Stunning Local Olive Grove Tour, in English! – Proyecto Los Aires

In 2013, biologists **Guillermo and Laura** – Spain's newest generation of **olive farmers** – took over the family business and embarked on an innovative mission: to connect the local countryside with the city of Madrid and make farming a **sustainable way of life** once again.

How it all started:

Over a century ago, in a small town in the region of **Toledo**, Guillermo's great grandfather planted his first grove of around 200 olive trees, and between the evenly spaced olive saplings grew rows of sun-drenched grapevines.

A hundred odd years later, only the footprints of the old vines are visible, but the olive trees have grown beautifully gnarled and twisted, with silver miniature leaves and shiny hard fruit, ready for the annual harvest of some of the tastiest **organic extra virgin olive oil** in Spain.



The centenarian olive trees

Guillermo and Laura's story:

Olive farming has been in both of their families for generations, inspiring them to study biology at university, which is where they met. From early on, they drew sketches on scraps of paper illustrating grand ambitions to re-bond our booming capital with its rural backyard, enthusiastically telling anyone who will listen about the genius that is the organic farming ecosystem (it's genius).

By mid 2014, their dream had gathered enough steam for them to **quit their jobs** and make ***Proyecto Los Aires*** their life, and for being in the midst of an **economic depression**, it's incredible how much they've already achieved.

The tour:

On Saturday, we headed out to their stunning olive grove in **Arcicóllar**, about an hour south of Madrid. When we arrived, we

met up with our fellow tour buddies and set off on our educational meander through the olive trees.

Guillermo and Laura led us around their oldest plot and explained the **process of creating olive oil**: from planting and harvesting to filtering and bottling. Their scientific angle on the entire practice is fascinating, but I won’t say any more – the oohs and aahs are all part of the fun!



The walking tour begins



Taking a closer look at the trees

After the walking tour (and tanning opportunity), we sat down at a shaded table nestled idyllically among the centenarian trees. It was time for the **tasting**. This involved professionally sampling several olive oils in little blue glass cups, and learning how to tell the difference between generic **supermarket oil** and **top-quality organic oil** such as theirs.

And then came the food and wine. Through local connections and friends and family, Guillermo and Laura brought together a plethora of **Iberian foodie gems** for us to eat. A *mercado* on a table came to mind, and our tour companions' similarly delighted reactions included lots of "mmm"s and "oh my God"s and jokey squabbles over who liked the **pumpkin *morcilla*** most. We chatted, talking about Guillermo and Laura's endeavours as well as our own, then gratefully accepted Guillermo's offer of

a top-up of wine to accompany our final wander through the trees (and take a few grove-selfies). Finally, we had the opportunity to buy some of the delicious products we tasted that day.



The tasting (and eating and drinking)



The quaintest little market stall in the world

After an **eye-opening and mouth-watering experience**, we said our goodbyes to the lovely Guillermo and Laura and hopped on the bus back to Madrid, desperate to get the word out to you!

The project explained:

Proyecto Los Aires aims to **promote local agriculture** by running **educational tours** & **tastings** on their farm and forging a direct link between urban consumers and the rural economy. Their oil (Los Aires Extra Virgin Olive Oil) can be found in **gourmet shops** such as Oleoteca Murúa at Mercado San Antón. Guillermo and Laura also regularly sell their oil in **markets across Madrid** such as Mercado de Motores, Mercado Central de Diseño, Nómada Market and Gastro Market. Next time you're there, **go and say hello**!



Los Aires olive groves

How to get there:

The **meeting point** for the tour is the bus stop in the town of **Arcicóllar** (see location here). Regular buses (see timetable here) will get you there from Madrid's **Méndez Alvaro** bus station in **just over an hour**. If you're driving, it takes around **50 minutes** from central Madrid.

Details & Contact Info:

Tours run **year-round** on **any day of the week or weekend** and must be booked at least **48 hours in advance**.

> **Facebook & Web**
>
> **The website is in English and Spanish! For more information about the tour, pricing, and to book, click here.**

Cercedilla


LA CURVA
BAR
LA CURVA BA



What to see:

When I think of *Cercedilla*, the first thing that pops into my head is nature. An hour from Madrid, this mountainous town is an incredible place for hiking, adventure activities and typical, no-frills kind of food.

In the summer, there's also an amazing natural swimming pool, meaning a manmade pool filled with natural running water from the mountain's streams and rivers, so you can take a refreshing dip while enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

If you'd like to go to Cercedilla but the idea of hiking scares you, there's a train that travels around the Guadarrama mountains. The train is called "*Tren de la naturaleza*" and runs every Thursday and Friday from the beginning of July to the end of September.

How to get there:

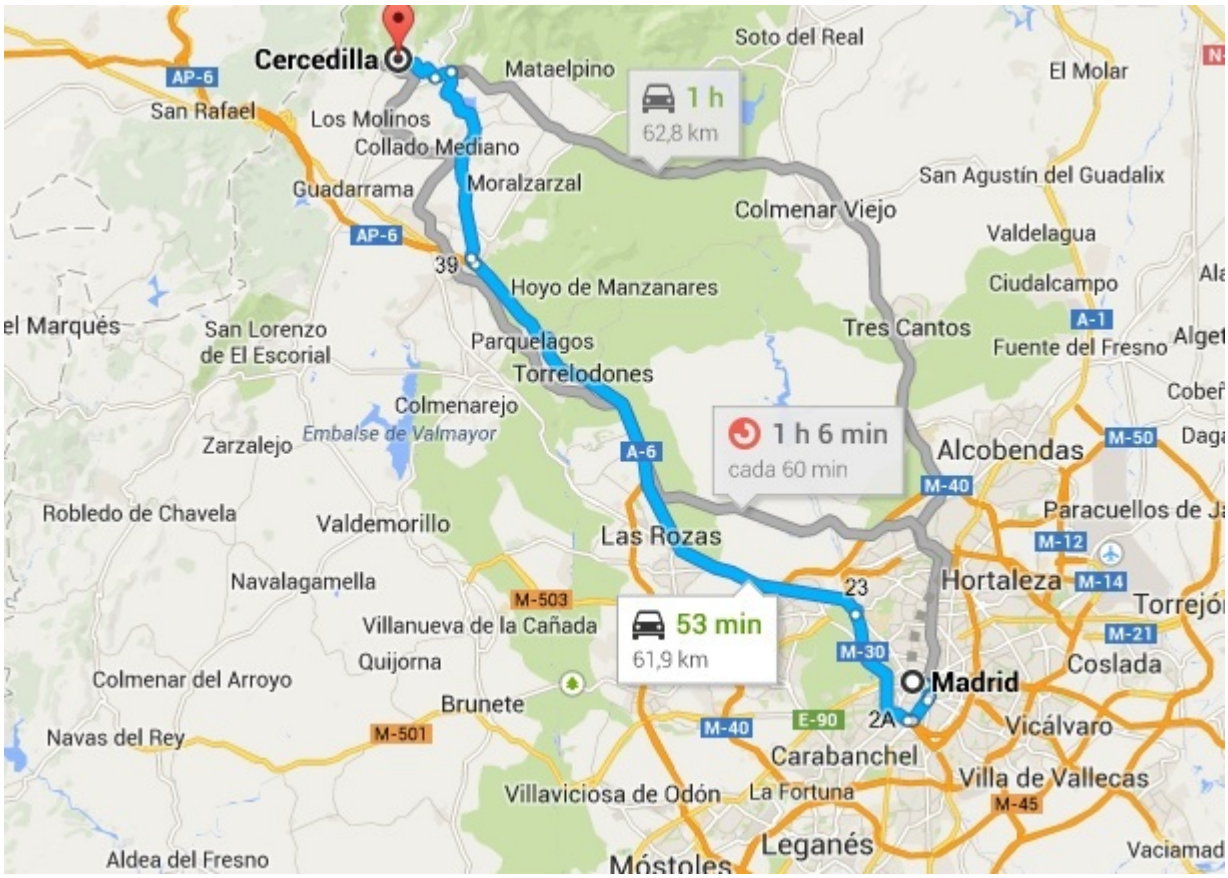
- **By Train (Cercanias)**

  Depart from: Chamartín train station
  Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Cercedilla (Cercanias))
Return (Cercedilla – Madrid (Cercanias))
  Duration: approx. **1 hour**
  Price: 4€ (round trip approx. 8€).

- **By bus**

  Depart from: Moncloa. 684 bus
  Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Cercedilla (Bus))
Return (Cercedilla – Madrid (Bus))
  Duration: approx. **1 hour 10 min**
  Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:


Cercedilla
Soto del Real
Mataelpino
El Molar
AP-6
San Rafael
Los Molinos
Collado Mediano
1 h
62,8 km
Guadarrama
Moralzarzal
San Agustín del Guadalix
Colmenar Viejo
AP-6
Valdelagua
39
Hoyo de Manzanares
Ciudalcampo
el Marqués
San Lorenzo
de El Escorial
Parquelagos
Tres Cantos
A-1
Fuente del Fresno
Torrelodones
Colmenarejo
1 h 6 min
cada 60 min
Zarzalejo
Embalse de Valmayor
A-6
Alcobendas
M-50
M-40
Robledo de Chavela
Valdemorillo
Las Rozas
Paracuellos de Ja
M-12
Navalagamella
23
Hortaleza
M-14
M-503
Villanueva de la Cañada
53 min
61,9 km
M-21
Quijorna
M-30
Coslada
Colmenar del Arroyo
Madrid
Brunete
M-40
E-90
2A
Vicálvaro
Navas del Rey
M-501
Carabanchel
Villa de Vallecas
Villaviciosa de Odón
La Fortuna
M-45
Leganés
Aldea del Fresno
Móstoles

Rascafría



What to see:

There is a proverb in Spanish that goes: *“quien algo quiere, algo le cuesta.”* It’s the Spanish way of saying: “no pain, no gain.” I say this because, if you don’t have a car, Rascafría is far from the city and inconvenient. However, if you have wheels, don’t miss the opportunity to drive along the **northern mountains of Madrid and get away from the city**. Once you get there, you won’t regret it.

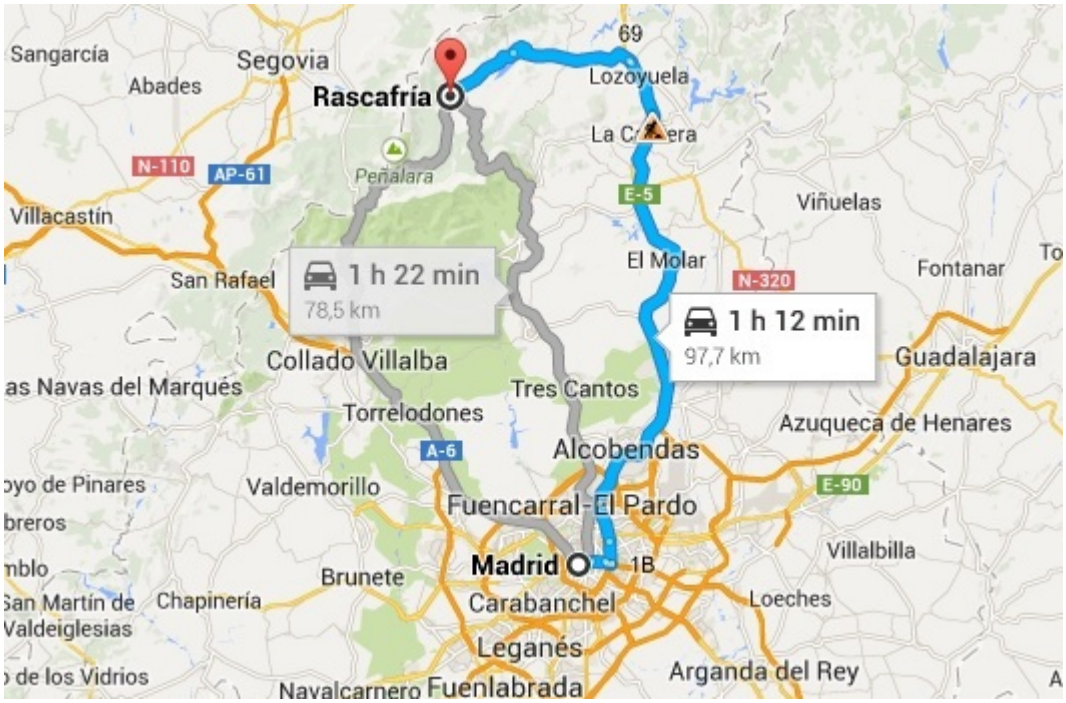
In this northern town, there are plenty of adventure activities to do. Although hiking and biking are the most popular, you can also jump into one of Madrid’s natural ponds. After that, enjoy the rest of the day at one of the pool-side *terrazas* or at a café in the quaint town.

How to get there:

- **By Car (How to get there)**
- **By bus**

Depart from: Plaza Castilla. 194 bus
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Rascafria (Bus))
Return (Rascafria – Madrid (Bus))
Duration: approx. **2 hour**
Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:



Buitrago de Lozoya



Buitrago_del_Lozoya by wikipedia



Buitrago de Lozoya by Lugaresconhistoria

What to see:

After living in **Madrid** for a while, you learn how to survive the summer heat (**pools help a lot**) and **Buitrago de Lozoya** has become an integral part of my method to avoiding the high temperatures. An hour and a half away from the city, you will find this beautiful city surrounded by a **wall** that was built during the **IX and XI centuries**. Here, enjoy the breeze from the **Lozoya River** and the views of the **Somosierra** mountains. Find your spot in the plaza while drinking a beer and looking up at **Buitrago de Lozoya's Castle.**

A little secret of the town will be revealed soon… so keep an eye on the blog!

How to get there:

- **By Car (How to get there by Car)**

Duration: 1 hour (80km)

- **By bus**

Depart from: Plaza Castilla
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Buitrago de lozoya (Bus))
Return (Buitrago de lozoya – Madrid (Bus))
Duration: approx. 1 hour 40 min
Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:

