

SPAIN

# Salamanca



WORLD HERITAGE CITY

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

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**T**he Province of Salamanca (population 363,000), situated in the south-west corner of Castile & León on the borders with Extremadura and Portugal, covers an area of 12,336 sq. km (4,763 sq. m.). Lying on

Spain's Northern Plateau (meseta), it forms part of the Duero river system where the Palaeozoic soils, poorly suited to cultivation, have resulted in a landscape of pastures, dotted with trees and bushy undergrowth. Winters tend to be relatively long, with minimum temperatures averaging around 6°C (42.8°F), while the shortish summers are marked by average highs that never climb above 20°C-22°C (68°F-71°F). Nights can be cool, something which should be borne in mind by the traveller.

Salamanca could never be said to be an exceedingly wet province (annual rainfall: 300-600 mm/11-23 inches), except in the southern mountain ranges which receive over 1,000 mm (39 inches) of rain. This difference favours a great diversity of plant life, with holm oaks on the eroded flat lands, bushes and thicket in the foothills, and sizeable swathes of forest up in the mountains (sierra).

Many a writer has evoked the stands of holm- and cork-oak, the thorn enclosures, the slate walls and stone markers, a phenomenon that still endures to this day in the Salamancan countryside (Campo Salmantino). In brief, this is a terrain of pastures, of extensive grazing, where ranching coexists in perfect harmony with the local plants and vegetation.

Yet not all is farming and livestock rearing. Industry assumes a high profile in the provincial capital of Salamanca and in smaller cities such as Béjar, while the service sector also plays an important role, particularly in education and teaching. The University of Salamanca is a centuries-old seat of learning of major importance which even today can claim to be one of Europe's most renowned universities.

#### ■ Partial view of Salamanca



## Historical Highlights

The origins of this UNESCO World Heritage City hark back to Celtic times. Polybius, writing in the 2nd century B.C., speaks of the city, referring to it as *Helmantik*.



■ *Façade of the University*

The bridge is a witness to Roman domination, and was constructed in the time of Trajan as an essential part of the Silver Route as it forded the River Tormes. At this point in history and again under subsequent Moorish occupation, Salamanca vanishes as an urban entity. With the advent of Alfonso VI in 1085, these lands were repopulated with Franks, Galicians, mountain peoples (*Serranos*), Navarrese and the like. Two centuries later, the creation of the so-called *Estudio Salmantino* (literally, Salamanca Study), subsequently converted into a university by Alfonso X, was to prove

the decisive event in Salamanca's emergence as a universally acknowledged city of culture.

The reign of the Catholic Monarchs in the 15th century heralded a period of splendour which was to give rise to figures of renown, such as Antonio de Nebrija (author of the first vernacular Castilian Spanish Grammar), and architectural masterpieces, such as the façade of the University building. Its stones would also see the birth of Spanish literary characters, namely, *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, as



well as the lovers, Calisto and Melibea (from the work entitled, "*La Celestina o Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea*"). The existence of 54 printing presses, 80 bookshops, 15 monasteries and convents, 19 hospitals, a number of churches and two cathedrals



■ Church of the Holy Trinity

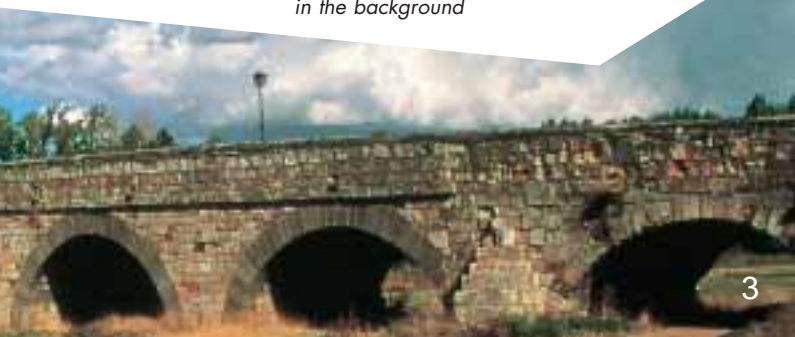
eloquently attests

to the city's importance in the 16th century.

The *Plaza Mayor* (Main Square) traces its origins to *salmantino* (i.e., Salamancan) support for the Bourbons in the 18th-century struggle for succession. It was Philip V, the first monarch of this line, who gave the necessary royal assent to the Council's decision to embark on the square's construction.

The 19th century was a bleak time for the city. The War of Independence (Peninsula War) wrought havoc with its artistic heritage; the university slid into profound decadence, with the student body never exceeding five score and the very institution on the brink of collapse. Midway through the century, Salamanca started on the road to recovery. Communications improved, the city was linked into the railway grid, and the population started to increase, rising to 25,000 by 1900. It was in this same year that Miguel de Unamuno became Rector of the university, which began to regain its lost vitality and nowadays imparts instruction to something like 45,000 students.

■ Roman bridge with twin cathedrals in the background





■ Plaza Mayor (Main Square)

## CITY ITINERARIES

### The magic of stone

In these parts the Villamayor stone, rich in iron oxide, easy to work when newly quarried yet as hard as marble when dry, will make church, university, college or cathedral, shell motif, spire, capital or coat of arms.

Should the stonemason so desire, the stone will become pure filigree and will seem to have emerged from a silversmith's anvil, be it in the form of some mythical arabesque, intricately entwined relief, a frog trapped within a skull or an astronaut in mid space odyssey, floating through a sea of almost unimaginable ornamentation. And when the rays of the setting sun reflect and refract upon its surfaces, the stone turns to pure gold, appears to glow from within and unleashes its full magic. The **Main Square (Plaza**

**Mayor) (1)**. Undoubtedly this is one of the most stunning arcaded squares in Spain. Designed by Alberto Churriguera, it was built from 1729-1755 in the Baroque style. Note the medallions on the pillars and spandrels, representing personalities closely linked to the city's history (Unamuno, Fray Luis de León, etc.). The play of light and shade is enhanced by the effect of the Villamayor stone being subtly set off by the grey of the granite, particularly on the façade of the City Hall (*Ayuntamiento*), the work of García Quiñones.

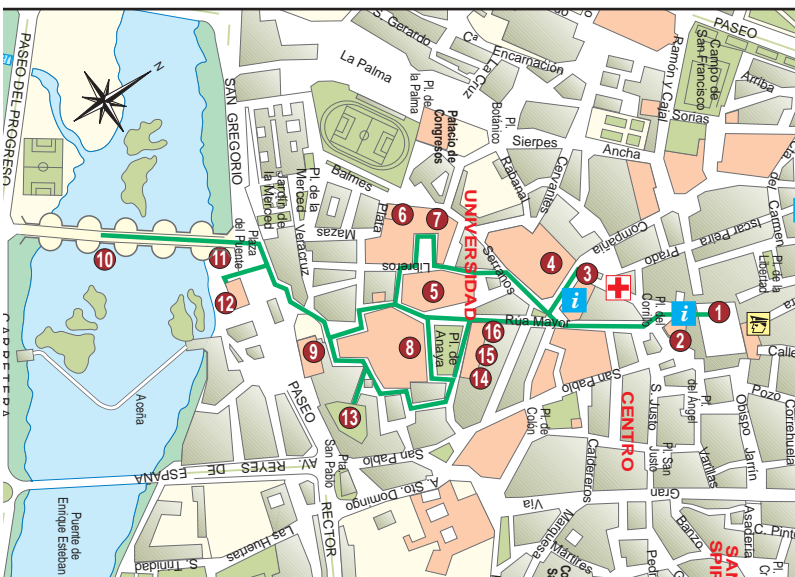
Leaving by the Plaza del Corrillo, an irregularly shaped square, one comes to the 12th-century Romanesque **Church of San Martín (St. Martin's) (2)**, constructed by the first Christian *reconquistadores* to arrive in the city (*reconquistador*,

those who reconquered Spain from the Moors). It is built on the traditional groundplan of a nave and two aisles, with pointed barrel vaulting over the nave and groin vaulting over the aisles. The relief on the Bishop's (*Obispo*) Door depicts St. Martin tearing his cloak (i.e., to share it with a beggar). If one follows the *Rúa Mayor* (*rúa* or *calle*; street), one comes to the **House of Shells (Casa de las Conchas) (3)**, one of the best examples of 15th-century civic Gothic, with clear traces of Italian Renaissance influence. The façade is decorated with more than 300 scallop shells, due to the fact that its first owner, Rodrigo Árias, was a member of the Order of Santiago (the scallop shell is traditionally associated with St. James, *Santiago*). Set within these shells, is a beautiful paired Isabeline window (this is the colonette-style window known in Spanish as *ajimez*) and two exquisite Gothic grilles. The inner *patio* (courtyard



■ **House of Shells (Casa de las Conchas)**

or quadrangle) is framed by mixtilinear arches, which are such a typical feature of Salamanca that the style has been dubbed *salmantino*. The building houses the Tourist Information Office. Standing opposite is the **Clerecía (Baroque Church and Seminary) (4)**, designed by Juan Gómez de la Mora and begun in 1617. The church forms part of the Jesuit College (*Universidad Pontificia*). Church and seminary were the initiative of Margaret of Austria, wife of Philip III, in an attempt to make reparations to the



Society of Jesus for the wrong done to its founder, St. Ignatius Loyola, by his imprisonment in Salamanca at the hands of the Dominicans. The towers, designed by García Quiñones, somewhat distort the facade's otherwise primitive air.

Go down Libreros street to get to one of the city's most impressive architectural sights.

The **University (5)**: this Gothic-style structure was built on the orders of Pope Luna in the years 1415-1433. In 1529 the main façade was erected between two buttresses and is the archetype of the style that has become known as Salamanca Plateresque (*plata*, Spanish for silver, denoting the style's resemblance to silver filigree). Five distinct vertical lines of decorative stonework rise through three horizontal registers. Prominently displayed in the first register, immediately over the twin doors with their basket-handle arch surmounts, is the medallion depicting the Catholic Monarchs holding a single sceptre, in representation of the unity of Spain. Visible above their heads are the yoke and arrows, symbols of the monarchy,

and running round the border is an inscription engraved in Greek that reads: *The monarchs for the university and the university for the monarchs. Ferdinand, Elisabetha.*

To the right as one looks at the façade, three skulls will be seen on the broadest pilaster, and within the left-hand skull is the famous frog, said to represent sin. In the centre of the second register, above the Order of the Golden Fleece and flanked by the two-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire and the crowned eagle of St. John, symbol of the Kingdom of Spain, is the imposing royal escutcheon of the Emperor Charles V. Lastly, on the third and uppermost register, there is the figure of a Pope, possibly Benedict XIII or Martin V, both protectors of the University in their time, addressing clerics and prelates. To the right and left of this group are the heads of Venus and Hercules. Note that as they get higher, the figurative and arabesque reliefs grow in size. Leading off from the university quadrangle are the lecture rooms. Among these are: the lecture hall that once belonged to Francisco de Vitoria, theologian and founder of international law;

■ *Clerecía (Church and Seminary)*

the class where Unamuno taught; the *Paraninfo* (Great Hall); and the well-known room used by Fray Luis de León and kept just as it was in his time. The library and a museum will be found on the first floor. At the far end of the





#### ■ *New Cathedral*

*patio*, presided over by its statue of Fray Luis de León, stands the building of the **Minorite Schools (Escuelas Menores) (6)**, now home to the University Museum, with its heraldic portal, Plateresque entrance-way coat of arms, and mixtilinear arches, granite columns and 18th-century Baroque balustrade gracing the inner courtyard.

#### **Salamanca Museum (7).**

This 15th-century palace bears a certain resemblance to the House of Shells and originally belonged to Fernando Alvarez Abarca, erstwhile physician to Queen Isabel the Catholic. It houses a fine art collection of paintings and sculpture, including an outstanding pietá by Luis de Morales. The graffiti featuring the word, "VICTOR", are references to the academic achievements of illustrious

figures associated with the university.

Turning into Calle Calderón de la Barca, one is surprised by the impressive sight of the **New Cathedral (Catedral Nueva) (8)**. It was built at the behest of King Ferdinand the Catholic when the Old Cathedral became too small. Work on a Late Gothic-style design commenced in 1513 under the supervision of Juan Gil de Hontañón and Juan de Álava. Some years later, Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, son of Juan, continued the work, introducing Renaissance touches, such as the decorative addition of medallions. Towards the end of the 16th century, Juan de Ribero took charge of the project, envisaging a square-cut east end flanked by two towers, a plan that eventually came to naught. The Lisbon earthquake (1755) caused serious damage. The

tower had to be reinforced and Sagarvinaga was charged with building a new lantern. The main façade, facing Calle Cardenal Plá y Deniel, is an example of Flamboyant Gothic and contains an amalgam of decoration; on the tympanum there are two different reliefs, a Nativity scene and the Adoration of the Magi, and above this a third, depicting Christ on the Cross. The Ramos Door, on the Plaza Anaya, is much in the same vein, its richly decorated tympanum and relief of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem ensconced within an ogee arch. If you enjoyed the challenge of searching for the University frog, try to spot an astronaut, the brainchild of the new stonemasons responsible for restoring the jambs whose stone had deteriorated.

A treasure trove of art awaits inside. The main chapel, choirstalls and *trascoro* (the retrochoir or wall enclosing the choir) are all by Churriguera (18th-century). Then there is the Golden (*Dorada*) Chapel and the Retable of Christ of the Battles, containing the Romanesque carving that accompanied El Cid in his exile. Move round the church to get to the **Old Cathedral (Catedral Vieja)**. Begun in 1150, the building work continued into the next century, hence explaining the presence of typically Romanesque elements alongside eminently Gothic features. It is through the New Cathedral that one enters the Old. The original cruciform groundplan had a nave and two aisles with their corresponding apses but when the New Cathedral was

constructed, one entire side was razed. Rising above the transept crossing is the popular scallop-tiled **Cock Tower (Torre del Gallo)**, one of the city's classic landmarks. It consists of a ribbed umbrella lantern set on a two-tiered drum, reinforced by four circular turrets. Clearly Byzantine in influence, the view one gets from the idyllic *Patio Chico* (small square) is truly impressive. Note too the point of union between the two Cathedrals, the visible transition from Romanesque to Gothic. The altarpiece in the central absidal chapel is an ensemble of 53 panels painted by Nicholas of Florence in the 15th century, narrating the life of Jesus and Mary. At the very centre of this gorgeous symphony of colour is the city's patron saint, the Virgin of the Vega (*vega*; fertile plain or valley bottom). Gothic murals line St. Martin's Chapel. The **cloister** was destroyed during the Lisbon earthquake and rebuilt some years afterwards. The St. Barbara Chapel was where doctoral students spent their pre-examination night: for candidates who passed, there were pealing bells, feasting and celebrations, but for those who failed, there was only a silent exit by the Carros Door. See also the New Chapterhouse (16th-century), nowadays the **Diocesan Museum**, with works by Francisco Gallego, Juan of Flanders, etc.

En route to the *Patio Chico*, one passes Salamanca's leading example of the Modernist movement, the **House of Lis (9)**, now a Gallery of Art Nouveau and Art Deco.



#### ■ Anaya Palace

If time permits, this is a good point from which to visit the **Roman Bridge (10)**, erected in the time of Trajan. Only the first 15 arches nearest to the city are original, the remainder having been swept away by the flood of 1626. Standing on a column is the statue of the **Verraco Ibérico (Boar) (11)**, also sometimes known locally as the Toro or bull, in allusion to the pre-Roman, reputedly Celtic, inhabitants of the area.

**St. James (Iglesia de Santiago) (12)** preserves a 12th-century Romanesque-Mudejar style apse. This church enjoyed a certain degree of importance on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela thanks to its position by the Silver Route bridge. Close to the Old Cathedral and to the right of

the Patio Chico is the **Garden of Calisto y Melibea (Huerto de Calisto y Melibea) (13)** a reference to the star-crossed lovers of Fernando de Rojas' world-famous work *La Celestina*. Skirting the Cathedral, one gets to the Plaza Anaya, the site of a superb architectural group: the **Students' Hospice (Hospedería) (14)** by Joaquín de Churriguera; the **Church of San Sebastián (St. Sebastian's) (15)** by Alberto de

Churriguera (1731), with a statue of the saint set into a niche on the façade; and the **Anaya Palace (16)**. Founded in 1401 by Diego de Anaya y Maldonado, the original edifice was Salamanca's oldest university residence. The present neoclassical-style building (almost an exception in this city) was designed by Juan de Sagarvinaga in 1760. Adding the final touch to the group is one of the university doorways on Rúa Mayor, a street which leads back to the starting point.



find an ensemble quite like this, of such beauty and harmony, would be all but impossible. Leaving the Plaza Mayor via Calle San Pablo, one comes to the **Salina Palace (17)**, a 16th-century structure attributed to Alonso

■ *St. Stephen's Monastery*

### *Mansions and monasteries*

If the stones of Salamanca cast their spell on the previous itinerary, they will not only continue to do so now but will indeed conjure up knights and saints, nobility and clergy, sword and cross. By the end of this particular tour, the visitor will inevitably be forced to conclude that, while it might well be feasible to find as many palatial buildings and monasteries elsewhere, to

■ *Clavero Tower*



de Fonseca.

It is one of Salamanca's most beautiful Renaissance buildings. The façade, over a loggia frontage formed by four rounded arcades, is decorated with medallions, while the inner *patio* features an ornately corbelled gallery. The palace is the official seat of the Provincial Authority.

Emerging from amongst the trees almost directly opposite is the **Clavero Tower (18)**.

This 15th-century fortress, though begun on a square groundplan with rubble walling, later came to assume its present-day octagonal shape, with walls of cut and dressed ashlar. Each side is capped by a round sentry turret, which accentuates its medieval flavour.

Standing on the same side of the street as the Salina Palace is the **Orellana Palace (19)**, dating from the end of the 16th century. The decoration is limited to an alternating series of triangular and rounded gables over the pedimental windows on the first floor. This rather cold architecture suggests Herrerian influences.

Walking down Calle Jesús, formerly called Calle Ataúd (*ataúd*; coffin) -the backdrop



Ceroni's *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (1610), and immediately above, a Calvary scene. In the late afternoon, when the sunlight falls directly on the stonework, the façade acquires a magnificence difficult to forget.

The church, designed by Juan de Álava in the shape of a Latin cross, was begun in 1524 and has a single broad nave and side chapels enclosed within its buttresses. Rising over the transept crossing is the dome, its square lantern set with large windows, attributed to Juan de Ribero Rada. Framed by the barley-sugar (*salomonica*) columns of the high altar retable by Churriguera (1691-1693) is Claudio Coello's painting of the Martyrdom (stoning) of St. Stephen.

Outside, the portico leading to the Reyes cloister dates from the mid-16th century and is reminiscent of an Italian loggia. The inner courtyard is a beautiful combination of Gothic and Renaissance. The lower level features rounded arches with delicate mullions, medallions and stellar vaulting, while on the upper level, Gothic elements give way to arches and decorative motifs that are wholly Renaissance. Among the rooms to see, are the Salón de Profundis, where Columbus conversed with the Dominicans on his voyage to the West Indies, and the Pantheon of the Theologians.

Turning right as one comes out of the church, one spies

**Calatrava College (23)**, founded by the Knights of this Order (16th-century) when the university was at its peak. Work on the present building was begun in 1717 by Joaquín de Churriguera in the Baroque Style, but the ensuing shift in taste to Neoclassical has vested it with a certain aloof coldness. A little farther on stands the **Church of Santo Tomas Cantuariense (24)**, the first Romanesque church dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Once again, a Latin-cross groundplan takes the form of single nave and three apses. Walking back along Calle Rosario one returns to Las Dueñas Convent and thence, via the Gran Vía, to the Plaza Mayor.





■ *Calatrava College*

## *Baroque and Renaissance*

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A marked resurgence of beauty: mansion, church and convent continue to alternate, yet the magic now stems from the contrast in architectural styles. There is a break with the straight line, a departure from symmetrical serenity, and instead the curve convulses, creating spaces of light and shadow.

Walk down Calle Prior away from the Plaza Mayor to the Monterrey Palace, and thence via Calle Bordadores to the statue of Unamuno. The urban ensemble grouped around the great man's figure is extraordinary. There is **Corregidor Ovalle House/Unamuno House-cum-Museum (25)**, where Miguel Unamuno lived during the latter years of his life, and adjoining it, the **Casa de las Muertes (26)** (literally,

■ *Las Dueñas Convent*





#### ■ *Monterrey Palace*

House of the Dead), a truly lovely example of 16th-century Salamanca Plateresque. Assumed to have been the home of the architect, Juan de Álava, its name is linked to local legend that not only whispers of the murder of a priest by the family, but has it that, when the foundations were being dug up, headless bodies appeared, rumoured to be those of the Manzano brothers decapitated on the orders of María la Brava. Others are of the opinion that the name is simply a reference to the skulls on the window consoles. The bust of Archbishop Alonso de Fonseca is prominent amidst the exquisitely worked decoration, and just across the way is the **Ursuline Convent (Convento de las Úrsulas) (27)** which he founded in 1512. This Late Gothic-style church, with a lofty polygonal apse that is more like a tower topped by a balustrade,

houses the tomb of its founder. Sculpted by Diego de Siloé in white marble, the Archbishop's sarcophagus is considered to be one of the best works of the Renaissance period. The museum has some interesting exhibits by artists such as Juan de Borgoña. Adjoining the museum is the **Chapel of the True Cross (Vera Cruz) (28)**, its Baroque interior hung with an Immaculate Conception attributed to Gregorio Fernández.

A walk along Calle de las Úrsulas leads to the Campo de San Francisco, once part of the monastery founded by Fadrique, Duke of Alba, in the 13th century. From here, the route continues on to **Fonseca College (29)** which, along with San Bartolomé, Cuenca and Oviedo Colleges, was one of four University Halls of Residence and the only one to have survived intact. It is also known by the name of the Irish College. The best architects of the age, Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, Juan de Álava and Diego de Siloé, were all involved in the construction of a building commissioned by Archbishop Fonseca in 1525. The façade displays a number of novelties: architectural predominate over decorative elements, and Villamayor stone has been used in combination with granite. Inside, the high altar retable is by Berruguete. The use of rounded arches along the lower, and basket-handle arches along the upper

galleries has given the two-storeyed *patio* an atmosphere of carefully crafted harmony. The pillars are prolonged by torch-holders, enhancing their slender elegance, while the spandrels are ornamented with medallions.

Almost fronting onto Fonseca College is the **Church of the Capuchines (30)**, the work of García Quiñones and the only significant remnant of the former Franciscan Monastery. From here, one can catch sight of the enormous dome of the **Church of the Immaculate Conception (*la Purísima*) (31)** (Augustinian Convent) founded by Fonseca and Zúñiga. Curving over the cruciform groundplan of one of the great Baroque churches is its massive

central dome, which collapsed in 1657 and had to be rebuilt some years afterwards. The high altar retable is dominated by José de Ribera's sublime painting of the Immaculate Conception. Opposite stands **Monterrey Palace (32)**, considered by many to be the Spanish Renaissance palace par excellence. Designed by Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, work on this building began in 1539. Whilst the lower section is almost totally devoid of ornamentation, a line of windows with the typical decoration of the time is symmetrically set into the long top-floor gallery. Nowadays, the building belongs to the House of Alba. Go via Calle Prior to return to the Plaza Mayor.



## A stroll down and around Calle Zamora

Salamanca is art in stone and bustling streets, business activity and the boisterousness of youth, dynamism, vitality and the good-natured disposition of its townsfolk.

Leave the Plaza Mayor via Calle Zamora to get to the **Plaza de los Bandos (33)**. Here a rich architectural feast awaits: the **Garcigrande Palace** (16th-century), recognisable by its pointed windows; the **Solís Palace**, escutcheons emblazoned on the façade, and site of Philip II's betrothal to María of Portugal; and **María la Brava's House** (15th-century), with its fan-like voussoir arch and stone-beaded *alfiz* (rectangular surround). Abutting onto the square are: the 12th-century Romanesque **Church of San Juan de Barbalos (St. John's)**, constructed by the Order of the Knights Hospitallers and home to the well-known Romanesque Christ of Thorns, with its four nails; and the 17th-century **Corpus Christi Convent** with its beautiful Plateresque frontage. Nearby, the **House of St. Teresa (34)** evokes the Saint's presence in the city. Tradition has it that it was here that she wrote the famous verses, "*Vivo sin vivir en mí*".



■ *María la Brava's House. Detail of the façade.*

At the end of Calle Zamora stands **St. Mark's Church (San Marcos) (35)**, a Romanesque building dating from the 12th-century, converted into a royal chapel in the 14th century. Judging by its solid fortress-like looks (slit windows, circular shape) and location close to the gate in the city walls, it must have played a defensive role. The frescoes inside are 14th-century Gothic, while the bellcote

■ *Torre del Aire*



is Baroque. On emerging, make your way across town to the **Torre del Aire (36)**, a 15th-century Gothic tower, whose style though medieval has a definite Italianate feel. Just a block or so away is the **Church of the Holy Spirit (Sancti Spiritus) (37)**, a Plateresque

gem combining Gothic and Renaissance elements which, once inside, will reveal a single nave covered by ribbed vaulting and a high altar retable in the Baroque style. From here it is a short walk back to the Plaza Mayor.

**Visiting times of sights and museums.**

*As opening times tend to change according to the season, visitors wishing to avoid any unnecessary inconvenience should contact the museums directly or make enquiries at the Tourist Office.*

*Note: A combined, reduced-rate ticket is available for visitors interested in seeing: the University, Fonseca College, Minorite Schools (Escuelas Menores) and House of Lis.*

**- House of Shells:**

☎ 923 26 93 17

**- Clerecia:** ☎ 923 26 46 60

**- Jesuit College (Universidad Pontificia):** ☎ 923 21 59 66

**- University (listed historic building):**

☎ 923 29 44 00 Ext. 1150

**- Salamanca Museum:**

☎ 923 21 22 35

**- Cathedrals:** ☎ 923 21 74 76

**- History Museum (Episcopal Palace):** ☎ 923 21 30 67

**- House of Lis (Gallery of Art Nouveau and Art Deco):**

☎ 923 21 14 25

**- Masonic Lodge (in National Historic Archives):**

☎ 923 21 28 45

**- Salina Palace:**

☎ 923 29 31 00

**- Las Dueñas Convent:**

☎ 923 21 54 42

**- Poor Clares Convent:**

☎ 923 26 96 23

**- St. Stephen's Monastery:**

☎ 923 21 50 00

**- Unamuno House-cum-Museum:** ☎ 923 29 44 00

Ext. 1196

**- Ursuline Convent:**

☎ 923 21 98 77

**- Fonseca College:**

☎ 923 29 45 70

**- Church of the Immaculate Conception:** ☎ 923 21 27 38

**- Bullfighting Museum:**

☎ 923 23 24 92





■ *Alba de Tormes*

## Side Trips

### TO THE SIERRA DE BÉJAR VIA THE SILVER ROUTE

From Salamanca, the visitor has the chance to travel to the south of the province via one of the oldest lines of communication in the Iberian Peninsula, the so-called **Ruta de la Plata** (Silver Route). Used by the different peoples that have inhabited or passed through the Peninsula, the route's strategic and economic importance in times past has made it a cultural and tourist itinerary of the first order, thanks to the relevance of the wayside cities, towns and villages that have sprung up down the years.

Heading south out of Salamanca, the Silver Route coincides with the N-630/E-803 national road, the selfsame route any modern-day traveller would

take to get to Béjar. After twenty kilometres or so, a turn-off to the left leads to a town any sightseer would be well-advised to visit, **Alba de Tormes**. The town boasts four churches, all built in the 12th century in Romanesque-Mudejar style and all subsequently modified to varying degrees: St. James' (Santiago), St. John's (San Juan), St. Michael's (San Miguel) and St. Dominic's (Santo Domingo). Equally noteworthy are the Convent of Santa María de las Dueñas (also known as Santa María de las Benitas), the Convent of Santa Isabel, St. Leonard's (San Leonardo) and the Convent of the Discalced (i.e., barefoot) Carmelites, founded in 1571 by St. Teresa. The Carmelite Convent is



### ■ *St. John's. Alba de Tormes*

where Teresa died and where her saintly relics are preserved, doubly making Alba de Tormes a key Catholic pilgrimage site. The Armoury Tower (Torreón de la Armería) stands as a reminder of the old palace belonging to one of Spain's most powerful dukedoms, that of the Duke of Alba. After this short detour, the traveller rejoins the Silver Route (N-630/E-803) as it continues southwards to Béjar (60 kilometres). At the halfway mark, a road branches off to **Guijuelo**, a town of some interest in that it has given its name to the official Seal of Origin affixed to the cured ham made hereabouts, one of this locality's most delicious specialities.

### **Sierra de Béjar** (*Béjar Range*)

This district occupies the south-eastern fringe of Salamanca Province, and acts as a natural divide with the Provinces of Cáceres and Avila. For visitors who arrive

in these parts with a yearning for sport and activity, no end of outings can be made. Indeed, in winter, this can even include a bit of skiing on the Covatilla pistes in the La Hoya municipal area. Whatever the choice, there will be no shortage of marvellous scenery and fine examples of well-preserved traditional and monumental architecture.

## Béjar

The main town in the district, long famous for its capes, woollens and blankets, it has now become the local industrial and administrative centre. Sights of major importance, a legacy of the city's long history, await the visitor.



There is the *Palace of the Dukes of Béjar*, rebuilt in the 16th century over the still visible remains of a castle. Even today, its entrance has something of the fortress about it. The 13th-century *Churches of St. Mary Major* (Santa María la Mayor), *St. John the Baptist* (*San Juan Bautista*) and the *Saviour* (*Salvador*) all display evidence, some more so than others, of modifications and alterations executed in the 16th century. The *Church of St. James* (*Santiago*), known as "*la Antigua*" (the Old), was erected in the 17th century over an earlier Visigothic church. The city's *Old Quarter* with its charming Main Square forms a harmonious backdrop for a quiet stroll. Those wishing to rest a while should wander over to *La Antigua Park* adjoining the *Walls*, which date from the 11th-13th centuries and command a stupendous panoramic view of the local mountain scenery. Not all is architecture however; there is also the exquisite Italian Renaissance-style garden, *El Bosque*, with its promenades, ornamental palace and pond.

## Candelario

Lying so close to Béjar that no visitor can legitimately justify skipping it, is the town of Candelario, officially designated as being of artistic-historical interest. Situated on the flanks of the range of the same name, Candelario comes as somewhat of a surprise, with its excellently-preserved



■ *Béjar*

■ *Candelario*

village architecture. This town definitely calls for an unhurried walk through its streets, not merely because they are so steep that the unwary might be left a little breathless, but more so because of the sheer amount of detail to be discovered around every corner. If one has the luck to coincide with a rainy period or the Spring thaw, an agreeable background murmur issues from the water as it rushes and gurgles down the streetside channels. The local religious sight to be visited is the town's 16th-century Parish *Church of Our Lady of the Assumption* (*Nuestra Señora*

*de la Asunción*), boasting a central absidal chapel roofed with a fine Mudejar coffered ceiling featuring strapwork decoration. The marvels of this district do not end here For the traveller with the

time and energy there are other places worth seeing, places such as Cantagallo, Montemayor del Río, Puerto de Béjar, Puente del Congosto etc., which will never fail to come up to expectations.

## TO THE SIERRA DE FRANCIA

Lying to the south of the province is another district not to be missed. To get there from Salamanca, take the N-620/E-80 in the direction of Ciudad Rodrigo. After driving for approximately 49 kilometres, turn left down the C-525. From here onwards, close attention must be paid to the road signs, because after a further 19 kilometres one has to branch off to El Cabaco and thence to La Alberca. If travelling from Ciudad Rodrigo, head for Béjar along the

C-515 and go as far as El Cabaco (at the 38-km. mark), from which point the SA-204 covers the remaining 19 kilometres to La Alberca.

### La Alberca

This is the district's best-known town and was in fact the first of Spain's country villages to be declared a National Historical Monument. A wander through the streets of La



Alberca with its quaint, overhanging, half-timbered houses -their system of construction unchanged for hundreds of years- will have many visitors shaking their heads and thinking that they have somehow travelled back in time, unless of course some delivery van should rudely waken them from their daydreams.

A tour of the town inevitably leads into the Plaza Mayor, an irregular square ringed by columned arcades, without rival and still very much the centre of the townsfolk's social and festive life.

No Spanish town or village would be complete without its parish church. The *Church of the Assumption (Asunción)*, built in the 18th-century houses a 16th-century pulpit sculpted in granite, a splendid Gothic gilded-copper processional cross and a figure of *Cristo del Sudor* attributed to Juan de Juni. Yet it is not only in the architecture that time has stopped in La Alberca. Despite the inevitable throngs of onlookers, travellers fortunate enough to be here in August will have the chance of participating in fiestas whose origins are so remote as to be obscure. On 15th (*Diagosto*) and 16th (*Tornafesta*) August, the town gives itself over to the *Feast of the Assumption*, with festivities that mingle pagan and religious traditions, and the local women resplendent in their jewel-laden *Vistas* dress.

## Valle de las Batuecas (Batuecas Valley)

From La Alberca, the traveller should make a point of visiting the **Batuecas Valley**, one of the best areas to enjoy the region's fauna and flora to the full.

To get there, rejoin the road used to travel to La Alberca and head up to the Portillo de las Batuecas. On the other side of this low pass, one cannot but be impressed by the change in landscape and the subtle shifts in colour and tone that take place in response to the light at different times of day. Almost at the end of the sheer descent, a narrow road branches off to the right, only to peter out at the entrance to the valley on reaching St. Joseph's Shrine (*Santuario de San José, also known as the Santuario de Santo Desierto*), the Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites, a cloistered order not admitting visitors. What the traveller can do instead is to stretch his/her legs by going for a quiet ramble along the banks of the river from which the valley takes its name. Walkers are obviously free to roam as far as they wish, but should nonetheless take care not to get lost along paths that are not always too well defined. Evidence of prehistoric inhabitants plainly capable of appreciating their surroundings is provided by the many rock paintings in the area, yet access is often difficult. With a little luck, and better still, with the aid of a pair



### ■ St. Joseph's Shrine. Las Batuecas

of binoculars, golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and black vultures (*Aegypius monachus*) can be spotted as they glide, hover and swoop over crags that are home to ibex and roe deer. Unfortunately, it is nigh impossible to catch sight of the elusive lynx, now a protected species.

## Peña de Francia

Another "must" when in La Alberca is the 15-kilometre side trip to the peak known as the **Peña de Francia** (height: 1,723 m./5653 ft.). Head down the SA-202 as though bound for El Cabaco, and after roughly six kilometres, branch left onto the road leading up to the summit. At first, the road winds through dense forest but the vegetation gradually thins and disappears as one climbs. A warning to drivers: the road narrows, complicating the approach and calling for extreme caution. From the two good vantage points, the *Balcón del Fraile* (friar's balcony), shaped like a small castle,

and the *Mirador de Santo Domingo* (St. Dominic's Belvedere) at journey's end, the views in any direction are simply stunning. Additional interest is afforded by the possibility of visiting the mountain-top *Shrine of the Virgin of the Peña de Francia*, repository of the holy image. Like Catalonia's Virgin of Montserrat, this Madonna is black. The first chapel was built following the discovery of the image in 1434. Three years later, the Dominicans enlarged the original chapel by adding a Gothic nave and two aisles, as well as putting up the monastery and hospice. An imposing tower, decorated with Tuscan-style pilasters, was erected in 1767. The interior of today's carving of the Virgin (1890) contains the remains of the centuries-old original. During seasons when the hostel is open, travellers are welcome to stay there and, in its calming tranquil atmosphere, to quietly reflect on matters divine and human.



## ■ *San Martín del Castañar*

### Miranda del Castañar

Another local sight worth seeing is the *villa condal* or "county seat" of **Miranda del Castañar** (of artistic-historical interest), where traditional folk architecture stands cheek-by-jowl with a good number of noble mansions, their emblazoned façades amply attesting to their lineage. The entire town is walled, the defences being well preserved and breached only by some very interesting gates. Other sights include the parish church, castle, bullring (*Plaza de Toros*), etc.

The Sierra de Francia Range has scenic spots and delightful villages to fill an entire holiday, and more, but a quick list of highlights would include the following: the Cepeda Valley, Sierra de Quilames, Honfría, Mt. Cervero, Linares de Riofrío, Monleón, Mogarraz,

San Martín del Castañar, Sequeros, etc. Do not hesitate to ask local local villagers about these and others...all your questions and queries will be met with helpful friendliness.

## ■ *Miranda del Castañar*



## VIA THE CAMPO CHARRO TO CIUDAD RODRIGO AND THE SIERRA DE GATA

Other places in the Province of Salamanca that travellers with a bit more time on their hands should get to know, are **Ciudad Rodrigo** and the **Sierra de Gata Range**. Both are situated in the south-west corner of the province, bordering on the Province of Cáceres and Portugal. From Salamanca take the N-620/E-80, which runs to the monumental city of Ciudad Rodrigo through one of the area's most typical stretches of terrain, the *Campo Charro*. An immense, slightly undulating plain tells one that this is indeed Castile, yet the colouring is somehow different. The meadows hereabouts are not yellowed by waving seas of wheat. Instead they are dotted with holm oaks, those still and silent witnesses to a distant and better time in the life of Spain's once vast mainland forests. These extensive pastures are vital to the animal that most typifies Spain, the *toro de lidia* or fighting bull, for which this is an earthly paradise. The world's most renowned breeders are based in this province.

### Ciudad Rodrigo

No sooner has he/she arrived when the traveller will discover that this is a city with one of the longest recorded histories in the Iberian Peninsula. Perched atop a rocky rise on the

right bank of the River Águeda, the first Neolithic settlers found it an ideal place to live. Subsequently, the native Celtic tribes (*Vettones*) fiercely resisted the Romans but were unable to prevent the city of *Miróbriga* being renamed *Augustóbriga* in honour of the Emperor Octavius Caesar Augustus. A relic of this time is the local landmark called *Tres Columnas*, three columns which join at the top to form a triangle, the exact significance of which is not known. The Moors were certainly here, yet the visitor will find little evidence of their stay. In 1100, Count Rodrigo González Girón peopled the city and gave it his name "Civitas Roderici" (Ciudad Rodrigo). In the second half of the 12th century, King Ferdinand II of León completed the repopulation of the area, had the city walled, reconstructed the old Roman bridge spanning the River Águeda and restored the bishopric, a development which in turn led to the construction of the Cathedral. It was in the 15th and 16th centuries that the city reached a pinnacle, with its best monumental works being erected, repaired or modified in some way. This frontier city, constantly embroiled in wars, was no exception during the War of Independence (Peninsula War), when a good proportion of its Old Quarter was destroyed. The visitor will nevertheless discover an invaluable

artistic legacy. The Spanish saying, *no se puede valorar lo que no se conoce* (which can be loosely translated as, to know is to appreciate), fits like a glove: Ciudad Rodrigo is the great unknown, outshone perhaps by the dazzle of Salamanca.

A wander through the city could do no better than to begin at the *Cathedral*. The fact that the building was begun in 1165 and not completed until 1550 means that a succession of styles will be visible to the keen-eyed visitor. Outstanding features include the stellar vaulting over the main chapel, most likely the work of Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, and the magnificent choirstalls which bear the stamp of the maestro, Rodrigo Alemán, date from 1498 and depict singular scenes for a place of worship. The church's interior gives onto its lovely Cloister, started in the 12th and 13th centuries and not finished until 1525.

Close by the Cathedral is the *Chapel of the Marquess of Cerralbo*, a superb example of classic Herrera-style with a fine interior. Make a point of seeing the three unpainted walnut retables.

From an elevation overlooking the city, the *Castle of Henry II* dominates the Águeda River valley. Ordered to be built by Henry II in 1372, it is distinguished by its handsome crenellated keep. Nowadays the castle serves as a modern Tourist Parador

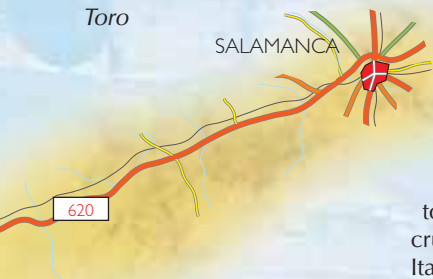
where travellers can spend the night in charming surroundings and build up their depleted reserves with typical regional dishes, such as *chanfaina* (rice with diced chorizo and meat) or, fried eggs and *farinato* (a white sausage meat containing breadcrumbs, lard and seasoning). A string of palaces and mansions, almost all hailing from the 15th and 16th centuries, line the sightseer's route. Some retain no more than a regal façade, others may only be seen from the outside as they are not open to the public. The City Hall,



Moctezuma's Palace, *Casa de los Águilas* (House of the Eagles), Montarro Palace, Vázquez House and many more testify to the city's glorious past. Church architecture is also represented in the form of St. Augustine's, St. Peter's, the Church of the Discalced Franciscans, etc.

If at all possible, a visit should be rounded off by taking another walk (with marvellous vistas) along the city walls, restored and

rebuilt innumerable times over the years since Ferdinand II had part of these fortifications erected at some time during the 12th century. Those with the good luck to be visiting during the Carnival fiesta celebrations will be able to take part in the so-called *Carnaval del Toro*



which, as the name implies, stars none other than Spain's fierce fighting bull.

Leaving Ciudad Rodrigo -inevitably with some regret- the traveller will cross over the Roman Bridge which, albeit largely reconstructed, is witness to the city's long history. Four kilometres away, on the Águeda Dam road, is the 16th-century *Caridad* (Charity) Monastery, with its enchanting 18th-century cloister. As it is private property, permission to go inside must first be obtained.

## The Sierra de Gata

To reach the Sierra de Gata, depart from Ciudad Rodrigo via the C-526 and then turn off to Águeda del Castillo. While driving along the banks of the Águeda, or crossing and recrossing its

waters, one gets magnificent views of the river, as it cleaves a course through the rugged terrain. The local outcrops in the area are called *Riscos* or crags, the best-known being Martiago, La Herguijuela and Robledo, each lying near the town of the same name.

A worthwhile idea, on rejoining the C-526, is to go back as far as the Santo Cristo *ermita* (hermitage chapel) on the outskirts of El Bodón to see the 16th-century crucifix attributed to the Italian sculptor, Lucas Mitata. In Fuenteguinaldo, a lovely Gothic church houses a 16th-century retablo likewise ascribed to Mitata.

A short way outside El Payo, set amidst surroundings of scenic beauty, is an excellently preserved, twin-arched Roman bridge across the Águeda. From El Payo one can get to the source of the River Águeda up in the Sierra de Jálama Range, the last section of the Sierra de Gata still in Spanish territory. This same town is also the starting point for trips to points in the Sierra de Gata lying on the far side of the Salamanca-Extremadura watershed, in areas that are noticeably more abrupt and steeper.



■ Ciudad Rodrigo, Tourist Parador

## ALONG THE BANKS OF THE TORMES TO THE ARRIBES DEL DUERO

On this route, the traveller will follow the River Tormes from Salamanca to its confluence with the River Duero, in order to get to know the area called *La Ribera* (riverside) or *Arribes del Duero* (upper course of the Duero), located in the north-west of the province. Leave Salamanca via the SA-300. After approximately 18 kilometres, a short stop can be made in **Almenara de Tormes** to see *St. Mary's Parish Church (Santa María)*, built midway through the 12th century in Romanesque style. Special attention should be paid to the figures adorning the capitals.

Sixteen kilometres further on another halt is called for, this time at the historic walled town of **Ledesma** which, with its ruined castle, stands on the banks of the Tormes. Here, a number of churches justify a brief visit: *Santa María la Mayor (St. Mary Major)*, constructed in the 12th century, with 15th-century

modifications and additions; the Romanesque-style Parish Church of *Santa Elena*, small yet well preserved, featuring finely adorned capitals and modillions; and lastly, St. Michael's (*San Miguel*) and St. Peter's (*San Pedro*), also Romanesque though unfortunately not as well preserved. Of the *Walls*, only the *San Nicolás (St. Nicholas)* and *Puente (Bridge) Gates* remain. Little is left standing of the old fortress. The bridge was built on the orders of Don Beltrán de la Cueva in the 15th century.

Proceeding from Ledesma along the SA-302, the River Tormes will be seen to widen out into a large lake, measuring almost eight kilometres across at some points. This is no natural wonder but rather the manmade expanse of the Almendra Dam, an ideal spot for watersports. From the town of Almendra, one can make one's way up to the reservoir wall to enjoy

the impressive panorama stretching away on both sides.

The next destination is Villarino, where *La Ribera* or *Los Arribes* can be technically said to begin. In the town itself, one can get a lovely view of the area from the balcony of La Faya.

After a quick stop, drive on to Pereña, where a good idea is to climb up to the *Virgen del Castillo* hermitage chapel to see the typical *Ribera* scenery, a greenery-covered landscape of sheer-sided slopes, scarred, carved and hewn by the waters of the River Duero. Yet do not be too overwhelmed by all this grandeur: in the village ask the way to the *Pozo de los Humos* (Well of Smoke), a 50-metre/165-foot high waterfall, over which the River Uces plunges before merging with the Duero, an impressive sight particularly after the rains.

Follow the road to Masueco

and thence to Aldeadávila de la Ribera, the centre of *Los Arribes*, where the visitor will find any number of vantage points overlooking the River Duero. Access to many of these places is normally feasible by car, and so the best thing to do is to ask the way of a villager, who is sure to be ready with helpful and friendly advice. Names to remember when asking for directions are El Rostro, Fuente Frasquito, Puerta de Rupurupay, and above all, Picón del Águila and Picón de Felipe, the two most impressive look-out points. Equally impressive is the El Salto hydroelectric plant, one of the most important of its kind in Spain.

From Aldeadávila, the route leads on to Mieza, where the Balcón de la Code and El Mirador command sweeping panoramas of the Duero. Onwards to Saucelle, to see the Castillo (Castle), Puerto de la



Molinera, El Salto and many more places to which the locals will direct you. Leaving El Salto behind, one can now head for Hinojosa del Duero, with its lovely Romanesque hermitage chapel and a number of other interesting sights. The road continues as far as La Fregeneda, the last of the *Ribera* towns, and with it, the last views of the river's impressive upper reaches.

Making for Lumbrales, the traveller will find a church dating from the latter part of the 16th century and, in the environs, Las Merchanas where the remains of a pre-Roman *castro* (fortified settlement) and a scattering of dolmens are to be seen.

## San Felices de los Gallegos

Drive to San Felices de los Gallegos to discover another monumental Salamancan town laying

claim to a long and little-known past. Worth seeing here is the parish church, which retains important Romanesque vestiges of its earliest structure. The church tower rises above one of two gates that have survived from the old town wall. A prominent feature in the Plaza del Castillo (Castle Square) is the superb keep. This is a town made for exploring on foot, its history-filled streets flanked by seigneurial houses awaiting discovery. There are now two possible alternatives: either follow the road to Ciudad Rodrigo (see route III), or go back to Lumbrales and then return to Salamanca via the C-517, passing through Vitigudino to see the Church of St. Nicholas (only for those with the time and stamina after such a long day's journey).

■ *Los Arribes del Duero (upper course of the River Duero)*



## YOUR STAY IN SALAMANCA

### *How to get there*

**Car:** From Madrid (212 kilometres), via the A-6 toll motorway as far as Sanchidrián, then branch off and take the N-501; from Zamora (62 kilometres), via the N-630; from Valladolid (115 kilometres), via the N-620.

**Coach:** Bus and Coach Station. Filiberto Villalobos, 71- 85, ☎ 923 23 67 17.

**Train:** Direct services to Valladolid, Madrid and Portugal. RENFE (Spanish Rail) station. Paseo de la Estación. ☎ 923 12 02 02.

**Plane:** Matacán Airport. ☎ 923 32 96 00.

### *Where to stay*

Metropolitan Salamanca and the outlying areas offer a wide selection of accommodation.

There are Tourist Paradors in the cities of Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. A type of lodging currently experiencing a boom is the country cottage (*casa rural*). The Castile & León Directorate General for Tourism and the Tourist Board publish an annual guidebook which, among other things, lists these establishments, complete with details of rates and addresses.

**Sierra de Salamanca Agritourism Association** (*Asociación de Turismo Rural de la Sierra de Salamanca*). Central booking office, ☎ 923 43 75 76.

### *Useful information*

Opening times:

Banks: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., with some branches opening in the afternoon.

Shops: generally open from 10/10.30 a.m.- 8/8.30 p.m., and close for lunch from 2-5 p.m.

Pharmacies: opening times are the same as for shops. For emergencies, there is a daily rota, displayed outside all pharmacies, indicating which are on night-service and/or open at the weekend. Restaurants usually open for lunch from 1:30-4 p.m. and for dinner from 8:30-11:30 p.m.

Cashpoints (ATMs): located throughout the city.

Foreign currency can be exchanged for pesetas at all banks and most hotels.

Credit cards are accepted by most shops, hotels and restaurants.

### LOCAL CUISINE

Salamanca cuisine is deeply influenced by the geographical diversity of a province that ranges from pasture-lands and wheatfields to mountainous uplands. A common feature shared with the rest of Castile is the roast, be it sucking pig (*cochinillo*) or kid (*cabrito*). Yet the real local staple is pork, appearing in the vast majority of the region's dishes, such as: the *limón* of Ciudad Rodrigo, a cold platter prepared from meat, *chorizo* (spicy Spanish sausage), egg and lemon, and eaten during Carnival season; *hornazo*, a pie, traditionally associated with Eastertime but nowadays the typical dish

available at any time anywhere, and -depending on the recipe of the particular district- containing *chorizo*, ham, bacon, pork, hardboiled egg and sometimes even poultry; and *farinato*, a white sausage meat made with breadcrumbs, lard and seasoning (usually eaten with fried eggs).

Moors and Jews alike left their mark on the local confectionery and pastries, good instances being provided by the *amarguillos* (almond cookies) and *mazapanes* (marzipan) from the Convent of Santa María de Dueñas, and the buns and biscuits made by the nuns in Alba de Tormes, to say nothing of the *bollo maimón*, a kind of sponge cake.

A comprehensive list of cakes, biscuits, sweetmeats and the like made in the area would be too long to print here. Naming a few will however make the task of spotting them that much easier: *rosclas* (doughnut-like rings), *quisquillas almendradas* and *arope* (grape syrup) from La Alberca; *almendras garrapiñadas* (candied almonds) from Alba de Tormes; *obleas* (wafers), *perrunillas* (oval or circular cinnamon-and-lemon flavoured biscuits), *repelados*, *duquesitas*, *hojaldres* (puff pastry) and *paciencias* (small biscuits) from Ledesma and Santillán; *obispos* from Yeltes; and *empiñonados* and *huesillos* (fried finger-shaped pastries) from Béjar... and so on.

Many good restaurants are to be found en route, where the region's varied fare may

be enjoyed to the full. Bars abound, and the custom of *tapeo* (ordering a mix of snack-like servings, known as *tapas*) is almost a "must" in and around the Plaza Mayor, with the Arco del Toro, Calle Clavel and Plaza de San Julián, etc., being other areas where local specialities are served.

## HANDICRAFTS

Handicrafts in the Province of Salamanca embrace a broad range of materials: silver, used in the local precious-metal and silverwork (the emblem of Salamanca being the traditional ball-filigree *charro* button); leather, used by master craftsmen specialising in tooled morocco, and saddle, harness and shoemakers to produce an array of products including the famed Spanish-style riding boot or *boto*; fabrics, used to weave shawls, handmade lacework and the renowned Béjar cape; wood, used by joiners, master carpenters, woodworkers, carvers and coopers, and even in basketry and wickerwork; clay, for potters making earthenware and ceramics; and a long list of etceteras. For fuller information, kindly contact the Arts and Crafts Guild (*Gremio de Artesanos*), in the Plaza de Sexmeros, or the Centre for Traditional Culture (*Centro de Cultura Tradicional*) in the Plaza de Colón.

## SPORTS

Hunting and fishing figure prominently among the sporting activities to be enjoyed in the province. For

information on areas set aside for these activities and the relevant permits, kindly contact the Regional Environmental Regulatory Authority - *Servicio Territorial de Medio Ambiente y Ordenación Territorial*, ☎ 923 29 60 26, or the Spanish Hunting Federation - *Federación Española de Caza*, ☎ 91 311 14 11 and Spanish Fishing & Angling Federation - *Federación Española de Pesca*, ☎ 91 532 83 52.

There is an enormously wide range of possibilities for all manner of mountaineering, but restrictions on space limit recommendations to: the Batuecas Valley, ideal for hiking; and the Llano de la Covatilla, a place for skiers and rambles.

Watersports and sailing enthusiasts should head for the La Almendra Dam. Golfers can either play at the Zaparicos Golf Course, situated in the town of the same name, ☎ 923 32 91 00, or get in touch with the Spanish Golf Federation - *Federación Española de Golf*, ☎ 91 555 26 82.

El Matacán aerodrome, ☎ 923 32 96 00, is the local base for all flying and aerial sports.

## FESTIVALS AND FOLKLORE

**February:** Miranda del Castañar and La Alberca celebrate *Las Calendas* on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and *Las Águedas* and the *Día de las Mayordomas* on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Carnival festivities, which have no fixed yearly date, are held in Ciudad Rodrigo.

**March and April:** depending on the dates on which Easter falls in these months, Holy Week celebrations are held in all the towns and villages of the province.

Salamanca celebrates *Lunes de Aguas*, commemorating the return of the ladies of easy virtue, banished from the city during Lent by order of Philip II.

**June:** 12<sup>th</sup> June is the feast day of St. *John of Sahagún*, Salamanca's patron saint, a four-day holiday period of continuous festivities and entertainment. The 29<sup>th</sup> marks the *Fiestas of St. Peter and St. Paul* almost everywhere throughout the province.

**July and August:** 25<sup>th</sup> July in Candelario heralds the Fiestas of St. *James the Apostle (Santiago Apóstol)*, celebrated with *novilladas*, bullfights featuring 2 to 3-year old bullocks and novice fighters, and *encierros*, the running of the bulls through the village streets; La Alberca celebrates the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August with *La Ofrenda y loa de Nuestra Señora*, a traditional mystery play in which the devil descends amidst rockets and smoke.

**September:** pilgrimage outing in traditional Salamancan *charro* peasant dress on 8<sup>th</sup> September to the Peña de Francia Shrine; from the 8<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, fiestas in honour of the *Virgen de la Vega* (Virgin of the Valley) and St. Matthew in Salamanca.

**October:** Feast of St. Teresa in Alba de Tormes on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

**International Dialling Code: 34**

**TURESPAÑA TOURIST INFORMATION** ☎ 901 300 600

**Castile & León Regional Authority: Department for Industry, Commerce and Tourism** (*Consejería de Industria, Comercio y Turismo de la Junta de Castilla y León*). Jesús Rivero Meneses, s/n. (s/n, unnumbered). Valladolid.

☎ 983 41 41 00; Fax 983 41 13 95

**Salamanca Provincial Tourist Board** (*Patronato Provincial de Turismo de Salamanca*). Plaza de Sexmeros, 2, ☎ 923 28 01 36; Fax 923 28 01 46

**Salamanca Association of Official Tourist Guides** (*Asociación de Guías Oficiales de Turismo de Salamanca*), ☎ 923 40 73 00

**University Cultural Activities Department** (*Servicio de Actividades Culturales de la Universidad*). Plaza de San Benito. ☎ 923 29 44 80

### TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES:

**Salamanca:** Casa de las Conchas. Rúa Mayor; ☎ 923 26 85 71; Fax 923 26 24 92, Plaza Mayor, 14. ☎ 923 21 83 42

**Alba de Tormes:** Lepanto, 4. ☎ 923 30 08 98

**La Alberca:** Plaza Mayor. ☎ 923 41 52 91 (tourist season only)

**Béjar:** Paseo de Cervantes, 6. ☎ 923 40 30 05

**Ciudad Rodrigo:** Plaza de las Amayuelas, 5. ☎ 923 46 05 61

**Ledesma:** Plaza Mayor. ☎ 923 57 00 15 (tourist season only)

**Miranda del Castañar:** Plaza de Toros. ☎ 923 43 23 43 (tourist season only)

**Peñaranda de Bracamonte:** Carlos I. ☎ 923 54 00 01 (tourist season only)

**Vitigudino:** Plaza de la Torre, 4. ☎ 923 52 03 52 (tourist season only)

**PARADORS** (State-run hotels) **Central booking office.** Calle Requena 3 28013 Madrid. ☎ 91 516 66 66; Fax 91 516 66 57

**Salamanca:** Teseo de la Feria, 2. ☎ 923 19 20 82; Fax 923 19 20 87.

**Ciudad Rodrigo:** Plaza del Castillo, 1. ☎ 923 46 01 50; Fax 923 46 04 04.

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** Information: ☎ 1003;

Red Cross (Cruz Roja): ☎ 923 22 22 22; Municipal Police: ☎ 092;

Road & Highway information: ☎ 900 12 35 05

### SPANISH TOURIST OFFICES ABROAD:

**Canada. Toronto.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN. 2 Bloor Street West 34th floor. TORONTO, Ontario M4W 3E2. ☎ 1416/ 961 31 31

Fax: 1416/ 961 19 92

**Great Britain. London.** SPANISH TOURIST OFFICE. 22-23 Manchester Square. LONDON W1M 5AP. ☎ 44171/ 486 80 77

Fax: 44171/ 486 80 34

**Japan. Tokyo.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN Daini Toranomon Denki Bldg. 4F. 3-1-10 Toranomon. Minato-Ku. TOKYO-105. ☎ 813/ 34 32 61 41-42

Fax: 813/ 34 32 61 44

**United States of America**

**Los Angeles.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN. 8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960 BEVERLY HILLS, CAL 90211. ☎ 1323/ 658 71 88-658 71 92

Fax: 1323/ 658 10 61

**Chicago.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN. Water Tower Place, Suite 915 East 845, North Michigan Avenue. CHICAGO, ILL 60-611

☎ 1312/ 642 19 92 - 944 02 16, Fax: 1312/ 642 98 17

**Miami.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN. 1221 Brickell Avenue MIAMI, Florida 33131. ☎ 1305/ 358 19 92, Fax: 1305/ 358 82 23

**New York.** TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN. 666 Fifth Avenue 35th. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10103. ☎ 1212/ 265 88 22, Fax: 1212/ 265 88 64

### EMBASSIES IN MADRID

**Canada:** Nuñez de Balboa, 35. ☎ 91 431 43 00; Fax: 91 431 23 67

**Great Britain:** Marqués de la Ensenada, 16. ☎ 91 308 52 01;

Fax: 91 308 08 82

**Japan:** Serrano, 109. ☎ 91 490 76 00; Fax: 91 590 13 21

**United States:** Serrano, 75. ☎ 91 587 22 00; Fax: 91 587 23 03





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TURESPAÑA



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Secretaría de Estado de Comercio, Turismo y PYME  
Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda

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