



THE
CAVES OF THE
HUNDRED
PILLARS



ARNEDO
PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO
CUEVA DE LOS CIENTO PILARES



ARNEDO
AYUNTAMIENTO



THE ROCK-CUT HERITAGE IN THE CIDACOS VALLEY

Travelers arriving in the Cidacos Valley will be captivated by the reddish hues of the landscape, shaped by the predominance of sandstone and clay. The softness of these rocks has, throughout history, enabled humans to carve out hundreds of caves —used as

shelters, places of worship, and for economic activities—, giving rise to an extraordinary rock-cut heritage.

The Caves of the Hundred Pillars, which extend throughout the entire south-facing slope of St. Michael's Hill, form the most intricate and astonishing network of galleries and chambers in the entire Cidacos Valley. Their origins date back to the Middle Ages, when insecurity in the valleys forced inhabitants to seek refuge in safer places —either in the mountains or quite literally “beneath them”.





WORSHIP IN THE CAVES

Human spirituality has been linked to caves since its origins. People have long retreated to these places to escape the noise of the outside world and dedicate themselves to meditation, prayer, ancestor veneration or the preparation of natural remedies. This tradition is reflected throughout the valley, where the legacy of hermitages, churches, and rock chapels still stands.



ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY

During the early medieval period, the Caves of the Hundred Pillars likely housed St. Michael's Monastery. It is known that in the 11th century, a monastery dedicated to the Archangel existed in the town, as in 1063, the then Lord of Arnedo, Sancho Fortuniois, bequeathed it in his will to St. Prudence's Monastery on Mount Laturce. Since no remains of medieval architecture have been found on St. Michael's Hill—except for the hermitage of the same name at its summit, in front of which lies a necropolis from the same period—it seems likely that the rooms and

galleries of this impressive rock complex could have served as the monastery mentioned by the Lord of Arnedo.



LIFE IN THE CAVES

Since ancient times, humans have sought refuge in caves, a way of life that persisted in Arnedo until the mid-20th century, with around 200 cave-houses grouped into neighborhoods. These were gradually abandoned as the city underwent economic and social development.

These dwellings maintained a constant temperature of around 15°C year-round. Their layout was simple: a central corridor leading to the kitchen (always with

natural ventilation), the bedrooms, and the stable. Every year, the interiors were whitewashed to ensure cleanliness, hygiene, brightness, and safety.



CAVES AS A WAY OF LIFE

Until the development of the footwear industry in the 1940s, Arnedo's economy was primarily based on agriculture. As a result, many types of caves related to agricultural and livestock uses can be found, including pens, beehives, woodsheds, haylofts, and dovecotes.

Among the various economic uses, the wine cellars stand out, tied to the rich tradition of winemaking in La Rioja and, of course, in Arnedo. Additionally, there are

those connected to water: the water conduit tunnel (possibly built by the Count of Nieva in the 15th century), and the tanks used for distributing running water to the houses.




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Information and reservations

Tourist Office - Nuevo Cinema
Paseo Constitución, 38. Arnedo

941 380 128

609 420 560 

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Tickets

General entry: 7 €

Reduced entry: 5 € (pensioners, people with disabilities, groups of 20 or more people)

Children (ages 6 to 13): 4 €

Children under 6: free

Advance reservation is required

Visiting hours

Please check with the Tourist Office for details



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