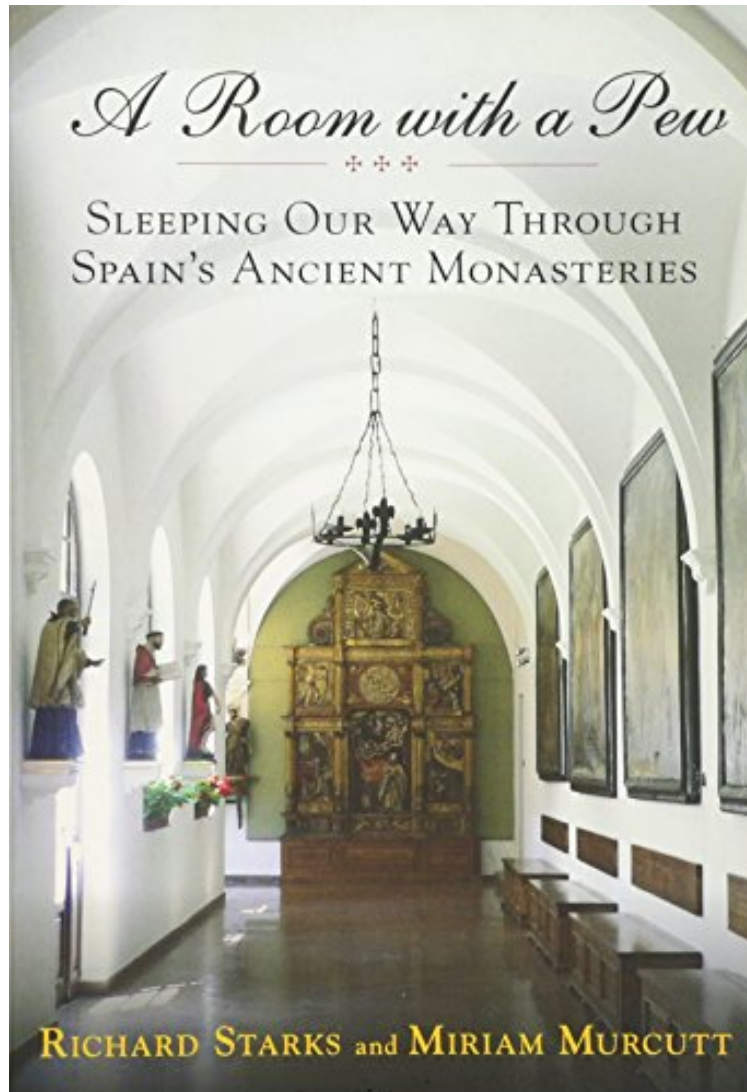


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## A Room with a Pew: Sleeping Our Way Through Spain's Ancient Monasteries

*Richard Starks, Richard Starks, Miriam Murcutt*  
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**Richard Starks, Richard Starks, Miriam Murcutt : A Room with a Pew: Sleeping Our Way Through Spain's Ancient Monasteries** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Room with a Pew: Sleeping Our Way Through Spain's Ancient Monasteries:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Save your eurosBy jonocomA somewhat caustic view of the monasteries and people of Spain; yet still informative.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. NiceBy Kit CatNice, low key travel account of couple who used monastaries on one of their trips. Nothing too adventurous. Not

sure what the intended direction of writing this account was headed. 19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Sophomoric , Yet Disturbingly Offensive By Customer This is a childishly offensive book. It is a mocking wise guy approach by the authors that exhibits no respect for the spirituality of centuries of devout people. An example of how the authors treat the subject of relics: "I've never seen a severed finger before. This one when I examined it closely, is unnaturally long, as if it possesses an extra knuckle. It's also brown what I would call "formaldehyde brown" the color laboratory specimens turn when they are past their sell-by date. It sticks up in what might be construed as a rude gesture set like a spent candle in an ornate filigree holder." The authors, who were benefiting from the generosity of believers who were extending hospitality to them according to the dictates of their faith, write glibly: "And most nights I've slept in a room with a man nailed to a cross, blood coursing from an open wound in his sight, his crowned head lolling on one shoulder or thrown back as he gazes skyward in an anguished rebuke it's been a fun filled few weeks Christianity must surely be one of the world's most violent religions - especially when you see it up close from inside the Spanish monastery." It can also of course be an inspiration - and, if you approach it with a modicum of doubt, even an inadvertent source of amusement "The fingernail," I tell a man beside me, "it needs a trim". People who write from this viewpoint clearly have not a clue about Spain and her culture.

One recent summer, Richard Starks and Miriam Murcutt traveled through Spain from Barcelona in the north to Malaga on the southern Mediterranean coast staying exclusively in ancient monasteries. As they quickly discovered, these are intriguing places in which to stay. They are ripe with history, art and culture (living museums); peopled by a dying breed of monks and nuns (last chance to see); rarely visited (so few tourists); and open to anyone who cares to stop by (you don't have to be religious, although it doesn't hurt if you are). They are also inexpensive (much of the time); eager for customers (most of the time); and always hospitable (in keeping with the Rule of St. Benedict). This account of the authors' journey will show you what it is like to turn your back on tourist Spain, to leave behind the hotels, pensions and up-market paradors and immerse yourself in the cowled world of Spain's many and varied ancient monasteries. This is not a guide book, but it does include enough information for you to plan a similar journey of your own. The tone is amusing, sometimes irreverent, but always respectful and entertaining. Monasteries visited: El Real Monestir de Santa Maria de Vallbona \*\* El Monasterio de la Virgen de Monlora \*\* Monasterio de San Salvador de Leyre \*\* El Real Monasterio de Santo Tomas, Avila \*\* El Monasterio de la Purisima Concepcion y San Jose , El Toboso \*\* El Monasterio de la Santa Maria de las Escalonias \*\* Convento de la Purisima Concepcion (Santa Maria) Marchena

A captivating tour of these edifices of spirituality, piety and community." - ForeWord "Travel books can get repetitive or dull. Not this one. Even the 'how to' pages are as enticing as they are informative." - CityBook "Great fun to read - unreligious, but not sacreligious... an entertaining book." - A Traveler's Library "If you have any inclination to try an offbeat way of seeing Spain, this book would give you some options. The authors do a good job of giving step-by-step advice about how to approach such a trip." - Book Pleasures From the Back Cover One recent summer, Richard Starks and Miriam Murcutt traveled through Spain from Barcelona in the north to Malaga on the southern Mediterranean coast staying exclusively in ancient monasteries. As they quickly discovered, these intriguing places are ripe with history, art, and culture (living museums); peopled by a dying breed of monks and nuns (last chance to see); rarely visited (so few tourists); and open to anyone who cares to stop by (you don't have to be religious, although it doesn't hurt if you are). They are also inexpensive (much of the time); eager for customers (most of the time) and always hospitable (in keeping with the Rule of St. Benedict).