

# SEGOVIA

*religious tourism*

ARTE RELIGIOSO · MANIFESTACIONES RELIGIOSAS POPULARES · ITINERARIOS MÍSTICOS







religious  
tourism  
S E G O V I A

Segovia	[3]
Tour 1	[4]
Tour 2	[11]
Tour 3	[12]
Tour 4	[18]
Visiting the Province of Segovia	[21]
The North-east	[22]
Ayllón	
Maderuelo	
Hornuez Sanctuary	
Chapel de San Frutos	
Sepúlveda	
The Segovian Countryside	[26]
Santa María la Real de Nieva	
Martín Muñoz de las Posadas	
Rapariegos	
Coca	
The Tierra de Pinares Area	[29]
Cuéllar	
El Henar Sanctuary	
Carbonero el Mayor	
Fuentepelayo	
The South	[32]
La Granja de San Ildefonso	
El Espinar	
Villacastín	
The Pirón Valley	[34]
Caballar	
Sotosalbos	
Map of the Province	[36]
Holy Week	[38]
Monasteries and Convents	[39]





# SEGOVIA

## Religious Tourism

*View of Segovia*

### San Juan de la Cruz



*Statue of St. John of the Cross by the sculptor José María García Moro*

The Province of Segovia provides a great range of tourism opportunities which even the most demanding visitor will enjoy, covering as it does a total of 6,949km<sup>2</sup> and offering attractions of all kinds: monuments, archaeology, sport, history, countryside, conferences and meetings, culture, gastronomy, etc. To this we can also add another type of tourism which is attracting more and more travellers, religious tourism. We would like to invite visitors to go on “religious tours” around the city and the province.

The Aqueduct seen from the Plaza Oriental



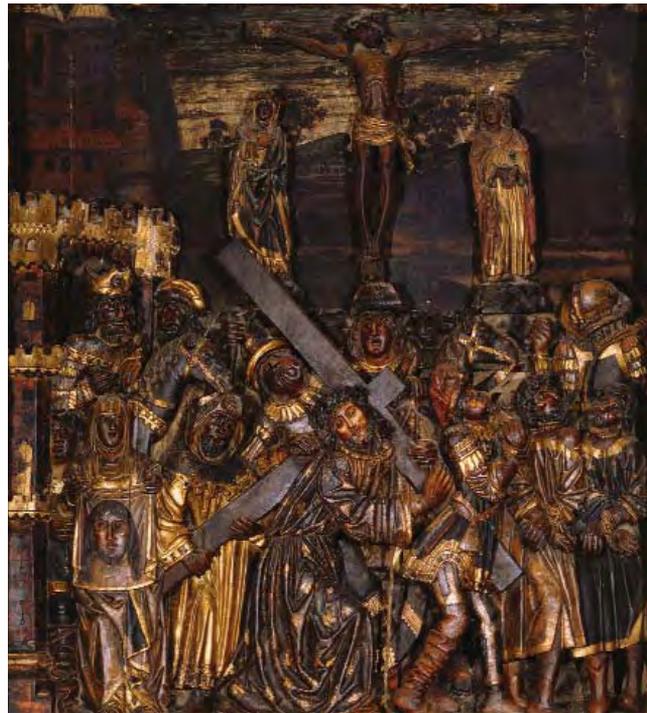
Niche with a statue of the Virgin Mary in the Plaza del Azoguejo



## TOUR 1

The Aqueduct, which is the starting point for our tours of the city, is also directly related to the theme of religion. There is a niche in the central part of both sides of the Aqueduct above the Plaza del Azoguejo. On the side looking west there is a statue of the Virgin Mary, whilst on the eastern side the niche has been empty for years after a very worn sculpture of San Sebastián was removed from it. We walk up the steep Calle Real, the main artery through the city (which in reality is made up of Calle de Cervantes, Calle de Juan Bravo, the Plaza del Corpus and Calle de Isabel la Católica) and we soon come to a very attractive area with steps and noble buildings which is popularly known as Plaza de las Sirenas (named after two sculptures there which look like, but strictly speaking are not, mermaids, or sirenas in Spanish). This area is made up of the Plaza de Medina del Campo with a statue of the comunero Juan Bravo, and at the top the Plaza de San Martín together with the Church of San Martín which has stunning doors, both inside and out, on the western side and very original iconographical capitals on the northern wall; there is

also a large atrium with interesting capitals on the southern face. There are a number of gravestones in its wall which seem to correspond to tombs. Inside the church visitors can admire a magnificent Reclining Christ which is attributed to Gregorio Fernández, and it would seem justifiably so. A small but valuable museum exhibits a magnificent Flemish triptych by Adrián Issembrant, two reliquary busts of



Path to Calvary Altarpiece (ca. 1500) in the Church of San Martín



Altarpiece in the Church of San Martín



San Marcos and San Lorenzo, a beautiful wooden sculpture of St. Francis of Assisi by Pedro de Mena and other just as important paintings and sculptures.

Not far from this church we come to the Plaza del Corpus Christi where the Church of Corpus Christi is to be found together with a convent for Clarisa nuns. The church used to be the main Jewish synagogue and very recently saw the completion of restoration work of the former synagogue's arches, capitals and stained glass windows which to a large extent were destroyed in a fire in 1899. The nuns of the convent carry out binding work to order.

From the Convent of Corpus Christi one can enter the old Jewish quarter along the narrow little street called Calle Judería Vieja. This quarter is counted among the "Sephardic Paths" of the Network of Spanish Jewish Cities. About halfway down this street, there is an attractive granite doorway which leads to a number of buildings, one of which is the Jewish Quarter Education Centre. This was the house of the eminent Segovian, Andrés Laguna. It also appears that part of the building belonged to the Jewish convert to Christianity, Abraham Sennear. However, if we continue along the last section of the Calle Real (Calle Isabel la Católica), we

Tomb of the Rueda family in the Church of San Miguel





Altarpiece in the Church of San Miguel

Tomb of the Infante Don Pedro

almost immediately come to the Plaza Mayor (Main Square). On our right is the Church of San Miguel, built some time after the original church which stood in the centre of the square was pulled down. It was in the atrium of that first church that Isabel la Católica was crowned on 13th December 1474. Some of the original church's sculptures have survived and they have now been replaced by copies on the façade of today's church in order to preserve them better. The originals can be seen from outside in the entrance in Calle del Cronista Lecea. In the fairly spacious interior of the church is the artistically decorated tomb of the Rueda family and the tomb of the illustrious Segovian, Andrés Laguna (1499-1559), a scientist and humanist, doctor at the court of Carlos V and doctor to Pope Paul III and Pope Julius III. He wrote the notes in the translation of Dioscorides' "De Materia Medica" and the famous "Discurso de Europa" (Europe Discourse).

We cross the Plaza Mayor to visit the Cathedral which we are not going to discuss in detail here as it can be visited with a guide. Nevertheless, in addition to the

many things which can be seen in the cathedral, it is worth pointing out that on the altar in the retrochoir is the urn which contains the remains of San Frutos, the Patron Saint of the Diocese of Segovia (when you travel around the province you will have the opportunity to visit his chapel by the Duratón River gorge), and quite high up in the cloister there is an inscription which recounts that the converted Jewess, who was thrown off the cliffs called Peñas Grajeras having been accused of adultery, is buried there. As she fell, she commended herself to the Virgen de la Fuencisla and got to the ground safely. She converted to Catholicism and this is where her tomb lies. In the museum (which in the near future will be moved under the cloister, consi-

Urn with the remains of San Frutos in the retrochoir of the Cathedral





*Plaque in the Convent of the Carmelite Nuns*

derably increasing its size), there is at present a small tomb with the engraved golden sculpture of the Infante Don Pedro, the son of Enrique II, who fell from a window in the Alcázar to the ditch below in a moment of carelessness on the part of his nursemaid who threw herself out of the window after him.

Coming out of the Cathedral we head down Calle Marqués del Arco to the gardens of La Merced (there used to be a Mercedarian convent built on the remains of what was a smaller Jewish synagogue) where on our right we find a convent for Carmelite nuns which was founded by Santa Teresa de Jesús. Today the religious community makes textiles to sell to the public.

It is possible to enter the old Jewish quarter from La Merced area along Calle San Geroteo where we find the school of the Madres Jesuitinas, in which there are the remains of the Ibáñez synagogue, one of five synagogues in the city, Calle Almuzara (named after an oil mill, known in Spanish as an almuzara), Calle Refitolería (where the

Cathedral Chapter once gave food to the poor) and Calle Judería Vieja. This last street takes us to San Andrés Gate (one of three surviving gates ) where there is a city wall visitor centre known as the City Wall Interpretive Centre. From here a steep flight of steps leads down to the Clamores Valley (the stream was covered many years ago). Crossing the valley leads to the Jewish cemetery which is located in the area known as El Pinarillo (pine woodland) where a number of tombs in the open air and in caves survive.

*Tombs in the Jewish Cemetery in El Pinarillo*





*The spot where St. John of the Cross used to rest*

In the Plaza de la Merced is the Church of San Andrés which is home to two Works by Gregorio Fernández and statues from the Convent of La Merced which no longer exists, a Pietà by José de Ratés, a reliquary made of silver with a relic of the patron saint of the church and three lamps from the original Crystal Factory at La Granja. An original feature of the chancel is that it is slightly off-centre from the central part of the church.

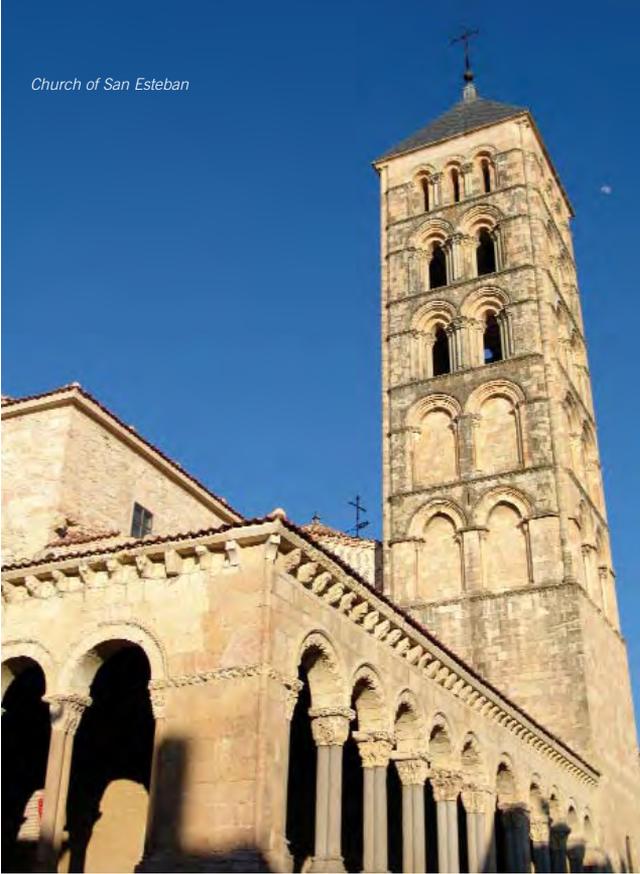
Opposite the church there is a narrow street called Calle de Adolfo de Sandoval (named after a prolific Segovian novelist) which takes us to what used to be the Canonjías district where the canons of the original cathedral lived when the cathedral stood in what are now the gardens leading to the Alcázar. The cloister gate which led to the enclosure survives and can be found in what is now Calle Velarde (named after the captain who, together with his companion from the Royal Artillery College in Segovia, Daoíz, defended the Artillery Park in Madrid

*Silver reliquary of San Andrés (16th century) in the Church of San Andrés*



against the Napoleonic invasion). We walk along this street towards Calle Vallejo where a statue of St. John of the Cross by the sculptor José María García Moro was erected a few years ago. A few metres further down Paseo San Juan de la Cruz there stands an iron cross nailed to a rock. An inscription in the rock tells us that according to general belief, St. John of the Cross used to rest at this spot whenever he walked up to the city from the convent of Carmelite monks which he founded.

We now retrace our steps and walk to the Plaza de San Esteban where we come across the Church of San Esteban which has a small atrium next to a graceful and beautiful tower which, with its six sections, is an outstanding example of Romanesque

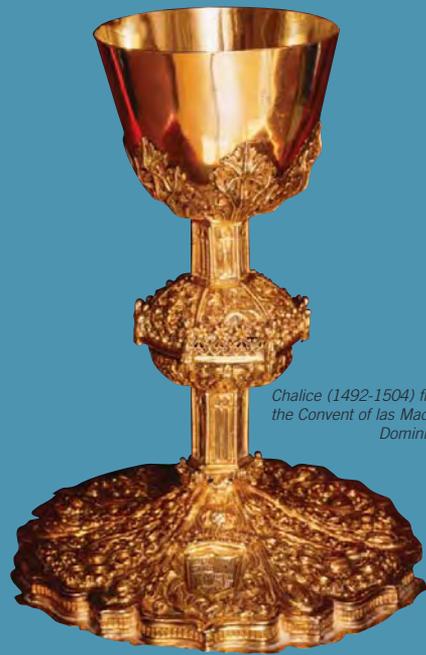


*Close-up of the Tower of Hércules  
in the Convent of las Madres  
Dominicas*

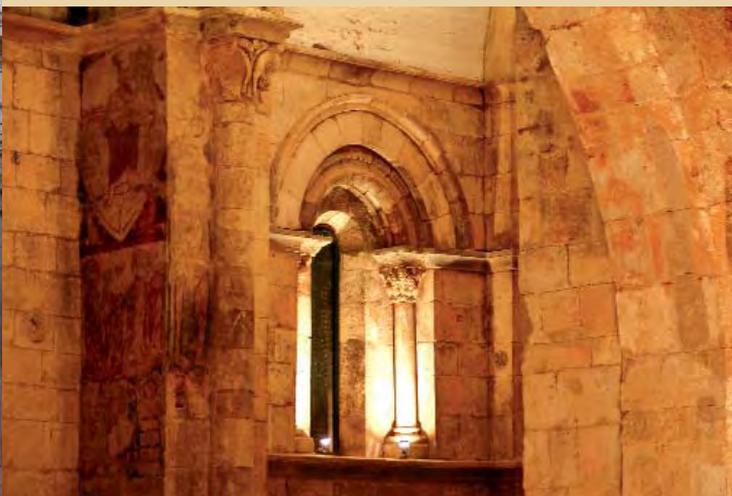
architecture. Taking up the whole of one side of the square is the Bishop's Palace.

We continue down Calle de Valdeláguila (a name which recalls Doña Mencía del Águila who governed the city until Alfonso XI came of age) and come to the walls of the Convent of the Dominican Nuns, where the sturdy Tower of Hércules rises up. Inside the tower there is a sculpture of the mythological Hercules and "the best Moorish paintings in Spain" according to the Marquis of Lozoya. The public cannot view them as the tower lies within the area of the cloister. For many years now, the religious community has dedicated its time to making polychrome sculptures.

Opposite the door of this church is the Church of the Santísima Trinidad which has an extremely beautiful Romanesque interior. One highlight is a panel which depicts two angels holding up the Holy Face which some attribute to Ambrosio Benson and others to the "Maestro of Segovia".



*Chalice (1492-1504) from  
the Convent of las Madres  
Dominicas*



Walking along Calle San Agustín we come to a small garden next to which a flight of steps invites us down to the Plaza de Colmenares, a name the square gets from the first Segovian chronicler, Diego de Colmenares, whose remains, tradition tells us, are resting in a tomb inside the Church of San Juan de los Caballeros which he was the parish priest of and which stands in the same square near the city wall. It is an attractive example of Romanesque architecture. It is quite spacious inside and there are two other tombs which are said to be of the Segovian captains Día Sanz and Fernán García, who were conquerors of Madrid. The church was the see of the nobility. Above one of the naves is the home of the great ceramic artist, Daniel Zuloaga, who bought this church when it was in ruins to convert it into his workshop. His nephew, Ignacio Zuloaga also painted here. Nowadays, the building is a museum of the

ceramic artist's works which include a number with religious motifs.

We now go up Calle de los Zuloaga back towards Calle San Agustín which we cross and we enter Calle de Joaquín Pérez Villanueva (a civil governor of the province, 1946-50) which takes us to the Romanesque Church of San Sebastián. From here we turn right into Calle del Licenciado Peralta (an educated Segovian soldier who defended the cause of Doña Juana, the daughter of the Catholic Monarchs), where there is a convent belonging to Franciscan nuns who make and sell sweet and savoury pastries.

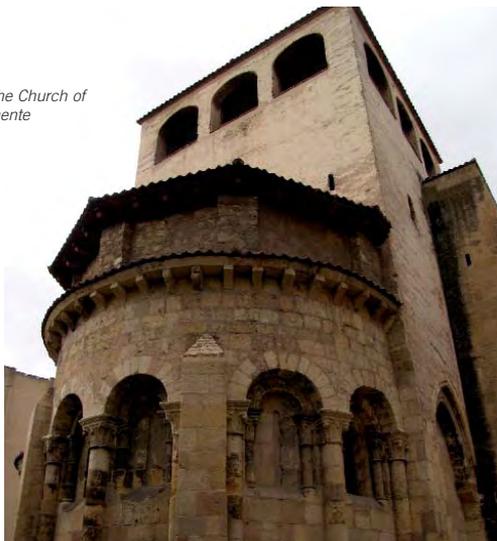
We come to the Plaza del Seminario where we end our first religious tourism tour. In this square there is the large granite façade of the former Council Seminary built by the Society of Jesus. It is said that the man who would eventually become San Francisco de Borja attended its opening. There is a fairly large church where a number of sculptures of considerable value are kept. The building has now been turned into a spiritual centre and residence for people attending seminaries, meetings, retreats, etc. The offices of the Bishopric of Segovia have also moved here recently.

## TOUR 2

Once again we start out from the Plaza del Azoguejo along Avenida de Fernández Ladreda (named after the Minister of Public Works when the avenue was planned). Very soon we come to the Church of San Clemente on our left, a church which is not usually used for worship. It has a beautiful Romanesque apse which faces Calle del Marqués de Mondéjar (named after a writer and politician of Felipe IV).

Continuing along the avenue we are immediately struck by the large parish church of San Millán which is decorated with beautiful apses, atriums and porticos and considered one of the oldest churches in the city. It is majestic inside with remains of its old Mudejar coffered ceiling. There are two venerated sculptures, one of the Virgen de la Soledad and one of Cristo en su Última Palabra (Christ Speaking His Last Words).

Apse of the Church of San Clemente



Both works are by Aniceto Marinas, a sculptor who was born in the parish.

We now continue along what is popularly known as Camino Nuevo (it is really made up of three sections, Paseo Ezequiel González, Paseo del Conde de Sepúlveda and Paseo Obispo Quesada) which will take us to the old chapel of Cristo del Mercado, in front of which there is a stone cross. According to tradition, where the cross stands is where San Vicente Ferrer preached to Segovians. A friar at the time, Vicente arrived in the city on the 3rd May 1411, the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, and found a large throng there, probably to celebrate the positioning of the maypole, probably a pagan custom which was absorbed by Catholicism. The feast is still celebrated at the feet of the chapel. On San Vicente Ferrer's wishes a small chapel was built here but in the 17th century it was torn down to replace it with the one which stands there today. The chapel contains an altarpiece by the maestro Churriguera. The specific date of the sculpture of Christ is not known although it is thought that it was given to the chapel at the beginning of the 16th century. In 1863 a relic of San Vicente Ferrer was brought from Rome, kept in a white metal reliquary (today its whereabouts are unknown).



Plaza de San Lorenzo

Monastery of San Vicente el Real

## TOUR 3

Once again we start out from the Plaza del Azoguejo along Vía Roma, or along a parallel and very old street called Calle de Gascos (the Gascons who brought the Reclining Christ found in the Church of San Justo stayed in houses in this street). These streets will bring us out in the Plaza de San Lorenzo which is made up of houses with popular-style façades and where there stands a church with Romanesque apses and a Mudejar tower. The church's portico has some very attractive capitals. Inside, we can admire a beautiful late-Gothic triptych of the Pietà by Benito Gilarte, painted by Rodrigo Segovia. This is one of the prettiest districts in the city. In the past, the majority of the inhabitants here worked growing vegetable gardens which hugged the houses on all sides. Domingo de Soto, the great theologian of the Council of Trent and confessor of Carlos V, was born in this district.

We walk through the whole district until we cross a small and old bridge over the River Eresma which will take us to the Cistercian



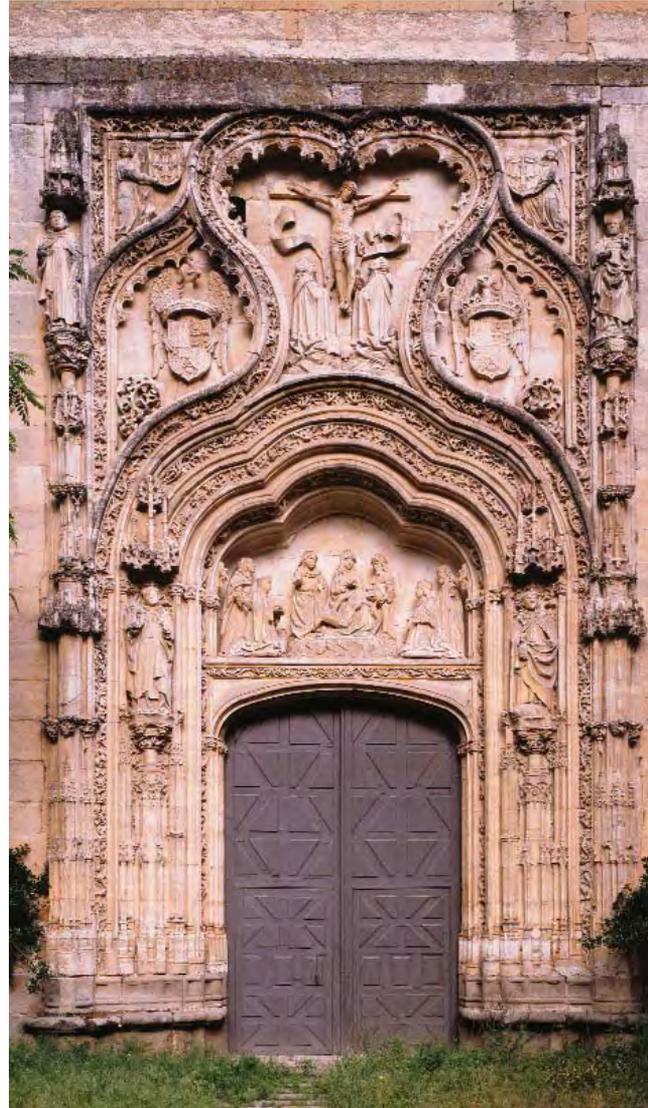
Monastery of San Vicente el Real. It was built on the site of a pagan temple and is made up of a number of buildings, hence the many roofs. It was founded in the year 919 A.D. as a Benedictine monastery. Cistercian Nuns dwell there now. Some of the services for the public are performed in Latin with Gregorian chants.

From here we continue along a dirt path towards the Alameda (poplar grove) of El Parral. Very soon we come to a stone bridge over the River Eresma and after crossing it, we walk up a steep path towards the old Convent of Santa Cruz la Real; A Dominican Convent was founded by Santo Domingo de

*Façade of the Church of the  
Convent of Santa Cruz la Real*

Guzmán, although it was the Catholic Monarchs (Isabel and Fernando) who had the stunning stonework built which we see today. The church has a fine doorway. Its first prior was the famous Friar Tomás de Torquemada. The building is now used by the SEK University which has been carrying out considerable maintenance and improvement work. Behind the church is the cave, to which there is an separate entrance, where Santo Domingo did penance. It was turned into a small chapel where Santa Teresa de Jesús entered a state of ecstasy, conversing with the founding saint on 30th September 1574. It is said that she declared that there was a great likeness between the saint she had the spiritual discussion with and the sculpture of him in the hollow above the small altar.

We take the same path back to the wide and shady poplar grove with the Eresma River



*Cave of Santo  
Domingo inside the  
Convent of Santa Cruz  
la Real*



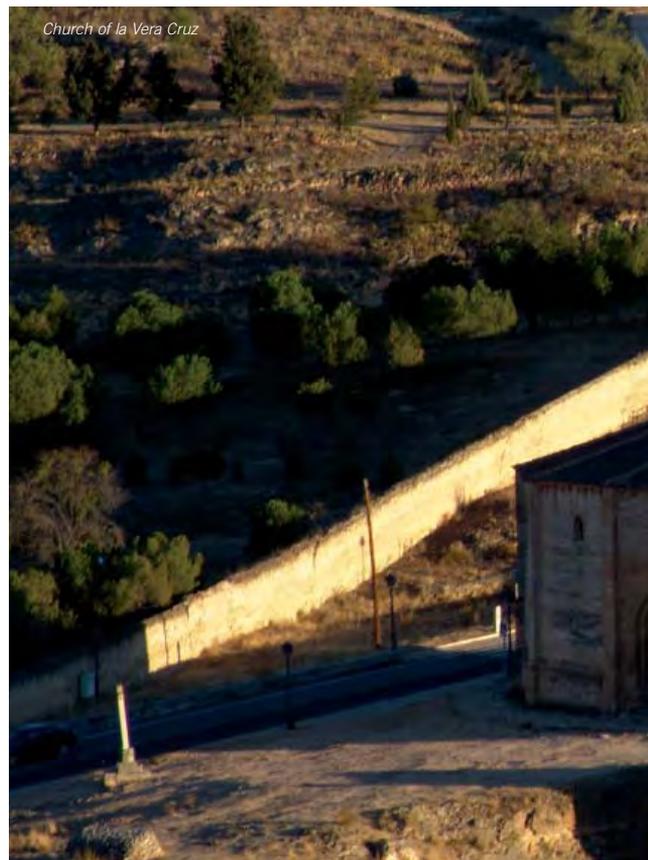


flowing next to it towards the former Mint (which is soon to be restored). Here we follow a steep stony path to the right which takes us to the very famous Monastery of Santa María de El Parral, one of only two in Spain which are still run by Hieronymite Monks (the other is the Monastery of Yuste). Juan Pacheco, the Marquis of Villena, is attributed with its founding, although the well informed author, the Marquis of Lozoya claims that Villena was the founder of the church, whilst the monastery as a whole built at Enrique IV's desire. The fact that Juan Pacheco is attributed with its founding can be put down to a legend which tells us that a nearby chapel dedicated to the Virgin was chosen for a duel between Villena and another gentleman. The latter arrived in the company of two men. In the face of the situation, the Marquis said, whilst he was unsheathing his blade, "Traitor, your treachery will be of no use to you if one of those who are accompanying you does for me what they have promised. We will be equal". His words gave birth to mistrust among the three men, which the marquis took advantage of to injure two of them, whilst the third fled the scene. The Marquis promised to build a monastery dedicated to the Virgin. The whole of the monastery, including the large church, its cloisters and other build-

ings, is very beautiful. Some of the buildings have been considerably improved over the years thanks to the enthusiasm of the monks and their fruitful work. The church is dominated by an impressive golden and polychrome Plateresque altarpiece next to which are the tombs of the Marquises of Villena, among other tombs.

The Hieronymite Monks who dedicate themselves to prayer and study also make wooden benches for churches. In their worship they use Gregorian chants. The monastery has a small area for male guests only.

We now retrace our steps past the Mint towards the District of San Marcos where, almost as soon as we get there, we walk up a stretch of road which leads to the District of Zamarramala to visit the unusual Church





of la Vera Cruz which is also known as “The Templars”: this is because, according to some historians, it was this order that founded it. There are others, however, who are inclined to believe that it was founded on the initiative of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. What is certain is that there are a number of legends concerning the church and the Templar Knights. The church is built in the shape of a 12-sided polygon with a triple apse, a tower and two doorways. In the centre inside there is a small two-floor shrine. On the upper floor there is a small altar. This is all related to the rites attributed to the Templar Knights.

When the Order of the Temple was disbanded, the church became the property of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and later of

the Order of Malta whose care it was in until the end of the 18th century. It was then left abandoned for many years until 1845. More recently in 1951 it was returned to the Order of Malta whose members hold some ceremonies there and who come in their characteristic dress to the Procession of the Holy Burial which goes from the church in Zamarramala to the church of la Vera Cruz at night on Good Friday. In the church chapel, underneath the tower there is a tabernacle in flowery Gothic style where a relic from the Cross of Christ which was given by Pope Honorio III in 1224 A.D., was venerated for centuries. It has now been hidden for many years to protect it from being stolen in the church of the parish of Zamarramala where other objects from the Church of la Vera Cruz are also kept.



*Inside the Church of la Vera Cruz*



This district of Segovia is universally known for its festival celebrating mayoresses and Aguedera women which is held on the Sunday closest to 5th February in honour of Santa Águeda. On this day it is the women who rule the roost. They wear old Segovian clothing and the two mayoresses attend with their staffs of office to preside over the ceremonies. In the procession only women are allowed to dance in front of the saint, to carry her sculpture and take part in the circular dance. There is only one man with them, the parish priest, who is usually dressed in a long cloak and clerical headwear in accordance with old religious custom.

It is precisely the church in Zamarramala where the relic of the Holy Cross, which used to be in the nearby church of la Vera Cruz, has been kept for many years. The relic is now hidden away following a number of attempts to steal it and it is brought out



for the faithful to worship during services on Good Friday. In this church there is also a Reclining Christ which comes from the Church of the Vera Cruz along with other objects of worship.

We go back down to the Alameda de la Fuencisla where a large flight of steps takes us to the Convent of the Padres Carmelitas. In a chapel inside the church is the altar with the urn which contains the remains of St. John of the Cross, who founded this convent back in 1586 and was its first Prior. There is also a painting of Christ in the convent which according to tradition spoke to the saint whilst he was praying before it, as well as the original tomb of St. John of the Cross and a sculpture of him attributed to Gregorio Fernández. In the upper part of the large vegetable garden from which we can enjoy an impressive view of Segovia, there are two chapels, it is said that in one of them

Relic of the Holy Cross





*Visit by Pope John Paul II in 1982*

*Mausoleum of St. John of the Cross in the Convent of the Padres Carmelitas*

the mystic saint composed some of his most beautiful poems. During Holy Week a very popular Via Crucis procession takes place along the paths through this garden. On 4th November 1982, the late Pope John Paul II prayed before the tomb of St. John of the Cross to whom he was very devout.

In the convent there is a Spirituality Centre with a residence which is very popular all year round. It organises retreats, conferences, religious and lay meetings, etc.

We end today's tour at the Sanctuary of the Virgen de la Fuencisla who is the Patron Saint of Segovia and its lands. The origins of the sanctuary take us back to the miracle we have already mentioned of the Jewess called Esther who was thrown off the rocks which the present-day church dating from

the 17th century shelters beneath. The sculpture of the Virgin is small but has very fine and moving features, as does the figure of the Christ Child she holds in her right hand. The church has wonderful artistic screens and a Gothic pulpit. It was also visited by Pope John Paul II in 1982.





## TOUR 4

We start out from the feet of the Aqueduct and walk up Calle de Teodosio el Grande (named after a Roman emperor who was born in Coca, a town in the province of Segovia). The street runs parallel to the aqueduct and takes us to the Royal Artillery College. Originally this building was the Convent of San Francisco and a beautiful courtyard from the convent still stands. We pass through the arches of the aqueduct in the Plaza de Día Sanz (named after one of the legendary Segovian captains who conquered Madrid. In the centre of the square there is a large granite fountain. Opposite the fountain on the corner with Calle de San Alfonso Rodríguez stands a building (which at present is still being restored) which a plaque tells us is the birthplace of the Segovian saint. At the top of this large house there is still a gallery which was typical of the houses of traders in textiles and wool. This indeed was the trade of the saint's father. His wife and children dead, Alfonso entered the Society of Jesus and was sent to Majorca, the island of which he is patron saint.

We enter Calle Ondátegui (named after a famous textile maker) behind this house and almost immediately come to a small square in which the Romanesque church of Santos Justo y Pastor stands. It was in the front of this church that San Alfonso Rodríguez was baptised in 1530. For many years the church was left abandoned and turned into a warehouse for old objects. A few decades ago, the plaster vault came loose, something which arose an interest at the Caja de Ahorros de Segovia bank to restore the church, and restoration work was started. Whilst the work was being carried out many significant works of art were uncovered. The discoveries brought even more surprises as when Romanesque paintings in the side apses were viewed, a decision was made to remove the altarpiece and fairly well preserved fresco paintings appeared on the wall behind it. The Marquis of Lozoya witnessed the work being done himself and published a small book on it in 1966 in which he describes the contents of the paintings which are dominated by Christ Pantocrator. According to the specialist, José Gudiol, whose team of restorers worked on the restoration of the paintings, these paintings make up "one of the most important collections of Romanesque painting in Spain, and can be compared with Tahull, Maderuelo, San Baudilio de Berlanga and San

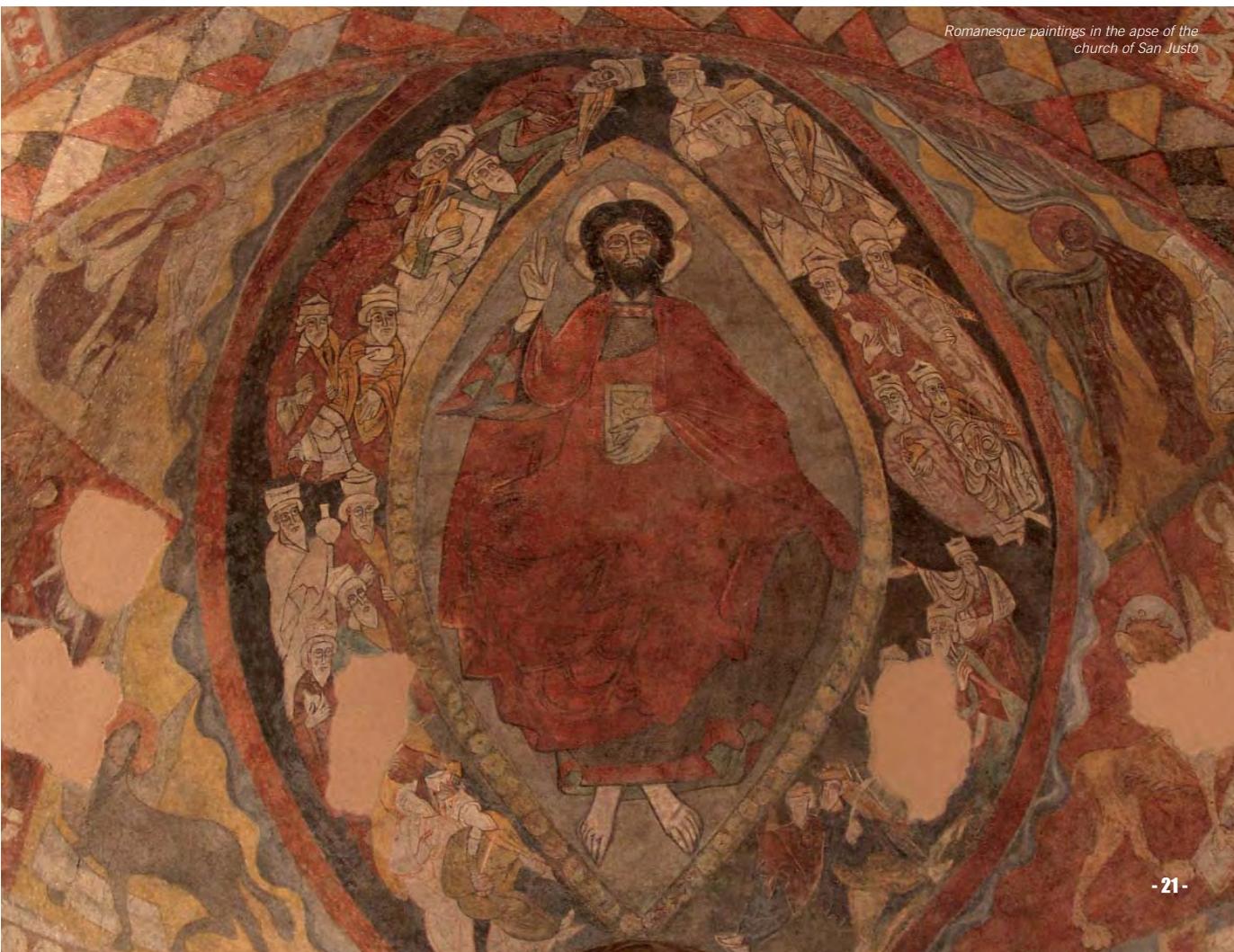


Font in the church of San Justo

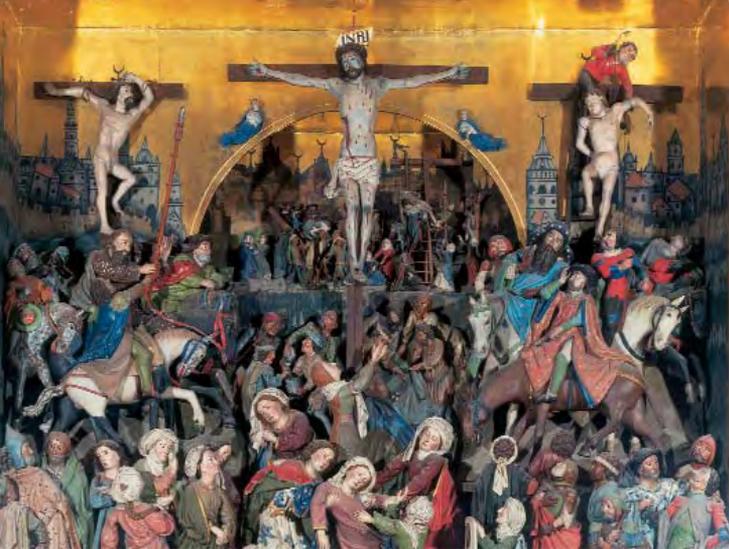
Isidoro de León” as Juan de Contreras, the Marquis of Lozoya, remarks in his book. Once the church had been restored, the sculpture of the 12th century Reclining Christ of the Gascons returned here, where it had been worshiped before. The sculpture gets this name because, tradition tells us, it was brought to Segovia by soldiers from French Gascony on the back of a mare who died right where the church stands, and this was interpreted as a sign of the divine will that the sculpture of Christ, which has articulated arms, should remain here. A short distance away is the fairly large

Romanesque Church of El Salvador with considerable remains from when it was first built. Among a number of works of art there is a sculpture of the Immaculate Virgin by Gregorio Fernández and a painting by Francisco Camilo who left a number of outstanding works in the city of Segovia.

We continue along Calle de Cañuelos (named after the water spouts which used to be there) and come out in Avenida del Padre Claret by a monument which commemorates this saint, opposite the school which bears his name and is run by the Padres Misioneros del Corazón de María.



*Romanesque paintings in the apse of the church of San Justo*



*Calvary Altarpiece in the Convent of San Antonio el Real*

During his time at La Granja as confessor to Isabel II, San Antonio María Claret often visited his congregation's residence and preached there. As we enter the present-day church, there is a corridor on the right where one can see the lattice screen which used to be in the church and behind which Father Claret went to pray. According to tradition he spoke to Jesus and Mary there.

As we walk up Avenida del Padre Claret along a narrow passageway which runs alongside the initial part of the Aqueduct channel, we come to an esplanade where the Convent of San Antonio el Real is to be found. This is one of the outstanding jewels which have survived in the city and is inhabited by nuns of the Order of St. Clare. The building served for Enrique IV's recreation when he was a prince, and at the beginning of his reign he founded a convent of Franciscan monks there. Later it was handed over to nuns of the Order of St. Clare. The church was possibly the main hall in the palace and has a Mudejar ceiling which is a real jewel. In the same church there is a wonderful Stations of the Cross altarpiece of which one should one's time over as some consider it to be the most important work of Flemish sculpture in Europe. It is kept behind protective glass.

Our visit also includes a number of the monastery's other buildings, some of which

are particularly aesthetically pleasing, as well as the cloister with its Mudejar coffered ceilings and three small and very rare altarpieces of the school of Utrecht. Nuns who die at the convent are buried in the cloister but there are no inscriptions as the humbleness of the order prevents them from engraving names. There is just a small "homemade" book which records where each nun is buried.



*Courtyard and cloister of the Convent of San Antonio el Real*



## Visiting the province

Designing a route around the province of Segovia for an outing based on religious tourism is not easy given the large number of places from which to choose. That's why we have selected a number of places which will introduce visitors to what the province has to offer on the theme of religion, though many have had to be left out.



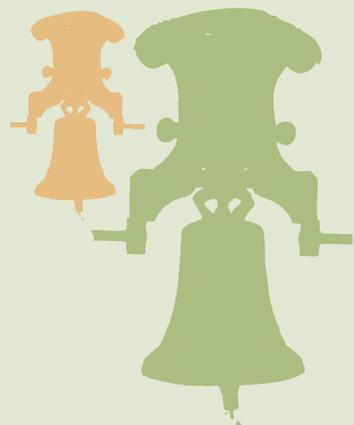
# The North-east

## Ayllón

The whole of this town is a monument, but the parish church of San Miguel which contains the tombs of a number of illustrious people from Ayllón from the 13th and 14th centuries is a must. Nearby is the Church of Santa María la Mayor which stands out for its remarkable 40-metre high bell tower. Inside there is an altarpiece on the main altar with a number of images. A bit further on is the Convent of la Purísima Concepción, founded by the Marquises of Villena in 1528. A good number of relics are kept here. In the ruins of the Church of San Juan there are a number of Renaissance tombs. What used to be the Convent of San Francisco, which according to tradition was founded in 1214 A.D. by the saint himself, also lies in ruins. On one occasion it was visited by San Vicente Ferrer.

## Maderuelo

The walls of the pre-Romanesque chapel of la Santa Cruz (or la Vera Cruz as it has been attributed to Templar origins) were completely covered with wonderful Romanesque paintings. Many years ago these were moved to the Prado Museum in Madrid because of the danger they were in from the water of the nearby Linares reservoir which sometimes flooded the small church. From the chapel a long bridge crosses the reservoir and leads to Maderuelo (just over 100 km from Madrid), a walled town which was at its most magnificent in the 13th century when it had up to ten churches and a castle. The houses are very typical. It is an example of a defensive hamlet with towers, gates, large houses, etc. The Church of Santa María del Castillo is quite large and combines a number of architectural styles;



*Ruins of the Convent of San Francisco*





Church of Santa María del Castillo



some people argue that it was a mosque originally. It contains a number of works of art from churches which no longer exist as well as an altarpiece and a painting on serge of the Last Supper by Gabriel de Sosa which dates from the 16th century. There are also a number of mediaeval tombs and surprisingly, a mummy of what appears to be young women whose origin is unknown.

## Hornuez Sanctuary

Located in Moral de Hornuez, the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Hornuez was originally a chapel which underwent successive changes until it reached the large size of the modern-day building. According to tradition the Virgin appeared among the branches of a juniper tree which has always been linked to the successive churches here. In 1913 a fire destroyed a considerable part of the church as well as the sculpture of the Virgin and part of the juniper tree. The efforts of the congregation brought about the rapid restoration of the church and a new statue was sculpted, resembling the original. The surviving branches of the juniper tree were properly treated and today can be seen on the altar where the holy sculpture is venerated

Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Hornuez





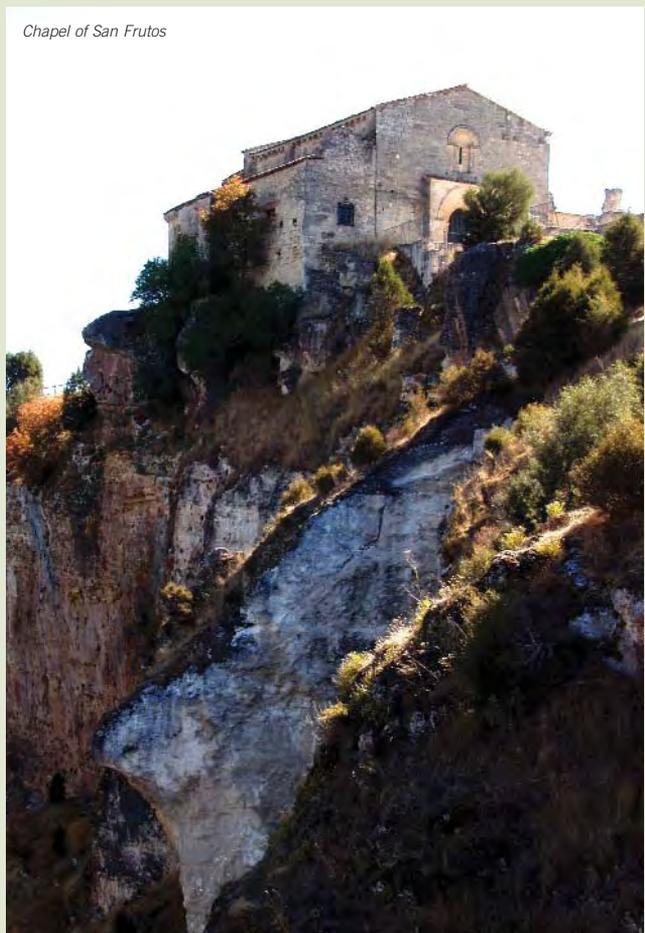
and 1100, completing it in the second half of the 12th century and the Priory of San Frutos was established immediately. It was built on Visigoth remains and the church has survived quite well, unlike the monastery of which some ruins remain. The remains of tombs survive next to the building. A grand romería (an event celebrating a saint) is celebrated on 25th October.

In the background, next to one of the turns in the Duratón River the remains of what used to be the Monastery of la Hoz can be seen. This was a Franciscan convent which was dedicated to Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles de la Hoz which was founded one and a half centuries after the Priory of San Frutos was established.

## Chapel of San Frutos

Of all the many religious attractions in the province of Segovia, a visit to one of the most impressive spots, the Hoces del Duratón National Park, is a must. It is also a spiritual centre in the province of Segovia as this is the location of the Romanesque Church of San Frutos, the patron saint of the diocese who was a recluse who came to this barren place together with his brother and sister, Valentín and Engracia, both characters, as we will soon see, in the tradition of the “Mojadas de Caballar”. A short rocky outcrop is almost surrounded by the waters of the Duratón River which flow many metres below; flocks of vultures nest there and the birds often fly over the large rock on the edge of which one of the walls of the church is incredibly balanced. Alfonso VI gave this site to the Monastery of Silos and the monks built a church between 1076

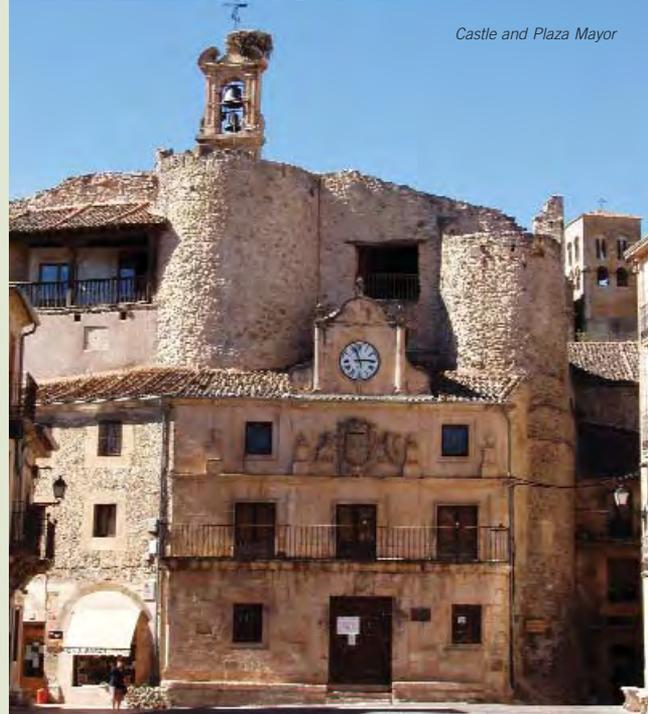
Chapel of San Frutos





## Sepúlveda

Seen from the distance, the urban landscape of this small town is one of the most beautiful that can be seen. Sepúlveda has a famous charter known as the Fuero de Sepúlveda which was granted by Sancho García. Many reminders of the small town's ancient past survive along with a good number of churches in a Romanesque style which is earlier than the so-called "Segovian Romanesque". The most outstanding is the Church of El Salvador which dates from 1093 A.D. and is located on a hill over the town. Inside the church there is a monstrance in the shape of a temple. The Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de la Peña, who is the patron saint of the town, also stands out for its sculptural richness. The Church of San Justo was the favourite of the nobles of the town. Inside the church is the sepulchral chapel of the González family of Sepúlveda; the crypt is of particular interest. In the Plaza de España there is also a



Castle and Plaza Mayor

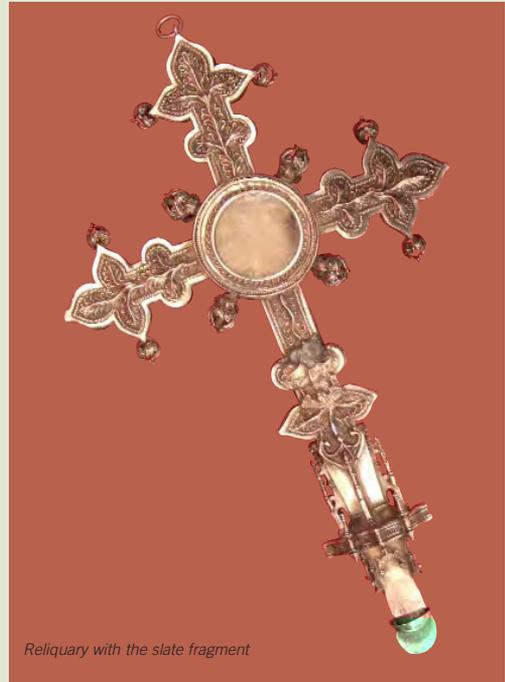
flight of steps and a simple cross (humilladero) which lead to the church of San Bartolomé which is home to a valuable parish cross made by the Segovian silversmith, Antonio de Oquendo. Sepúlveda also used to have a considerable Jewish quarter of which little can be seen today.

# The Segovian Countryside

## Santa María la Real de Nieva

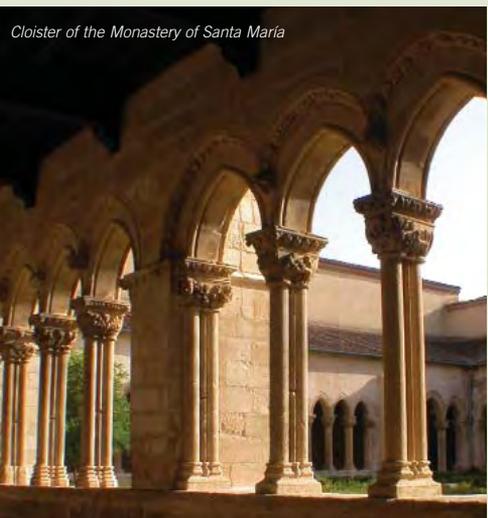
It is also worth visiting this small town during our religious tour of the province. It came into being out of the wishes of queen Catalina of Lancaster (the wife of Enrique III) for a monastery – which was entrusted to the Dominicans – to be built on the same spot where the sculpture of la Virgen de Soterraña was found. Under the protection of the monastery, building work began on village houses in 1395 by decree of the king. According to tradition, the Virgen appeared to a clergyman and told him to ask the Bishop of Segovia to build a church here. Faced with the incredulity of the religious authorities, the clergyman took, on the suggestion of the Virgin in another apparition, a piece of slate which nobody, except

*High Altar in the church of the Monastery with the Virgen de la Soterraña*



*Reliquary with the slate fragment*

the bishop, could detach from his hand. This raised a great deal of interest in the matter until the sculpture was found right where the clergyman indicated, buried (soterrado in Spanish, hence the name of the Virgen) under a large piece of slate. The crypt where the discovery was made survives to this day under the church. The church has a stunning doorway to the north



*Cloister of the Monastery of Santa María*

and a cloister, restored some years ago, which is considered one of the most valuable in Spain and which has beautiful capitals. Inside the church there is an altarpiece with a very good sculpture of San Jerónimo which is attributed to Berruguete, as well as other valuable sculptures and paintings.

Blanca de Navarra, the daughter of Carlos III and wife of Juan II was buried in this church. A controversy has recently arisen as to whether remains which have been discovered could be hers, and the matter has not yet been settled.

A piece of slate survives in a reliquary which is kept in the church, and it is said that it is the piece of slate which was stuck to the hand of the clergyman.

In honour of the Virgen de la Soterraña there are feast days called the “fiesta de los cirios” (fiesta of the candles) over the first few days in September.

## **Martín Muñoz de las Posadas**

The beginnings of this settlement are attributed to Martín Muñoz, a knight who accompanied El Cid during his exile and whose name repeatedly appears in the Poem of My Cid. There is a large square in the centre of the village and part of it has an arcade. At one end of the square the Palace of Cardenal Espinosa still stands. It is built in Herreran style and has a splendid courtyard.



On the opposite side is the parish church with three doors in different styles corresponding to different periods. There are many things to be seen inside the church, such as beautiful tombs, one of which is that of Cardinal Espinosa with a statue of the cardinal at prayer by Pompeyo Leoni, a number of altarpieces from the 16th and 17th centuries, a Reclining Christ by Francisco Díaz de Tudanca, a student of Gregorio Fernández, beautiful Romanesque paintings in tempera from the 13th and 15th centuries, and a painting by El Greco of The Crucifixion which is in good condition and is protected behind glass. The parish priest of the Church of Santo Tomás de Toledo, to whom the artist gave the painting, appears at prayer next to Christ, the Virgin and St. John. This work by El Greco has always been the pride of the local community which fights tooth and nail for it. And this is why it was kept at the Civil Guard barracks to protect it and ensure it did not leave the village while work was being carried out on the church between 1982 and 1999.



## Rapariegos

This is a small village near the Madrid-Valladolid road. The Royal Convent of Santa Clara should be highlighted. It was probably founded in 1240 A.D. and is occupied by Franciscan nuns of the Order of St. Clare. Throughout its history this monastery has had an important connection with kings and popes. In addition it was for a long time the home of a large number of nuns, of up to around sixty. Nowadays, the nuns make embroidered table linen and bed linen to order, as well as pastries.

Royal Convent of Santa Clara



San Nicolás Tower



## Coca

This town, which was the birthplace of Emperor Teodosio, had seven parish churches, of which all that remains is the graceful tower of the Church of San Nicolás and the Church of Santa María, built at the beginning of the 16th century. Inside this large church there are a number of works of art, the highlight being the four tombs of the Fonseca family (which was responsible for building the famous and beautiful Mudejar castle). The tombs are a valuable collection of Renaissance Carrara marble sculpture work, made by the chisel of the Bartolomé Ordóñez, a sculptor from Burgos.

# The Tierra de Pinares Area

## Cuéllar

This town in the province of Segovia is full of the Mudejar Romanesque or brick Romanesque style, an art form which prevails in the majority of its churches. In one of these, the Church of San Martín, there has for many years been a Mudejar Visitor Centre with a light and sound show, and a visit to the centre is recommended. The Church of San Andrés has a number of important sculptural works, a highlight being the Romanesque-Bizantine Stations of the Cross, and mural paintings in the apses. The Church of San Esteban has an impressive apse in which there are a number of alabaster tombs. The Church of San Miguel has a worthy Baroque altarpiece and a Reclining Christ which is attributed to Gregorio Fernández. The main church in the town was the Convent of San Francisco of which remains do survive. In one of the buildings a visitor centre on Cuéllars famous bull-running has been established. The Church of El Salvador stands out for its flying buttress arches which strengthen the Mudejar apse. Inside there is a Romanesque doorway and a sculpture of the Virgen de la Palma. It is said of the Church of Santa María de la Cuesta with its graceful tower that it belonged to the Templar knights although there is no written evidence of this. In San Francisco park stands the Convent of la Concepción which dates from the 16th century. Franciscan nuns live there. In the outskirts of the town is the Convent of Santa Clara, a

building which dates from 1244 A.D. where Franciscan nuns of the order of St. Clare live.

Although they have no connection with religion, the castle, the Hospital de la Magdalena and the town's numerous and ancient gates, etc. should also be seen.



*Mural paintings in the apse of the Church of San Andrés*



## El Henar Sanctuary

Just 5 km from Cuéllar is the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de El Henar, the patron saint of resin workers of whom there is a greatly revered sculpture. Its *romería* (an event celebrating a saint) in September brings together around 20,000 people and includes a torch-lit procession at night. In the large poplar grove is the Fuente del Cirio (Candle Spring) from which water still streams and where, tradition tells us, the holy sculpture, a beautiful polychrome carving with the Child sitting on the Virgin's knee, appeared. It dates from the 12th century.

The sanctuary has been presided over by Carmelite Monks of the Ancient Observance since 1924.



Virgen de El Henar

## Carbonero el Mayor

The Parish Church of San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist) has an impressive altarpiece, a work dating from the first few years of the 16th century, which has 21 panels between pilasters and carved and engraved wooden adornments.



Altarpiece in the Parish Church of San Juan Bautista

## Fuentepelayo

The first records regarding the origins of Fuentepelayo date from the middle of the 12th century. There are two parish churches. The Church of Santa María la Mayor, located in the centre of the built-up area still has 12th century remains from when it was first built. It has two doorways: the northern flamboyant Gothic limestone doorway is the main one, and the southern one is also Gothic but is made from red stone. The interior is Gothic and has three naves from the 16th century, and it is well worth seeing the lower choir stalls from 1535. The Angustias altar is a highlight with its beautiful group of sculptures of the Pietà attributed to Pedro de Bolduque. There is a curious feature here in that one of the men has a thorn from the crown in his hand and he is showing it to Mary. The limestone pulpit is also in florid Gothic style, but its origins are unknown. Among the valuable precious metal artefacts, the monstrance by Diego de Olmedo (16th century Gothic) and a parish cross considered to be Francisco Ruiz's most beautiful work stand out. There is also a parish cross by Oquendo which belonged to the Parish Church of El Salvador.



The other parish church, named El Salvador, brings together a number of architectural styles. Inside the church, the magnificent coffered ceiling, currently being restored, should be highlighted. There are a number of reliquaries, and one of them contains a small fragment of the Cross of Christ.

Visiting Fuentepelayo during the Octava del Corpus festival is to be strongly recommended. During the procession the monstrance and crosses mentioned above are carried as part of a very typical and ancient popular celebration.



From Fuentepelayo we can head to Escalona del Prado. In the Church of San Zoilo there is a copy of the Turin Shroud dating from 1657.

*The Pietà Group in the Church of  
Santa María la Mayor*

# The south

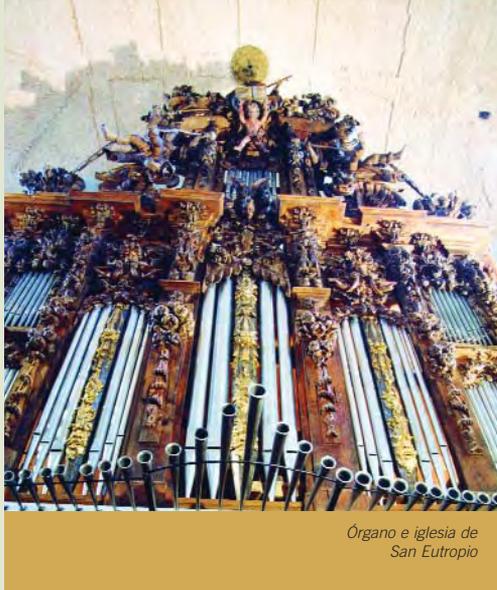
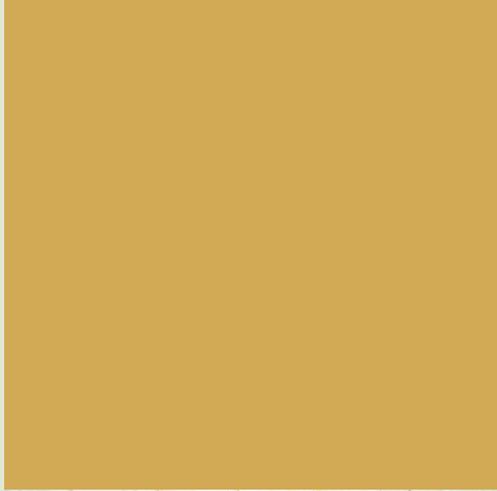
## La Granja de San Ildefonso

Popularly known as La Granja, this village is famous for its royal palace and the fountains in its large, beautiful gardens. The Parish Church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, also named the Church of El Cristo, was built on the orders of Isabel de Farnesio. It contains many important sculptures, highlights being the Soledad and Cristo del Perdón sculptures, both by Luis Salvador Carmona who also has other sculptures at La Granja. San Antonio María

Claret often attended this church during his time at this royal residence. The other church is named Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. A highlight there is the altarpiece of the main altar with a human-sized sculpture of la Dolorosa which is also by Salvador Carmona. In front of the Royal Palace is the Collegiate Church inside which the tomb of Felipe V and his wife can be admired along with a beautiful sculpture of the Inmaculada de Maella and a painting of San Ildefonso receiving the Chasuble, which appears to be the work of Bayeu. There is also an intricate parish cross which is considered to be the most beautiful work of the Segovian silversmith, Antonio de

*Palace and gardens at La Granja de San Ildefonso*





Órgano e iglesia de San Eutropio

Orquendo, and which used to belong to the Segovian parish church of Santa Columba which no longer exists.

The origins of the village go back to the reign of Enrique IV who revered San Ildefonso greatly and had a small chapel built in his honour on land which would later become the famous gardens. Next to the chapel he also had a hunting pavilion built. Some historians claim it was founded because Enrique IV had to fight a wild animal here, which he managed to kill. In 1477 the Catholic Monarchs gave the site to Hieronymite Monks who created an agricultural farm, hence the nickname of La Granja (farm in Spanish).

Later, Felipe V bought the land from the monks to build the present-day palace and its very famous gardens.

## El Espinar

The origins of El Espinar go back to Roman times and later, in 1297, the village was founded when it was granted a charter. It is located right in the foothills of the Guadarrama mountain range and has a large area covered in pine trees. The climate is also very favourable for a summer resort. The Parish Church of San Eutropio has Roman origins but was completed renovated in 1572 by Juan de Mijares, an assistant to Herrera at El Escorial. Inside the church there is a splendid 16th century altarpiece by Francisco Giralte and oil panels by Sánchez Coello, who was also the creator of a large serge painting 15m high and 5m wide with scenes from the Passion which was used to cover the altarpiece during Holy Week. The wonderful 18th century Baroque organ by Pedro Cavaría must be highlighted. It is 15m high and 8m wide and has over 1,000 tin pipes. Nowadays it is often used for concerts.

A few kilometres from the village, next to the Madrid-La Coruña road is the Chapel of the Santo Cristo del Caloco which was built on Romanesque remains from the 11th and 12th centuries. The sculpture of the Santo Cristo del Caloco is greatly revered throughout the district, and in September its typically popular romería (event celebrating a saint) is held with many festivities.

# The Pirón Valley

## Villacastín

The Church of San Sebastián casts an impressive silhouette, the outside in Herreran style, the inside Gothic. Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón who is linked to Segovia's Cathedral, and friar Antonio de Villacastín, a foreman from the Monastery of El Escorial, worked together on the building of the church in the 16th century. The main altarpiece, by Andrés Ruiz (16th century) is very beautiful and is made up of 33 sculptures and some good paintings by the Segovian, Alonso de Herrera. The church has been a National Monument since 1944.

The Convent of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, which building work started on in 1621, has a Renaissance altarpiece with a canvas of Saint Clare and St. Francis. A community of Franciscan nuns of the Order of St. Clare have lived here since 1632.

## Caballar

This is a modest but very well-known village as it is linked to the story of two of three Segovian siblings who became saints, Frutos, Valentín and Engracia, particularly because of what is known the "Mojadas de Caballar". In the parish church, which is an excellent example of the Segovian Romanesque style, there is a chapel dedicated to saints Valentín and Engracia with an altarpiece which has a throne in the centre on which the urn containing the heads of the two martyr siblings sits.

In the fields immediately surrounding the village there are a number of springs. One of them is called the Fuente Santa (Holy Spring) because, according to tradition, the heads of Valentín and Engracia were thrown down it shortly after they were decapitated, until they were discovered and taken to the village church. Ever since then, whenever there is a long drought, the bishop is asked permission to carry out the "Mojadas de Caballar" (wetting of the heads). This consists of taking the remains of the saints in a procession from the church to the spring. These are then wet in the waters of the spring to ask for rain to come, and all the people from the villages in the district take part.



Inside the Church of San Sebastián

Urn containing the heads of San Valentin and Santa Engracia in the Parish Church



There is written evidence of many of these “mojadas” or wettings, and the Segovian researcher and historian, Tomás Calleja Guijarro tells of them in great detail in his book “Las Mojadas de Caballar”. The majority of the wettings have had positive results.

## Sotosalbos

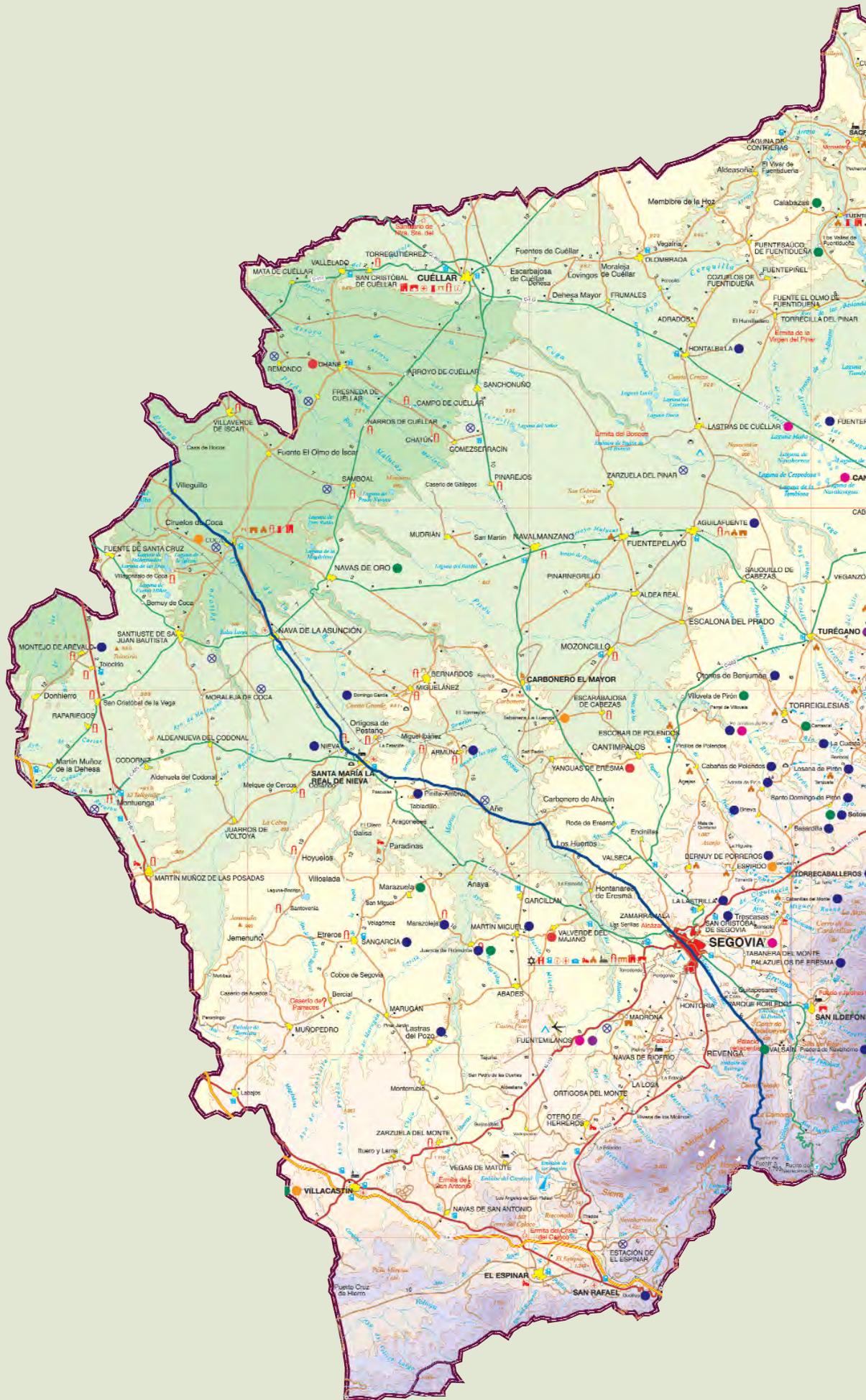
The Romanesque Church of San Miguel which was declared a historical and artistic monument in 1973 is one of the most beautiful churches in the province. It has an atrium which two doors lead to and capitals which are a real sculptural joy. Inside there is a small but valuable museum where a 12th century Romanesque sculpture of the Virgen de la Sierra can be found.

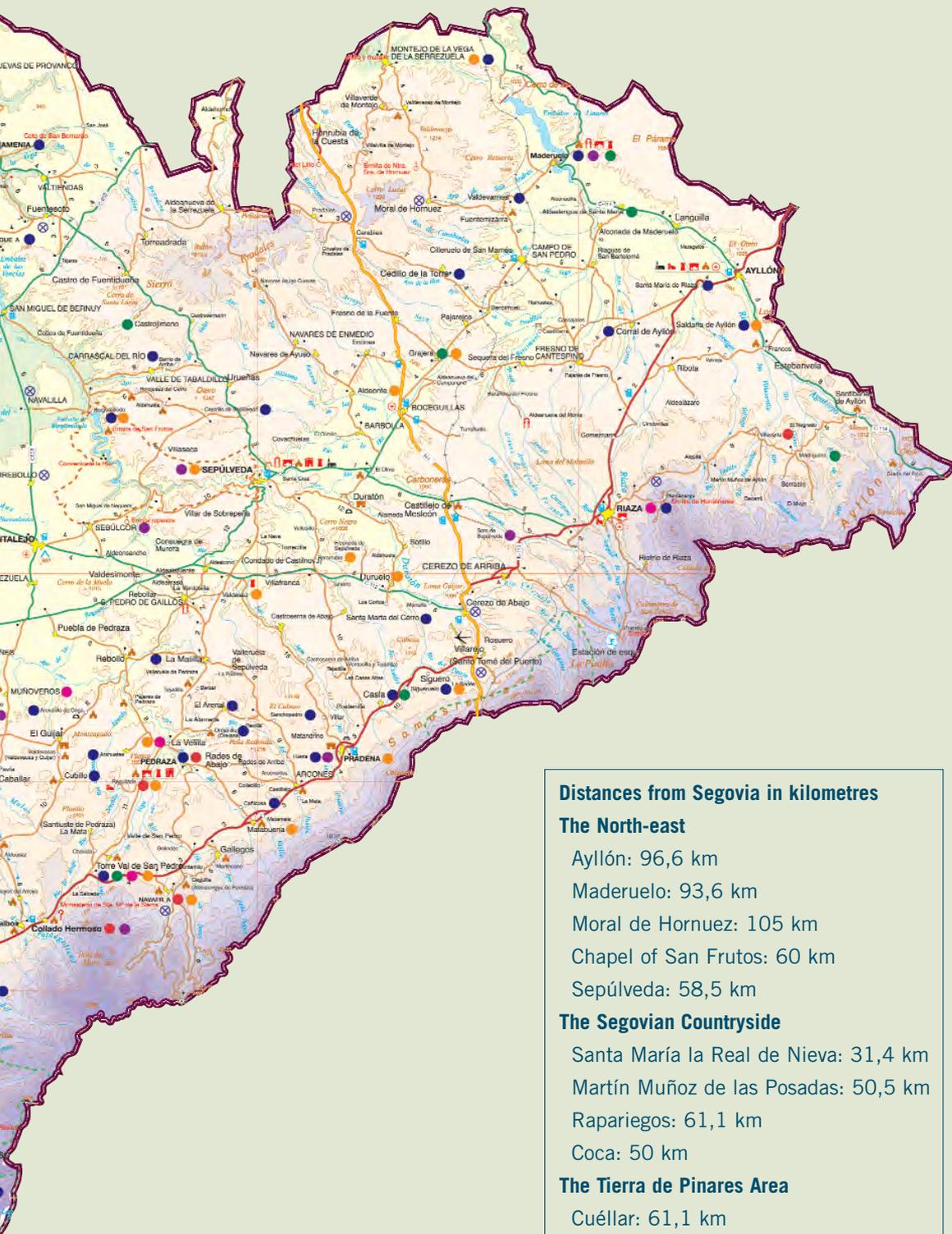
Sotosalbos is closely linked to the Archpriest of Hita who is his Libro de Buen Amor (Book of Good Love) clearly expresses his reverence for this place, located at the foot of Malagosto Pass where, according to his story, he had his famous encounter with a woman known as La Chata.



Church of San Miguel







## Distances from Segovia in kilometres

### The North-east

- Ayllón: 96,6 km
- Maderuelo: 93,6 km
- Moral de Hornuez: 105 km
- Chapel of San Frutos: 60 km
- Sepúlveda: 58,5 km

### The Segovian Countryside

- Santa María la Real de Nieva: 31,4 km
- Martín Muñoz de las Posadas: 50,5 km
- Rapariegos: 61,1 km
- Coca: 50 km

### The Tierra de Pinares Area

- Cuéllar: 61,1 km
- El Henar Sanctuary: 66.1 km
- Carbonero el Mayor: 27,2 km
- Fuentepelayo: 38,8 km

### The South

- La Granja de San Ildefonso: 11 km
- El Espinar: 34,1 km
- Villacastín: 34 km

### The Pirón Valley

- Caballar: 30,2 km
- Sotosalbos: 18,5 km



## Holy Week

Before we go deeper into the processions which play a leading role in Holy Week, we would like to point out three things for travellers with more time on their hands. The Via Crucis processions of the different parish churches which go around the streets of the district throughout Holy Week, displaying their faith and tradition; cultural events which are held from the Friday before Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday – the proclamation, concerts, conferences, performances, exhibitions and photography competitions; church services, attended by an increasing number of people each year, which nourish the faith of all those who attend them.

The cycle of the public's displays of piety begins with the procession on Palm Sunday of the sculpture, by the sculptor José María García Moro, of Jesus entering Jerusalem, accompanied by children from lay brotherhoods carrying palm leaves.

The ten lay brotherhoods and fraternities which make up the Holy Week Committee organise Via Crucis processions and other processions in the districts of Segovia, a particular highlight being the one held on the Wednesday of Holy Week in the gardens of the Carmelite Monks, by the poplar grove at la Fuencisla, on the same small hill which St. John of the Cross once walked on.

There are two parts to the processions. Firstly there is the station of penitence which each brotherhood makes from its church to the Cathedral in the evening and night of Maundy Thursday and the morning of Good Friday. Then there is a procession of sculptures and

floats which takes place in the first few hours of dusk on Good Friday.

The float belonging to the brotherhood of the Association of Former Marista Students (Asociación de Antiguos Alumnos de los Maristas) and its entry into the city through Socorro Arch, as well as the route taken by the float of La Oración en el Huerto through the poplar grove in San Lorenzo are really worth seeing and make the trip worthwhile.

On Good Friday at dusk all of the brotherhoods join the Procession of the Floats from the Cathedral. They march following the chronological order of the Passion: La Oración en el Huerto by J. Rius; La Flagelación and Jesús Con la Cruz a Cuestas by José Quixal; La Virgen de las Angustias by the school of Juan de Juni (16th C.); Santo Cristo de la Cruz, anonymous (17th C.); Santo Cristo de San Marcos, Castilian school (17th C.); El Santo Cristo en su Última Palabra and La Soledad al Pie de la Cruz by the Segovian Aniceto Marinas; La Magdalena al pie de la Cruz by Sebastián Sanobra; The Pietà by José Quixal; El Santo Cristo de los Gascones (12th C.); the Reclining Christ, the Journey to the Tomb by Gregorio Fernández (1615); and La Soledad Dolorosa. All these sculptures pass through the arches of the Aqueduct to return later to their respective churches.

On Easter Sunday the Council of Brotherhoods accompanies the Resurrected Jesus (anonymous, 16th C.) in procession. In the background the bells of the churches in the walled areas of the city ring out.

The beauty of the sculptures, the streets of this World Heritage City and the sincere piety which is felt here led in 1999 to Holy Week in Segovia being declared an event of Regional Touristic Interest by the Government of Castile and León

## The Catorcena Feast Day

This religious celebration is unique in the world and has been held in the city of Segovia since the 15th century to commemorate an act of sacrilege committed all those centuries ago. The people and the religious authorities agreed that from then on and in order to make amends for the offence against the Holy Sacrament, solemn services would be held each September in each of the 14 parish churches which existed then.

One year the ceremonies would be organised by a church located inside the city walls, and the next year by one outside the city walls, and so on. With time, churches have been pulled down and so in the years corresponding to them, the ceremony is held in the churches closest to where they once stood. There are usually cultural and fun activities as well.

## Monasterios y Conventos

### CITY OF SEGOVIA

#### Convent of los Padres Carmelitas Descalzos

Alameda de la Fuencisla, s/n  
40003 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 431 349

With the "San Juan de la Cruz" Spiritual Centre (Tel: +34 921 431961) used for meetings, and spiritual retreats, etc. There are guest quarters for participants

#### Convent of Madres Carmelitas Descalzas

C/ Marqués del Arco, 40  
40003 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 460 715

The community makes a variety of items to order. Visits are not possible as it is an enclosed convent.

#### Monastery of San Vicente el Real (Cistercian Order of the Common Observance)

C/ San Vicente el Real, 44  
40003 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 432 026

Summer camps (July & August) for children from the province are organised at the monastery.

#### Convent of Corpus Christi (Franciscans of the Order of St. Clare)

Plaza del Corpus, 7  
40001 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 435 541

The community does binding work in its craft workshop and sells to the public.

#### Convent of the Inmaculada Concepción (Franciscan Nuns)

C/ Licenciado Peralta, 7  
40001 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 462 055

The community makes pastries and sells them to the public.

#### Convent of Santo Domingo el Real (Dominican Nuns)

C/ Capuchinos Alta, 2  
40001 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 460 080

The community makes hand-crafted polychrome sculptures out of wood using techniques from the 15th century. They sell to the public.

#### Convent of San Juan de Dios (Franciscan nuns of the Third Regular Order)

C/ Desamparados, 3  
40003 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 460 387

The nuns wash and iron liturgical vestments and also restore ornaments and vestments for worship.

#### Monastery of Santa María de El Parral (Hieronymite Monks)

Subida de El Parral, 2  
40003 Segovia  
Tel: +34 921 431 298

The monks make pews for churches, to order. The monastery has guest quarters for men only with four individual rooms.

### PROVINCE OF SEGOVIA

#### Convent of Santa Clara (Franciscan nuns of the Order of St. Clare)

C/ Santa Clara, 1  
40466 Rapariegos  
Tel: +34 920 309 613

The community makes embroidered table linen and bed linen to order, as well as pastries.



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