



Map

● Plaza Mayor

1. Puerta de Carnicerías or Puerta Nueva Opened in the 15th century
2. Old City Hall, 16th century Charles V Imperial Escutcheon. Next to the arch: measurements of the rod, half rod, roof tile and brick.
3. Current city hall, 19th century Carillon clock

● Calle Santa Engracia

4. Old inn House no. 41
5. Palatial residence from the 18th century, stone portal House no. 25
6. Two escutcheons and an inescutcheon with a cross, sword and feather House no. 19, 17th century
7. Renaissance building, 16th century House no. 15
8. Escutcheon bearing the family name OROBIO House no. 9 Baroque building, 17th century
9. Puerta de Santa Engracia and Gardens of Doña Blanca

● Calle del Castillo

10. Escutcheon with anagram of Jesus Christ and legend: LAUS TIBI House no. 17 16th century
11. State school on the site where the old castle once stood

● Plaza de la Torre

12. Abacial Tower

● Calle Mayor

13. Church of Santa María de los Reyes. (For tours Tel.: 945 60 08 45)
14. Koko Rico sculpture "Travellers" (Gaitero plaza)
15. House no. 4 Early 15th century, very old style
16. 16th century building House no. 3
17. 16th century building Archaic style House no. 13
18. Escutcheon with outspread eagle (one of the oldest in the town). 15th century House no. 14

19. Escutcheon bearing the family names SÁNCHEZ and LARA Houses no. 18 and 20 They used to be a single house (17th century).
20. Escutcheon bearing the family name LAZCANO House no. 25
21. House no. 27 18th century, river stone entryway
22. PATERNINA. SAMANIEGO escutcheon 17th century. House no. 26
23. Door with ogee arch inset House no. 29
24. 16th century building Balcony with trefoil plaster moulding, unique in the Rioja Alavesa. Houses no. 34 and 36
25. Tourism office Garcetas house Palatial residence from the 17th century. The decorated eaves, railing, forged balconies and stone portal are conserved. House no. 52
26. House no. 54 Built in the 17th century The SOLAR DE LA PISCINA coat of arms appears on the escutcheon.
27. Old hospital, 16th century building House no. 61
28. 16th century building with Gothic characteristics on the arch House no. 70
29. Palatial residence from the 17th century. The fabulist Samaniego was born here. The family names RAMÍREZ DE LA PISCINA Y ACEDO appear on the escutcheon.
30. Virgin of Pilar Chapel and Church of San Juan Bautista
31. Old Capuchin convent. Built on the site previously occupied by the Jewish quarter.
32. Celtiberian water storage pool
33. Puerta del Mercadal
34. La Rachuela traditional small square

● Calle Paganos

- 35.- Rincón de San Nicolás: The patron saint of the neighbourhood was worshipped in the niche.
36. House no. 86 18th century building
37. House of the First Fruits: The oldest civil building in the Town and the Church's first fruits were stored here. Gothic doorway House no. 78
38. House no. 72 From the late 16th century

39. House no. 60 Niche with a Gothic image of San Antón Abad
40. Building with Gothic remains on the entry arch House no. 33
41. 18th century building Modern escutcheon of the TEJADA property House no. 29
42. Puerta de Paganos
43. Houses no. 46 and 48 Baroque buildings
44. Palatial residence from the 18th century Escutcheon of the SAENZ D SAN PEDRO House no. 44
45. Old manor houses Number 34 has an escutcheon with the coat of arms of the OLANO family. Houses no. 30 and 42
46. Baroque building with original decorated eaves House no. 9

● Calle Cuatro Cantones

- 47.- 18th century building Stone portal, baroque stairway House no. 12

● Outer town walls

48. Fortress Tower Puerta de San Juan
49. Paseo del Collado
50. Monument to the fabulist Samaniego
51. Paseo de los Siete Castillos
52. Paseo de la Barbacana
53. Paseo de Sancho Abarca or Plaza Nueva
54. Old Jai Alai Fronton
55. Leisure Centre
56. Public swimming pool
57. Football pitch
58. Prado de la Paul

MI Museums

- 1.- Museum of the Friends of Laguardia Society. (Tel.: 945 600 845)
- 2.- "La Abadía de Morata" house museum. (Tel.: 677 469 692)
- 3.- La Hoya Village (Tel.: 945 621 122)
- 4.- "Villa Lucía" wine thematic centre. (Tel.: 945 600 032)

Places to see



Portico of the Church of Santa María



"Travellers" sculpture



Abacial Tower



Church of San Juan Bautista



Carillon clock



Monument to the fabulist Samaniego



Celtiberian Water Storage Pool

Santa María de los Reyes Church and Portico

Construction began in a Lombard Romanesque style (12th century) and was not completed until the early 16th century, so a mixture of styles can be seen throughout. The building has a rectangular plan with three naves, transept and polygonal apse east end. The entrance to the transept were built in medieval times (12th. 15th century) and the transept and east end are from the renaissance (16th century). The main altarpiece is from the 17th century and is one of the best works by Juan de Bascardo. The real jewel of the church, however, is the Gothic portico. It was made of stone in the late 14th century and its polychrome, from the 17th century, is perfectly conserved. The jambs display the figures of the twelve Apostles and there is a splendid sculpture of Santa María de los Reyes on the mullion. The tympanum is full of images of the life of the Virgin Mary and the archivolt is decorated with plant motifs and imagery. The closure of the portico in the 16th century has preserved this magnificent work.

Contact the Tourism Office to arrange a visit.



Plaza Mayor / City Hall

The 19th century City Hall presides over this porticoed plaza, which is the nerve centre of the villa. The facade is bestowed with the coat of arms of Laguardia and a carillon clock with automatons that dance to the rhythm of the parades typical of local carnival at 12:00, 2:00, 5:00, and 8:00 PM, (we recommend arriving a few minutes before the times mentioned). The Old City Hall, from the 16th century, is located on one side and the coat of arms of Charles V is displayed on the first floor. A plaque on the facade shows the old official measurements of the rod, half rod, roof tile and brick, which were used to prevent manipulation by merchants.



Laguardia

The villa was given the name "La Guarda de Navarra" because of its strategic location facing Castilla and its military significance. Its municipal charter was granted in 1164 by Sancho el Sabio from Navarra, and the area of its city limits were defined. The villa and lands of Laguardia joined the Brotherhood of Álava in 1456 by order of the Catholic Kings.

The walls of Laguardia suffered major damage in the 19th century as a consequence of the Carlist War and the War of Independence. The medieval section and a large part of the walls erected in the 13th century are still standing.

As imposing as ever, Laguardia rises over a hill and dominates the horizon. "The very noble, loyal and crowned villa of Laguardia", capital of the Rioja Alavesa and loyal guardian of the march of history, of which it also played a central role. Hidden between the walls, you can find the keys that, if you know how to interpret them, can help you understand the character of its people, which has been forged over centuries.

However, Laguardia does not only face inwards. From the watchtower you can discern the Sierra de Cantabria range, which mark the northern boundary of the Rioja Alavesa and from which the land gently descends to the Ebro river, which is the southern boundary. The lands included form a spectacular landscape of vineyards that have an astonishing range of nuances and tonalities throughout the different times of the year. To lose yourself among them is to gain a new experience of light and colour. Insofar as flavours and aromas, you can saturate yourself with the countless choices of food and wine that, as a wine capital this area can offer.

If a passion for travelling and discovering new places is what drives you, Laguardia is your destination.



The Walls

The villa of Laguardia was fortified in the 13th century during the reign of Sancho VII The Strong. Its walls were built with sandstone masonry using different kinds of material as infill. Four gates connect the villa to the outside: Páganos, Mercadal, San Juan and Santa Engracia. The Puerta Nueva, or Puerta de Carnicerías, was not opened until the 15th century. To this day, and despite the damage they underwent in numerous wars, the walls conserve their original layout and still have a number of towers, two of which have been adapted to be belfries.



Gaitero Plaza

The “Travellers” sculpture group by artist Koko Rico can be seen in this plaza. The two bronze panels, with a group of bags and suitcases on one and shoes on the other, are a tribute to travellers.



Abacial Tower

Originally a military facility, it is a tower-castle from the 18th century. It is joined to the walls and formed part of the defence system of Laguardia. Tradition knows it as the Abacial Tower and it is assumed to have been part of an old abbey or monastery. It has been converted into a belfry for the Church of Santa María de los Reyes and it has been adapted for tours.



House of the First Fruits

Located in calle Páganos, this is the oldest civil building in the Villa and dates from the late 14th or early 15th century. It is in a Gothic style and was the place for storing the tithes and “first fruits” that were paid to the Church.



Samaniego Palace House

This building is dear to Laguardia because the fabulist Félix María Sánchez Samaniego was born in it. It was built in the 17th century and is laid out around an interior courtyard. The facade bears the shield of the Ramírez de la Piscina y Acedo family.



Church of San Juan and Pilar Chapel

It is a church-fortress located to the south of the villa. The south entrance, known as the “grandparent’s entrance”, is Gothic in style and decorated with columns representing the Annunciation. It has a Latin cross floor plan with three apses and a transept. The baroque altarpiece is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. The late baroque chapel of Pilar is located near the entrance and it was built by destroying a Gothic entrance, of which the image of the Virgin and the pillar still remain. The Gothic tower was part of the city walls and was refurbished in the 16th century to fulfil its current role of belfry.



Barbacana Celtiberian Water Storage Pool

It is located in the southern part of the villa and was used to store the spring water that comes from the high part of the hill the villa sits on. It was built 2100 years ago. It could hold around 300,000 litres of water and it is the largest Iron Age water storage pool yet found in Europe. It has a performing arts centre to help understand the history of Laguardia, the significance of the pool, and the lives of the people who used it.



Paseo del Collado

This road runs through the northern part of the hill where Laguardia is located outside the walls between the Puerta de Santa Engracia and the Puerta de Páganos. The lands and villages of the Rioja Alavesa, crowned on the north by the Sierra de Cantabria range, open at its feet. A metal shrine housing a bronze bust of the fabulist Samaniego has been placed in the middle of the road.



Wineries

Wine culture has a close relationship with the villa and “caves” or wine cellars have been dug underneath the houses. Wineries with more modern architecture can be seen in the area surrounding the villa. The Tourism Office has a list of wineries that offer tours.



Lagoons and ‘El Prao’ reservoir

This protected biosphere is located in the centre of the Rioja Alavesa near Laguardia. It encompasses three small wetlands. Two of them, Carralagroño and Carravalseca, are naturally occurring and functioning temporary endorheic lakes, while the third one, El Prao de la Paúl, is a small reservoir created over an old pooling area. There is also an observatory and scenic overlook for birdwatching and an accessible trail that makes it easy to get around.



La Hoya Village and Dolmens

The La Hoya archaeological site, located one kilometre from Laguardia, was discovered in 1935. The site was first occupied around 3400 years ago during the Middle Bronze Age and, at one time, it was a major commercial and organisational centre for the territory. Nowadays, you can visit the museum and the ruins of the village. When the people of La Hoya left that place they moved to the hill now occupied by Laguardia. Burial monuments like the San Martín Dolmen, which is remarkable for its age, el Sotillo, el Alto de la Huesera and la Chabola de la Hechicera (in Elvillar) can also be found in the surrounding area.



San Juan and San Pedro Carnivals

These carnivals are for the patron saints of the villa. They have an emblematic ceremony, which is the flag waving done in the Chapel of Pilar and repeated at the main altar in front of the image of Saint John the Baptist. The carnivals also have a lot of traditional and fun events (Basque handball, bulls...), and people wear bright colours with the traditional dancers whose main character is Cachimorro.



Gaitero Day (May)

If music is played at all the events and celebrations in the villa, the Gaita or Dulzaina is the instrument likely to be heard. Keeping the tradition alive for many years and with local melodies, a day of camaraderie between all the musician-troubadours is celebrated.



Mobile Nativity Scene of Santa María de los Reyes (Christmas)

This 18th century nativity scene has around 70 figures, many of which have moveable parts The performances take place around 1:00 PM on Christmas, New Year’s, Epiphany and the first Sunday of February.



Holy Week

The Descent, one of the most moving moments happens on Holy Friday. A 17th century Crucifixion with outstretched arms presides over the main altar of the church that is being honoured. A religious brotherhood climbs up to the cross to remove the nails and other religious brotherhoods gather them and put them in the tomb that is later carried in a procession.



Other Villas

Also part of Laguardia are the village of Laserna, where you can see the Mantible bridge spanning the Ebro river, El Campillar that has a magnificent thousand-year-old oak and the Páganos Administrative District in the centre of which are the notable Church of La Asunción and a house with an escutcheon that says “The World is like that” (El mundo es así), which is also the title of a novel by Pio Baroja.

