

The north of the Sierra de la Demanda

“The industrialization of the Sierra ”

Demanda mountain range in Burgos is a biogeographic crossroads. An essential feature of these mountains of the Iberian system is that they constitute the marked watershed between the basins of the Ebro and Duero rivers.

The main protagonist of this high mountains land is a privileged and unique landscape. A nature in pure condition with a few shady and magical forest of beeches, oaks, hollies, birches and pines.

In this vast territory we highlight three differentiated areas: the Mountains of Oca, Juarros county and the villages and mountain peaks of the Demanda mountain range.

In the Northwestern end of Burgos we find a valuable natural enclave: the mountains of Oca. Here you can still find large autochthonous forests of Pyrenean oak and beech which are a paradise for many animals, highlighting the valuable population of a bird: beekeeper, singular prey that feeds on bees.

Beautiful roads lead to the reservoir of Alba, skirting and reaching the Oca River gorges formed by a succession of narrow and deep limestone rifts. This is a valuable biological refuge for a wide variety of species, especially raptors like royal owls and peregrine falcons, otters and beech ancient specimens.

If we continue our journey towards the Demanda mountain range, we find a small region: the region of Juarros, which name derives from the Basque toponymy “Zugarro” designating the elm, name given because of the abundance this tree, now almost extinct due to a terrible disease.

This region marks the limit between the Demanda mountain range and the Arlanzón River Basin. This interesting territory is dotted with villages and is covered largely by Pyrenean oak forest, and it has also been marked by an intense human activity: the mining industry of the coal. Numerous mines have already been abandoned in this territory. At present you can visit some of them which have been enable for their visit, and a “mining path” has been created in the small village : San Adrián de Juarros. Nearby, two rehabilitated mines worth a visit. These mines are Mina Esperanza located in Olmos de Atapuerca and Puras located in Belorado.

Water is also featured in this spot, highlighting the large spring where the rivers Brieva and Cueva have their sources.

Its proximity to the Demanda mountain range and its cattle activity make that the majority of these villages have a rural architecture with clear highland influences: Stone houses, traditional chimneys and sheep sheds.

At the foot of the San Millán Peak, in the Demanda mountain range, lies the village of Santa Cruz del Valle Urbión. Few towns of Burgos are located in a natural environment and with such a beautiful and privileged landscape. It is one of the best preserved areas of all these mountains. It has an impressive traditional architecture, flour mills and communal bread ovens.