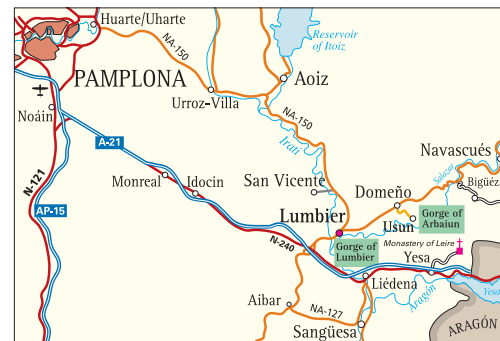


OTHER GORGES AND RAVINES

NAVARRRE, AND PARTICULARLY ITS PRE-PYRENEAN VALLEYS, IS A LAND OF GORGES AND RAVINES. IN ADDITION TO THE ONES FEATURED IN THIS PUBLICATION, YOU CAN ALSO VISIT THOSE OF UGARRÓN, BENASA, ASPURZ, SANTA COLOMBA AND BURGUI, ALMOST ALL OF WHICH ARE LISTED AS PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS.

THE GOOD VISITOR GUIDE:

- Leave your rubbish in the bins in the reception area (car park).
- Use the designated parking areas and respect the restrictions on access to the tracks.
- Respect the wildlife and the natural environment in general.
- Do not disturb the birds by shouting or making noise.
- Do not leave valuables in plain sight inside your vehicle.
- Risk of rockfalls; proceed with caution.
- No camping or fires permitted. In the interest of the common good, do not make fire in any way.
- The gorge has a ranger service. Please collaborate with the rangers.



THE GORGE INTERPRETATION CENTRE. LUMBIER

You can find out more about the local environment and what the area has to offer tourists at the Gorge Interpretation Centre in the village square in Lumbier (Plaza Mayor). The Centre is also a Tourist Information Office and Ornithological Information Point.

CONTACT

- Environmental Information and Education Section
Telephone: 848 42 78 65 • email: sian@navarra.es
- Lumbier Nature Interpretation Centre
Telephone: 948 88 08 74
email: cinlumbi@navarra.es
Website: www.focesdenavarra.es



Written by: Carlos García (Cederna-Garalur), Iñaki Cortés - Mikel Madoz (TERRA). Design by: Javier Arvilla. Translated by: CCI, s.l.

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► NAVARRE'S PRE-PYRENEAN GORGES

A Gorge is a cleft between two walls of rock caused by the erosive action of a river over millions of years. The geological conformation of limestone folds perpendicular to watercourses in Navarre's Pyrenean and Pre-Pyrenean valleys has led to the creation of several gorges on the principal rivers in the area (Salazar, Irati, Esca, Areta, etc.).

The formation of a gorge involves the creation of a land structure the entrance to and exit from which consist of narrow passageways which only have room for the river. This, together with the rocky escarpments lining the watercourse, made such areas practically inaccessible to humans for centuries, allowing nature to develop unaltered within their confines and we now prize such areas as invaluable natural resources. In the past, only timber rafters, charcoal burners and the odd hunter dared venture into the depths of these wild areas. Nowadays most of our gorges are Protected Natural Areas.

NATURE RESERVES

GORGE OF ARBAIUN

GORGE OF LUMBIER



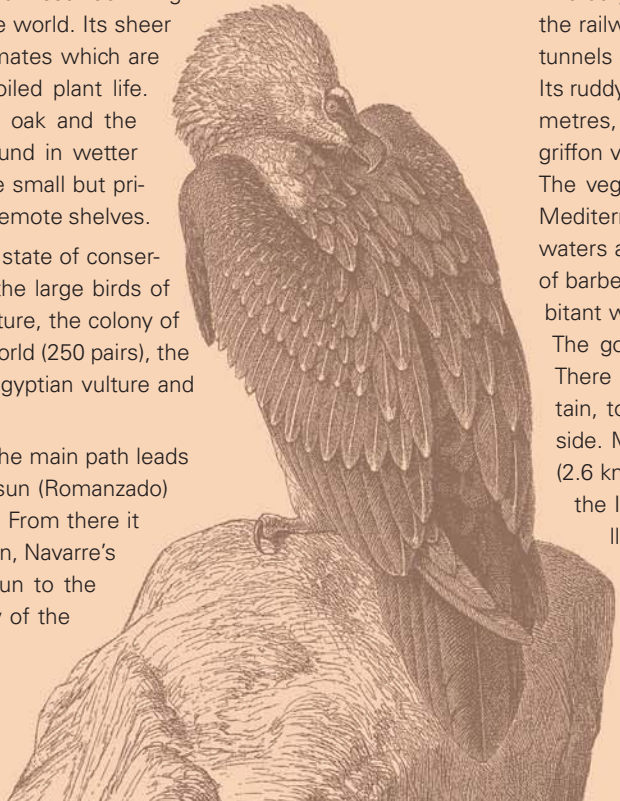


▶ GORGE OF ARBAIUN

Thanks both to its size and to its awe-inspiring nature, the Gorge of Arbañun is the true pearl of all Navarre's gorges; but it is also the most inaccessible. Carved by the waters of the River Salazar, vertical walls almost 200 m high cut 6 kilometres of the watercourse off from the outside world. Its sheer size and complex relief have led to a range of microclimates which are home to an intricate and varied array of almost unspoiled plant life. Mediterranean species like the holm oak, the kermes oak and the Portuguese oak all thrive alongside others normally found in wetter areas, such as beech trees, lime trees and hazels, while small but priceless botanical rarities can be found in fissures and on remote shelves.

Protected as a Nature Reserve, the gorge's outstanding state of conservation attracts a great many animal species, including the large birds of prey for which it is famous: these include the griffon vulture, the colony of which resident in the gorge is one of the largest in the world (250 pairs), the extremely rare bearded vulture, the golden eagle, the Egyptian vulture and the Eurasian eagle-owl.

There are different ways to visit the Gorge of Arbañun. The main path leads off from the car park at the entrance to the village of Usun (Romanzado) and takes walkers to the downstream end of the gorge. From there it is possible to walk on to the Chapel of San Pedro de Usun, Navarre's first documented monastery. The entire walk from Usun to the chapel and back again is 3.6 km. Perhaps the best view of the gorge can be seen from the Iso viewpoint.



▶ GORGE OF LUMBIER

The Gorge of Lumbier takes its name from the municipal district in which it is located. Formed by the River Irati, this small but spectacular gorge is unique in that you can walk its entire length along the easy path left behind by the railway line ("El Irati") which ran through it from 1911 to 1955. Two small tunnels on the path separate the gorge from the outside world.

Its ruddy- and ochre-tinted limestone walls, which reach as high as a hundred metres, are the ideal habitat for a broad array of cliff-dwelling birds: griffon vultures, Egyptian vultures, red-billed choughs, jackdaws, swifts, etc. The vegetation mainly consists of clumps of kermes oak bushes and the Mediterranean flora that usually accompany the species. The river, whose waters are getting a little bit cleaner by the year, is home to a good number of barbel, trout, loaches, gudgeons and minnows, and one emblematic inhabitant who has only just returned: the otter.

The gorge is a Nature Reserve and receives lots of visitors every year. There is a pay car park with a recreation area equipped with drinking fountain, toilets and tables at the main entrance to the gorge on the Lumbier side. Most people who visit the Gorge of Lumbier take the easy flat path (2.6 km to the end of the path and back again) which runs through it where the Irati railway line used to lie. For those who want a slightly more challenging walk, there is a way-marked path (SL-NA 113) which goes around the top of the gorge and comes back through the gorge itself. Near the gorge, there is a "muladar" (a feeding place for carrion-eating birds). You can watch the birds there from the viewpoint on the NA-178, just off the A-21 (Pamplona-Jaca).

