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TOPIC: Cultural heritage in Europe –**The Asturian Bagpipes**

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It can be surprising to see that the North of Spain has Celtic origins and has many things in common with Scotland and Ireland. One of these aspects is the bagpipe which is intrinsically linked to our history and culture.

A short history

The Gothic term “gaits”, meaning “goat” seems to confirm its origins. It is believed that shepherds would use goat wineskins to give their flutes a different sound. Although it had humble beginnings, the bagpipe would go far and beyond the hills and valleys where it was born.

In fact, the origins of the bagpipe take us back to the Middle Ages. In the 8th century, Northern Indian warriors would play the instrument while challenging their opponents. Between the 12th and 14th centuries, pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela would make Galicia (Spain) the epicentre of European bagpipe.

The bagpipe in Northern Spain

Asturias, neighbouring region with Galicia, adopted the bagpipe and introduced it into its folkloric music and culture. So much so that it was played in Christian ceremonies including funerals, usually accompanied by a “panderu” or tambourine.

Asturian bagpipe in the 21st century

Although the Asturian bagpipe reached its peak of popularity in the 1800s, the 20th century threatened its existence. Nonetheless, social movements defending not only its music but its history sprang up. The bagpipe today can be played with a twist like in [Tierra de Nadie by José Ángel Hevia](#) or the more traditional way like our own [Carlos González Suero](#). Thanks to people like them, an essential part of Asturias is definitely here to stay.

Link to the video

<https://youtu.be/HEyXdIII8x4>

