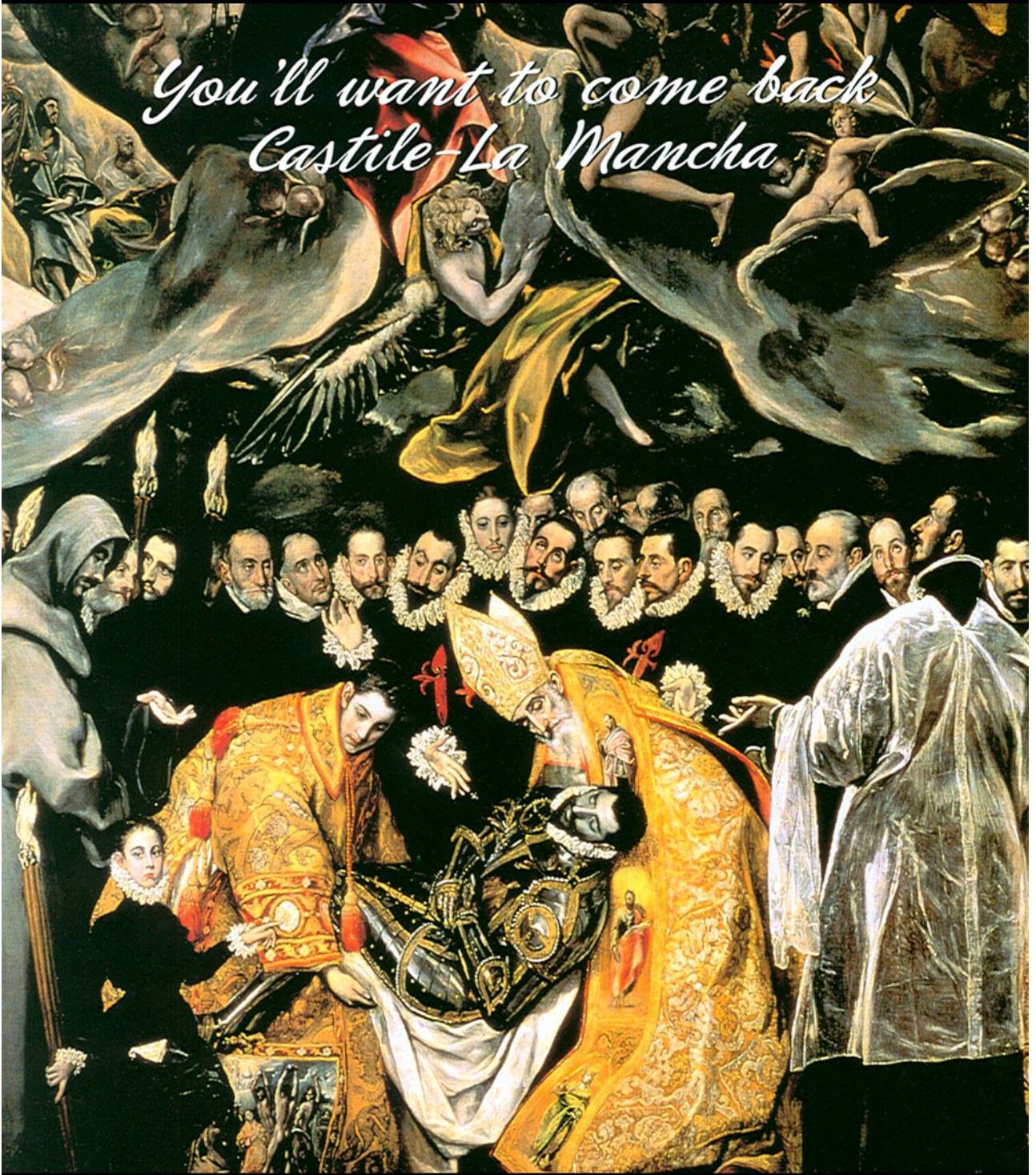


T O L E D O

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Castile-La Mancha*



Castilla
La Mancha
Turismo





Toledo, Art and History

HISTORY

The earliest mentions we have of Toletum date back to the fourth century BC, when, according to Pliny, it was the capital of Carpetania. The Romans took Toletum in 192 BC and developed an important iron industry and minted coins here. From the Roman era, we have remains of the circus, and an amphitheatre, a villa and public buildings for water supply.

At the beginning of the 5th century AD, Toletum was conquered by two Germanic tribes: first the Alani (411) and shortly after this the Visigoths (418) who defeated and banished the former. Halfway through the 6th century, during the reign of Anagildo, Toletum was the capital of the Visigothic kingdom of Hispania and lived moments of political and religious splendour. The Councils of Toledo had a religious dimension (conversion from Arianism to Catholicism) but, in many cases, a political dimension (succession to the throne, adapting the codes of justice of Spanish-Romans, Visigoths, etc.).

After the Moslem invasions, Toledo lost importance for over three centuries until, in 1085, it was taken, by means of a treaty, by king Alfonso VI of Castile, who encouraged the repopulation of the area between the lands of the Tagus River and the lands of the Guadiana River.

For more than two centuries, until the reign of Afonso X the Wise, Toledo became a European intellectual centre and the School of Translators was created here. It was the School's mission to translate into Latin Ara-



Remains of the Roman Circus

bic literary and scientific texts. They also translated from Greek into Latin and, often into Castilian Spanish, almost all the works of Aristotle and his school, and the most important Jewish and Moslem scientists.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, the growth of the town continued, based on flourishing textile, weapon, silk and coin-minting industries and other crafts.

In the first third of the 13th century, Archbishop Ximénez de Rada ordered building work to be started on the cathedral, one of the greatest Spanish Gothic architectural works. This was a demonstration of the economic and spiritual strength of the Church. Ferdinand III laid the first stone of this temple which was more or less finished in 1493, after the Conquest of Granada. However, other parts were added later.

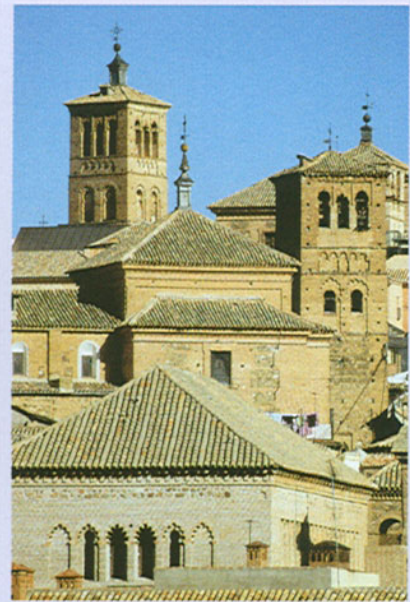
The Archbishopric was to be for many centuries the driving force behind the town's economy and ideology. The Archbishops, mostly from the nobility, had great political influence, (just as the Councils had had at the time of the Visigoths) and, in any case, enormous economic power derived from the taxes they controlled and the vast amounts of land they possessed throughout the province.

During the Commune Wars, the town nobles who controlled the municipalities were opposed to Charles V's fiscal and centralist government aims and they led the uprisings of many of the cities of Castile. These were eventually put down in 1522. Restoration work was started on the Alcázar, which had held the Court and would do again during the reign of Charles V and a short part of the reign of his son Philip II.

In the 16th century, the wool trade and different craft industries make Toledo, together with Medina del Campo, the most important towns in Castile.

Charles V and his son Philip II kept their Courts at Toledo until, in 1565, Philip decided to move to Madrid due, probably, to the fact that it was impossible to have all the Court organs at Toledo. This move resulted in a notable decline of life in the town. In little under fifty years, it no longer had any administrative function and this, together with the serious textile crisis in the 17th century, resulted in a drop in the population of Toledo from 11,000 registered inhabitants in 1561 to less than half that number (5,000) in 1640.

Largely, the buildings abandoned by the nobility and the Court would be occupied over the next few decades by the Church, especially with convents and religious foundations. In the 18th century, an "enlightened" Archbishop, Cardinal Lorenzana fought to bring new life into the city: The Royal Trading and Factories Company was established in Toledo and this in turn led to the establishing of the Weapons Factory in Toledo and the textile industry in Talavera. A hospital was built for the demented (the Nuncio) and the Llana Door of the Cathedral was added. The Enlightenment also led to the creation of the first Economic Society of Friends of the Region, at the initiative of the Minister Campomanes.



Synagogue and Mudejar Towers



Roman Ivory Statue. Museum of Santa Cruz

During the Wars of Independence the town was sacked and much of the artistic heritage –buildings and other works of art– it had accumulated over the centuries was damaged.

During the second half of the 19th century there was a slight increase in the population. In 1858 the first railway, a branch line from Aranjuez, leading nowhere else, came to Toledo. In the convulsed last third of the century, with the 1868 revolution and the First Republic, life in Toledo seemed to be picking up (the Alcázar was remodelled, a water supply tower to bring water from the Tagus to the city was built, etc.).

During this period, Toledo was visited and studied by many writers and painters, both Spanish and foreign, and this created a Romantic image of the town, which has largely survived until now.

In the second half of the 20th century, after 1960, there was new industrial development in the town and an industrial estate was built to take the overflow from Madrid. This led to a further improvement in the demographic and economic situation, which was ratified in the 1980s when Toledo was chosen as the capital of the Castile-La Mancha region.



*Santiago del Arrabal Tower
and Puerta de Bisagra*

ART

Nowhere is there such a splendid collection of historic and artistic buildings from almost all the different periods, as there is in Toledo. These buildings turn Toledo into a museum and have been declared by UNESCO to be a **World Heritage City**.

The old part of the town, perfectly delimited by the gorge formed by the river Tagus and by the city walls, is the geographical space which contains the most important buildings from a historical and architectural viewpoint. The lack of space, because of its situation, means they were forced to build the most varied buildings side by side. All the different styles stand here together: Moorish, Mudejar, Gothic, Renaissance, etc. The accumulation of artistic jewels from different centuries is the most noticeable feature, forming a picturesque group of buildings, which is almost perfect.

The city walls date from Roman times; they were later rebuilt by king Wamba in the 7th century and the Moors finally fixed the walled enclosure, which is preserved today. There are many gates, but the most important ones are: the **Doce Cantos Gate**, the **Bab-al-Mardum** gate –a Moorish work and perhaps the oldest gate into the town–, the **Puerta del Sol** (The Sun Gate), the base of which is from the 12th century and the upper part, Mudéjar in style, from the 14th century leading to the Medina or walled city; the **gate of Alfonso VI**, which is Moorish and is the last defense tower of the area outside the walled city; the **Puerta de Bisagra**, which leads into the historic city, was built by Covarrubia on the bases of an old gate during the reign of Charles V and has a magnificent parade ground. On the façade we can see the huge imperial coat of arms of the city; the **Alcántara Gate**, which was originally Moorish and has been completely restored; the **Cambron Gate** was rebuilt in the 16th century and owes its name to a thorny bush (cambronera), which grew up around one of the towers. Very close to this gate, we can find the **Baño de la Cava**, on the banks of the Tagus,

beside the **Puente de San Martín** (St Martin's Bridge), a Moorish construction, which acted as a support for a bridge which was destroyed by floods in 1203.

The **Alcántara Bridge**, which was presumably Roman, also forms part of the defence enclosure, and has a fortified gate with merlons of equilateral arches; the tower on the outside is from the 18th century. This bridge gave access to the city and had a parade ground with three gates, of which only the one mentioned here still exists. The other bridge is **St Martin's Bridge**, further down the river. We do not know when it was built, but we can find references to it in the 12th century. It is often raised and sits on four arches and is defended by two gate-towers.

The only building which dates back to before the Reconquest and has been preserved intact is the **Mezquita del Cristo de la Luz** (Mosque of Our Lord of Light), from the 10th century. It has four columns with Visigothic capitals and these support nine domes of the most varied structure, derived from the Cordova Mosque.

The Christians who lived in the city when it was under the control of the Moslems (*Mozárabes*), used their churches for religious practise, but those that remain from that period (the church of **Saint Sebastian** or of **Saint Eulilia**) were rebuilt during the Christian Middle Ages –12th to 15th century- and are called Mudejar churches; they show a mixture of Visigothic motifs and architectural elements which have been adapted (capitals, shafts, pilasters, vaulted niches, etc.) with the richest Moorish decorations.

The Church of **Santiago del Arrabal** is perhaps the most important Mudejar church. Its tower dates from the 12th century, has a square base and windows with double horseshoe arches. The present church was built in the 13th century. On the outside we can see three gable ends with lobed windows and three semi-circular apses. On the inside we can find important coffered ceilings and an interesting pulpit. The Church of **Cristo de la Vega** was built on the site of the former Visigothic basilica of Saint Leocadia. It was rebuilt in 1166 and the Mudejar apse from that period was preserved. On the inside, we can see the famous statue of Cristo de la Vega which gave rise to a famous legend told by Zorrilla in his play *A mejor juez, mejor testigo* (The Better the Judge, the Better the Witness has to Be). The Church of **San Vicente** is also important, and has a Mudejar apse, and so is the Church of **Santo Tomás**, which is mentioned in 12th-century documents and was rebuilt at the beginning of the 14th century. Its square-based tower, made from brick and masonry, is one of the most beautiful in the town. Inside, it still has the El Greco painting *El Entierro del señor de Orgaz*.



Visigothic Shaft.
Church of El Salvador



Plasterwork. Synagogue of El Tránsito



Museum of the Councils. Interior

We can find another very interesting tower in the **church of San Miguel**, from the 12th century, situated next to the Alcázar. **The Church of San Roman** has an important collection of 13th-century mural paintings, which have been magnificently preserved, and the main chapel, which is from the 16th century, is plateresque. It is now home to the **Museum of the Councils and Visigothic Culture**. Like the other churches, it has a beautiful tower.

Like the Christian churches, the synagogues are also Mudejar in style. Toledo had many synagogues, but only

two have been preserved, situated in the south-eastern part of the town where there was once a flourishing Jewish Quarter. The oldest of the two, now called the Synagogue of **Santa María la Blanca**, was built at the end of the 12th century inspired in Almohad art, with beautiful horseshoe arches and typical capitals. Around 1550, it became a Christian church and three chapels were added to it. The **Synagogue of El Tránsito** from the 14th century, home today to the **Sephardic Museum**, has a simple structure and great decorative beauty; Samuel-Haleví, Pedro I of Castile's treasurer, had it built. It is a rectangular building with beautiful plasterwork on the walls.

From the Gothic period, we have the **Catedral Primada** (the Primate Cathedral), a more solid and monumental example than other European temples of the same style. Construction work began in 1226. Certain features of the building – the strong lines, the Mudejar influences in the decoration and the original solution of the vaults in the ambulatory- make it the most original cathedral to be built in Spain during the Gothic art period. It had a nave with a choir, four aisles around the main chapel, two of which formed the ambulatory and a transept, which does not stand out. It has only



Sacristy. Cathedral

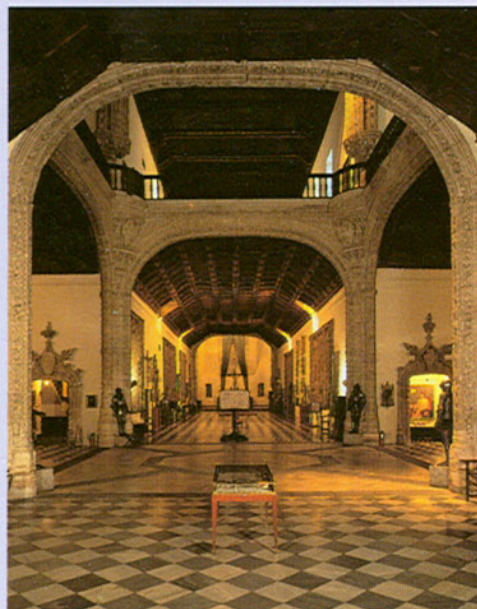


The Pillaging. El Greco. Sacristy of the Cathedral

one tower, which is very slim and offers a view of the whole town. It took hundreds of years to build the cathedral. Around about the time Columbus discovered America (1492), the basic structure of the temple was finished. The different periods of Gothic art are represented in the decoration; the choir is Renaissance style and part of the stonework was carved by Alonso Berruguete. A series of smaller rooms in the temple are also decorated in Renaissance style: the Mudejar chapel; the chapter house, which has important frescoes painted by Juan de Borgoña and an antechamber with magnificent Mudejar decoration; the sacristy, which constitutes a real museum of paintings with works by El Greco, Lucas Jordán, Juan de Borgoña, Van Dyck, Tristán, Goya, to name only a few; the treasury where the monstrance worked by Enrique de Arfe at the beginning of the 16th century in gold and gold-plated silver, measuring 3.8 metres high and weighing around 200 kilos, is exhibited.

There are many chapels (22 in total) and other rooms in the Cathedral and the number of works of art lodged here is impossible to count: the Chapel of the New Kings, built by Covarrubias as a burial place for the monarchs, the Chapel of Santiago (St James), one of the greatest works of the more ornate Gothic period, especially the tombs of Álvaro de Luna and Juana Pimentel; the Chapel of San Ildefonso, from the 14th century, with its beautiful tombs; the Chapel of the Virgen del Sagrario, patron of Toledo; The Chapel of the Tomb under the chancel or the Transparente, one of the most important works of the Spanish Baroque by Narciso Tomé.

Amid the sombre royal tombs, we find the beautiful altarpiece made of wood with estofados by Bigarny, Almonacid, Petit Jean and other artists. The Gothic cloister has special charm as do the different doorways: the Puerta del Reloj (of the Clock), la puerta del Mollete, de la Torre (of the Tower) del Infierno (of Hell), del Perdón (of Pardon) de los Escribanos (Scribes) or del Juicio (Judgement), the Puerta Llana and the Puerta de los Leones (of the Lions). We must not forget to mention, when talking about the Cathedral, the wrought-iron, because here we can probably find the best collection of Spanish grilles that we will ever see.



Santa Cruz Museum. Interior



Astrolab Tapestry. Santa Cruz Museum

plateresque building, has beautiful coffered ceilings, an exceptional cloister with a palatial staircase and the doorway to the outside is an altarpiece. Today it is home to the Santa Cruz Museum, which has an important leading collection of El Greco paintings, including the *Asunción de la Virgen*. It also has interesting works of art, ivory crucifixes, jewellery, furniture and 30 tapestries from Brussels and works by, among others, Ribera, Carducho, Morales, Jordan, Goya and a good representation of 16th and 17th-century painters from Toledo.

The Hospital de Tavera is also worth a visit: it has a Renaissance façade and twin courtyards. Inside the church, we can see the marble sarcophagus of Cardinal Tavera, by Alonso Berruguete. In the left wing of the hospital, we can find the Museum, which has interesting paintings by El Greco, Ribera, Carreño, Sánchez Coello, Titian and Tintoretto.

But Toledo's artistic wealth does not stop here. There are many other examples of the variety of styles, from the Renaissance: **Santo Domingo el Antiguo**, which has an interesting conventual museum, **Puerta Nueva de Bisagra** (New Hinged Door), **San José...** to the neoclassical, not forgetting the Baroque examples on the way, like the church of **San Ildefonso**, which belongs to the Jesuits, and the **Lorenzana Palace**, the University's Main Building together with the former convent of **San Pedro Mártir** (St Peter the Martyr). **The Alcázar**, which seems to preside over the town, holds part of the Army Museum and the Library of Castile-La Mancha.

Other historical buildings include the **Palace of Fuensalida**, which was built at the beginning of the 15th century and has a magnificent courtyard and remains of Mudejar plasterwork. Behind this, we can see the Taller del Moro, part of a 14th-century palace of which only a central room and two side alcoves connected by magnificent plaster passages are left; this building holds the **Taller del Moro Museum**, which exhibits Mudejar arts and crafts from the 14th and 15th centuries.

The Bearded Woman. Ribera. Duke of Lerma Museum

Other examples of Gothic architecture in Toledo are the **Bridge and Gate of St Martin** and the **Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes**, which dates from the late Gothic period; inside the Monastery church, late Gothic style is combined with Mudejar features. The most interesting part of the Monastery is the cloister.

Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza ordered the **Santa Cruz Hospital** to be built towards the beginning of the 16th century as a hospital and a home for orphan children. Famous architects like the Egas brothers, Enrique and Antón, and Alonso de Covarrubias participated in this project. It is a





Synagogue of Santa María La Blanca

The **Casa-Museo de El Greco** (The el Greco Home and Museum) as it is called, is the reconstruction of a typical Toledo home decorated with furniture and objects from the painter's era, and has a collection of important El Greco paintings, including the *Vista y Plano de Toledo* (View and Map of Toledo) and an *Apostolado*. A few years ago a Jewish ritual bath, related to the Synagogue de El Tránsito, was found under the flooring.

In the Calle de las Bulas in the famous Casa de Cadenas (House of Chains) –a magnificent Toledan house– we can visit the **Museum of Contemporary Art**, which has a collection of works by Spanish artists like Alberto Sánchez, Arredondo, Barjola, Canogar, Benjamín Palencia, Antonio López, etc.

Outside the city walls, opposite the Alcántara Bridge, stands the **Castle of San Servando**; in the area known as the Vega Baja we can see the remains of the **Roman circus**.

In addition to visiting famous buildings in Toledo, it is essential to wander round the streets, courtyards and convents, with no not going anywhere in particular destination in mind, and just enjoy the magic.

FIESTAS

Perhaps the **Corpus Christi** procession in Toledo is the most famous of all those held in Spain; on that day the town lives one of its greatest and most solemn moments. There are references to his procession as far back as the 13th century and it is the fiesta which is most deeply-rooted in Toledo.

Many festivities take place during the **Semana Grande del Corpus**, but the procession, without a doubt, is the highlight. The streets the procession goes through are all decorated: typical mantones (huge embroidered shawls) are draped on balconies; flags and flowers line the streets and the walls of the Cathedral are covered with 17th-century tapestries which are only exhibited for a few hours a day during this festival. The route the procession takes is covered with awnings which act as a canopy for the participants to walk under.

The night before the procession, the route is opened by local government officials, preceded by the *pertiguero*, whose job it is to measure the height of the awnings, to check that they are all at the same height and will not be an obstacle for the monstrance. Once this is done, everybody can go onto the route and people will party there all night.



The ground is normally strewn with rosemary and thyme and is the same route that the procession has been taking for centuries; first in line are the *gigantones* and *cabezudos* (people in fancy dress costumes which normally have very large wooden heads) with the *tarasca*, they are followed by the Guardia Civil on horseback, the *timbaleros*, the Guardia Civil band, the *guión de los horteros*, the processional crucifix, the brotherhoods from Toledo with their standards, the boys and girls who have taken their First Communion, groups of young people, religious associations, noble orders, clergymen, the Archbishop, the civil and military authorities, the band and honorary members.



They all wear traditional clothes and accompany Arfe's magnificent monstrance, commissioned by Cardinal Cisneros in 1515. These celebrations are among the most important in Spain and are an important tourist attraction.

Toledo does itself proud for the Corpus Processions, but not long before, they hold another, more sombre celebration: the **Holy Week** processions which go through the streets of Toledo are a much more serious affair, but very interesting for the tourist. The most famous processions are those held on Wednesday and Thursday of Holy Week, and also the Good Friday procession. The processions on Thursday and Friday are accompanied by the group of *armaos*, a representation of the Roman legion who wear 16th and 17th-century armour and carry out the traditional *Quema del Judas* (burning of Judas, the traitor).

It is traditional during Holy Week in Toledo to visit the statues exhibited in all the churches and these remain open from Thursday afternoon until Friday at midday. Many of these churches are not open at any other time.



The Carnival festivities in Toledo are becoming popular and the number of visitors at this time of year is increasing. There has also been an increase in recent years in the number of participants, who dress up, take part in processions and cavalcades and join the ash Wednesday celebration *El Entierro de la Sardina*, a burlesque burning of sardines in the Tagus.

On May 1st the **Virgen del Valle** pilgrimage takes place to the shrine of the Virgen del Valle, opposite the town. Bells ring all day because legend says that if you do not ring a bell, you will never get married. The Virgen del Valle is taken in procession through the countryside and revered by the people of Toledo. Other pilgrimages take place at other times of the year, including the **Virgen de la Cabeza** pilgrimage and the **Virgen de la Bastida** pilgrimage.

On August 15th the festivities in honour of the patron of Toledo, the Virgen del Sagrario, are held and last for a week. Festivities include theatre, concerts, sporting competitions, bullfights and fair attractions.



GASTRONOMY

Toledo has always been famous for its cooking and the gastronomy of Toledo has been praised throughout the centuries. Lope de Vega, a famous Spanish Golden Age writer, refers in *La Noche Toledana* (A Night in Toledo) to the large number of restaurants the town had. Another popular saying in those days was "If you want a cook and a driver, you'll have to get them from Toledo", and Alexandre Dumas said that this was the best place he had ever eaten in in Spain.

Cooking is very traditional in Toledo, a town which has an abundance of game, has excellent olive oils and saffron and a valley that produces fresh vegetable products. The cookery is based on the quality of the ingredients and is distinguished by a number of specialities which give it personality.

For example, venison, wild boar, pigeon, quail, and above all, red partridge, the star dish on the menu. In Toledo partridge is cooked slowly and simply, with just a dash of vinegar, a lot of onion, herbs and slow, careful stewing. This dish has been popular for many centuries and is mentioned in Don Juan Manuel's *Exemplos* and by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*.

Roast lamb and suckling pig, butter beans with partridge or hare, *carcamusas*, venison with wild mushrooms,

trout in brine, crab soup, *pisto* (ratatouille) and a large number of dishes to appeal to any food lover.

And we must not forget that we are in a land where the Moors left the secrets of their best dessert: marzipan. Toledo also offers other desserts, cakes and jams, most of which have come from the convents. Many convents still sell delicious home-made cake and desserts. We can try *marquesitas* (sponge cakes), *melindres* from Yepes, or the very sweet honey syrup (*arrope*), *rosquillas* from Bargas, *pestiños* (these are both pastries), etc.

And to wash down all this food, some of Toledo's famous wine from Méntrida, Yepes, Quintanar, Ocaña, Malpica de Tajo, etc.: all these wines have been highly praised in recent years.

And finally, this is the area to eat Manchego cheese, which is produced in the province of Toledo and can be eaten either as an hors d'oeuvre or a dessert.





LOCAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

Toledo is very famous, and has been since the days of the Romans, for making swords. Ceramics made in Toledo have also been famous since the Middle Ages and, perhaps the most famous craft of all is the damascene work.

Damascene work consists of rubbing gold or silver onto less precious but harder metals like iron, bronze, steel or copper which defines

this decorative craft handed down to us by the Moors. Damascene work can be done on plates, brooches, pins, bangles and bracelets, rings and on other everyday objects that would surprise you. It is done by experienced craftsmen in Toledo and there are quite a large number of them.

As for swords, most are sold to tourists, although some manufacturers continue to produce sabres for different armies throughout the world and also produce replicas of famous swords: Tizona (El Cid's sword), James 1, Excalibur, Boabdil.



These activities, together with engraving, the production of suits of armour, wrought iron, working tin, the production of leather goods and wooden objects, pottery and others, constitute the selection of arts and crafts in Toledo.



As they go through the own, visitors can buy these goods in the many shops selling them and can also buy goods from other parts of the province: pottery from Talavera, Puente del Arzobispo, Ocaña or Cueva, embroidered goods from Lagartera and the surrounding district, leather goods from Ventas con Peña Aguilera or San Pablo de los Montes.



MUSEUMS IN TOLEDO

Ambulance Red Cross	925-222222	Army Museum (Alcázar)	925-221673
Bus Station	925-215850	Contemporary Art	925-227871
Train Station (RENFE)	902-240202	El Greco Museum	925-224046
Guardia Civil	062	Cathedral Treasures	925-222241
Hospital	925-269200	Visigothic Councils and Culture	925-227872
Police	092	Duke of Lerma	925-220451
Taxis	925-255050 / 925 227070	San Juan de los Reyes	925-223802
Fire Station	085	Santa Cruz	925-221036
		Santa María La Blanca	925-227257
		Santa Ursula	925-222235
		Santo Domingo El Antiguo	925-222930
		Santo Tomás	925-256098
		Sephardic Museum	925-223665
		Iglesia Jesuita	925-251507
		Taller del Moro	925-224500
		Victorio Macho	925-254524

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Castilla-La Mancha • Turismo
Consejería de Industria y Tecnología
Dirección General de Turismo y Artesanía

Río Estenilla, s/n
TOLEDO 45071 • Tel.: 925 267800 • Fax: 925 269470

Delegación Provincial
TOLEDO: Avenida de Francia, 2
TOLEDO 45071 • Tel.: 925 267980 • Fax: 925 253817

