



7 MAGICAL SECRETS OF SPAIN ONLY LOCALS KNOW

1. Sleep like royalty in a parador castle

Stay in places like *Parador de La Granja*, an 18th-century summer palace of Spanish royalty, or a castle used by Emperor Charles V. These aren't hotels — they're living museums with goosebump-inducing history in every stone.

2. The Basque festival with cannons and drums echoing through the mountains

Alarde de Hondarribia isn't your average festivity. Locals dress in 17th-century uniforms, fire rifles into the air, and parade through cobbled streets to the sound of drums. It's Basque pride in full regalia — raw, emotional, unforgettable.

3. The Frank Gehry winery nobody tells you about

You've seen the Weisman Museum in Minneapolis — now imagine it as a winery in La Rioja. *Marqués de Riscal*, priced best winery in the world in 2024, is a wine cathedral where art meets flavor. Hemingway and Dalí drank here. You can too.

4. How to find Spain's best restaurants with the Michelin Guide — without paying Michelin prices

Go to [guide.michelin.com](https://www.guide.michelin.com) and look not for the starred restaurants, but for those marked as "**Recommended**" or "**Bib Gourmand**." These offer amazing food under €35–40. Filter by location and sort by price — you'll find local gems that over-deliver, especially in places like Logroño or San Sebastián

5. The Spanish guide locals trust more than Michelin: Repsol

The **Guía Repsol** is Spain's Michelin — but more local, less flashy, and *hyper-accurate*. Go to [guiarepsol.com](https://www.guiarepsol.com) and search for **Soles** (Suns). One Sol = great, Two = excellent, Three = worth traveling for. Even one Sol usually beats most tourist picks. You'll eat like a Spaniard, not a tourist.

6. The Spanish Town Built on Wine — Literally

Beneath the quiet streets of **Aranda de Duero** lies a **labyrinth of over 7 kilometers of hand-carved wine cellars**, some dating back to the Middle Ages. These underground tunnels were built to age and protect wine — and many are still in use today. You can walk through them, taste wine by candlelight, and feel the cool stone walls that have stored wine for centuries.

Even more fascinating? Aranda de Duero was **the first city in Spain to have a drawn urban map**, way back in the 1500s — and it was created to plan these very cellars. It's a city quite literally built around, and for, wine.

7. What to order to impress the locals (and not look like a tourist)



Want to gain instant respect in a northern Spanish restaurant? Order:

- **"Kokotxas al pil-pil"** (fish cheeks in garlic oil)
- **"Pulpo a la gallega"** (Galician-style octopus)
- **"Cochinillo"** (roast suckling pig in Segovia — Real Madrid's favorite)

And always say *"Para compartir"* — it means "we'll share." That's the Spanish way.

These and more unique places are included in our premium Spain Tours which are all-inclusive (for real, no need to bring a wallet). ;)