

SEGOVIA

# Maderuelo



## PUBLISHED BY

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The town lies on a long arm of land bordering the course of the Riaza river, at the eastern extremity of the Pradales or Serrezuela mountains. In the days of the Reconquest it formed part of the front line of defensive positions along the left bank of the river Duero, together with Coca, Cuéllar, Fuentidueña and Sepúlveda. One of the earlier foundations, which some authors place as far back as the 10th century, it was also one of the defensive positions that Sancho Garcés assumed recovered in 1011. It also figures as part of the diocese of Burgos, under the name Castro Maderolum, in 1109. It was the largest of a cluster of settlements comprising some 19 hamlets of which seven eventually failed. The town had as many as ten parishes and was, at least until fifteenth century, a fiefdom of Luna Chaves Girón and Villena; in the case the last mentioned, as from the sixteenth century onwards. It was built on the promontory of a rocky outcrop with a wall adjusted to follow the contours and mark an east-west orientation acquiring a characteristic format with gross measurements of some 580 x 75 metres. It covers an area measuring approximately 3.5 hectares. In that respect it was a size that today we would regard as very small indeed but which in medieval times was considered extravagant, particularly in the north of the Iberian Peninsula. The walls, which retain many of their original hangings, plus the famed "Town Arch", had four gates, with the castle itself located at the far east. The population amounted to some eight to ten parishes, which set up in turn their own suburbs. However, these declined in the fourteenth century. Of clear signs of religious prosperity we can still see the parish church of Saint Mary and

the hermitages of Saint Michael, Veracruz and Castrobody. The street layout is remarkably haphazard, with a predominance of long narrow rows of houses propped up by the castle wall, alongside a mixed collection of open spaces, most of which appear to have arisen as a consequence of successive building alterations. Notwithstanding, two longitudinal axes can be distinguished. They converge on the gates on either side of the walled enclosure and are interconnected by multiple link roads and passageways that seem to have appeared in the course of time. Seen as a unit, the site undoubtedly offers a perfect example of a defensive medieval fortress and its long-term impact on the landscape. Maderuelo is part of "The most Beautiful Spanish Towns Association".

## What to see?

### Town Gates

Emblematic entrance to Maderuelo, protecting access from the east. The gates still retain the original bolts, the look-out point and the massively reinforced wooden doors, with embellishments and steel sheathing added in the fifteenth century. Up until the early part of this century there was still a moat and a drawbridge. This defensive combination was designed as a high vaulted half-pointed arch whereas the external complement is pointed. Attached to the external arch is another, higher, half-pointed arch that presents a central space which serves the purpose of a gallery from which to defend the entrance to the town.



### Square of San Miguel

This is a modest triangular space that serves as a separation point for those entering Maderuelo. There is a staircase to climb up to the roof or atrium of the hermitage from which the square takes its name. The tall buildings around the square conserve the medieval atmosphere, aided by two Romanesque and one Gothic entranceway. Above one of the former is a rococo coat of arms, corresponding to the Enríquez family, Marquises of Villena and Counts of San Esteban.

### Church-cum-Palace of Saint Michael

This is an old hermitage, property of the Municipal Council. Its walls form an intrinsic part of the defences and have undergone numerous alterations. In the fifteenth century it had to make room for a second rectangular construction. The bell tower of the original Romanesque hermitage, semi-circular in shape, was converted into living quarters. Inside this very chaste church there are numerous burials beneath Gothic arches, the gravestone of Hermosa being particularly striking. Reconstructed in 1981 thanks to the combined efforts of the local council and the regional government of Castile and León, this building has taken on a new lease of life, playing a significant role in the social and cultural life of the town.



### Gateway to the Jewish Quarter and Hospice Tower

This is a defensive construction designed to protect the sole access point from the west, via the road that climbs the valley of the Moralejos river. It is an arched entranceway supported by a solid half-pointed arch to which has been added a house that was once a defensive tower. Subsequently, these buildings were used as a temporary hospital or inn for pilgrims or persons in need. It is called "The Gate of the Suburb", because this part of the town constituted the Jewish quarter of Maderuelo.

### Dance Square

This square is dedicated to Pérez de Seoane, a great benefactor of Maderuelo. It occupies one entire level of the hill and a low wall separates it from the street. Of special note is the house flanked by columns that occupies one side of this square, which mourns the loss its great elm, victim of the plague that decimated the species.

### St Mary's Square

This rectangle occupies the centre of the highest part of the town. It is overlooked by the imposing Church of Saint Mary. The square may be accessed from either the east or the west, beneath two arches attached to the large wall, witness to the innumerable games of wall tennis played on this site.

### Church of Saint Mary of Castile

This is a church that stands out on account of its size and the variety of styles used to build it. It is



the only surviving church in the province of Segovia that shows remains of Moslem architecture. Its walls reveal countless modifications, using materials taken from no fewer than thirteen old churches and convents in the town. In the eighteenth century the bell tower, which housed five bells that could be heard at extraordinary distances from the town, was remodelled. The height of the main aisle of the church is particularly striking. It is crowned by a semi-circular apse and an elegant wood ceiling, alongside adornments and mudejar windows set in the lateral brickwork.



### Tower of Castile

One of the last remnants of the massive turret that protected the northern access to the town. It was repeatedly struck by lightning, which eventually toppled one of the main walls. One can still appreciate the sturdy square foundation of this bulwark, beneath which was housed a huge water reserve.

### Arcacel and Barbacana

This is a spectacular look-out point that remains under the arched atrium of the church of Saint Mary.

Although it served as an ossuary for the parish up until quite recent times, its defensive function remains a mystery, particularly in the days of Moslem domination. The term "arcacel" indicates that this was originally a piece of land used to sow barley which was mown when still green and used as fodder.

### Old Bridge

As the water levels fall at the beginning of August you can start to see this stout stone construction. Some experts consider it Roman rather than Romanesque. Its five spans, semi-submerged in the mud of the reservoir, and its stout buttresses reveal the strength of the Riaza floods. The bridge, to cross which travellers had to pay a toll to the Marquis of Villena, connects the townsfolk to their beloved hermitage of the Veracruz, and the uplands of the moor.





### Hermitage of the Veracruz

Declared part of the national heritage in 1924, this simple church, erected by the knights templar, astonished the world for containing one of the best examples of Castilian Romanesque frescos. In 1950 the need to build the reservoir meant that the government acquired it and had the frescos removed to the Prado Museum. Only traces of the hermitage walls remain, though they are still revered locally. It is the oldest church in the country and appears to have been built on the site of an earlier Visigoth hermitage. Tradition tells us of an ancestral cult of the dead and that the knights templar stationed here stood guard over one of the pieces of the Holy Cross that reached the Iberian peninsula.



### Hermitage of Castroboda

This is a hermitage of the eighteenth century that the townspeople erected using their own funds to provide a safe home for the patron saint of Maderuelo. It was built on the site of an earlier hermitage devoted to Saint Roque, protector against the plague.

### Surroundings

The surrounding villages built their first churches and hermitages in Romanesque style, with a single nave, curved apse and south atrium, as is the norm with Segovian Romanesque churches such as Linares, Valdevarnés, Fuentemizarra and, in particular, Cedillo, whose church boasts such a splendid bell tower that reference to it has been incorporated in the village

name. The only trace left by Gothic architectural norms was in the altar room of the church of Campo, whose paintings, including some by Gabriel de Sosa, are of excellent quality. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, churches were decorated extensively using plasterwork.

### Linares del Arroyo Reservoir The “Hoces” of the Riaza river

The presence of a broad range of eco-systems creating genuine natural value has prompted the authorities to seek special protection, i.e., “Nature

2000” status, for the stretch of the river containing the so-called “hoces” and their surrounding ecosystems. The reservoir itself extends from the outskirts of Maderuelo to the hoces to over 690 hectares. This area is already catalogued as protected wetland where otters, herons and numerous species of water fowl abound. Downstream from the reservoir are the famed “Hoces” or horse-shoe indentations of the Riaza river, an area of special protection for birds (ZEPA in its Spanish initials). This natural space is formed by a spectacular combination of canyons and cliffs over a distance of 12 kilometres of the middle

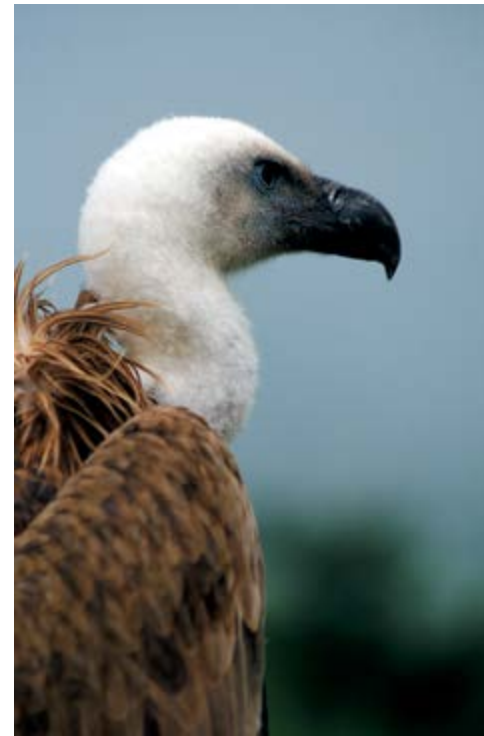






course of the Riaza river, accompanied by massive limestone outcrops. The geological structures that predominate in the Riaza river are the limestone outcrops and the alluvium of the river bed. These lime outcrops were originally formed under the sea bed and it was internal movements of the Earth's crust that made them protrude above ground level. Subsequently, the erosion of the river itself gave them

the astonishing form we see today. The surrounding climate is continental Mediterranean with scant annual rainfall and bitter winters. The surrounding vegetation comprises Kermes oak and gall oak, amid rough dry terrain of difficult access. There are also junipers, hawthorn and briar alternating with thyme, lavender, sage, furze and gorse. Along the river bank magnificent specimens of weeping willows abound



close to the water, with dark and grey poplars behind them. One may also see ash, elder and hawthorn. With respect to crops, these are mainly wheat and barley on the rain-fed high ground and beet and maize along the river bank. The presence of over 300 animal species has been detected, but the real importance of the area lies in the fact that the cliff walls provide nesting for one of the most numerous

flocks of Griffon and Egyptian vultures in Europe. It is by no means unusual to see concentrations of over 50 vultures circling above this landscape.

They are not alone. Other birds of prey inhabit the area, such as the eagle owl, the peregrin falcon, the short-toed eagle, golden eagle, kestrel, jackdaw, rook, etc. Man, too, has left his mark on these lands. Along the entire length of the "Hoces" are cave paintings dating from 2,500 B.C. There are also clear indications of the passage of the Romans and the Roman hermitage of Casuar, recently declared a protected building.

#### **Savin Wood of Hornuez**

A superb forest of savins, some of them of great height, the delight of any nature lover or, indeed, anyone with an eye for beauty. It is not in vain that the age of these gnarled but majestic trees is measured not in hundreds but in thousands of years. The wood is the home to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Miracle of Hornuez, declared in 1768 in a bout of baroque enthusiasm, patron saint of the Land of Maderuelo. According to tradition it was in one of these savins that the image of Our Lady appeared. The host tree is preserved in the church. Among its branches is a magnificent wood-cut of Our Lady. Unfortunately, a lightning bolt and subsequent fire wrecked the original Romanesque sculpture. To complete the experience, the site includes an exquisite fresh-water spring.

# What to do?

In or on the lake formed by the Riaza river visitors may practice canoeing or windsurfing, take a trip out in a boat or simply go for a swim. They may also do horse riding, biking or fishing. There are numerous well-marked routes for walkers and mountain bikers, along with ornithological observation posts. In Maderuelo you can find magnificent works of sculpture and decoration. It is also famed for its honey. In nearby Fresno de Cantespino, they make clay water bottles and many other pottery items.

## Gastronomy

The traditional dish of the region of the Duero Valley is undoubtedly baby lamb, washed down by the local wine, one of the best of the land. The "morcilla" or blood sausage of Burgos is another favourite, along with all the culinary delights resulting from the sacrifice of a pig.

## Let's party!

### 12th-Century Maderuelo

This festive event aims at presenting us with a live view on 12th-century existence by recreating dances, medieval trials, knightly combats, and parades. It takes place in the penultimate week of August.



# How do I get there?

**From Madrid,** take the A-1 towards Burgos. Exit at km 115, continue along the service road to the turnoff to Boceguillas Grajera and Maderuelo. (135 km).

**From Segovia,** take the N-110 towards Soria. At Santo Tomé take the A-1 towards Burgos.

Exit at km 115, continue along the service road to the turnoff to Boceguillas Grajera and Maderuelo (110 km).

**From Burgos,** take the A-1 towards Madrid. Exit at km 152. Take the C-114 towards Alcolea del Pinar and Ayllón. (110 km).

## Other information of interest

**Segovia Capital distance:** 97 km.

**Area:** 94,19 km<sup>2</sup>.

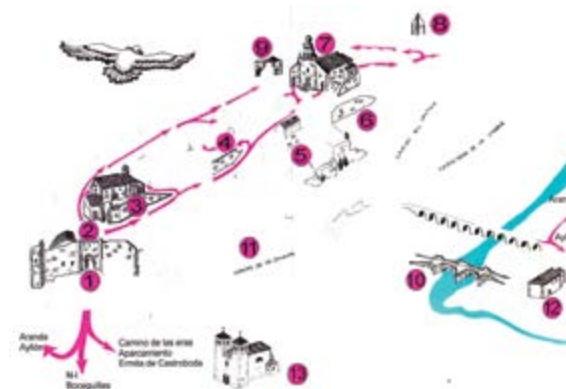
**Altitude:** 952 m.

**Population:** 109 inhabitants.

# Tourist

## Establishments

**For more information at:**  
[www.segoviaturismo.es](http://www.segoviaturismo.es)



# Where do I find information?

### City Council of Maderuelo

C/ De Arriba, 6  
40554 Maderuelo  
Tel. 921 556 110  
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Tourist Office  
Tel. 921 556 089  
[www.maderuelo.com](http://www.maderuelo.com)  
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### OTHER MAPS AND BROCHURES

- Cattle herding on horseback
- Isabel the Catholic's route
- Saint Medel's way
- Segovia - World Heritage City    
- Segovia a place to make movies
- Map of the province
- Emotions Horizon
- Monuments Opening Hours
- Tourism in Segovia   

### TOWN

- Aguilafuente
- Ayllón  
- Cabañas de Polendos
- Cantalejo
- Carbonero el Mayor
- Coca  
- Cuéllar  
- El Espinar  
- Fuentidueña  
- Maderuelo  
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- Riaza  
- Sepúlveda  
- Turégano  
- Villacastín  

### VIDEOS

- Tourism Segovia
- Something for everyone
- Segovia. Land of cultures

## TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

### CAPITAL

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Plaza Mayor, 9 40001 Segovia  
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**Tourist Office**  
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www.turismocastillayleon.com  
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Azoguejo, 1 40001 Segovia  
Tel. 921 466 720 / 21 / 22  
Fax. 921 466 724  
www.turismodesegovia.com  
info@turismodesegovia.com

### Other tourist information points

**Tourist Information Point in the City Walls**  
Plaza del Socorro, 2 y 3 40001 Segovia  
Tel. 921 461 297  
www.redjudearias.org

### Bus station

Po. Ezequiel González, s/n 40002 Segovia  
Tel. 921 436 569  
informacion.estacion@turismodesegovia.com

**AVE (high-speed rail) station**  
Estación Segovia-Guiomar  
Ctra. de Juarillos, s/n 40195 Hontoria (Segovia)  
Tel. 921 447 262  
informacion.ave@turismodesegovia.com

### Association of Official Tour Guides of Segovia

Tel. 691 117 197  
www.guiasdeturismodesegovia.es  
guiasdeturismodesegovia@yahoo.es

### Central Reservations Office of Rural Tourism in Castille and León

Tel. 979 178 137  
www.castillayleonesvida.com

### Association of Rural Taxis in Segovia

Tel. 645 836 373  
Para cualquier traslado a la provincia  
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Palacio de Vellosillo, 1 40520 Ayllón  
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www.ayllon.es  
turismo@ayllon.es

**Cuéllar**  
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Tel. 921 142 203 / 140 014 / Fax. 921 142 076  
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**El Espinar**  
Plaza de la Constitución, 1 40400 El Espinar  
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turismo@pedraza.info

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Paseo de los Dolores, 1 (Edificio del Ayto.)  
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info@turismorealsitiodesanildefonso.com

**Riaza**  
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oficinaturismo@riaza.es

**Sepúlveda**  
Plaza del Trigo, 6  
40300 Sepúlveda  
Tel. 921 540 425  
www.turismosepulveda.es  
turismo@sepulveda.es

**Villacastín**  
Plaza Mayor, 1 40150 Villacastín (junto Ayto.)  
Tel. 921 198 547  
www.villacastin.es  
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Tierra de Pinares  
Tel. 921 143 422  
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www.segoviasur.com





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