



What is a Biosphere Reserve?

Biosphere Reserves are internationally designated protected areas within the framework of the Man and Biosphere UNESCO Program (MaB). This program is focused on peoples relationship with nature, developing a better balance between the conservation of biological and cultural diversity alongside social and economic development

Biosphere reserves are set up in areas that are ecologically representative or of unique value. They are in terrestrial, costal as well as marine environments, where it is essential to integrate human population and its activity together with nature preservation..

Which basic functions should it achieve?

- * 1. Conservation of the biodiversity and its ecosystems.
- * 2. Development of local populations.
- * 3. Logistical support for research, education and communication.

Headquarters:

- * Centro de Visitantes del Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido.
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Ordesa-Monte Perdido National Park



It was created in 1918 and extended to a wider area in 1982, it is also recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The National Park is the most important limestone mountain range in Western Europe.

The Monte Perdido massif (3348m) is surrounded by the Añisclo, Escuaín, Ordesa and Pineta Valleys, which are the four main accesses to the Park. Its wide range of different environments and landscapes makes it an outstanding natural heritage that has to be protected and conserved for future generations.

It's a nature lovers and hikers paradise, with many hiking routes making it possible to discover its beauty.

Hiking



An endless network of paths and viewpoints, such as the impressive Hoz de Jaca hanging viewpoint, allows you to know the best places of the Biosphere Reserve. Hiking paths link villages and give you the opportunity to discover hidden corners and beautiful scenery. There are routes for all ages and for different seasons.

Flora and fauna



The Aragonese Pyrenees is a place with huge more biological interest. There is a huge biodiversity of species and environments, it's a photographer's paradise.



Ornithology



The Biosphere Reserve hosts numerous birds species, and it is an exceptional area for people who are keen to observe lammergeiers, griffon vultures, wallcreepers, capercallie and ptarmigan.

MTB & road biking



There are a huge set of routes for mountain biking in all its subtypes and difficulty levels. The Zona Zero Sobrarbe and BTT Pirineos Alto Gállego trail centres offer the main routes of the Reserve with marked mountain biking trails. If you prefer road biking the reserve is the ideal starting point for many routes.

Activities



Get your adrenaline flowing with some of the outdoor sports and activities that the area offers: canyoning, rafting on Ara river (the only undammed river in the Pyrenees), vias ferratas, rock climbing, horse riding excursions and paragliding are just some of the sports that you can practice in the reserve.



Biescas Aventura



Located in **Arratiecho park**, it is the biggest high ropes course in the Pyrenees, with 8 circuits and more than 80 obstacles with different difficulty levels so that everyone can enjoy the activities all year round, including during wintertime.

Hunting and fishing



If you like fishing in extraordinary landscapes, you will be able to fish in rivers, reservoirs and mountain lakes of the area, and hunt in **the hunting reserves of Viñamala or Los Cirkos**, or other existing reserves. Always abide by the rules set by the Aragonese government and the local town hall.



History, Culture, Traditions, Heritage and Identity

Inhabited from the prehistory and an intersection of pathways, the reserves situation in a mountain and border area fostered an enormous amount of historical, cultural and ethnographical treasures in the different parts of the Reserve.

The numerous villages that have existed in these areas and the uses of natural resources fostered the development of cultural and traditional values and architecture, legends, and customs that are linked to nature and mountains.

Architectural heritage



In all the villages of the Reserve we find traditional mountain architecture, with houses with thick stones walls and roofs, forts and strong houses, streets, small palaces, towers and chimneys.

Churches & chapels



There are religious buildings throughout the Reserve. Some of the most interesting are the Romanesque churches of the Serrablo, some of the best preserved of their type in Europe and with unique architectural features. Other buildings of note are **San Pelay Monastery, Asin de Broto, Linás de Broto church, Tella chapel, San Úrbez and Santa Elena**.

Prehistoric remains



There are remainders from Paleolithic populations of the past within the Reserve, like the cave paintings in Forcón cave, the tumulus of Sabocos and the well known dolmens of Santa Elena y Tella.

Geopark of Sobrarbe



Has exceptional geological heritage. It's a living history of the dynamism of the planet and how the landscape was constructed. The Geopark institution, teaches about how each rock is reveals part of the Earths history.



Abandon villages



There are many abandon villages in the Reserve, a symbol of the abandonment of rural areas. Many of the villages are well conserved and important parts of the villages' history remain.

Carnivals & traditional festivals



Ancient traditions and costumes full of symbolism are mixed in the rituals and festivals of the area. The highlights are the festivals of Bielsa and Torla-Ordesa. The traditional descent of Navatas, remembers the past importance of loggers and the timber industry to the area. Also important are the traditional dances of the area – particularly of Yésero and Lanuza. Witches are another important part of the legends and traditions of the area and the witches, mages, spells and inquisitions are remembered in various festivals including the Witch Fair in Sallent de Gállego and the museum of witchery in Tella.

Village fairs & processions



There are a number of fairs of animal stock in the Reserve – the largest of which are the fairs in Biescas, Broto and Sallent de Gállego. Also important are the religious processions to the chapels of San Úrbez and Santa Elena.



Winter sports



Aramón Formigal and Aramón Panticosa offer access to two of the most spectacular skiing areas for alpine skiing in the Pyrenees: 176 km of pistes where you can enjoy and practice alpine skiing, snowboarding, telemarking, snow biking. There are also cross country skiing stations in **Pineta, Fanlo** and **Panticosa** where you will enjoy this sport in an outstanding natural environment. Snowshoeing and ski touring are other excellent options for winter sports in the area.

Thermal waters and spas



Health, leisure and relaxation are what you can find at the Baños de Panticosa health resort, a hot springs dating back to Roman times. There are also lovely spa's at Aguas Limpias in Sallent de Gállego and La Paúl in Panticosa.

La Cuniacha animal park



Based in woods in the heart of the Pyrenees and converted by its flora and fauna into a living space and outstanding environment for mammal species that live or once lived in the Pyrenees. Walk round large natural enclosures that house lynx, deer, wolves, bears and bison all living in semi freedom.



Festivales and cultural activities



Amongst the festivals the world musical festival of **Pirineos Sur** is the highlight and takes place on a floating stage on the Lanuza reservoir at Sallent de Gállego. Many cultural activities are practised in the Reserve amongst them the Aragonese writers at Yésero.

Gastronomy



Encounter a rich variety of typical dishes using superb local products such as beef from the Valle de Broto. You can also find modern dishes and cuisine.

Mycology



You can find a large number of mushroom varieties in the Reserve. Various villages hold mushroom tours led by a local expert to help you identify the various species. It is important to be informed about the regulation in each place.



The Ordesa-Viñamala Biosphere Reserve is one of the best representations of a Pyrenean ecosystem – a system bound by nature and formed by erosion and glaciation. Home to unique species of flora and fauna the reserve is important in both a regional and international context. The conservation of these threatened species is fundamental at maintaining bio-diversity.

The reserve is situated in the north of the Huesca province and into France. Created in 1977 it was the second reserve in Spain and had an initial size of 51,396 ha. In May 2013 it was increased to 117,364 hectares extending to the villages of Biescas, Yésero, Hoz de Jaca, Panticosa and Sallent de Gállego, in the Comarca of Alto Gállego, and Torla-Ordesa, Broto, Fanlo, Tella-Sin, Puértolas and Bielsa in the Comarca of Sobrarbe.

The bio-sphere reserve contains 6000 inhabitants. In addition the beauty of the area has attracted a great number of second homes. You can find lodgings and restaurants of all types in the area and lots of tourist companies. More than one million visitors a year come to the Biosphere Reserve.

Amongst the most special landscapes of the Reserve is the high mountain area deeply carved glacial erosion. Here you find glaciers, mixed forests, black pine, silver fir and edelweiss and lady slippers orchids amongst the alpine meadows. Amongst the valued fauna species are the Lammergeier (or bearded vulture), chamois, Pyrenean desman, Ptarmigan, Cappercallie and black woodpecker.

What type of zones have Biosphere reserves?

- 1 One or more villages whose principal function is conservation.
- 2 One or more zones that reduce the impact of human impact on the area.
- 3 A zone in transition that promotes sustainable economic activities in its socio-economic planning.

Although different each zone contributes to the overall function on the Reserve.

Interpretation centres and tourism offices.

Museums & centres of interpretation

Throughout the Reserve there are several museums and interpretation centres to help you learn more about the area - the visitors centre of the Ordesa National Park, the museum and the bear cave of Cavernas, and museums of electricity, the witches, lakes of the Pyrenees, of fish, the 'pocket of Bielsa', ethnography and traditions.

Useful Phone Numbers

National Park Visitor's Centre and Information Centre (Torla-Ordesa).	974486472
National Park Tourist Information Centre (Escalona)	974505131
National Park Tourist Information Centre (Bielsa)	974501043
Torla-Ordesa Tourist Information Centre.	974486378
Broto Tourist Information Centre	974486413
Bielsa Tourist Information Centre	974501127
Biescas Tourist Information Centre	974485222
Sallent de Gállego Tourist Information Centre	974488012
Panticosa Tourist Information Centre	974487314



Ordesa - Viñamala

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