



RIDE WORLD WIDE

SPAIN

MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS OF GREDOS 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides explore the four valleys of the Sierra de Gredos, west of Madrid in Castille, central Spain. The mountains that make up the Gredos range are situated between the provinces of Avila, Caceres and Salamanca and are crossed by the Duero and Tajo rivers. The majority of peaks are higher than 2000m and the summit of the best known, the Circo de Gredos Almanzor peak, is about 2590m and always snowy against the horizon. In between these imposing mountains, there are grassy moorland valleys that are scattered with a gorgeous array of wild flowers in spring and summer. These provide wonderful going for horses and the area is a lovely example of rustic, rural Spain. The Gredos rides we offer are organised by Equiberia, under the expert guidance of Maria Elena Dendaluce. Her experience, together with the dedication and enthusiasm of the Equiberia guides and local staff, mean that both horses and guests are looked with the greatest care. Uniquely, the rides include accommodation at some of Spain's wonderful Parador hotels and this, combined with good horses, unspoilt, un-touristed countryside and an approach that focuses on being personable, welcoming and highly professional, makes them one of the best rides on offer in Europe.



DATES

Several different ride itineraries are run from set dates between April and November. There are three 7 night options, running from Sunday to Sunday which include riding on 5 or 6 days. The Valleys of Gredos Ride follows a route that progresses from village to village over the course of the week; the Sierra de Gredos Ride is a little more flexible, combining a 'loop' ride with a few days riding out from a village hotel - an excellent choice for summer months when it can be hot or for those who are less sure how much riding they wish to do each day; the Gredos & Segovia Ride combines 3 days riding in the Gredos with 3 days riding a little further north, close to Segovia and is an ideal way to sample the two different areas (see our separate Segovia information file for more details). For those short of time, 4 night Long Weekend rides (Wednesday to Sunday) are another option allowing 3 full days riding. Please see dates overleaf and contact us to discuss plans, dates and availability.

HORSES

Equiberia has about 24 horses in all, most of which are locally bred Arab and / or Andalucian or Lusitano crosses. They average between 15hh and 16hh and are well-schooled, enjoyable and responsive to ride. They are also good-natured, sure footed and well adapted to the going which makes riding them a real pleasure. Most of the horses have been owned or known to the team since they were young. They have been carefully brought on and schooled, are calm, kind and well-loved and one of the Equiberia skills is matching riders with their ideal horse.

TACK

Good quality English style (general purpose saddles) with seat savers and saddle-bags provided.

RIDING

The Valleys of Gredos and Gredos & Segovia Rides include 6 days riding, whilst the Sierra de Gredos Ride has 5 days and one day for sightseeing. Long Weekend rides include 3 full days riding. Riding days usually include between 5 & 6 hours in the saddle, broken up with rests to stretch legs, for drinks and a long lunch. Much of the going is good although there are occasional rocky and steep paths where you might need to dismount to lead your horse and there will also be some road work each day riding through small villages, where you will be watched by locals who love to see riders on a beautiful horse. Set date rides are run for a maximum of 10 riding guests (if less than 4 there will be an additional transfer charge - see below). Rides are lead by an English speaking guide, often accompanied by a back-up rider (according to group size), with at least one helper / groom also on hand at lunch breaks and to look after the horses in the evenings. Selma who is originally from Denmark guides many rides, and back up and logistics are ably managed by Evelyn, originally from Venezuela but resident in Spain. Luggage is moved by back up vehicle and a vehicle meets riders at drinks stops and lunch most days.

WEIGHT LIMIT

90kg (14 stone) in riding clothes. If you are close to this, please let us know in advance so we can check horses.



PACE

The riding pace is moderate overall although it varies from time to time with the terrain. The Gredos area itself is used for endurance riding competitions and there are some lovely open grassy valleys (rather like moorland) where you can canter off-track, as well as wide woodland paths that provide good going. When riding higher and on winding paths, there are places where the pace will be slow but as you descend, for example to the area around the Corneja valley, the going is generally flatter and fairly open and there are wide sand and dirt tracks, the old cattle drover roads, that provide excellent chances to move on. Overall the rides are at a moderate, well-varied pace and the horses are active and energetic.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

The rides are all aimed at reasonably experienced riders and to participate you are expected to be a reasonably competent rider, who is comfortable and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at all paces. Although you don't need to be an expert rider, you should be used to riding over varied terrain at a varied pace with a group of horses. Riding hours are well managed with regular breaks but you should also be reasonably riding fit as the hours can be fairly long. Of the 7 night itineraries, the Sierra de Gredos Ride has the most flexibility (and one day less riding) so is the best choice for anyone not sure of their riding fitness.

TERRAIN

The rides for the most part explore the four valleys of the Tormes, Corneja, Alberche and Tietar Rivers. Although this is a region of high mountains, there are forested slopes of oak, pine and chestnut and vast open moorland pastures nestled in the valleys. This rough grassland, which is scattered with craggy rocks, acres of broom **cont.**

TERRAIN cont.

and grazed by wild goats, provides wonderful going for horses. In spring and summer the grasslands are covered in an array of wild flowers and you will ride through a sea of yellow broom catching the scent of wild thyme and lavender on the air as your horse brushes past. On some days, routes climb winding, rocky paths (where you may dismount to lead); on others riding is along forested river valleys and past small isolated villages with age-old traditions, architecture and a unique character.

ACCOMMODATION

Nights are spent in comfortable, carefully chosen hotels. The first two and last night of the Valleys of Gredos Rides; the first two nights of Sierra de Gredos Rides; ; the first three nights of the Gredos & Segovia Ride and all 4 nights of the Long Weekend Rides are spent at the Parador of Gredos, a hotel belonging to Spain's national chain of Parador hotels chosen for their special building or setting. The impressive Parador of Gredos was built in 1926 as a hunting lodge for Alfonso XIII and was the first establishment in Spain to be converted to a Parador. Rooms are very comfortable and the hotel has several dining areas and terraces where you can sit with a drink and enjoy the mountain views. The last night of the Sierra de Gredos Ride is at another good quality Parador, in the medieval walled city of Avila. Nights in between, and the remaining nights on the Valleys of Gredos Rides, are in small, comfortable country and village hotels or guesthouses. These range in style and character, with the standard varying a little over the week (choice is limited), but are equivalent to a good 2* to good 3* standard and chosen for their character, food and / or position. On the Gredos & Segovia Ride after transferring to Segovia, you spend a night at the lovely Parador at La Granja de San Ildefonso, about half an hour's drive from the city of Segovia, then two nights in different hotels, one in the centre of a picturesque small town and the other in a country setting, before a final night at a charming 4* hotel built in the cloisters of a 15th C Monastery a 5 minute walk from the Roman Aqueduct. Rooms at all hotels are twin or double bedded, with en-suite bathroom (usually shower and loo, although some also have a bath). Single rooms are possible at a supplement (although one or two hotels are small with limited rooms and, if the ride is full, you may be asked to share with another guest on one night).



MEALS

Breakfast, lunch and dinner every day on the rides is included (dinner first day to breakfast the last day) except lunch in Avila on Day 7 of the Sierra de Gredos Rides. Breakfast is at your hotel and is generally simple - bread, toast or croissant, perhaps yoghurt, fruit and tea or coffee. On most days you stop for an 'aperitif' mid-morning, with a selection of drinks as well as light tapas. Lunch will normally be a substantial picnic, eaten at a long table set up in the countryside. It usually includes a selection of freshly prepared salads, bread, and a main course such as Spanish omelette, barbecued steak, fish or a delicious Paella. Dinner is three courses, usually eaten at your hotel, sometimes with a choice from the a la carte menu and sometimes a set menu, although often a choice of meat or fish. Great care is taken with menu choices and the team works closely with local restaurants to include local specialities. Meal times are generally a little later than in the UK with breakfast usually 08.30 to 09.00am, aperitif at 12.30 to 1.00pm, lunch at 2.00 to 2.30pm and dinner at about 9 to 9.30pm. Tea and coffee are included with breakfast and a selection of soft drinks, beer, good local wines and tea and coffee are included with lunch and dinner. Vegetarians can be catered for with prior notice - please tell us of any special diet when you book.



WEATHER

The area's climate in summer is usually dry, but as you are close to the mountains the weather can be unstable with rain always a possibility! Temperatures are strongly influenced by the altitude which is between 1600 and 1700m. In spring daytime temperatures are usually between 15 and 20 degrees C, in summer maximum is around 28-30 degrees C and in autumn, temperatures average 12 to 18 degrees C. Days are normally sunny with clear blue skies - the sun can be very intense because of the altitude but as you are high it is often very pleasant even in high summer with average daytime temperature in July and August around 25C. Evenings are cool and in March, April, early May and October a warm sweater and warm (waterproof) coat are necessary.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

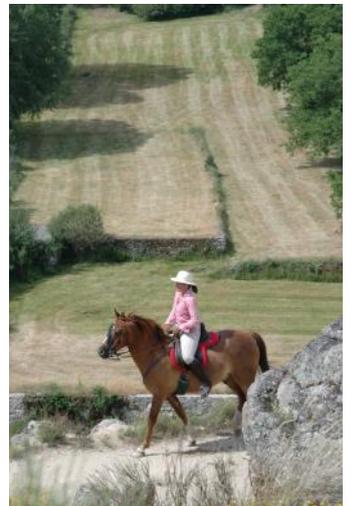
ITINERARIES

The daily routine on all rides is generally breakfast at about 08.30, then set off at about 10am riding for a couple of hours before stopping for a rest and aperitif at about 12 noon to keep you going until lunch. You then ride on for about 2 hours before lunch. After lunch and a siesta until about 4pm, you ride until early evening, stopping at about 6 or 7 pm or sometimes a little later. Dinner is usually at about 9pm Below are day-by-day detailed itineraries for The Valleys of Gredos and the Sierra de Gredos Ride. Please ask us for other itineraries and always note that itineraries are only examples of what is planned; daily arrangements and routes may be varied if the weather or other local conditions require.

Example itinerary - Valleys of Gredos Ride

Day 1 Collected from Madrid airport, usually 3pm, and driven about 2 hours to Navarredonda de Gredos, a small village in the Gredos with a splendid view of the Almanzor peak. Time allowing, a stop en route from Madrid at the historic walled town of Avila for sightseeing before driving on to the first night's hotel, the imposing Parador of Gredos just outside the village of Navarredonda de Gredos. Welcome dinner and night at the Parador. (D)

Day 2 Breakfast, then a short drive to the stables to meet the horses. This is an easy introductory day so you can get used to your horse at all paces. After mounting up, set off following cattle tracks through pine woods and across open pasture towards the mountains with magnificent views of the Sierra de Gredos. A mid-morning aperitif and then stop for a delicious lunch, perhaps at an old sawmill by the river, followed by a short siesta before riding back to the stables in Navarredonda by a different route. Dinner and second night Parador. (B,L,D)



Day 3 Breakfast and return to the stables. Set off through the woods and beautiful meadows along the Tormes River Valley with chances to trot and canter. Cross a stone bridge over the river to a magical picnic spot at the 'Poza de las Paredes', the gorge of Barbellido. Picnic in a shady cherry orchard and in summer months sunbathe or swim from the rocks by the river (even in spring those who are brave enough can have a refreshing dip in the pools in the river). After lunch, mount up for a lovely ride along cattle trails to the town of Navalperal de Tormes and to the night's lodging in a guesthouse set by itself in the countryside, a short walk from the river. Accommodation is simple but the guesthouse is in a lovely situation for an evening sun-downer and you might take a gentle stroll down to the river as the horses graze nearby, before dinner and the night. Night Hostal Rural Cruz del Gallo. (B,L,D)

Day 4 Breakfast then set off on a long half-day ride continuing along cattle paths in the Tormes river valley passing the village of Aliseda de Tormes. There is a marked change in the vegetation as you ride deeper **cont.**

VALLEYS OF GREDOS ITINERARY cont

Day 4 cont. into the mountains until you eventually arrive on the outskirts of the small town of Barco de Avila where the night is spent at a comfortable hotel, converted from a lovely country house. The afternoon free to explore Barco de Avila, a 15th century walled town with a beautiful medieval bridge over the river, about 15 mins walk from the hotel. Or just rest and relax by the hotels heated indoor swimming pool. In the evening a special wine tasting and dinner pairing is often organised in conjunction with one of the top 10 wine shops in Spain. Dinner and overnight Hotel Puerta de Gredos or similar. (B,L,D)

Day 5 After breakfast, mount up and ride on starting with a little road work and then riding along cattle tracks, through holm oak woods and across grassy pasture heading away from El Barco. The going today is quite flat and there will be a chance to canter as you follow winding tracks through grassland dotted with huge granite boulders and rocky outcrops. Continue to the village of Puente del Congosto, with its XV century bridge and castle. A picnic lunch in the shade near a lovely swimming spot in the river. In the afternoon a short, fun ride to a small country hotel just outside the village of Hoyorrendondo. The horses are turned out to graze in the fields around the hotel and there will be time for a drink in the garden, before dinner. Overnight rural hotel. (B,L,D)

Day 6 After breakfast at the hotel, set off riding. This is a day of contrasting landscapes starting in the open flat country of the Corneja river valley until a mid-morning aperitif stop. Then follow the Corneja river to its source, stopping for a picnic lunch near one of the many old water mills, which used to produce most of the flour for this part of Castile. In the afternoon, a bit of riding on a tar road, before cutting into the hills to follow the path of an ancient Roman road to the Puerto de Chia (5,686 feet) for a breathtaking panoramic view of the Corneja Valley on one side, and the Alberche river on the other. Descend to San Martin de la Vega where the horses spend the night. A short transfer to a village hotel in Barajas de Gredos for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Breakfast and a short drive to meet the horses. Set off riding back towards the Sierra de Gredos with some great views of the distant peaks. Head down towards the Tormes valley, to where the ride started. Stop for at a beautiful spot with panoramic views of the mountains for special lunch. A short afternoon ride takes you back to the stables in Navarredonda de Gredos. Farewell to the horses before being driven the few minutes from the stables to the Parador in Navarredonda where the final night is spent. After settling into your rooms, you might meet up for a drink on the terrace, with its glorious views over the pine forest towards the mountains, and then a farewell dinner before your last night at the Parador. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Breakfast in the hotel, before your transfer to Madrid (arriving about noon) for onwards flights. (B)



Example itinerary - Sierra de Gredos

A flexible ride and excellent choice for the hotter summer months of July & August, when the alpine meadows and fresh river pools of the Gredos mountains provide a perfect escape. Days filled with fun riding, lunches by river pools with glorious mountain views (and often a natural 'Jacuzzi') and the added excitement of moonlit rides and village fiestas, an extra bonus.

Day 1 Collected from Madrid airport, usually at 3pm and driven about 2 hours to Navarredonda de Gredos, a small village with splendid views of Almanzor peak. Welcome dinner and night at the Parador de Gredos. (D)

Day 2 Breakfast, then a short drive to the stables to meet the horses. This is an easy introductory day so you can get used to your horse at all paces. After mounting up set off following cattle tracks through pine woods and across open fields towards the source of the Tormes river, with magnificent views of the Sierra de Gredos. A mid morning aperitif, another hour or so riding and then stop for a delicious picnic lunch at a small restaurant by the river or at tables set up in the countryside. After a siesta, ride back to Navarredonda by a different route. There is a nice spa in the village where massages can be arranged, or an evening bird walk is another option. Dinner and second night at Parador de Gredos. (B,L,D)

SIERRA DE GREDOS ITINERARY cont.

Day 3 Breakfast and return to the stables. Set off through the woods and beautiful meadows along the Tormes River Valley with chances to trot and canter. Cross a stone bridge to a magical picnic spot at the 'Pozo de las Paredes', the gorge of Barbellido. Picnic in a shady cherry orchard and in summer months, sunbathe or swim from flat rocks by the river (even in spring the brave can have a refreshing dip in the river pools!). After lunch, mount up for a lovely ride along cattle trails to the town of Navalperal de Tormes and to the night's lodging at a guesthouse set by itself in the countryside, a short walk from the river. Accommodation is simple but the guesthouse is in a lovely situation for an evening sun-downer and you might take a gentle stroll down to the river before dinner, as the horses graze nearby. Dinner and night Hostal Rural Cruz del Gallo (B,L,D)



Day 4 From Navalperal, take the cattle path to Navacepeda de Tormes once again and on to the Tormes River itself. Lunch by a fisherman's hut at Hoyos del Collado, another ideal spot for bathing. The afternoon to relax in the shade by the river before heading through the scented pinewoods back to the stables in Navarredonda. Short drive to the neighbouring small village of Barajas de Gredos and dinner and overnight at a village hotel, Hotel Rural la Dehesilla (B,L,D)

Day 5 In the morning a short drive back to the stables and then mount up to ride to the heights of Cañada del Horno, through open fields and area of dense broom (there are more than 10 different species of broom in the Gredos and the hills in spring and summer are spectacular colours of yellow and cream) with panoramic views of the Alberche river valley. Lunch at a bar in the village or at tables set up in a shady spot in the countryside. Ride on in the late afternoon with great views of the Sierra de Gredos, before descending again towards Barajas de Gredos and the stables in Navarredonda. Transfer a short way back to the Hotel Rural la Dehesilla for dinner and night. (B,L,D).

Day 6 Breakfast, meet the horses and a final riding day takes you on a route to the heights of the Sierra de Gredos with magnificent views. Climb to the Covacha gorge and then down towards the gorge of Barbellido. Lunch by the river, a wonderful spot for a swim. In the afternoon climb to the heights of Siete Fuentes and descend to the pinewoods of Hoyos del Espino before riding back to the stables in Navarredonda de Gredos. Short transfer to Boutique Hotel Milano Real for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 7 After breakfast in the hotel you will be collected and driven about an hour to the lovely walled city of Avila, a World Heritage City and one of 660 cultural sites in the world that are considered of outstanding universal value. Avila is a small city, easy to navigate on foot and a lovely place to spend the day. A private tour guide will be arranged to show you the main sites and the rest of the day is yours to enjoy as you wish - soaking up the atmosphere and architecture, sampling some of the restaurants and bars or enjoying the local shopping - see below for further information on Avila. A room will be booked for you at the Parador of Avila, a very comfortable hotel built into the city walls. Dinner and night at the Parador de Avila. (B,D)

Day 8 Breakfast and onward transfer to Madrid airport (arriving about noon) for your flight home. (B)



Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in Euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Valleys of Gredos Ride

21st to 28th April	8th to 15th September	13th to 20th October
5th to 12th May	29th September to 6th October	

Euros 2850 per person (single supplement 200 Euros)

Sierra de Gredos Rides

28th April to 5th May	9th to 16th June	1st to 8th September
12th to 19th May	14th to 21st July	6th to 13th October
26th May to 2nd June	28th July to 4th August	20th to 27th October

Euros 2450 per person (single supplement 200 Euros)

Gredos & Segovia Ride

19th to 26th May	23rd to 30th June
16th to 23rd June	15th to 22nd September

Euros 3100 per person (single supplement 250 Euros)

Long Weekends

10th to 14th April	7th to 11th August	6th to 10th November
26th to 30th June	18th to 22nd September	13th to 17th November
10th to 14th July	30th October to 3rd November	

Euros 1350 per person (single supplement 120 Euros)

NB - Single supplements are payable on arrival in Spain in cash

Rates **INCLUDE** all riding, 7 nights (4 for long weekends) twin hotel accommodation (single room if paying supplement), meals from dinner Day 1 to breakfast Day 8 (Day 5 for long weekends), except lunch on Day 7 of the Sierra de Gredos Ride, mid-morning aperitif most days, wine, beer and a selection of soft drinks with meals and also transfers from / to Madrid airport with the group at set times on the first and last day. **cont. over**



DATES & RATES 2024 cont.

Rates **EXCLUDE** international flights / travel to Madrid and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), lunch on Day 7 of Sierra de Gredos Ride, any extra drinks at bar stops, before meals etc, any visa fees, extras such as telephone calls, laundry and drinks at hotels etc., charges for transfers outside the set times and any tips you may wish to leave.

Rates are based on a **minimum of 4 ride participants**. Rides will still run for less than 4 riders BUT there will be a supplement for transfers / logistics.

Valley of Gredos & Sierra de Gredos - Less than 4 rider supplement is Euros 300 per person

Gredos & Segovia - Less than 4 rider supplement is Euros 350 per person

Long Weekends - Less than 4 rider supplement is Euros 150 per person

Single supplements - Rates assume twin shared rooms in hotels and the single supplement is payable if you are travelling alone *OR* wish to book a single room (NB one or two hotels have a limited number of rooms and if the ride is full you *may* be asked to share with another guest for one night even if paying a single supplement - you would of course be refunded this part of the supplement). If you are travelling alone and are prepared to share with another (same sex) guest on the ride to save paying the supplement, we can sometimes arrange this - let us know and we will see if we can find a sharer - if there is no-one, the supplement will be charged.

Private groups - Rides can be booked / run exclusively for private groups. For the above rates to apply, 10 riders are usually required, but rides can be run for smaller groups at a supplement. Please contact us to discuss.



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS & TRAVEL

Madrid is the nearest International airport and the ride meeting point is Madrid airport. There are several flights a day to Madrid from London - British Airways have regular flights from Gatwick and Heathrow and Iberia fly several times a day from Heathrow. Easyjet also usually have a daily flight from Luton and Gatwick and there may be other 'budget airline' options from London or regional airports, depending on the season. You need to aim to arrive in Madrid by about **14.15** at the latest on the first Sunday (or Wednesday for Long Weekends) and should book a return flight which leaves **after 13.30** on the final Sunday to allow time for transfers. The transfer takes about 2 ½ hours each way. Fares to Madrid vary but expect to pay from around £150 to £250 per person economy return. If you would like help booking flights or a fare quote please contact us - we can book British Airways scheduled flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION cont.

Transfers - Please note when organising flights that there is ONE **set** transfer for the group on the first / last day of the rides. Pick up is normally 3pm on the first day and the drop off is about 12 noon on the last day. If you cannot get to Madrid in time for the pick up or if you need to arrive in Madrid earlier than the drop off time on the last day, it might be possible for the group to wait a short time / leave a little earlier but you will **probably** have to pay extra for a private transfer / taxi (we can help arrange this - around 150 Euros one way).



GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is only a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

Visas If you hold a full British passport you do not need a visa for visits to Spain whatever the length of stay, although for visits of over 90 days residence permits are required. Please check up to date requirements with the Spanish consulate.

Health No vaccinations are needed by UK residents to enter Spain (according to the Spanish and World Health Organisations). If you have a particular condition requiring special medical treatment, in case of emergencies you should carry a letter from your own doctor translated into Spanish describing your condition and the medicine / treatment required.

NON RIDERS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA

Non-riders can join any riding group by hiring or bringing their own car. They can meet up with riders in the evenings for dinner and spend nights at the same hotels. It is usually also possible to arrange to meet in the middle of the day for aperitifs and / or lunch if you are confident driving to different locations. Non-rider participation is a tailor-made option so if you are interested please contact us for rates. The area of the Gredos is a Natural Park and there is some wonderful walking and hiking. The Tormes River also has good trout fishing from April to August - if you are interested please contact us as a permit is required. There is also some excellent bird watching (best in May). The region is in the heart of Castille, home to some of Spain's most historical towns and cities. Avila, Segovia, Salamanca and Toledo have all been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

NON-RIDERS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA cont.

Avila is a medieval town, surrounded by walls constructed in the 11th and 12th century (2500m in length, 88 towers, 9 gates). These walls were built to protect the Spanish territories from the Moor and are still pretty much intact. Known as the “City of Saints and Stones”, it is the birthplace of St Theresa and the burial place of the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada. Avila has kept its medieval austerity and the purity of form can still be seen in its Gothic cathedral and the fortifications which are the most complete in Spain. There are charming squares and beautiful quiet pedestrian streets which make it a wonderful historic town to explore on foot. A night here is included in the Sierra de Gredos Rides and it is an excellent place to spend a night before the Valley of Gredos Ride. The Parador is very comfortable and in the centre of the city; there are a number of other smaller, stylish hotels that are also very good. If you stay the Saturday before a ride in Avila it is usually possible to meet the transfer vehicle in Avila (an easy train ride from Madrid) on the first Sunday of the ride.

Websites worth visiting are: <http://whc.unesco.org> & www.spain.info/tourspain & www.avilaturismo.com
www.paradores-spain.com

Segovia has many magnificent monuments including a Roman Aqueduct built in the 1st & 2nd C AD and a castle - Alcazar - dating back to the 12th Century where Isabella la Catolica was proclaimed Queen of Castile.

Salamanca was conquered by Hannibal in the 3rd C AD. The university of Salamanca, founded in the 12th C, is the oldest in Spain and one of the oldest in Europe. There are many fascinating monuments to explore.

Toledo the medieval capital of Spain, is one of the most impressive historical - artistic complexes anywhere in the world. The town, perched on a hill and skirted by a sharp bend in the river Tagus has remained largely unaltered since the end of the Middle Ages. Romans, Visigoths and Moors lived there in successive centuries, each leaving a mark in the development of the city. Alfonso VI, king of Castile, conquered the city in 1085 and thenceforth three ethnically distinct communities grew up - Christians, Jews and Moslems all leaving a profound mark on its architecture and culture. Of all cities in the area, Toledo is impregnated with a fascinating history and culture. A few days exploring on foot, with a night or two in the Parador, a lovely 4 * hotel, is a wonderful addition to any ride.

(DRAFT 18/02/24)

