Visit our castle on your own.

Points 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
13. Basilica of Our Lady of the Remedies
14. Calvary
15. Medieval bridge
16. Gate of Primicia
17. Lower Wall / Panoramic Gangway
18. West Gate / River Ebro Viewpoint
19. Wall paintings
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25. Gate of Primicia
Sierra de Cantabria

Vegetation you can enjoy watching wildfowl of all kinds, the charm of pure, living nature. As well as the riverbank (hiking route), through the groves and thickets of the Tower and Keep, the fort's main stronghold. The view you reach the final walled fortification with the Clock Tower (in the old castle courtyard). Climbing a little higher, you get nearer the centre you can see how grand and impressive the buildings are, imposing, swaying 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 circular Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation of the land.

Strolling through the streets of San Vicente de la Sonsierra is a pleasure all 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.

San Vicente de la Sonsierra is a fortified town, which has been declared as a Historical Artistic Monument. The history and topography of the land have determined and conditioned the location and development of this town from the Middle Ages up to the present day. San Vicente de la Sonsierra, a fortified town, stands as a testimony to the struggle for independence from the Berberic invasion.

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, helped by the climate and terrain of the Sonsierra, vine cultivation spread as others went into decline (cereal) 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 enterprise 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.

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 motivations, 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 “Picaos” returns to the headquarters of the Brotherhood where the wounds will be treated with rosemary water.

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 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 Alto de San Vicente de la Sonsierra in the Middle Ages.

Ancestral landscape

If you decide to walk up the mountain, you will be rewarded with an amazing view. You can see the Ebros 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 Tolóno peak, you will see the ruins of a Gothic monastery and the “ice house” (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.

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