

CHARACTERISTICS

The area of the Archeological Site covers more than 2000ha. It is an archeological site and a cultural landscape. It includes the mines themselves and large areas where the remains of the activities are deposited. There are also dams to collect the water needed for the mining activity, and canals to transport water to the mines. In the area there were Roman roads used for this process.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Bierzo has a Mediterranean climate with Atlantic influence and it allows a great variety of plants and trees, like shrubs (brams, gorse or thickets), thorny plants (brians), riverside woodlands, trees (holm oak, beeches, cork oak and chestnuts). It houses a lot of animals like wild boars, roe deer, wild cats, rabbits, hares, geophytes, dormice, badgers, grouse, wood pigeons, reptiles and birds.



Erasmus+

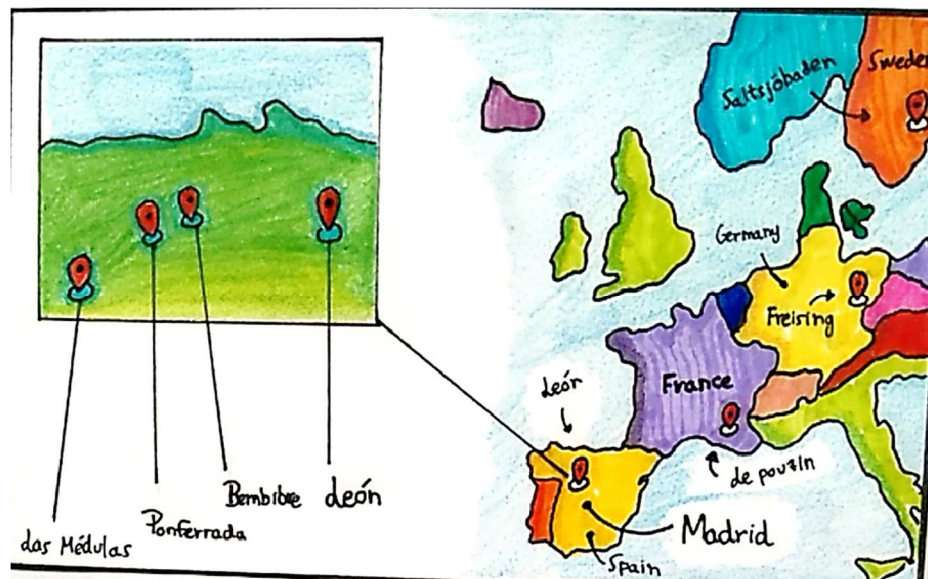
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LAS MÉDULAS



Las Médulas, in the region of El Bierzo (León), was declared World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 1997. It was the biggest gold mine exploited by the Romans from the 1st century AD until the 3rd century AD. For this purpose, Romans used hydraulic works. It is more than 2000 years old and it's an incredible landscape whose main features are its red land colour and the variety of vegetation, like the chestnut tree.

LOCATION



HISTORY

The north-west of the Iberian Peninsula was conquered by the Romans in the late 1st century BC. It remained under military control for a century. That is the reason why this area was less romanised. Some important Roman cities were built not far from Las Médulas and even a Roman road was constructed. However indigenous population continued to live in tribes in their hill-forts for a long period. In the second half of the 1st century AD Romans established new ways of living, having seen the incredible resources of the settlement. All the mineral resources of the Empire were administered directly by the Emperor.

The kind of people who worked in Las Médulas were free men, not slaves, something that wasn't frequent in other gold-mining places.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The process used to extract the gold is named in Latin "ruina montium". The water from the springs, rivers, rain and melting snow was collected in large reservoirs. This water was transported to the upper part of the hill, where the mines were, thanks to gravity canals that were built. They excavated galleries inside the mountain. The water did pressure and the rock exploded. The materials were washed by the water flow, forming big areas of tailings. Gold was found and deposited at the bottom of the channels.

RUINA MONTIUM

