

URROS DE LIENCRES

Sunrise over the geological wonder of the Cantabrian Coast. Powerful waves and golden light reveal ancient rock formations in a dramatic display of natural forces.

A coastline of global geological importance.



In September 2024, Costa Quebrada was officially designated a UNESCO Global Geopark, recognizing its exceptional geological heritage.

This 20-kilometer stretch of coast is an open-air museum, showcasing millions of years of Earth's history etched into its cliffs, beaches, and rock formations.

The International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) has declared the section between Punta de Los Pilis and the Miengo marsh a Spanish Global Geosite, one of the most relevant in the world.

120 million years of history in 20 kilometers.

Costa Quebrada

20 km

To find the same variety of geological phenomena concentrated in Costa Quebrada, one would have to travel at least 100 kilometers elsewhere in Europe.

Elsewhere in Europe

100 km

Time

Landscape formation began 120 million years ago.

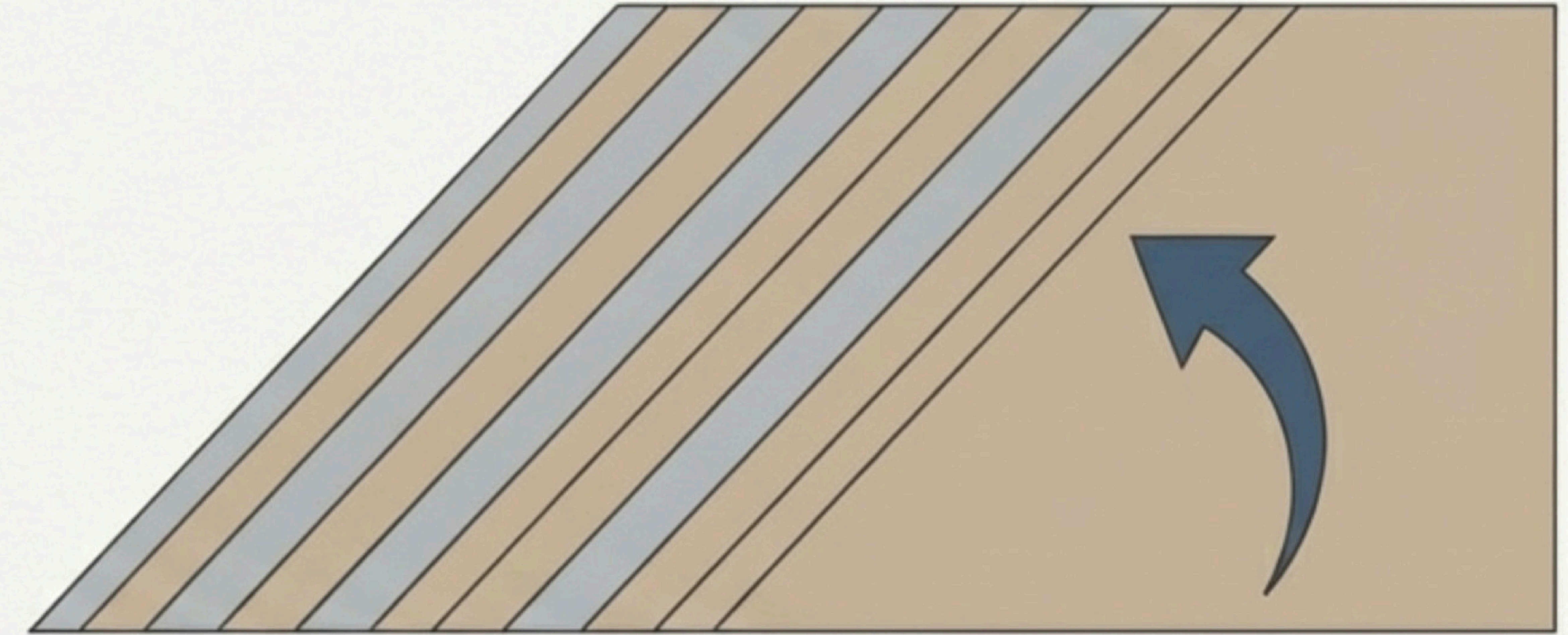
Scale

The Geopark territory covers 345 km², including 270 km² of land and 75 km² of marine area.

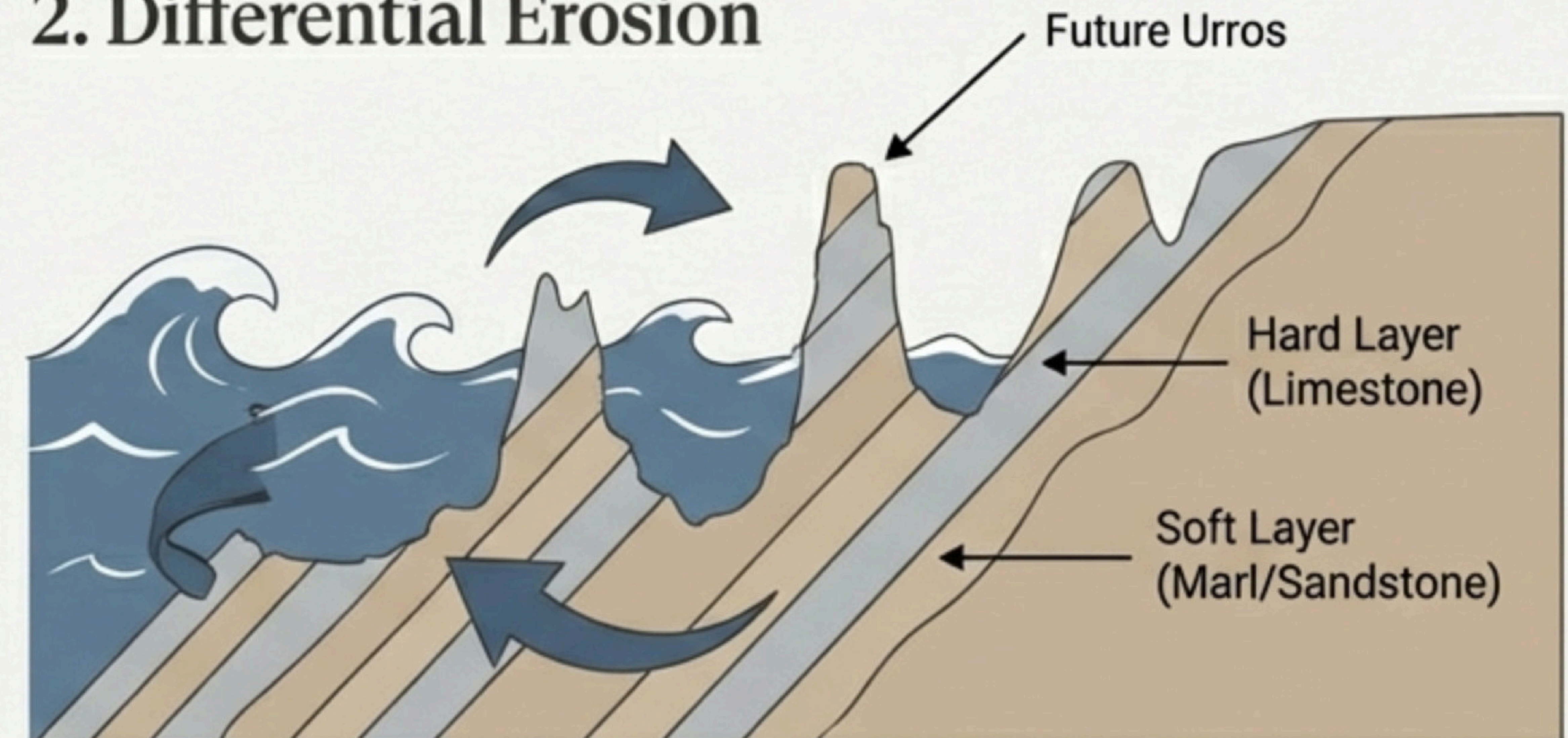
Scope

Spans eight municipalities, from Santander to Suances and beyond.

1. Tectonic Tilt



2. Differential Erosion



Geology in Action: The 'Broken Coast'.

The name Costa Quebrada ('Broken Coast') describes the relentless confrontation between the sea and the land. Here, ancient rock layers were tilted by tectonic forces and now lie inclined to the coast.

The relentless power of the Cantabrian Sea erodes the softer layers more quickly, leaving the harder layers as dramatic, vertical crests that emerge from the water. This process creates the unique and varied landscape.

A Compendium of Coastal Landforms.



Urros

Hard limestone crests resisting marine erosion.



Tombolo

A sand spit connecting an island to the coast.



Abrasion Platform

A coastal terrace formed by wave erosion.



Dunes

One of Northern Spain's most important coastal dune ecosystems.



Arch / Cave

Features created by focused wave erosion on headlands.



Estuary (Ría)

The final stretch of a river valley flooded by the sea.

The 20-Kilometer Coastal Trail.

The best way to experience Costa Quebrada is along the coastal path that runs from the outskirts of Santander to the beaches of Miengo.

The route offers continuous, breathtaking views and access to a succession of unique beaches and viewpoints.

While accessible to most, certain sections near the cliffs require caution.



The Geological Masterpiece of Playa de la Arnía

Abrasion Platform: A massive, wave-cut rock terrace revealed at low tide, showcasing incredible geological patterns and tidal pools.

Urros de Liencres: The iconic, resilient limestone sea stacks standing guard along the coastline, remnants of ancient cliffs.

! Caution: The abrasion platform is best explored at low tide. Be mindful of slippery rocks and incoming tides for safety.

A Beach for Every Character.



Seclusion

Known for its nudist tradition and spectacular beauty, Somocuevas is divided by an isthmus and accessed by 139 steps carved into the cliffside.



Expanse

Two kilometers of golden sand in the heart of the Liencres Dunes Natural Park, popular with families and surfers.



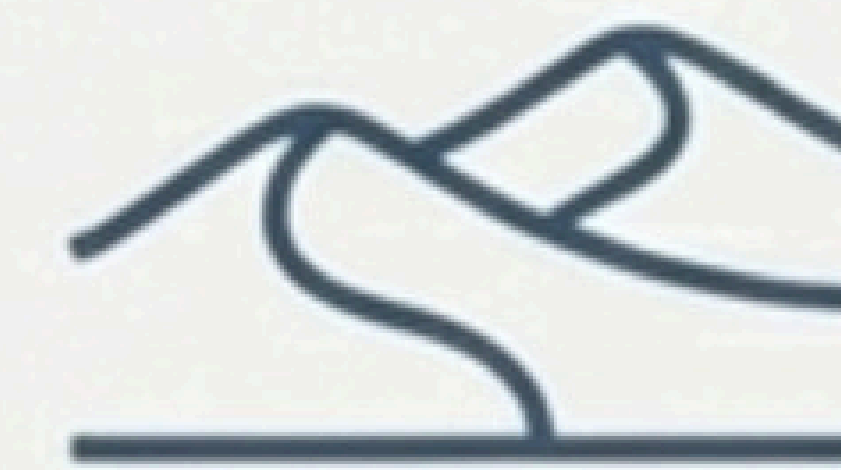
Shelter

A calm beach set back from the open sea, sheltered by sharp cliffs.



Where the Land Meets the Sea: Liencres Dunes Natural Park.

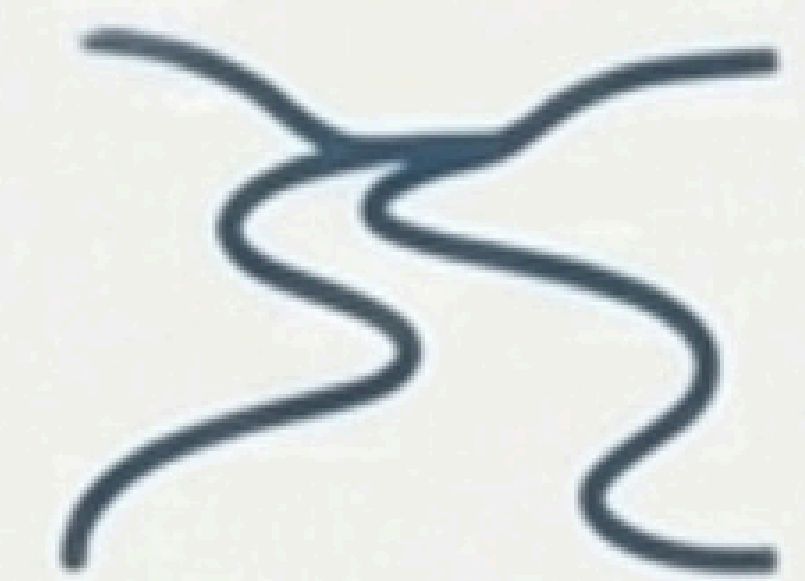
The western end of the route is defined by the Parque Natural de las Dunas de Liencres, which protects one of the most important dune systems in northern Spain. The park also includes an extensive maritime pine forest and the estuary of the Pas river (Ría de Mogro), a spectacular landscape where the river makes its final turns before meeting the Cantabrian Sea.



Dune System



Pine Forest



Pas Estuary (Ría)

The Geopark Extends Beyond the Shoreline.

While the coast is the main attraction, the official UNESCO Geopark territory extends inland, weaving together geology and deep human history. The protected area includes sites of modern trandinna in the low base of immense cultural importance, demonstrating the timeless connection between people and this landscape.



Altamira Cave:
Prehistoric Art



Pindal Cave:
Archaeological Site



San Vicente de la
Barquera:
Historic Port



A Dynamic Landscape for Adventure.



Surfing: The powerful waves attract surfers year-round, and the area hosts the 'La Vaca Gigante' international big-wave surfing championship.

Diving & Snorkeling: The clear waters and rocky coves, especially around Playa de Covachos, are ideal for exploring marine life.



Trail Running: The coastal path provides a stunning and challenging route for runners, with several successful trail events held here.



Photography: For landscape photography enthusiasts, the dramatic light and weather, especially off-season, provide countless opportunities.

A Coast Etched with Human History

On the islet of Virgen del Mar stands a stark white chapel, a protector for Cantabrian sailors. It serves as a memorial to the raw power of this coast, particularly the tragic “Sábado de Gloria” gale of 1878, when a savage storm claimed the lives of 254 fishermen. The chapel is a quiet reminder of the deep, often perilous, relationship between the people and the sea.

Learn more at the Centro de Interpretación del Litoral near La Maruca, a recommended visit to discover the details of the local marine environment.



The Timeless Rhythm of the Coast

Where the sea shapes the land, and silence speaks volumes.