



Web site



Visit our castle on your own

Town parks and recreational spaces

- A1. Carretera de Rivas
- A2. El Calvario
- A3. Parque del Remedio
- A4. Las Vistillas
- A5. Plaza Doctor Botello
- A6. Plaza Alberto Güenechea
- A7. Entrepuentes

Places of interest

- 1. Main square / Town Hall
- 2. Archaeological remains
- 3. Clock Tower
- 4. Main Tower / Panoramic viewpoint
- 5. Parish of Saint Mary Major
- 6. Hermitage of Saint John
- 7. Gate of Primicia / Slope of Flagellants
- 8. Lower Wall / Panoramic Gangway
- 9. West Gate / River Ebro Viewpoint
- 10. Wall paintings
- 11. House of the Villa / Social Centre
- 12. Hermitage of Saint Roch

Castle

- 13. Basilica of Our Lady of the Remedies
- 14. Calvary
- 15. Medieval bridge
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San Vicente de la Sonsierra

Gobierno de La Rioja
Cultura y Turismo



Town tour

You only have to catch a first glimpse of San Vicente de la Sonsierra as you approach the town to realise its historical importance in the Middle Ages **as a fortress on the border between Navarre and Castile.**



Nowadays, as you come into the town it looks relatively modern to judge from the buildings. Then as you get nearer the centre you can see how grand and impressive the buildings are, imposing, seigneurial mansions, some bearing the heraldic arms of ancient lineage, others more modest, built of adobe and stone masonry.

You will find some fine examples in the almost perfectly square **Plaza Mayor**, with the imposing Aguiriano family mansion, the Town Hall in front of you and along the left-hand side, ashlar stone town houses.



You need to wander through the narrow streets which criss-cross the whole town, imagining yourself as an inhabitant from another epoque, enjoying its buildings, quaint corners or fountains and reliving the day-to-day life of olden times.

Climbing the increasingly steep and narrow streets towards the hilltop, they converge into one taking you up to the **fortress**. This is where you will find the Shrine of San Juan de la Cerca (headquarters of the Brotherhood of the Vera Cruz de los Disciplinantes or flagellants), the Parish Church of Santa María la Mayor (in the old castle courtyard). Climbing a little higher, you reach the final walled fortification with the Clock Tower and Keep, the fort's main stronghold. The view from the castle walls is spectacular.



River valley, vines and mountain

If you take a walk along the GR-52 (Sendero del Ebro hiking route), through the groves and thickets of the Ebro valley, depending on the season, you can enjoy the charm of pure, living nature. As well as the riverbank vegetation you can enjoy watching wildfowl of all kinds, ducks, storks, cormorants, moorhens, egrets, herons, swans and an endless variety of smaller birds.



If you prefer to venture into the arable lands you can follow various paths which will reveal a sea of vineyards in amongst which you can find remains of the ancient settlements which made up the Alfoz de San Vicente de la Sonsierra in the Middle Ages.



In these settlements you will find hermit's caves, stone tombs, the odd dolmen and, in general, remains of Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation of the land.



If there is one typical construction worthy of mention in the midst of this landscape of vines, it is the **'chozo'** or vineyard shelter. These are circular buildings with a false dome roof and a walled compound on one side like an open-air stable. At one time they were used as shelter from the elements or even as a dwelling in those zones furthest away from the village when the work in the vineyard made it necessary to spend more time out in the field.



While the landscape is spectacular in all seasons, it is really in autumn that it reaches its maximum splendour.



Harvesting takes place at the beginning of autumn and it is from then onwards that the vines' vegetative cycle begins to cease. The landscape begins to change colour. The plants' final sacrifice after giving up its fruit is to give us an endless palette of colours and hues ranging from red to garnet, yellow, ochre, dun-brown... converting the countryside into a multi-coloured carpet. A real pleasure for anyone contemplating this gift of nature.



If you decide to walk up the mountain, you will be rewarded with an amazing view. You can see the meandering Ebro opening up a path between lands of vines, villages and castles. In the background you will be able to see the majestic outline of the mountains of the Sierra de la Demanda.

As you are walking uphill, look around and notice that with the greater altitude the vegetation changes, from vines to cereal crops, to shrubland and full-scale woods (beech, holm oak, box, juniper, pine and oak trees) and endless wild plants. On higher ground and on the Toloño peak, you will see the ruins of a Gothic monastery and the "ice houses" (round holes with stone walls) where the winter snow was "harvested" and stored so as to have ice in summer, whether for medical treatments or for preserving foodstuffs.

The culture of wine

In San Vicente de la Sonsierra people in the past survived from subsistence farming (cereals, sugar beet, vegetable garden and vines). With time, and helped by the climate and terrain of the Sonsierra, vine cultivation spread as others went into decline (cereals) or disappeared (sugar beet) or became a complement for the domestic economy (vegetable garden).

Nowadays, the vine has become virtually the only crop grown in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, with 1,800 hectares recognized by the Control Board of the Rioja "Qualified" Designation of Origin, with output of around 12,000,000 litres of wine. This is the product which, thanks to the growers and enterprising winemakers who have not only



tended their vineyards but also managed to make wines which are renowned and appreciated for their quality, has made the region famous in Spain, most of Europe and all around the world. This is borne out by the recognition received by our cellar owners and winemakers at international level.

In San Vicente de la Sonsierra there are currently forty wineries of varying sizes and output, of which 32 have a bottling licence.

Strolling through the streets of San Vicente de la Sonsierra is a pleasure any day of the year, it is even more so at harvest time when the air is filled with the aroma of fresh-pressed must and tumultuous wine fermentation.

A visit to a wine cellar would be the perfect end to a harvesting day in San Vicente de la Sonsierra.

Feasts and traditions. The "picaos"

An ancestral rite which has been preserved for centuries. In ancient times Brotherhoods of penitents who flagellated themselves were found all over Europe. The Brotherhood of the Santa Vera Cruz still keeps the spirit of this practice alive, whereby anonymous penitents, moved by their own personal, secret motives, choose to put on the white habit totally covering their face and body.

The penitence starts when the accompanying brother uncovers the back and the flagellant begins to beat himself over his shoulders with a scourge or skein of cotton cord. With each stroke the blood builds up under the skin. When the companion sees fit, he pricks the back of the flagellant so that some of the accumulated blood can run.

At the end of the penitence the "Picao" returns to the headquarters of the Brotherhood where the wounds will be treated with **rosemary** water.



- **Maunday Thursday**, during the procession of the Last Supper (19:30. approximate start time for the procession).
- **Maunday Thursday**, at the Holy Hour of 11 pm.
- **Good Friday**, after the Procession of the Vía Crucis (11:30, approximate start time for the procession).
- **Good Friday**, during the Procession of the Holy Burial. (20:30 h. approximate start time for the procession).
- **May Cross**, 3 May if it is a Sunday and if not, the following Sunday (18.00 approximate start time for the procession).
- **September Cross**, 14 September if it is a Sunday and if not, the following Sunday (18.00 approximate start time for the procession).

Feasts and local tradition

January 22. San Vicente Martyr (patrón saint of the town).
May 15. San Isidro, patron of the farmers.
June 26. San Pelayo (co-patron saint).
August 9. Nights of San Lorenzo, wine cellar open day.
August 15. pilgrimage to Santa Mª de la Piscina.
Mid August. Day of the dancer.
Late August. Hike
From September 7 to 12. Festival in honour of patron saint Our Lady of Los Remedios.
November. Thanksgiving Festival.



Town Hall - Plaza Mayor, 1
T: 941 33 40 06 / F: 941 33 40 05
www.sanvicentedelasonsierra.org
Tourist guide
T: 941 33 40 04 / F: 941 33 40 05
guia@sanvicentedelasonsierra.org
Health Centre - Peciña nº 1. T: 941 30 80 06
Infant School (first cycle) - Donantes de Sangre, 6
T: 941 33 45 35 / F: 941 33 45 35
State Primary School - Donantes de Sangre, 8
T: 941 33 41 50 / F: 941 33 41 50
Senior Citizens' Social Centre - El Remedio 4-1º
T: 941 30 80 78
Casa Toñi Restaurant - Zumalacárregui, 27
T: 941 33 40 01. www.casatoni.es
José Mari Restaurant - Rivas de Tereso. T: 941 33 40 61
La Bodega de Rivas Restaurant - Rivas de Tereso
T: 941 33 43 29. www.labodegaalrivas.es
Hotel la Casona del Boticario - C/General Varela 1
T: 941 33 42 00. www.casonadelboticario.com
Hotel and restaurant Las Vistillas - Cr Briones
T: 941 33 45 33. www.lasvistillas.net
Hotel Villa Sonsierra - Zumalacárregui, 29
T: 941 33 45 75. www.villasonsierra.com
Entresillares Holiday Apartments - C/Mayor 4
T: 667 662 785. www.entresillares.com
La Casa de Alberto - Rivas de Tereso
T: 636 996 447. www.lacasadealberto.com
Parish Church - Zumalacárregui, 6
T: 941 33 40 77
Old People's Home - Po Vistillas, nº 6
T: 941 30 80 00 / T: 941 30 80 97

Useful addresses and telephone numbers



San Vicente de la Sonsierra La Rioja

MAP-GUIDE

