

# Look up! You are in a Starlight Village.



In March 2022, Las Navas del Marqués received the Starlight certification as the **first Starlight Village in Castilla y León**, a certification hitherto only two communities held in Spain (and three in the whole world). After months of sampling and measurements by specialists, the extraordinary quality of the night sky here is evidenced, making this territory a national benchmark in the stargazing and astrotourism sector.

## What is a Starlight certification?

After the I International Starlight Conference (2007), promoted by the Instituto Astrofísico de Canarias and where the Declaration of the Defense of the Night Sky and the Right to Star Light was drafted, the Starlight Foundation was born with the objective of protecting the night sky, enhancing the dissemination of astronomy and promoting sustainable development through astrotourism. The Starlight Foundation grants certifications to those territories with exceptionally dark skies and with a great astrotourism potential.

The certification as **Starlight Village**, as the one awarded to Las Navas del Marqués, is intended for those small rural communities still preserving their dark skies and looking to diversify their economy by unleashing its potential as a touristic attraction. Beyond a recognition, receiving the Starlight Village certification entails the commitment of Las Navas del Marqués to protect their dark sky, raise awareness and promote astrotourism.

As many other rural destinations, Las Navas del Marqués treasures natural jewels that only the rural world can enjoy nowadays. This natural heritage, together with the great quality of its night sky, offers wonderful views like the one in this picture, taken right on this site looking south on a summer night, where one can appreciate the Milky Way against the dark sky, as well as the light pollution dome cast by Madrid on the left.

## The night sky, in figures

Over 80% of the world  
population is believed  
to live under  
polluted skies  
nowadays.



Mirador estelar  
**Las Tres Fuentes**  
500 m

At the end of this path, about 500 m away, you will find the **Mirador estelar Las Tres Fuentes**, one of the two first astronomical viewpoints of this Starlight Village which, together with the Sierra de Gredos Starlight Reserve, make for two landmarks in astrotourism in the province of Ávila.

Get to the viewpoint and let your eyes get used to the dark for a few minutes.

Put your head up and admire the view: thousands of stars are there... there are actually thousands of millions but the human eye can only see two or three thousand.

Don't you believe it? Dare to count them!

## Consequences of light pollution

Light pollution is the excess of artificial light in the sky caused by inefficient lighting. Light pollution has many negative effects:



It leads to high energy consumption and **waste** of money.



It contributes to greenhouse gas emissions responsible for **climate change**.



It hinders professional **astronomy research**.



It affects **biodiversity**, especially birds, nocturnal fauna and migratory species.



It harms **human health**, altering the day-night biorhythm, generating insomnia or depression, among other affections.



It deprives society of a common **cultural heritage**: the starry sky.

