

Monasterio de Piedra, an idyllic place to escape to

As you may already know, I like getting out of the city from time to time. Last week I wrote a post about the orange-colored cliffs at [El Barranco de la Hoz](#), and today I'd like to introduce you to another place that may be unknown to you. Built in the 12th century, [Monasterio de Piedra](#) (*Stone Monastery*) is situated in a natural park in **Zaragoza** (a province northeast of Madrid), which is inundated by misty **waterfalls, rivers and streams** that give you goosebumps.



Our visit to [Monasterio de Piedra](#) started a few weeks ago, when my friends and I were preparing a two-day trip outside

the city. When one of my friends suggested we go here, I stared at him with a puzzled look on my face. If we're going to pay 15€, it better be good. Actually, it better be incredible, I thought. Let's see what happens...

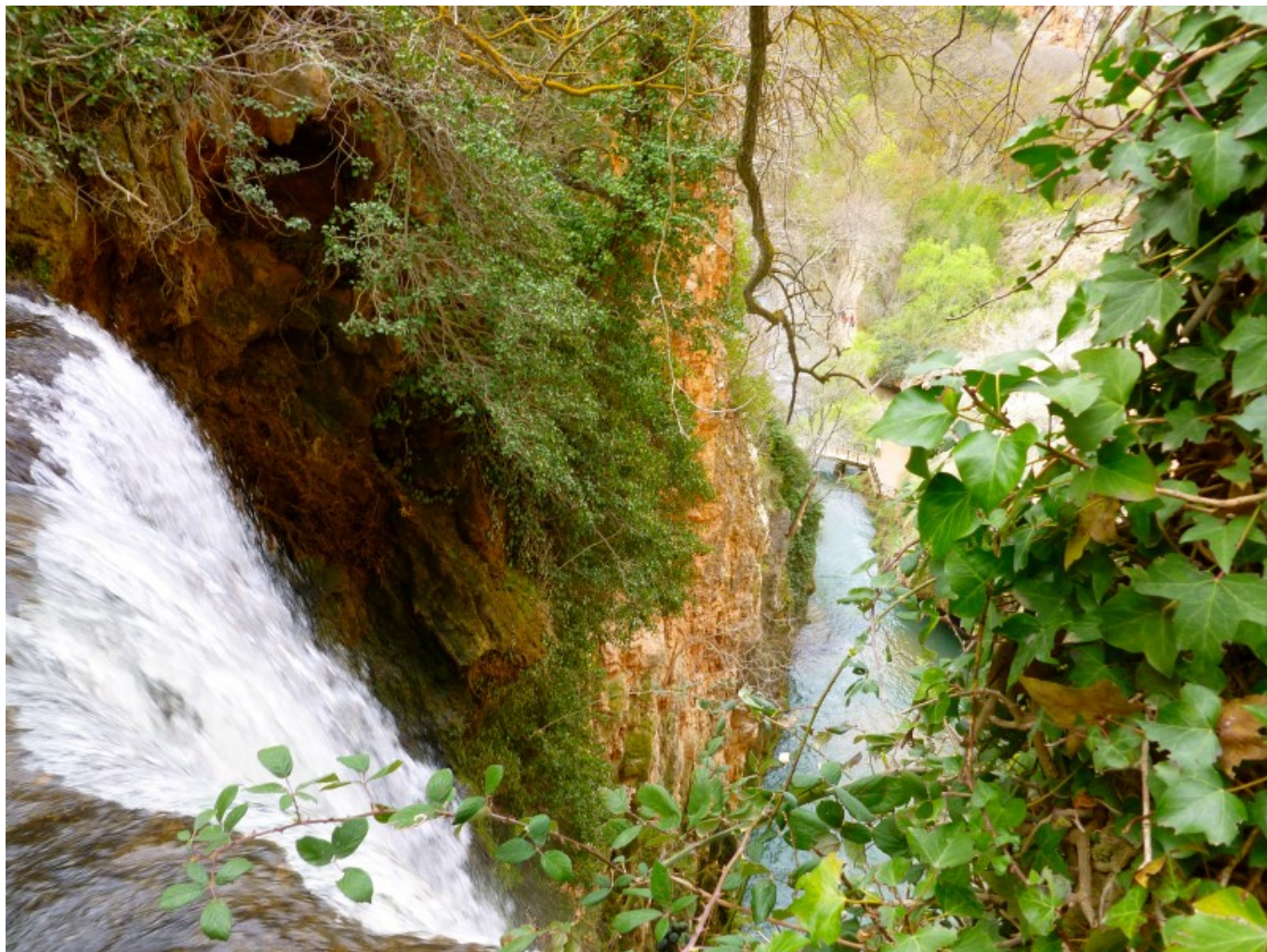


As soon as we entered the park, we walked down a bunch of steps and came across the first wow in our path. The **Wilful Waterfall** (in Spanish, "La cascada Caprichosa") stood in front of us. As you look up at the cascading giant, you see many different types of green and hear the sound of the water crashing into the river and continuing on its way. Although there were several other groups of visitors at the site, it never felt crowded.

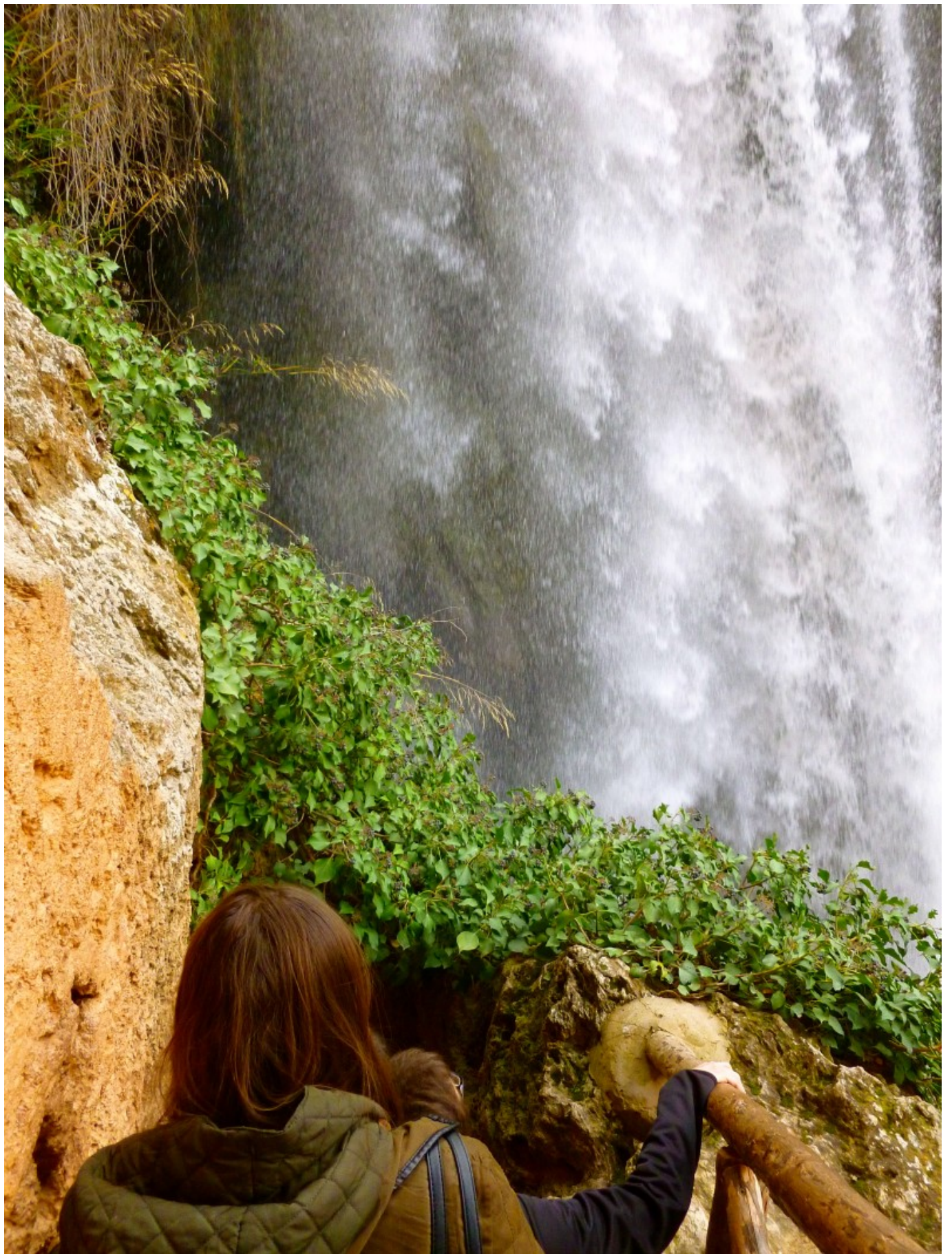
The "**Río Piedra**" (Stone river) is guilty of having formed this spectacular landscape of waterfalls and cozy natural spots.



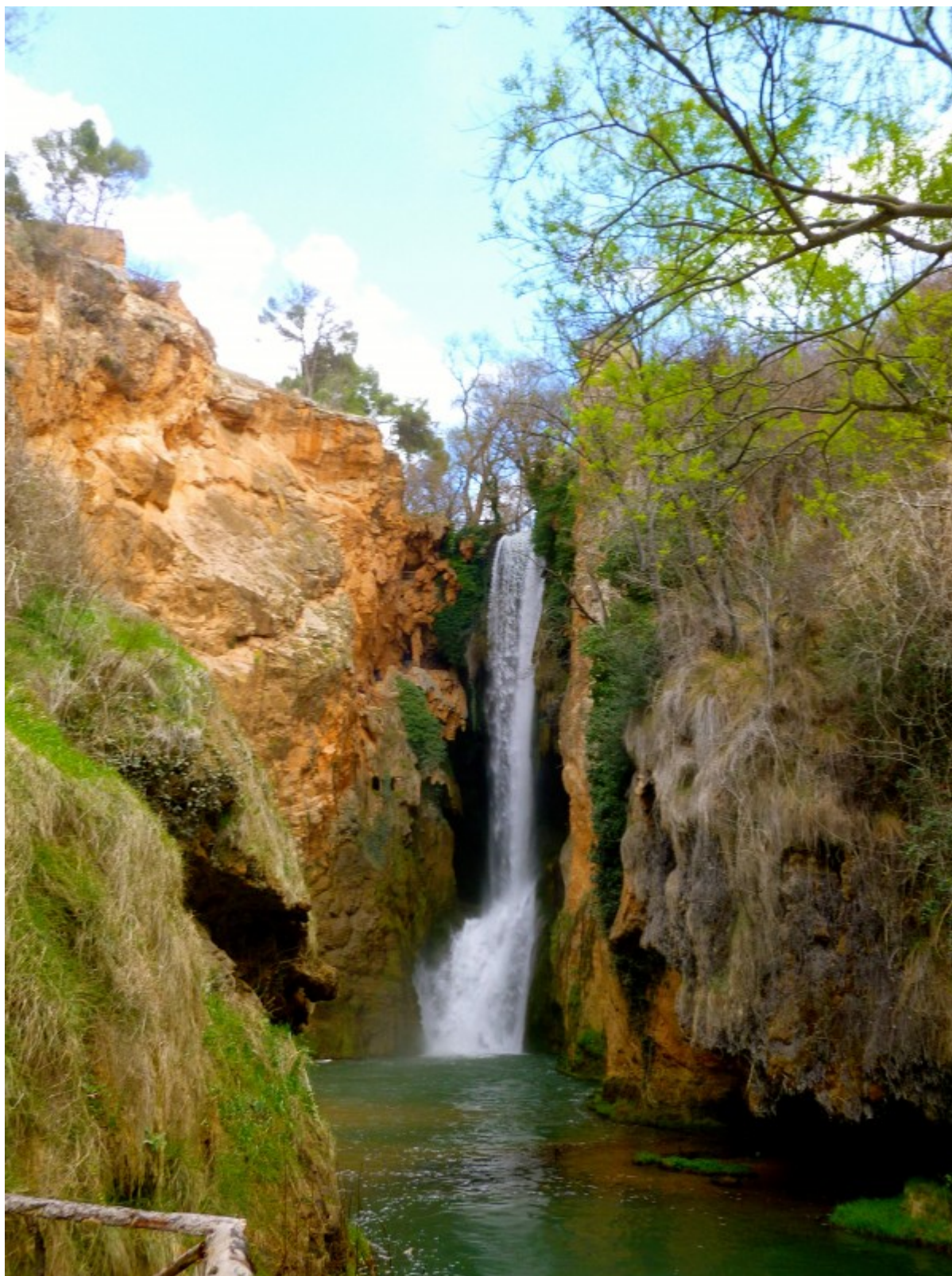
As we moved along the **río piedra** and stumbled upon a few more wows, we eventually got close up to the tallest waterfall in Spain: "**La cola del caballo**" (or, in English, *the horse tail waterfall*). It's an incredible 50m fall which makes you feel fear, awe and calmness, in that order.



We saw the “Cascada” from every angle. The most impressive moment was being behind it, inside the cave, feeling the strength of the water falling in your face.







Although we only walked through the park, **Monasterio de Piedra** also has a magnificent hotel that boasts a spa and two restaurants, fit for weddings and banquets of all kinds. Not to mention, the Monastery itself is open to the public.

Where:

Nuévalos (Zaragoza)

229 kilometres from Madrid

Website:

www.monasteriopiedra.com

[How to get there from Madrid](#)

Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think

Growing up at my father's coffee shop in New York – [the Hungarian Pastry Shop](#) – I remember there was a poster on the wall that featured *50 coffee shops around the world where you can think*.

Since I arrived in Madrid seven years ago, I've always thought that [Pepe Botella](#) should be on that poster, photographed alongside the other perfect cafés from Tel Aviv to Reykjavik.



Peer through the bay window at passersby in Plaza de Dos de Mayo in Malasaña

In my mind, cafés aren't about who has the prettiest foam;

cafés should make you feel at home. I first fell in love with **Pepe Botella** when I was a student. I used to bring my laptop there on Saturdays and Sundays during lunchtime when it was empty, and let the afternoon go by. Ever since, **Pepe Botella** has been the café I most enjoy going to with friends, family, or alone.

It just fits, whether I want to peer through the window with a coffee or a glass of wine, or disappear onto the red velvet benches in the back with a conversation or the newspaper. It's the kind of place that invites you to stay for hours. And whenever my sister, Amanda, visits me, this is our spot. She likes to linger there as much as I do.



Pepe Botella is situated in the infamous Plaza del Dos de Mayo, named in honor of the Madrileños who rose against Napoleon on May 2nd in 1802, as well as home to Madrid's

breaking experimental movement in the eighties called *La Movida Madrileña*.



The café is named after Napoleon's brother, **José I Bonaparte**, who was dubbed **Pepe Botella** in Spain for his exorbitant drinking habits (Pepe is the Spanish nickname for Jose).

And **Plaza del Dos de Mayo** is nestled between the streets of **Malasaña**, Madrid's trendiest neighborhood that boasts endless cafés and bars. But for me, **Pepe** is the best.



Also, their coffees come with delicious cookies (called *pastas*). Every time I ask the waiters for the chocolate ones, they give me two! And their wine comes with blue chips.

I've never had cocktails there, but I can say that the tables around me usually move on to the **gin & tonics** by 7pm.



Café Pepe Botella

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** c/ San Andrés, 12
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Noviciado, Bilbao