of Altamira and Paleolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain (Cueva de Altamira y arte rupestre paleolítico del Norte de España) are grouped 18 caves of northern Spain, which together represent the apogee of Upper Paleolithic cave art in Europe between 35, and 11, years ago (Aurignacian, Gravettian, Solutrean, Magdalenian, Azilian).

Early Upper Paleolithic[edit] The Chatelperronian culture typically associated with Neanderthal man is found in the Cantabrian region and in Catalonia. The Aurignacian culture work of Homo sapiens succeeds it and has the following periodization: Radiocarbon dating gives the following dates: The 14 C dates available are: The remains of a child dated to ca. The cranium , mandible, dentition and postcrania present a mosaic of European early modern human and Neanderthal features. This claim is contested. Schwartz consider it is probable the individual was a modern human, part of the Gravettian culture. In the Cantabrian area all Gravettian remains belong to late evolved phases and are found always mixed with Aurignacian technology. It is archeologically divide in two phases characterized by the amount of Gravettian elements: It eventually vanishes from the archaeological sequence and is replaced by an "Aurignacian renaissance", at least in El Pendo cave. It is considered "intrusive", in contrast with the Mediterranean area, where it probably means a real colonization. The first indications of modern human colonization of the interior and the west of the peninsula are found only in this cultural phase, with a few late Gravettian elements found in the Manzanares valley Madrid and Salemas cave Alentejo , Portugal. They are found immersed in important Gravettian perdurations that would eventually redefine the facies as "Gravettizing Solutrean. An sterile layer with signs of intense cold that is related to the Last Glacial Maximum. Upper or Evolved Solutrean, including bone tools and also needles of this material. In the Portuguese case there are no signs of Gravettization. The Cantabrian facies shows two markedly different tendencies in Asturias and the Vasco-Cantabrian area. The oldest findings are all in Asturias and lack of the initial phases, beginning with the full Solutrean in Las Caldas Asturias and other nearby sites, followed by evolved Solutrean, with many unique regional elements. Some transitional elements that prelude the Magdalenian, like the monobiselated bone spear point, are already present. In northern Catalonia there is an early local Solutrean, followed by scarce middle elements but with a well-developed final Solutrean. It is related to the French Pyrenean sequences. In the region of Madrid there were some findings attributed to Solutrean that are today missing. Late Upper Paleolithic[edit] This phase is defined by the Magdalenian culture , even if in the Mediterranean area the Gravettian influence is still persistent. In the Cantabrian area , the early Magdalenian phases show two different facies: In the second phase, the lower evolved Magdalenian, there are also two facies but now with a geographical divide: The upper Magdalenian is closely related to that of southern France Magdalenian V and VI , being characterized by the presence of harpoons. Again there are two facies called A and B that appear geographically intertwined, though the facies A dates: A possible intermediate site is La Dehesa Salamanca , Spain , that is clearly associated with that of the Cantabrian area. In the Mediterranean area, Catalonia again is directly connected with the French sequence, at least in the late phases. Instead the rest of the region shows a unique local evolution known as Parpallense. Only the late upper Magdalenian actually includes true elements of this culture, like proto-harpoons. Radicarbon dates for this phase are of c. Other sites give later dates that actually approach the Epi-Paleolithic. This artistic manifestation is found most importantly in the northern Cantabrian area, where the earliest manifestations, for example the Caves of Monte Castillo are as old as Aurignacian times. The practice of this mural art increases in frequency in the Solutrean period, when the first animals are drawn, but it is not until the Magdalenian cultural phase when it becomes truly widespread, being found in almost every cave. Most of the representations are of animals bison, horse, deer, bull, reindeer, goat, bear, mammoth, moose and are painted in ochre and black colors but there are exceptions and human-like forms as well as abstract drawings also appear in some sites. In the Mediterranean and interior areas, the presence of mural art is not so abundant but exists as well since the

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Solutrean. Also, several examples of open-air art exist. This climatic change also represents the end of the Upper Palaeolithic period, beginning the Epipaleolithic. Depending on the terminology preferred by any particular source, the Mesolithic begins after the Epipaleolithic, or includes it. If the Epipaleolithic is not included in it, the Mesolithic is a relatively brief period in Iberia. As the climate became warmer, the late Magdalenian peoples of Iberia modified their technology and culture. The main techno-cultural change is the process of microlithization: Also the cave sanctuaries seem to be abandoned and art becomes rarer and mostly done on portable objects, such as pebbles or tools. It also implies changes in diet, as the megafauna virtually disappears when the steppe becomes woodlands. In this period, hunted animals are of smaller size, typically deer or wild goats, and seafood becomes an important part of the diet where available. Azilian and Asturian[edit] The first Epipaleolithic culture is the Azilian , also known as microlaminar microlithism in the Mediterranean. This culture is the local evolution of Magdalenian, parallel to other regional derivatives found in Central and Northern Europe. Originally found in the old Magdalenian territory of Vasco-Cantabria and the wider Franco-Cantabrian region , Azilian-style culture eventually expanded to parts of Mediterranean Iberia as well. It reflected a much warmer climate, leading to thick woodlands, and the replacement of large herd animals with smaller and more elusive forest-dwellers. In the Mediterranean area, virtually this same material culture is often named microlaminar microlithism because it lacks of the bone industry typical of Franco-Cantabrian Azilian. Geometrical microlithism[edit] In the late phases of the Epipaleolithic a new trend arrives from the north: While in the Franco-Cantabrian region it has a minor impact, not altering the Azilian culture substantially, in Mediterranean Iberia and Portugal its arrival is more noticeable. The Mediterranean geometrical microlithism has two facies: The Filador facies is directly related to French Sauveterrian and is found in Catalonia, north of the Ebro river. The Portuguese sites south of the Tagus, Muge group have given dates of c.

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Chapter 2 : Cave Art in Spain | Martin Randall Travel

There are many ways to learn about prehistory, but we recommend one so real that you will be fascinated. Join us on a full tour of the sites, caves and museums with prehistoric art to be found in the east of Asturias, one of the most beautiful regions in Green Spain.

Principality of Asturias There are many ways to learn about prehistory, but we recommend one so real that you will be fascinated. Join us on a full tour of the sites, caves and museums with prehistoric art to be found in the east of Asturias, one of the most beautiful regions in Green Spain. Discover the mark of your ancestors in a fascinating area. A visit to Asturias is like a real trip back in time. Looking into prehistory in this part of northern Spain means spectacular cave paintings and engravings. The visit we recommend here includes 13 destinations in eastern Asturias where there are many marks left behind by early man. Take a good look around because you will be seeing one of the most important and beautiful Palaeolithic sites in western Europe. Passing through a tunnel specially designed for visitors, you will observe paintings and engravings of deer, horses and female figures. Can you imagine seeing the marks left behind by groups of late Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers? Within the same cave network you can also visit Ardines Cave, which is more than 40 metres high. Get ready, though, because to enter you have to climb steps. For the curious amongst you, next to Tito Bustillo Cave there is the Prehistory Teaching Room, where graphic information panels and archaeological exhibits will help you get a better idea of prehistory in Asturias. You can get more information at Ribadesella Tourist Office. Would you like to discover a prehistoric settlement designed for deer and ibex hunting? Continue your journey to Llanes, where you will also find a pleasant surprise. It is an amazing figure reaching more than a metre in height, that could represent a warrior. Furthermore, at its Teaching Room, staff will explain what prehistoric societies were like. Get more information at Llanes Tourist Office. Do you love nature? A stunning landscape where you can visit this cave, which has drawings including one of a fish, unusual in the Palaeolithic period. Once you have discovered the wealth of prehistoric paintings to be found in eastern Asturias, we would recommend another vital visit: When you arrive you can admire the most complete exterior sanctuary for Palaeolithic art to be found in Europe. Practical information To discover these places in eastern Asturias, we recommend comfortable clothing and footwear, suitable for wet and sometimes slippery terrain. There are well signed access points and guided tours available at most of these caves. All this and much more will be within reach, as Asturias continues to extend its "Cave Paradise" programme to include other sites with a rich prehistoric heritage. All these, along with the cave sites currently open, offer an amazing way to discover the secrets of prehistory and a fascinating region. Not to be missed for any art lover. All that is left to say now: Cave art at Teverga: Have you found this information useful? Yes Yes Have you found this information useful?

Chapter 3 : Cave of Altamira and Paleolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain - UNESCO World Heritage Centre

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Access to the cave, in April The entrance to the cave was smaller in the past, but it has been enlarged as a result of archeological excavations. After the first studies in the cave, the vestibule of Castillo was excavated by the Institut de Paleontologie Humaine at Paris, directed by Hugo Obermaier and Henri Breuil , between and This long sequence covers the transition from the Neanderthal populations of the Mousterian period and the Homo sapiens of the Aurignacian and later Upper Paleolithic periods. Some of these were recently found to date back to at least 40, years, making them the oldest known cave art in Europe, 5,, years older than previous examples from Chauvet Cave in France. This gave a minimum age for the art. Where larger stalagmites had been painted, maximum ages were also obtained. The results demonstrate that the tradition of decorating caves extends back at least to the Early Aurignacian period, with minimum ages of These minimum ages reveal either that cave art was a part of the cultural repertoire of the first anatomically modern humans in Europe or that perhaps Neanderthals also engaged in painting caves. The recorded remains belong mainly to the Upper Solutrean and the Lower Magdalenian ages, although older objects are also found. There are representations of equines horses , cervids deer, male and female and bovines cattle. There are also many abstract symbols ideomorphs. While excavating the cave of El Castillo in , they received news that the workers knew of another cavity nearby that villagers called "La Pasiega. Several hundred images of animals as well as symbols are contained in these galleries. They date from the Solutrean to the early Magdalenian from 19, B. Gallery A contains pictures of horses, bison, aurochs, deer, reindeer, and goats painted primarily in red, but also some images are black and some are engraved. In a narrow gallery further inside are several quadrilateral signs. This gallery is dated to the Solutrean, with some figures from the early Magdalenian. Gallery B contains red and engraved images of aurochs, bison, horses, megaloceros, goats, chamoises, and claviforms near the original entrance. These are from the early Magdalenian. In Gallery C, figures of horses, bison, goats and others have been found painted in red, yellow, violet, black and even engraved traces. There are also symbols, including claviforms painted red. The period of these paintings is dated to the Solutrean and some of the Magdalenian. Finally, Gallery D is a zone with horses, bison, deer, and quadrangular signs. Again these works are from the Solutrean to the Magdalenian. Asturias Five caves are located in Asturias, all situated in the Comarca de Oriente: He died in a mountain accident a few days later and the cave was renamed in his honor. Prehistoric paintings cover a large portion of the Cave of Tito Bustillo, with many painted over earlier works. The dating of the art ranges between 22, and 10, B. There are two especially significant sections: The drawings of the female body, however, are of especial interest as they make use of the natural relief of the rock to suggest the three-dimensional form of the body. The paintings are from the Solutrean period, of the Upper Palaeolithic, some 18, years ago. The cave consists of several sections, beginning with the Entrance Gallery. The hall of the engravings contains the most important panel in the cavern: The techniques used are varied, mixing painting and engraving. These animal images, created by climbing the large calcite formations, ladders, or scaffolding, are visible from all points of the main central chamber in the interior of the cave. In the Hall of the Red Signs, we can see signs in the form of dots, lines and other symbols which some interpret as feminine and masculine. It was discovered in completely by chance when several of the local inhabitants entered the grotto through an opening which had been made during road construction. Its interior space was sealed when the original entrance was blocked due to natural causes. The paintings date back more than 14, years. The cave runs for metres and contains around thirty prehistoric engravings and paintings. These include images of deer, reindeer horns, goats, snakes, and a bison. Cueva del Pindal Plan of Cueva del Pindal showing locations of the paintings Cueva del Pindal is located near the town of Pimiango in Asturias, near the border of

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Cantabria. The cave paintings were discovered in They include several bison and horses, with a duo comprising a bison and a horse as the main motif. There are also other creatures represented, including a fish and a mammoth, as well as symbols, dots, and lines. Both red and black colors were used. Their estimated age is between 13, and 18, years. Basque Country Three caves are located in the Basque Country. The engravings are well preserved. The paintings, however, have deteriorated on account of the damp, leading to the cave being closed to the public. Cave of Ekain The Cave of Ekain was already known to the people in the village of Sastarrain in Guipuscoa, when the cave art was discovered in June The accessible part of the cave was small, but to the right of the entrance some boulders had blocked a small opening. In addition to horses, there are also other animals such as bison, deer, and goats. The cave paintings were discovered in when some local boys explored them. It is best known for its mural paintings of the Magdalenian period, depicting bison , horses , goats , and deer. It is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Basque Country, including a nearly complete sequence from the Middle Paleolithic to the Iron Age. Retrieved October 10, References Bahn, Paul G. The Art of Earliest Times. University of Utah Press, Palaeolithic Rock Art in Western Europe. Oxford University Press, ISBN External links.

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Chapter 4 : Prehistoric art in Asturias: cultural routes at Spain is culture.

One of the powerful draws to visiting the Northern coast of Spain are the Cantabria cave racedaydvl.com based here in Cantabria, they are literally on our doorstep and we love visiting them and include them in our Northern Spain itineraries.

Relanzon Click on this link to see the detailed map During the Palaeolithic era, the first settlers on the Iberian Peninsula chose the coasts and valleys of Asturias as among their preferred sites. The places they inhabited today contain rock carvings and paintings which provide an insight into their vision of life and nature. The most representative caves have been included as part of the transnational route known as the Route of Prehistoric Rock Art, declared a Cultural Itinerary by the Council of Europe. Read more It is well worth dedicating two days to this route. The rock paintings and carvings that we are going to see belong to what is known as Franco Cantabrian art, a style which extended along the Cantabrian and Atlantic coast of Spain and France in the Solutrean and Magdalenian periods between 20, and 10, years ago. We start the route in the interior of Asturias in the district of Cabrales, where we can learn all about the Cave of La Covaciella, part of the ensemble of Palaeolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain, which has been awarded the World Heritage designation. It is located in the area of El Mazo, beside the Deva river. We then head for the coast. Some 10 kilometres on, beside the cliffs on the Cape of San Emeterio Ribadedeva , we come to the cave of El Pindal, one of the finest examples of rock art in the region. It has various groups of paintings in a predominantly reddish colour and carvings representing a variety of animals, of which the figures of the fish and mammoth are particularly interesting. Others have a mysterious symbolic character which has yet to be understood. From this point our route continues along the N coast road. This is a rock shelter with various paintings and carvings, showing particularly a human figure surrounded by geometric and symbolic symbols which give the site its name. We rejoin the same road and continue on until we reach the town of Ribadesella about 38 kilometres. Beside the town centre, in the Macizo de Ardines massif, there are ten caves which were inhabited during Palaeolithic times. The cave of Tito Bustillo is particularly interesting, and has up to 12 groups of carvings and paintings throughout its metres, including some of the most beautiful known prehistoric representations of horses. Continuing on along the N, we head inland again. Below the chapel of La Santa Cruz there is a dolmen, an old mortuary chamber decorated with chiselled engravings and geometric paintings in red and black. Some three kilometres ahead we come to the cave of El Buxu. In addition to the usual carved and painted figures including a range of animals, geometric motifs and animal shapes , the cave was also the site of an important discovery of stone and bone tools, as well as small sculpted figurines. The last of the caves on this route is located a little further away, in the district of Candamo. This is a centre of pilgrimage for the Asturian people, and, according to legend, stands on the site of the battle of Covadonga, the first Arab defeat at the hands of the Christians.

Chapter 5 : Cave art in Asturias, Spain. | racedaydvl.com USA

Five times older than the pyramids of Giza, the rock art in northern Spain was painted by people who were just as human as you and I, but who belonged to an era so long gone it's difficult to fathom the epochs that separates us from them.

Description[edit] Bison on the roof of the pit. The cave is approximately meters long [5] and consists of a series of twisting passages and chambers. The main passage varies from two to six meters in height. The cave was formed through collapses following early Karst phenomena in the calcareous rock of Mount Vispieres. Archaeological excavations in the cave floor found rich deposits of artifacts from the Upper Solutrean c. Both periods belong to the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. In the millennia between these two occupations, the cave was evidently inhabited only by wild animals. Human occupants of the site were well-positioned to take advantage of the rich wildlife that grazed in the valleys of the surrounding mountains as well as the marine life available in nearby coastal areas. Human occupation was limited to the cave mouth, although paintings were created throughout the length of the cave. The artists used charcoal and ochre or haematite to create the images, often diluting these pigments to produce variations in intensity and creating an impression of chiaroscuro. They also exploited the natural contours of the cave walls to give their subjects a three-dimensional effect. The Polychrome Ceiling is the most impressive feature of the cave, depicting a herd of extinct steppe bison *Bison priscus* [6] in different poses, two horses, a large doe , and possibly a wild boar. Great hall of polychromes of Altamira, published by M. Sanz de Sautuola in Dated to the Magdalenian occupation, these paintings include abstract shapes in addition to animal subjects. Solutrean paintings include images of horses and goats, as well as handprints that were created when artists placed their hands on the cave wall and blew pigment over them to leave a negative image. Numerous other caves in northern Spain contain Paleolithic art, but none is as complex or well-populated as Altamira. The French specialists, led by Gabriel de Mortillet and Emile Cartailhac , were particularly adamant in rejecting the hypothesis of Sautuola and Piera, and their findings were loudly ridiculed at the Prehistorical Congress in Lisbon. Due to the supreme artistic quality, and the exceptional state of conservation of the paintings, Sautuola was even accused of forgery, as he was unable to answer why there were no soot smoke marks on the walls and ceilings of the cave. Later Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola found out the artist could have used marrow fat as oil for the lamp, producing much less soot than any other combustibles. Alcohol was not available at the time as far as we know. Still, it remains unexplained how the paintings in Altamira cave remained unaltered being wet. It was not until , when several other findings of prehistoric paintings had served to render the hypothesis of the extreme antiquity of the Altamira paintings less offensive, that the scientific society retracted their opposition to the Spaniards. Sautuola, having died 14 years earlier, did not live to witness his rehabilitation. Dating and periodization[edit] Association of the animals in the cave of Altamira, by Leroi-Gourhan. There is no scientific agreement on the dating of the archeological artifacts found in the cave, nor the drawings and paintings, and scientists continue to evaluate the age of the cave art at Altamira. In , researchers using uranium-thorium dating found that the paintings were completed over a period of up to 20, years rather than during a comparatively brief period. During the s and s, the paintings were being damaged by the carbon dioxide and water vapor in the breath of the large number of visitors. Altamira was completely closed to the public in , and reopened to limited access in Very few visitors were allowed in per day, resulting in a three-year waiting list. After green mold began to appear on some paintings in , the caves were closed to public access. The replica allows a more comfortable view of the polychrome paintings of the main hall of the cave, as well as a selection of minor works. It also includes some sculptures of human faces that are not visitable in the real cave. During there were plans to reopen access to the cave towards the end of that year. Some of the polychrome paintings at Altamira Cave are well known in Spanish popular culture. The logo used by the autonomous government of Cantabria to promote tourism to the region is based on one of the bisons in this cave. Bisonte Spanish for

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"bison" , a Spanish cigarette brand of the 20th century, also used a Paleolithic style bison figure along with its logo. The Spanish comic series *Altamiro de la Cueva* , created in , are a consequence of the fame of Altamira Cave. The comic series depicts the adventures of a group of prehistoric cavemen, shown as modern people, but dressed in pieces of fur, a bit like the Flintstones. The mid-20th-century modern dinnerware line *Primitive*, designed by Viktor Schreckengost for the American pottery company *Salem China* , was based on the bison, deer, and stick figure hunters depicted in the Altamira cave paintings. The song "Cuevas de Altamira" Caves of Altamira appears on the album *Cuevas de Altamira* by the symphonic progressive rock-folk group *Ibio* from Cantabria. The iconic bison image has been used for the cover of the poetry collection *Songs for the Devil and Death* by Scottish author Hal Duncan.

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Chapter 6 : Cave of Altamira - Wikipedia

pages with full color photographs and illustrations, bibliography and index. Translated into English by Henry Hinds, with an introduction by Fredo Arias de Canal.

US Toll Free 1 EightFourFour Altamira cave and beyond Enter many actual caves, see the original art Custom, private small group tours Tour led by native English speaker All necessary reservations, fees included All transportation, transfers provided Private vehicle not a tour bus Altamira Cave Tour provides custom, private escorted tours of the most important Paleolithic prehistoric cave art sites of Northern Spain, including several important museums. Beyond the caves, we ensure you enjoy the beautiful landscapes, wonderful food and unique cultures of Northern Spain. By region they are: Many present difficult access routes, most of which are not suitable for larger vehicles such as buses. We do tours from one person but limit our tour groups to six persons maximum. We provide all land transportation, transfers and site reservations. We can recommend and book accommodations based on your preferences throughout your guided Altamira Cave Tour and beyond. We travel by private vehicle not tour bus. In March of , Charles entered the original Altamira cave as part of the ongoing experiment to determine if the cave is opened on a more permanent basis or not. Read about his experience here. Watch the webinar here. Year Round Altamira Cave Tour operates year round. Why Us We are highly knowledgeable with a lifetime of experience in the area. We understand the idiosyncrasies of each of the caves and know our way around Northern Spain. We are very familiar with the restrictions on entry and the physical limitations unique to each of the caves. We design your custom itinerary to ensure your experience is carefree and nothing short of unforgettable. He met us right at the train, arranged for an overnight stay in a lovely place and accompanied us to three different and beautiful caves. Charles helped me navigate through some areas that could have been difficult for me as an 84 year old with a broken arm! I recommend him highly to anyone interested in this type of tour. It has been a month since the tours and I am still exuberant when I share what I learned. As a kid, visiting the caves were always a goal; little did I know I the extent of details I would learn. I thoroughly enjoyed how Charles could meet me where I was with my knowledge and questions, planning a program that met my interests and abilities and the rich conversations before and after visiting the caves, chatting about the ancient peoples and the lands where they painted. I am still buzzing. This experience rates as one of my best experiences with guides over 20 years of travelling. I highly recommend Northern Exposure Spain and Charles as an educated, experienced, extraordinary investment. On top of that, his experience of travelling around the world has added to his repertoire. We greatly benefitted from his knowledge and friendly character during our visit. We would recommend anyone who plans to visit the caves to book his services without a blink of an eye. From the day I contacted Charles, he has been extremely informative, prompt and helpful. Any questions even weird ones were answered in a professional and timely manner. Touring Northern Spain with Charles was a wonderful experience. He considered all my interests and designed a program that exceeded my expectations. I have travelled on 6 continents on my own and on tours. Charles is one of the best guides I have had: It quickly became apparent he knows the area intimately having explored it since childhood. I was delighted by surprise visits to special places as we travelled along the roads. He also took me to museums, art galleries, churches, medieval towns, Roman and Celtic sites, port towns, national parks, sea, valley and mountain viewpoints, markets and even a ranchers fair, a music concert and some gourmet restaurants. I had a great time and would thoroughly recommend touring Northern Spain with Charles! We each have a keen interest in the subject matter and Charles arranged our itinerary with surprises each day - Michelin star restaurants, classic bars, private tours and ultimately far surpassing my initial requests. Charles is a rare combination of knowledge, patience, enthusiasm and gentility. In addition, the love of his country is infectious, all comfortably operating within his American upbringing. Customs and languages are fully integrated for a seamless travel experience. We recommend him for anyone traveling to Northern Spain. You will have the trip of a lifetime. The tour was

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structured to unfold as both an adventure and learning experience. We learned more than we could have anticipated and in fact this trip ignited our interests in continuing to learn more about prehistory and about Spain. Charles really understood what we wanted to see and also had a complete understanding of the kinds of food, wine and cultural experiences we were seeking. We highly recommend Charles to anyone planning a trip to Northern Spain. Charles has extensive knowledge of northern Spain and of the historical and archaeological sites we visited, and particularly of the Paleolithic cave art sites. He was also a great traveling companion. As English speakers with virtually no Spanish, we would not have gotten nearly as much out of the caves if we had been on our own. We thoroughly enjoyed the trip, and hope to do something like it again. He made all the arrangements and gave us excellent, comprehensive information. He is far and away the best I could have ever imagined. I could not recommend him more highly. Charles was able to set up impromptu visits to seldom-seen caves. He seems to know everyone and his knowledge of Cantabria is profound. I have travelled extensively in Europe and the United States and I can say that I have never had anyone as knowledgeable as you. I had so much fun, learned so much about Northern Spain and am still in awe of the caves. We spent almost 3 weeks in Spain but we all agree that the highlight of the trip was the day we spent with Charles of Northern Exposure Spain touring caves. What a fabulous day!

Chapter 7 : Spain Cave Tour

We start the route in the interior of Asturias in the district of Cibrales, where we can learn all about the Cave of La Covaciella, part of the ensemble of Palaeolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain, which has been awarded the World Heritage designation.

January 04, Note: The communities of Asturias, the Basque Country, and Cantabria are home to some of the best-preserved cave art that has come down to us from the Paleolithic era. Behaviorally-modern humans emerged from East Africa around 50,000 years ago and soon began to spread across the globe, reaching the Iberian peninsula approximately 60,000 years later. During the last ice age, communities on either side of the Pyrenees Mountains covered cave walls with haunting handprints and striking depictions of wild animals. When these caves, which most famously include Altamira in Spain and Lascaux in France, were discovered in the last century, the paintings they had protected for millennia affirmed the essential humanity of our prehistoric ancestors: That decision, though, compromised their fragile environments; the carbon dioxide exhaled by countless tourists and the slow creep of mold forced authorities to close off the caves of Altamira and Lascaux for the foreseeable future to prevent any more damage. Both sites still allow visitors to come face-to-face with the oldest art in the world. Wikimedia Commons This cave bores deep into the cone-shaped mountain of the same name, Monte Castillo. A steady water source and fertile woodlands would have been attractive to any hunter-gatherer peoples who lived here. Authorities have sealed off the passageway that leads inside with a heavy metal door, a portal that connects our modern world of agriculture, industry, and the Internet to a world adrift in the great sea of prehistory. To reach this door, you skirt the edge of a dig site that has yielded artifacts from every age of human prehistory. After the guide lets you cross the threshold and cautiously locks the door behind him, he leads you down slippery sandstone steps down into the mountain. Groundwater steadily percolates overhead, breaking a silence that is heavy with the dreams of our predecessors. A faded horse outlined in red humbly trots to the right, while a hefty bison runs headlong into the ground. Nearby, a single left hand waves out at you from the darkness of prehistory. The cave artists would have held out one hand against the rock face while blowing red pigment from a tube held in their other hand, creating a hand stencil in the negative space left by the diffused paint. The guide will tell you the date of one handprint, and then proceed to explain that another hand is approximately 5,000 years younger. That same breadth of time—5,000 years—covers the entire span of written human history, from Egyptian hieroglyphics through the Roman Empire and on to the U.S. You ponder the colossal continuity of this dwelling, a place that Paleolithic humans returned to year after year to practice their rituals, pass down ancestral knowledge, or visualize the hunt—and kept doing so for millennia. Who can imagine what struggles these peoples endured, what love they experienced, what kind of gods they worshiped? They bridged the gap between our animal nature and the humanity that transcends it. You can make tour reservations online. How to get there: For more information visit: To preserve the delicate decorations, the cave is closed from November through March, so plan accordingly. When you arrive, a tunnel bored a few decades ago ferries you from the sunny riverside entrance to an underworld of the past. From these dimly-lit passageways, you emerge in a chamber and see an illuminated panel of animal figures, an island in the darkness. The guide explained that there were actually two separate phases of decoration. One, applied 20,000 years ago, consists mainly of small red points blown onto the rock face and lines that have smudged into red washes. A second, dating to 15,000 years ago, includes the menagerie of horses, deer, and bison that dance around you. Like El Castillo, this cave illustrates a continuity unheard of in all human history, for the simple fact that it lasted longer than all recorded history itself. The primitive circles that dot the panel refuse to be explained, stars in the vast night of the past still shining years later. What, or who, did they represent? Gods in a pantheon long since washed away by the Sella River? Seasons, years, centuries, or millennia? The ancestors on whose shoulders the artists stood upon as we stand upon theirs? And was this cave abandoned after first being explored, or was the knowledge of its existence

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passed down from grandfathers to grandsons and great-grandsons a thousand times over? Was this cave open to everyone, men and women alike, or was it restricted to shamans who stood between the dirt and meat of the everyday world and the swirling spirits of the supernatural? What made that generation of humans grow restless with the fading red dots and spread ochre, charcoal, and pigment across the walls and choose to breathe horses and bulls to life? And they used an ingenious form of lighting: By the eerie light of these bone-borne flames, the artists drew the dark charcoal shapes of zebras and horses, filling in the outlines with a warm royal purple, or adding striking stripes to the flanks. Ribadesella is a coastal Asturian village about halfway between Oviedo and Santander. Half a dozen buses run by Alsa connect Ribadesella with Oviedo each day, but only two come from Santander. Four departures in each direction link Oviedo and Ribadesella two hours , but only two trains in either way go to Santander three hours. For more information visit [http:](http://) Share your experiences below in the discussion thread!

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Chapter 8 : Cantabria Cave Paintings - The Oldest Art? - Totally Spain Travel Blog

The trip visits all northern Spain's most important Paleolithic sites and culminates with a tour of El Castillo cave - the most important site in the world for both Paleolithic art and archaeology with approximately 3, engraved, painted and sculpted hands, animals, symbols and anthropomorphic figures spanning a period of over 30, years.

US Toll Free 1 EightFourFour Spain 34 Enter actual caves, see the original art Custom, private small group tours Tour led by native English speaker All necessary reservations, fees included All transportation, transfers provided Private vehicle not a tour bus Spain Cave Tour is a custom, private guided tour of the most important prehistoric art sites of Northern Spain, including several important museums. Beyond the caves, we ensure you enjoy the beautiful landscapes, wonderful food and unique cultures of Northern Spain. By region they are: Many present difficult access routes, most of which are not suitable for larger vehicles such as buses. We limit our tour groups to six persons maximum. We provide all land transportation, transfers and site reservations. We can recommend and book accommodations based on your preferences throughout your guided Spain Cave Tour and beyond. We travel by private vehicle not tour bus. In March of , Charles entered the original Altamira cave as part of the ongoing experiment to determine if the cave is opened on a more permanent basis or not. Read about his experience here. Watch the webinar here. Year Round Spain Cave Tour operates year round. Why Us We are local and highly knowledgeable with a lifetime of experience. We understand the idiosyncrasies of each of the caves and know our way around Northern Spain. We are very familiar with the restrictions on entry and the physical limitations unique to each of the caves. We design your custom itinerary to ensure your experience is carefree and nothing short of unforgettable. He made all the arrangements and gave us excellent, comprehensive information. He is far and away the best guide I could have ever imagined. I could not recommend him more highly. Charles was able to set up impromptu visits to seldom-seen caves. He seems to know everyone and his knowledge of Cantabria is profound. I have travelled extensively in Europe and the United States and I can say that I have never had a tour guide as knowledgeable as you. I had so much fun, learned so much about Northern Spain and am still in awe of the caves. Daily excursions to see historic and cultural sites which were of great interest. The prehistoric caves were spectacular. I cannot commend him highly enough.

Chapter 9 : Teverga Prehistory Park in Asturias, Spain. | racedaydvl.com USA

Cave Art & Human Evolution Your custom private escorted Northern Spain tour with us is the best way to get closer to the mysteries of our distant past as humans. Northern Spain is home to many of the finest expressions of prehistoric Paleolithic cave art in the world.

In addition, the caves of northern Spain are in regions of outstanding beauty, famed for their seafood and cuisine. Three nights are spent in Santillana del Mar, a well-preserved medieval village close to Altamira, one of the most famous and historic decorated caves, located in a striking landscape. Other caves such as Covalanas and Pindal are in settings with breathtaking views. Whatever your motivation or interest, a visit to an Ice Age cave is a tremendous privilege. After more than a century of research we still only know about such sites in Eurasia, and only a small fraction of these are open to the public because of difficulties of access or conservation concerns. As such, they constitute a very limited and finite resource, and yet visitors can approach these original masterpieces extremely closely, an experience unparalleled in major art galleries. Unlike a visit to the Louvre or the Prado, in entering a cave you are seeing the images precisely where they were created, you are standing or crouching just where the artists did. In many cases the journey to the cave entrance and the route through the chambers give your experience a sense of immediacy, purity and vividness. Entering a world far removed from one of commerce, art-dealers and critics enhances a feeling of connection with the artists. There is nothing like a stalactite dripping on your head to remind you that you are in a pristine and natural setting. Day 1 Fly at c. Continue by coach to Burgos. The Museum of Human Evolution is one of the biggest and most important in the world devoted to this theme, and contains a magnificent display of the major finds from the sites at Atapuerca. Atapuerca is one of the richest and most important groups of archaeological sites in the world, and yet despite the amazing quantity of discoveries so far, the surface has barely been scratched, and work will continue for decades or even centuries to come. Burgos Cathedral is one of the most beautiful in Spain, combining French and German Gothic styles, and has remarkable vaults and 16th-century choir stalls. Drive in the late afternoon to Santillana del Mar for the first of three nights. Day 3 El Castillo, El Pendo. The decorated caves of El Castillo and Las Monedas are close to each other but very different. El Castillo was decorated in many periods of the Ice Age over thousands of years, and indeed contains the oldest known cave art at present, while Las Monedas was decorated by one person at the end of the Ice Age. Both contain some masterpieces. At El Pendo the art on the back wall of the vast entrance chamber was only discovered recently. Careful cleaning of the surface revealed a whole series of beautiful animal figures. Day 4 Covalanas, Altamira. Only seven people may enter at one time. The extremely accurate facsimile of the cave of Altamira is as astonishing as the original, and enables one to have a detailed look at the many facets of this highly complex decorated ceiling. Day 5 Pindal, Tito Bustillo. The cave of Tito Bustillo requires a long walk past impressive stalagmites and stalactites to reach the complex decorated panel, one of the finest in all of cave art, which features the striking use of a very rare purple pigment. Day 6 Candamo, Teverga. The visitor centre at Candamo contains a facsimile of the cave itself and other shelters of the region. The Park at Teverga is a recent development which provides a final overview of the phenomenon of Ice Age cave art, including facsimiles of panels from a variety of caves in Spain and France. Take an early afternoon flight from Asturias airport, via Madrid, arriving at London Heathrow at c. Price, per person Two sharing: Included Air travel economy class with Iberia Airlines aircraft: Rooms are comfortable and richly furnished. A 4-star Parador, traditionally furnished. A 5-star in a converted 17th-century hospice. Rooms have been recently renovated. A lot of walking is involved to reach the caves, often over rough ground or up steep gradients. Inside the caves the ground is slippery underfoot; sure-footedness is essential. Average distance by coach per day: