

THE CITY OF CUENCA



CUENCA





TRAVEL DISTANCES

-  Airport
-  Train
-  Highway
-  National Road
-  County Road

169 Km. to MADRID
199 Km. to VALENCIA
552 Km. to BARCELONA
588 Km. to SEVILLE
145 Km. to ALBACETE
182 Km. to TOLEDO

The city of Cuenca is located in the centre of the Iberian Peninsula and is perfectly linked to the most important Spanish cities by the National High Speed Train Network: Madrid, Valencia, Alicante, Barcelona, Albacete, Seville, Huesca, Málaga and Valladolid.

The Province is also connected to the surrounding communities by different dual-carriage highways and auto routes:

- A-40: Cuenca Madrid
- A-31: Cuenca - Albacete
- A-43: Cuenca - Ciudad Real
- AP-36: Toledo-Albacete (passing through the south of the Province)
- A-3: Madrid - Valencia

The following are the main highways that pass through the province:

- N-320: Guadalajara - Albacete
- N-420: Teruel - Ciudad Real
- N-330: Teruel - Valencia





The city's most stunning characteristic is its beauty that recalls on the one hand, the harmony between nature and architecture, and on the other hand, its long history that has left us with a significant cultural and monumental legacy. On December 7th, 1996, Cuenca was named World Heritage Site by UNESCO, thanks to the excellent preservation of such an original urban landscape like this medieval fortress, and its rich collection of civil and religious architecture from the 12th to the 18th centuries. To this they added that the city features an exceptional personality, being perfectly integrated into the marvellous natural landscape that surrounds it.

Alfonso VIII Street



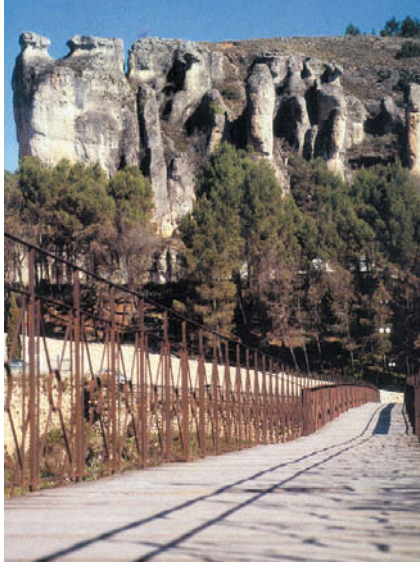
HISTORY

The origins of the city of Cuenca and its consolidation as an important population center can be traced to the Moslem domination following the year 711 AD. There was also a province similar to the current one, in the 10th century: the extensive Kora de Santavería. Its capital was located in Shantabariya (Ercávica), with its main enclaves being Uklis (Uclés), Wabda (Huete), Quelaza (Iniesta), Walmu (Huélamo), Al-Qualat (Alcalá de la Vega), Al-Arkun (Alarcón) and Kuvenka (Cuenca).

View of the back
of the Cathedral
from the Huécar
River Gorge



Starting in the mid-12th century, the Arab geographer El-Idrisí describes Cuenca as being a small and ancient village next to an artificial lake or lagoon surrounded by fortified walls, with a population of about 700. Located on a high unconquerable hill and encircled by the Júcar and Huécar Rivers, the city had great strategic value. For that reason, on September 21st, 1177, Cuenca was conquered by the Christian army, led by Alfonso the 8th and backed by the Aragonese King Alfonso the 2nd. Following the conquest, the city was awarded a large amount of territory and



Puente de San Pablo

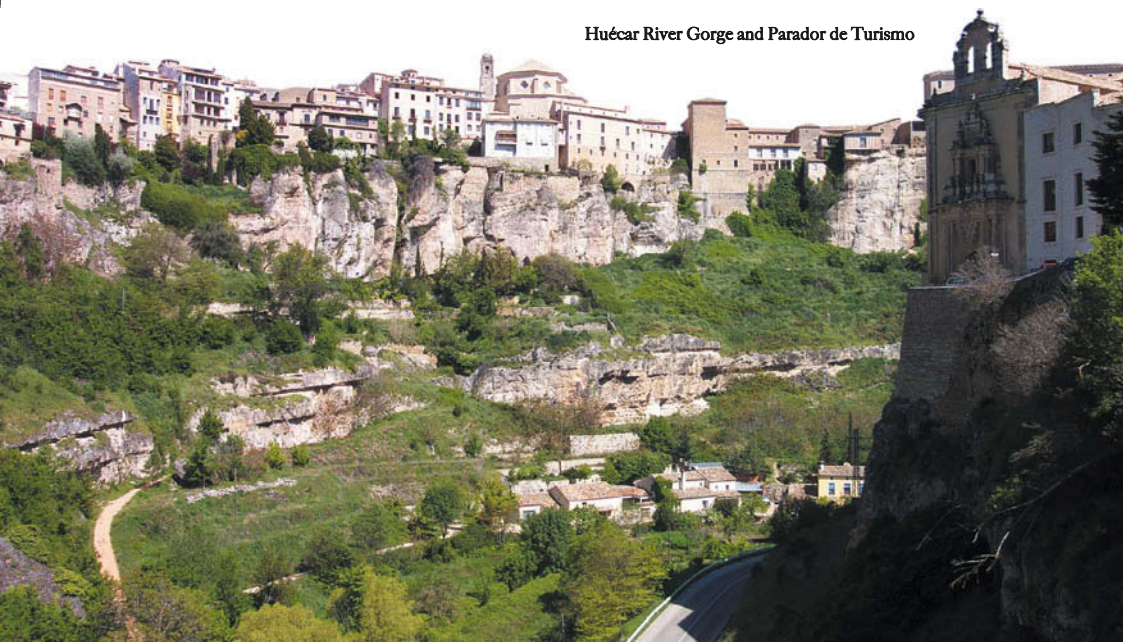
a repopulation campaign began, which resulted in the founding of several small hamlets. At the same time, the king set about repaying the various noblemen, prelates, and military orders that had helped him in his effort to win the city. The task of repopu-

lation was regulated by a new set of laws, called the *Fuero de Cuenca*. The new Episcopal seat was also re-established straightaway in Cuenca, following the restoration of what had been the ancient seats during the Visigoth era: Ercávica, Valeria, and years later, Segóbriga, when the territory of the ancient Moslem province (or “Kora”) was

conquered.

The constant presence of the Moslems made agriculture undesirable and farmers preferred to dedicate themselves to livestock, much more easily defended in case of attack. The Fuero of Cuenca stimulated war, as it recognized

Huécar River Gorge and Parador de Turismo





a superior category made up of all those in possession of war horses. Thus, the People's Cavalry came into existence, charged with the ongoing defense of local land and of communal livestock. Little by little, the People's Cavalry of Cuenca would see its

privileges grow and would end up as the most powerful group in the city, with its members occupying the most influential advisory positions. From a social point of view, the layout of the city was redistributed in the following

way: the Moslems occupied the Plaza de Mangana (Mangana Square), the Jews were found on Calle Zapaterías (Zapaterías Street), and the rest of the city was under Christian control, divided into parishes. The hamlets,

Arco de Bezudo, Castle District

which continued to spring up in the form of property awards given by the king, were organized by administrative entities called *sexmos*.

From an economic standpoint, the main industry was the production of cloth. As such, in the first third of the 15th century, the city gained a reputation as an important textile center, producer of wool and livestock.

During the 16th century, Cuenca lost jurisdiction over many of its villages, but the city was strengthened when it became the head of the judicial system, and more

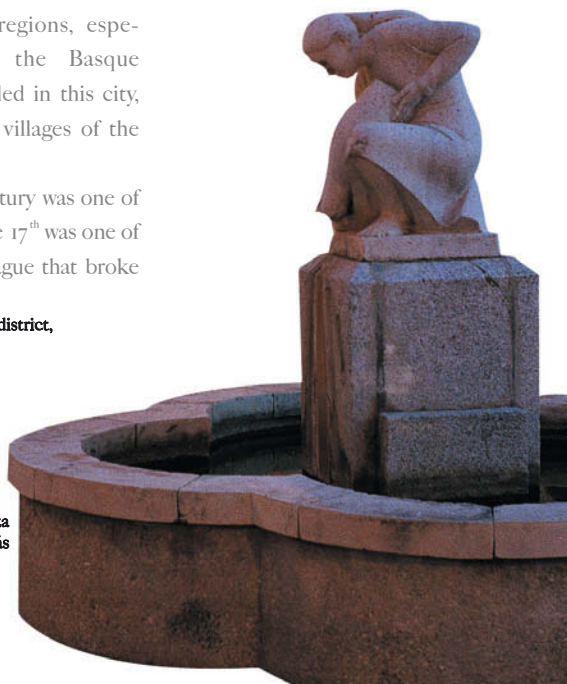
importantly, when it gained a vote in the Parliament.

The city would experience a great wave of growth thanks to agricultural expansion, the development of wool guilds, and the splendor of livestock transhumance. The most immediate consequence of this bonanza would be an unstoppable demographic growth spurt and the urban progress that the city underwent; this was the century that saw the construction of the Episcopal Palace; the monastery of the Jesuits; the convents of the Petras, Angélicas and Bernardas; the schools of San José and Santa Catalina; and the Oratory of San Felipe Neri. What's more, many artists and architects from other regions, especially from the Basque Country, settled in this city, and in other villages of the province.

If the 16th century was one of expansion, the 17th was one of crisis. The plague that broke

Ronda de Julián Romero

out in 1588 and affected Cuenca and other cities and towns in the province was the prelude to what would come to pass in the following century: prolonged drought, plagues of locusts, a drastic drop in population. The wool textile industry that had flourished up to this point would

**House in the historic district, with wooden beams****Fountain in Plaza de San Nicolás**

collapse, along with the decadence of the livestock transhumance.

Although symptoms of demographic recuperation appeared in the 18th century, and Bishop Palafox attempted to re-launch the textile industry, Cuencan economy would remain weak due to a decree by Carlos the 4th abolishing workshops in Cuenca, in an effort to avoid competition with the Real

Fábrica de Tapices (Royal Tapestry Works).

As for the 19th century, Javier de Burgos carried out reforms in 1833, in which Spain was divided into provinces, each with its own capital. Cuenca became the capital of its province, although the upheavals of the period (the War of Independence, the Carlist Wars, and political rivalries) would keep the city in a worn-out state that would

last until the second half of the 20th century.

Two events would mark this period: firstly, the definitive spreading of the population beyond the city walls and its establishment on the flat territory below; and secondly, the loss of power experienced by the clergy in Cuenca, following the confiscation of church property by Mendizábal in 1836 and Pascual Madoz in 1856.

Colored façades on Calle Pilares





View from the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español

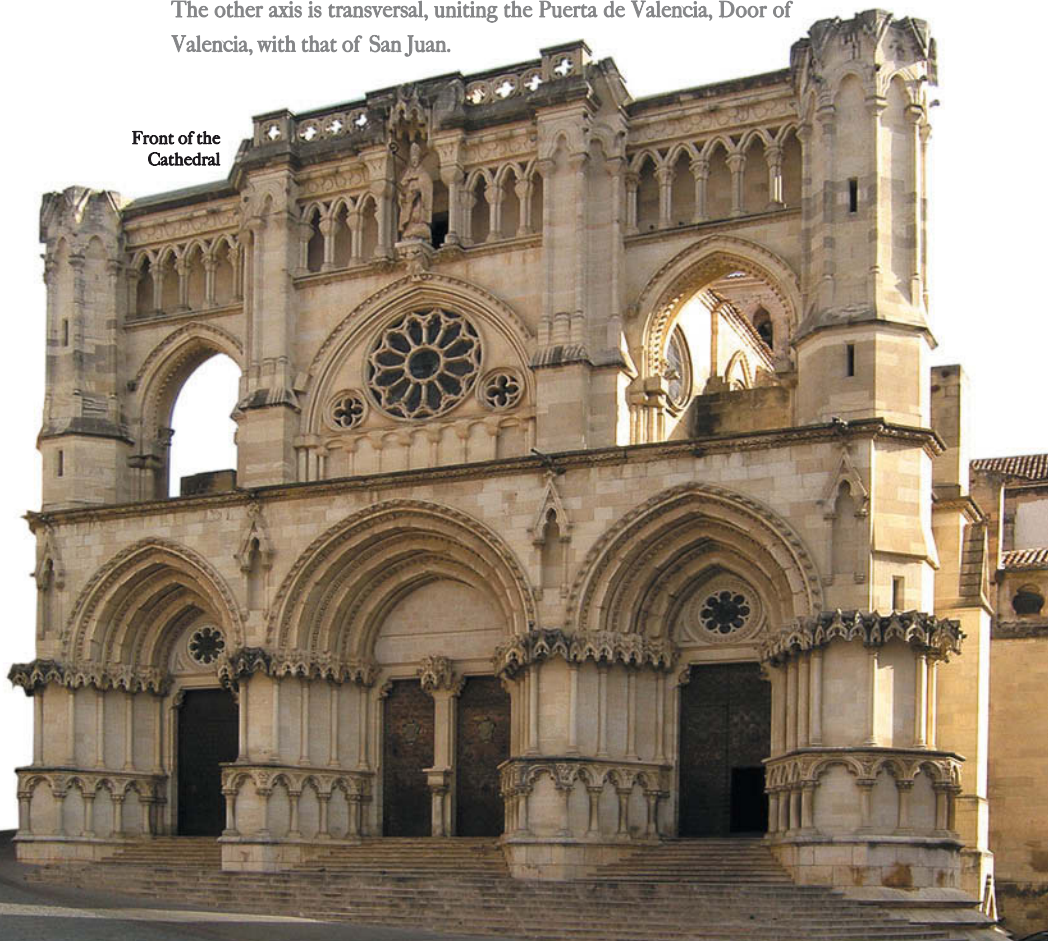
ART AND CULTURE

Cuenca's extensive history is reflected in artistic treasures, most especially in its monuments. One of the features that must be acknowledged is the stylistic variety on view. From the early Gothic era at the end of the 12th century to the Avant-Garde Artists of the 20th century, few artistic styles are not present in the city. Both traditional and contemporary flavors live together harmonically, and blend in such a way that Cuenca is a point of reference for all art-lovers, whether their preference is figurative or abstract.

MONUMENTS

In reality, Cuenca is two cities. One is the high quarter, or monumental Cuenca. The other, the low quarter, is the modern area that sprung up starting in the 19th century. The monumental area is a medieval city. For reasons of defense, it is located high up on a long, rugged promontory, between two rivers. The layout of the streets corresponds to the difficulties of the surroundings. The arrangement reflects a city with no formal design that has adapted perfectly to the characteristics of its environment. Streets are found along two axes: one is longitudinal, forming a “linear spine” that starts in the low quarter at Puente de la Trinidad (Trinidad Bridge), the ancient Door of Huete, and continues up along the streets of Calle Alfonso VIII and Calle San Pedro, ending in the Barrio del Castillo (Castle Quarter). The other axis is transversal, uniting the Puerta de Valencia, Door of Valencia, with that of San Juan.


Front of the
Cathedral






Cafés in the antepiazza, next to the Ayuntamiento

Plaza Mayor

 In the center of the longitudinal axis, we find the Plaza Mayor (Town Square), which is the main point of reference for every visit and tour of the city. The square is actually a triangle whose corners are marked by the Cathedral, the Convent of Las Petras (18th century) and the Town Hall.

10 on city map.

La Catedral

 The Cathedral of Santa María de Gracia, a symbol of ecclesiastic power, was the first building whose construction was started following the conquest of the city, in the very spot where the ancient Moslem mosque had been located. According to Lampérez, architect of the

façade, this is the clearest example of the Cuencan early Gothic style, and is considered to be the earliest example of the Gothic age in Spain. Its construction was begun at the end of the 12th century, and was consecrated in 1208 by Archbishop Ximénez de Rada, but was not finished until 1271. This is a complex building with elements from the transition between the Romanesque and Gothic periods at the end of the 12th century, others from the 13th

century, and still others from the 15th. It is laid out in the form of a Latin cross with a nave three sections wide, and a transept of just one section. The building's influences have been argued extensively. For some, its six-sectioned vaults indicate a Cistercian influence; for others, the presence of a two-winged transept, dentils, and a square lantern tower, suggest an English influence. The series of chapels that line the lateral naves were built in the 16th and 17th centuries, the most important being those of the Apóstoles, of the



Rose window in the Cathedral of Cuenca



Aerial view of the Cathedral and Plaza Mayor

Espíritu Santo, and of the Caballeros, as well as the noble rooms, like the sacristy and the chapel gallery. The cloisters are accessed by the unique Arco de Jamete (Arch of Jamete). None of the four original towers remain, except the base of that of the Angel, a work from the first phase of construction. Be sure to notice the open nave, and also the Transparente, a Baroque work by Ventura Rodríguez. The collapse in 1902 of the Torre del Giraldillo (Giraldillo Tower) damaged the façade of the cathedral, and led to the construction of the current Neogothic façade. The last transformation was the installation of stained-glass windows by contemporary artists such as G. Torner, A. Bonifacio, H. Dechanet and G. Rueda.

Gargoyle and flying buttress on the Cathedral



Interior of the Cathedral in Cuenca

As an annex to the cathedral, the Palacio Episcopal (Episcopal Palace) was added on, another of the symbols of ecclesiastic power in the city. This building does not reflect a focused design, but is the product and result of the changes and reforms that have taken place from the beginning of its construction up to present day. Its construction began in the 13th century and continued in the following centuries. In the 16th century, Pedro de Alviz and Andrea Rodi worked on the project, contributing to the purist architectural movement in Cuenca. The lovely façade was modified in the 18th century.

Above the door, notice the coat-of-arms of the building's patron, Bishop Flores Osorio.

The Cathedral. Plaza Mayor.

Tel. (+34) 969 224 626.

11 on city map.

Ayuntamiento



If the symbol of ecclesiastic power is the cathedral, then that of civil power is the Ayuntamiento. The building we see today is from the 18th century and was designed by Jaime Bort in 1733. It consists of three parts. The challenge posed to the great architect was that of isolating the

Ayuntamiento baroque façade





Convento de San Pablo (Parador) and Puentes de San Pablo

plaza while keeping it accessible. He solved the problem with the incorporation of three arches at the base of the square.

Ayuntamiento (Town Hall), Plaza Mayor.

Tel. (+34) 969 176 100

www.cuenca.es. Exterior visits only.

16 on city map.

Las Casas Colgadas



The most emblematic building, and the best-known in the city of Cuenca, is that of the Casas Colgadas

(Hanging Houses). Its precise origins are not known, but it is considered by some to have Moslem roots. For others, it is from the medieval era (14th-15th centuries). It might be an ancient manor-house, judging by the coat-of-arms of Canon Gonzalo González de Cañamares, found within. Myth, magic and legend have elevated this series of buildings to the category of monument. Today, they consist of three houses restored in the 20th century. The Museo de Arte Abstracto

Español is housed in two of them (Las Casas del Rey), while in the other (La Casa de la Sirena), there is a traditional restaurant.

Las Casas Colgadas. C/ Canónigos.

Exterior visits, or visit the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español or Mesón Casas Colgadas (restaurant) within.

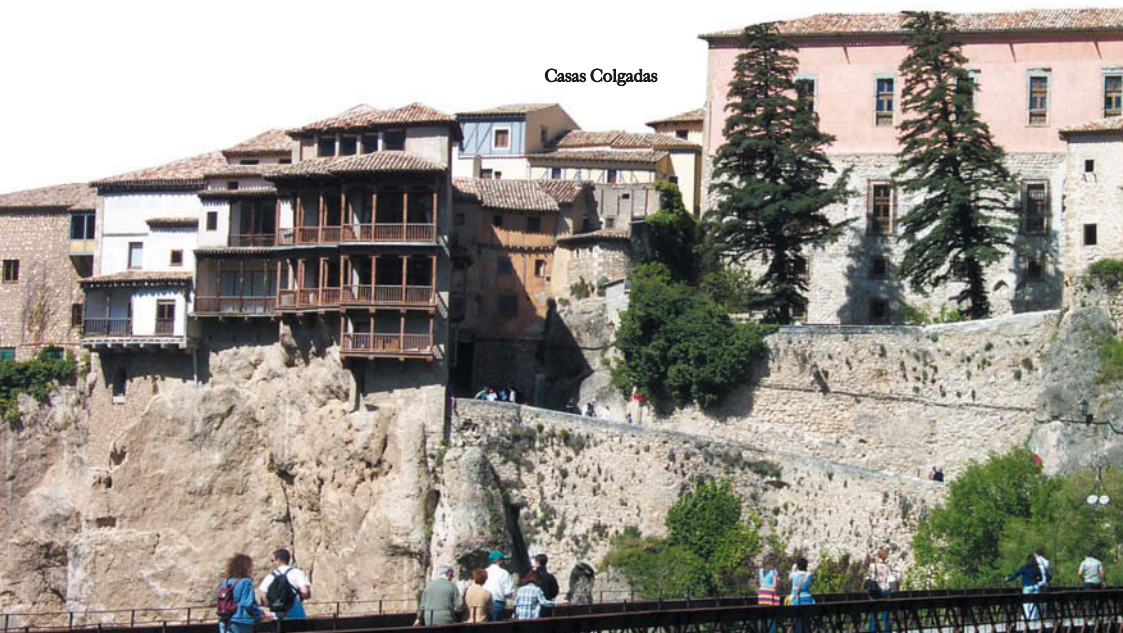
13 on city map.

Convento de San Pablo



The clerical character that the city enjoyed in the Middle Ages is evident in the

Casas Colgadas



Torre
de Mangana

quantity of religious buildings, churches, convents, and monasteries that were built between the 16th and 18th centuries. The best-known of these is the Convento de San Pablo (Monastery of San Pablo), a Dominican enclave whose construction began in 1523. Today, the building has been converted into a Parador Nacional de Turismo (hotels in historic settings). Its church is built in the decadent Gothic style and the design of the façade straddles the Baroque and Rococo periods. This space is soon to be dedicated to the artwork of Gustavo Torner.

The monastery can be reached from the Casas Colgadas using the Puente de San Pablo (San Pablo Bridge). The original bridge, built between 1533 and 1589, was made of stone, but one of its arches crumbled. In 1902 the current bridge was built of iron and wood, in

keeping with the architectural style of the day. Before crossing the bridge, we have the opportunity to take in a bronze sculpture: El Pastor de las Huesas del Vasallo (The Shepherd from Huesas del Vasallo), a 1930 work by sculptor Luis Marco Pérez. According to the artist himself, the figure is an homage to shepherds.

Convento de San Pablo. Paseo del Huécar. Now a Parador Nacional de Turismo. The Puente de San Pablo (San Pablo Bridge) provides access to the old town. # 15 on city map.

Iglesia de San Pedro



Of all the city's churches, the most representative is the Church of San Pedro. Built on the ruins of an ancient mosque, its octagonal layout is eye-catching. The building we see today is from the 18th century, a work by the architect Martín de Aldehuela, known for his work on other churches from the



same period: The Church of San Felipe, The Church of Nuestra Señora de la Luz, and the Convent of Las Petras. The Church of San Pedro offers generous visiting hours, and many of the area's other churches can be visited according to their liturgical schedules.

San Pedro Church. Plaza del Trabuco.
Tel. (+34) 969 213 444.
#5 on city map.

La Torre de Mangana



La Torre de Mangana (The Tower of Mangana) is another of the city's emblematic structures, located in the plaza of the same name. Built in the 16th century, it was



View of *skyscrapers* in the San Martín District

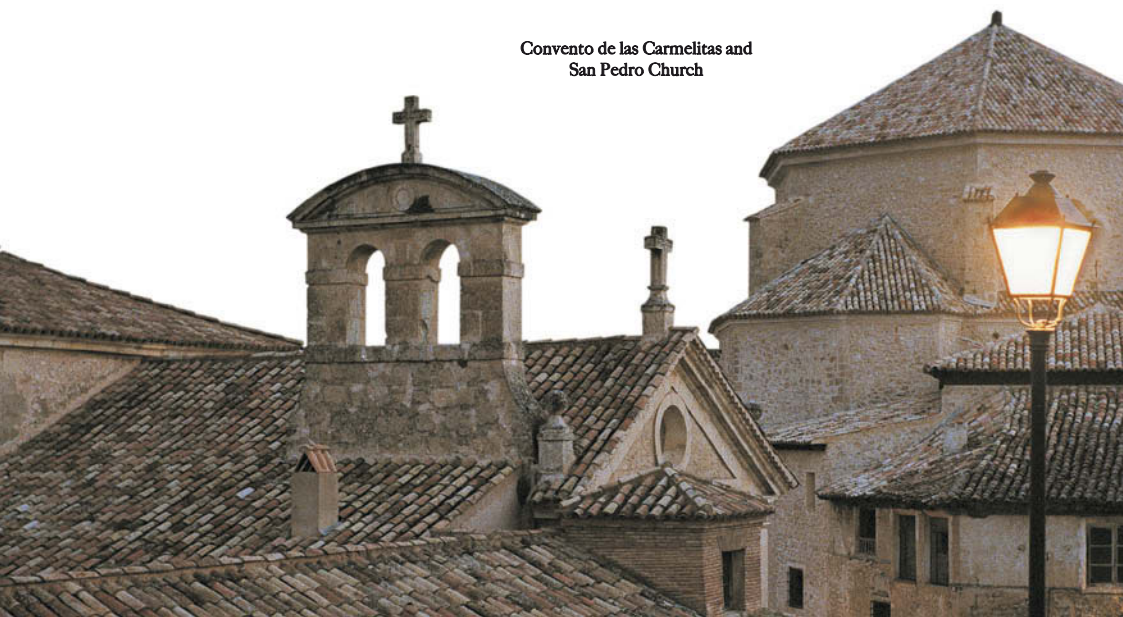
restored in the 20th century. From the tower, the city clock constantly reminds us with its monotonous bells of how quickly time goes by. In the same square we find the “Monument to the Constitution” by G. Torner.

Plaza de Mangana. Exterior visits only.
#18 on city map.

Civil architecture also has its place in the city. On Calle San Pedro, where most blue-blooded nobles once lived, we find ancient noble houses with

their coats-of-arms, calling attention to their iron window grills and other forged details. On Calle Alfonso VIII we see houses characterized by their verticality (these, too, are “hanging houses”); the interlocking architecture of a more humble court and popular character. From the Húecar River Gorge these houses appear to be authentic Rascacielos (*Skyscrapers*) that open their windows onto the also-popular San Martín Quarter.

Convento de las Carmelitas and San Pedro Church





MUSEUMS

The cultural monuments on view can be complemented with visits to the main museums of the city. The options are varied: sacred and profane art from every age, archaeological remains, figurative and abstract art, contemporary art, plus a tour through the history of the world and of mankind offered by the Museo de las Ciencias de Castilla-La Mancha.

Museo de Cuenca



Located in the so-called Casa del Curato (House of the Curate), on Calle Obispo Valero. The museum consists of an overview of the history of Cuenca, featuring remains found in the many archaeological dig-sites of the province, from the

Paleolithic era to the Modern Age. The most spectacular collection corresponds to the Roman Era, with samples from the ancient cities of Segóbriga, Valeria and Ercávica. Special mention must be made of the sculpture of Lucius Caesar, executed in white marble in a Roman

workshop, and the many Roman sculptures found in Segóbriga. The numismatic collections are also worthy of attention. The Museum is currently being enlarged.

C/Obispo Valero, 12.
Tel. (+34) 969 213 069.
museo_cuenca@jccm.es
12 on city map.

Museo de Arte Abstracto Español



Situated in the Casas Colgadas, this fine museum is one of the main points of attraction in the entire city. In 1966, artist Fernando Zóbel brought his personal collection of Spanish abstract art here, a collection that he had been constantly adding to over the years. The philosophies of the Casas Colgadas and the Museo de Arte Abstracto seem to be profoundly united. The future of the collection was guaranteed with its donation to the

Fundación Juan March. The most representative artists of the 20th century Spanish Abstract Movement can be found here: Torner, Saura, Rueda, Chillida, Tapiès, and more.

Casas Colgadas
Tel. (+34) 969 212 983.
www.march.es/arte/cuenca
museocuenca@expo.march.es
13 on city map.

Interior of Museo de Arte Abstracto and Casas Colgadas

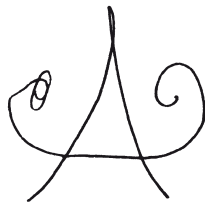


Fundación Antonio Pérez



Located in the former Convento de las Carmelitas Descalzas, this foundation was established using the artworks (paintings, prints, sculptures, books and more) that Antonio Pérez (collector, editor and artist) had been gathering over the years. In its galleries, landings and cellars, we find Informalism, Abstraction and Pop Art by Spanish and international artists alike: M. Millares, A. Saura, Equipo Crónica, Bonifacio, L. Gordillo, F. Zóbel, G. Törner, G. Rueda, R. Canogar,

Chillida, A. Warhol and Lucebert, among others. The collection of objects found by Antonio Pérez and his unique outlook on art and beauty in daily life, are parts of this artist's personality that pervade every nook and cranny of the museum.



Ronda de Julián Romero, 20.
Tél. (+34) 969 230 619
www.fundacionantonioperez.es
info@fundacionantonioperez.com
#3 on city map.

Interior patio in the
Fundación Antonio Pérez

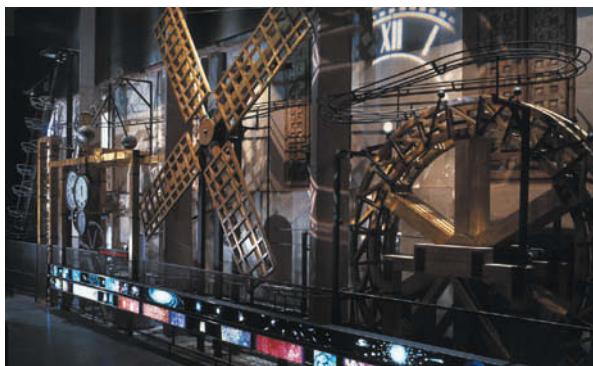


Museo de las Ciencias de Castilla-La Mancha

Time Machine. Interior of Museo de las Ciencias



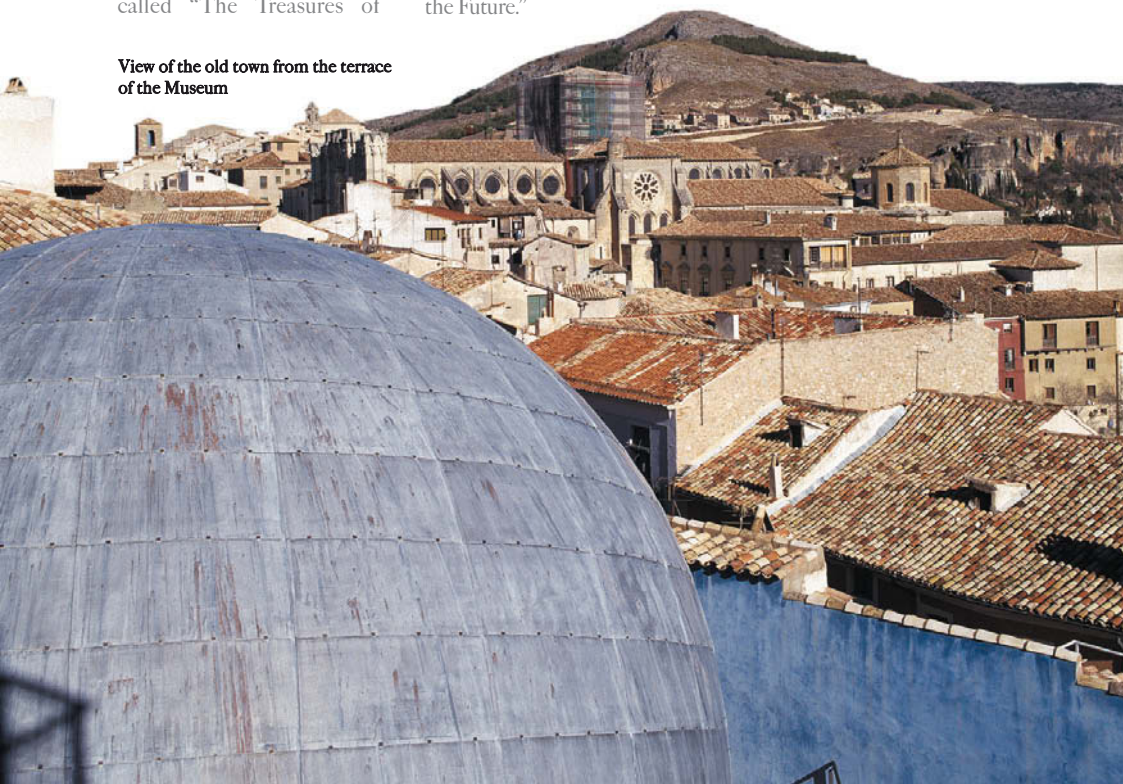
Situated in the Plaza de la Merced, this science museum is housed in two buildings: an ancient convent and its modern addition. An impressive Time Machine, made up of ancient and modern moving pieces, welcomes you on a tour through the history of the world and of mankind. The scientific discourse is centered around time and is explained through an Astronomical Gallery, a Planetarium, a *Cronolanzadera*, an exhibition area called “The Treasures of



the Earth” (Geology, Stratigraphy and Paleontology), “The Laboratory of Life” (nature, agriculture, livestock, and industry of Castilla-La Mancha), and “The History of the Future.”

Plaza de la Merced, 1.
Tel. (+34) 969 240 320
www.jccm.es/museociencias/
museociencias@mccm.jccm.es
17 on city map.

View of the old town from the terrace of the Museum



Tesoro Catedralicio



This tiny museum can be visited as a complement to a tour through the Cathedral. Works by Pedro de Mena are on view, as well as others by García Salmerón, Martín Gómez El Viejo, and more.

Plaza Mayor. Tel. (+34) 969 224 626.

11 on city map.



Interior of Museo Diocesano

San Julián, patron saint of Cuenca



Museo Diocesano



Also located on Calle Obispo Valero, artistic religious works of all kinds are on view here: paintings, altarpieces, tapestries and more. The jewel of the museum is the Díptico Bizantino, also known as the Relicario de los Déspotas del Epiro. The title comes from the fact that the Kings of Epirus, a Greek state during the Middle Ages, commissioned the work. Their names were Tomás Comneno and María Angélica. Inscriptions on the icon attest to this fact, as well as indicating the approximate dates of the painting (1366-1384). There is

also a sumptuous collection of rugs produced by the Cuencan school in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

C/ Obispo Valero, 3
Tel. (+34) 969 224 210
11 on city map.



Bishop San Julián's staff. Museo Diocesano

Antonio Saura Foundation



Located at the old "Casa Zavala" in Saint Nicholas square, The Antonio Saura Foundation displays the work of the Aragon native artist Antonio Saura who passed away in 1998, he was very attached to the town of Cuenca. The building has an exhibit space of 500 square meters which are distributed in several storeys where you can appreciate different works of art by Antonio Saura such as "Moi", "La Muerte y la Nada" or the "Autos de Fe", etc. As a supplement the visitor can see writings, documentary and photographic archives of the artist throughout his life. This space is able to show different temporary exhibits throughout the whole year.

Plaza de San Nicolás, 6 - Tël. (+34) 969 236 054
www.fundacionantoniosaura.es / fundacion@fundacionantoniosaura.es
8 on city map.

Plaza de San Nicolás y exterior Casa Zavala





Located in the gothic church of Old Saint Paul's Convent, nowadays a "Parador Nacional", it displays different periods of the work of sculptor and painter Gustavo Torner.

Espacio Torner

Half of the work displayed here comes from the Center for Art Reina Sofia National Museum in Madrid, with donated about 600 pieces of Gustavo Torner's work.

The Espacio Torner also has a store where you can purchase replicas of the painters work and books about his life and work.

Espacio Torner,
Paseo del Hucar.
Phone (+34) 969 238 373.
www.espaciotorner.com
espaciotorner@espaciotorner.com
15 on city map.



Holy Week Museum



The Holy Week Museum of Cuenca is located at the old "Casa de los Girones" which is now the headquarters of the "Junta de Cofradías" (a committee of religious brotherhoods) of Holy Week in Cuenca.

The museum takes up two storeys of the building and it displays the different religious theme parades of Cuenca's Holy Week, which has been declared of "International Turistic Interest".

Through the use of the art-

work donated by the different brotherhoods and modern audiovisual technologies this museum is nowadays an original and modern point of reference in the museum world. Of the different works of art in this museum an Ivory Christ from the XVI century stands out; till the museum's opening it could only be seen during the "En el Calvario"

parade. To compliment this, they offer information about all Holy Week's brotherhoods in Cuenca through the use of

multimedia stands, photos, drawings by Miguel de Zapata and videos with the testimony of historians, painters or writers linked with this city. Amongst other contents, the museum has fragments of images of Holy Week in Cuenca, made by the NODE corresponding mainly to the 50's and 70's.

Calle Andres de Cabrera, 13.

Phone: (+4) 969 221 956

www.msscuenca.org

contacto@msscuenca.org

28 on city map.



Plaza Taiyo (Sunny Square)



Located in the Parque Rustico, near El

Mirador Shopping Center, you can find one of the most peculiar pieces of urban landscape in the city, work of the Japanese artist Keiko Matak. It is a peculiar open square where different pieces directly receive sunlight which is reflected by the shiny tiles that make up the figureheads and by some metal sheets, strategically placed on them to act as mirrors. From a distance, the first thing to grab our attention is the leaning yellow cone which is part of the sundial, a cone that so well captures the spirit of this solar square. The whole place is complimented by a bunch of games (chess board, tic tac toe, etc) which are supported by tables covered with tile in shapes which are part geometrical and part organic, and its position has been rigorously studied depending on the sun's movement.

The whole square is a happy, infantile and detailed combination of scientific work and the knowledge of the sun's movement throughout the year.



MIDE



The MIDE-CIANT (International Electrographic Museum - Centre for Art Innovation and New Technologies) is related to the University of Castilla la Mancha, and is temporarily located in the Vicerectory building on the Cuenca Campus.

Inaugurated in 1990, this museum and centre for investigation boasts a collection of over 4000 electrographic art works; digital and predigital, as well as objects and intangible electronic art pieces.

The collection and media library are available to researchers, investigators and visi-

tors. Those interested in visiting or consulting are invited make an advance appointment by e-mail (mide@uclm.es) or telephone (+34 969179 115). Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 10:00 am to 14:00 pm.

Ars Natura



ARS NATURA is a the new Centre for Interpretation of the singularities of Castilla-La Mancha, its biodiversity and the interaction between man and the environment. The Centre invites visitors to enjoy and reflect upon our relationship with nature, to become more aware of our responsibility for our environ-

ment and to adopt sustainable attitudes and habits. It is aimed for visitors and general public of all ages and offers specific educational programmes and other activities throughout the year.

The building is an open space surrounded by a garden and park, inhabited by numerous species of flora and fauna adapted to the Cuenca climate. ARS

NATURA is of an original and singular design, where perspective has been used to frame certain areas of the surrounding landscape, creating lookouts and vantage points offering breathtaking views of the historic city of Cuenca.

C/Río Gritos, 5
Tel. (+34) 969 271 700
www.centroarsnatura.es
info@centroarsnatura.es
33 on city map.



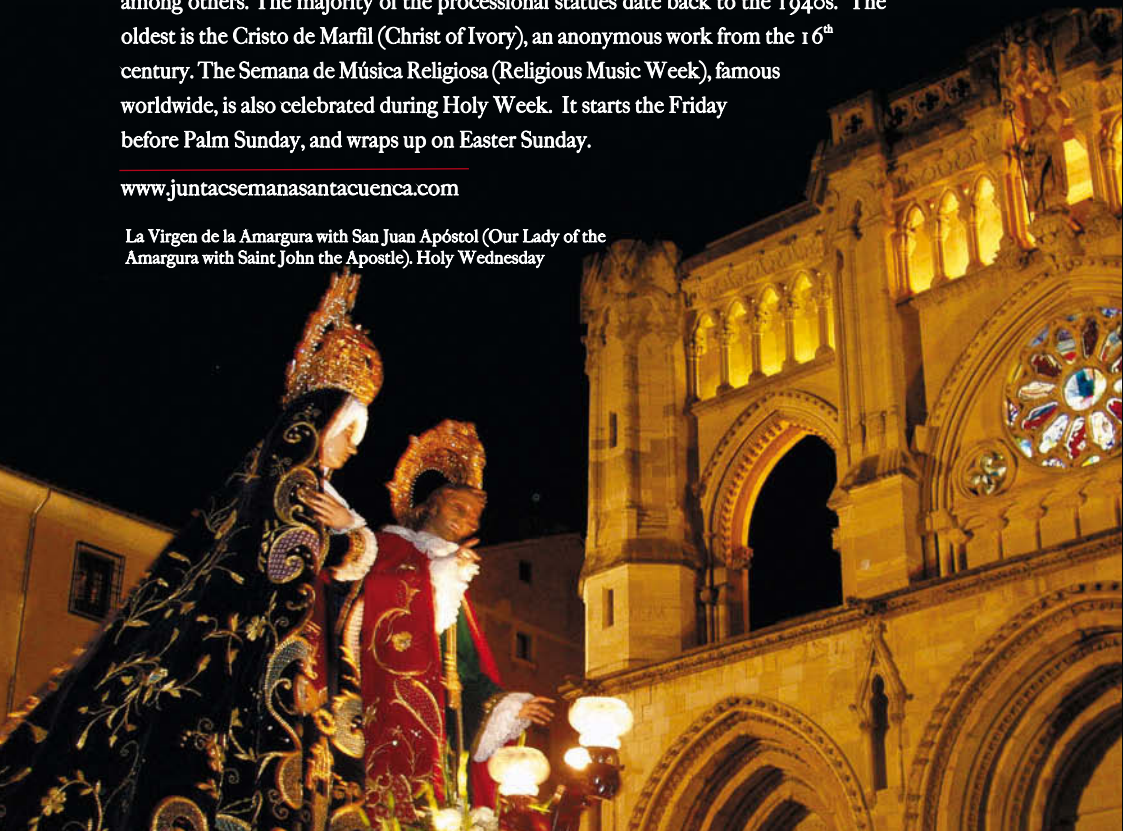
HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS HOLY WEEK



This is the pre-eminent holiday celebrated in Cuenca, declared of International Tourist Interest. The processions date back to the 17th century, when the Augustinians and the Trinitarians held the first Cuencan processions, thus founding the first brotherhoods. Today, thirty-two brotherhoods participate, thirteen of which pre-date the 19th century; four began in the 19th century, and fifteen are from the 20th century. The strong connection between tradition and modernity is on view here; to the primitive Baroque forms, a series of popular artistic contributions have been added. Of all the week's processions, the most famous is that held at daybreak on Good Friday: the Road to Calvary Procession. Here, the traditional role of music is evident with the yearly intonation of the Miserere de Pradas. The sculptures carried in the processions are the work of local sculptors like Luis Marco Pérez, Leonardo Martínez Bueno, and Federico Coullaut-Valera Mendigutía, among others. The majority of the processional statues date back to the 1940s. The oldest is the Cristo de Marfil (Christ of Ivory), an anonymous work from the 16th century. The Semana de Música Religiosa (Religious Music Week), famous worldwide, is also celebrated during Holy Week. It starts the Friday before Palm Sunday, and wraps up on Easter Sunday.

www.juntacsemanasantacuenca.com

La Virgen de la Amargura with San Juan Apóstol (Our Lady of the Amargura with Saint John the Apostle). Holy Wednesday





Figures in Cuenca's Holy Week

RELIGIOUS MUSIC WEEK

Religious Music Week, declared of International Tourist Interest, is a high quality festival in which the most prestigious performers of sacred music come together every year. This festival promotes the recovery of our religious musical heritage, as well as the composition of new pieces from highly regarded contemporary composers.

www.smrcuenca.es

SAN JULIÁN FAIR AND FESTIVALS

This celebration is held at the end of August. In the Fairgrounds, San Julián Park, and other parts of the city, a variety of activities can be enjoyed: important bullfights, parades with floats, theatre, concerts in San Julián Park and other venues, popular parties and celebrations. There is also a series of sports activities and a full line-up in the Auditorium of Cuenca.



SAN MATEO

This holiday is celebrated on September 21st. The historic reason for its observance is the conquest of the city by Alfonso the 8th in 1177. It is believed that this king rewarded his troops with a great festival. The party is remounted every September, with its focus on two events. One of these is a solemn ceremony featuring the transfer of the Banner of the Castilian monarch, Alfonso the 8th. On the eve of the holiday, it leaves its usual dwelling in the Cathedral to spend the night in the Ayuntamiento. The next day, it returns to where it began (the idea being that the Banner should be housed in the Cathedral, as it was the first building constructed following the conquest). The other event is a celebration that has been documented for centuries by Royal Decree. This is the popular running of the roped bulls through the Plaza Mayor and its surroundings, which takes place several afternoons in a row. The noise and joy of the Peñas Mateas (local clubs that come together during the festivities) is felt above all in the parades, which are held every year with a touch of originality. The celebrations are rounded out with parties, concerts, contests, fireworks, and cultural activities.

www.asociacionpmateas.com

La Vaquilla, a focal point of the San Mateo Festival



HANDICRAFTS

Pottery is the most traditional local handicraft. There are still traditional potter's workshops in the area, making objects that have a decorative purpose today, but that had a practical character in the past: pitchers, bowls, urns, and large earthenware jars. The most typical ceramic piece is the "Iberian Bull," created by ceramicist Pedro Mercedes, inspired by the head of a small Iberian bull that was discovered in the village of Huete and which is currently on display in the Museo de Cuenca.

The second half of the 20th century saw the development of "Cerámica de Autor," also known as "Contemporary Ceramics." The ceramic works of each artist came to be known for their own particular qualities; in this sense, the most well-known school is that of the aforementioned Pedro Mercedes. Other famed ceramicists from Cuenca are Luis del Castillo, Adrián Navarro and Fernando Alcalde. Also worth mentioning are the handmade paper of artisans



Traditional wicker and pottery

like Segundo Santos and Pilar Martínez, as well as wicker, glassworks, and wrought iron.





Ajo Arriero

GASTRONOMY

Cuencan gastronomy is characterized by its rural origins, most especially among shepherds. **Lamb**, pork from the traditional pig-slaughter, game meats, and various stews can be found in any number of combinations. The city also offers a great number of exclusive dishes that lend a unique personality to local cuisine. When visiting Cuenca, don't miss out on the opportunity to try local traditional plates like **Morteruelo**, **Zarajos**, and **Ajoarriero**. And don't forget **Alajú**, the reigning dessert on Cuencan tables, accompanied by **Resolí**, a traditional liqueur from the area.



Zarajos

Gaspacho Pastor





Morteruelo

Morteruelo

The most famous local dish in Cuenca, this is a hot paté made with game (hare, rabbit, partridge, hen, ham and liver) and prepared with clove and other spices. It is eaten with bread and is a natural tonic, above all in winter. Remember that every cook will lend his or her own personal touch and secret seasonings.



Grilled Lamb Chops

Grilled Lamb Chops

There are very few places in Spain that offer lamb chops as delicious as those in Cuenca. Here they are prepared over red hot coals, and are seasoned with rosemary. Their excellence comes from the quality of the lamb from this area.

Ajoarriero

This dish is a puree prepared with potatoes, cod, olive oil and garlic. Eaten with bread, it is sometimes adorned with slices of hardboiled egg,

depending on the tastes of the cook. Its origins come from a time when cod was the only type of fish that could be brought inland.

Mojete

Zarajos

This local specialty is a bit difficult to explain to foreigners, as the simplicity of its main ingredient (lamb tripe) gives no indication of the complexity and full flavor of the dish. It is usually served in balls wound around vine shoots (which lend aroma) or in slices. It can be served cold, or hot from the grill.

Gazpacho Pastor

Although its name evokes other lands, gazpacho appeared in Don Quixote in the hands of Sancho Panza. An excellent dish from La Mancha, in Cuenca there is a version from the mountains which is made in the form of an omelette (tortilla) accompanied by grapes. Its ingredients: game (rabbit, hare or hen) and gazpacho cakes (a type of unleavened bread).

Alajú

It is an Arab cake, a dessert made of honey, nuts and dried fruits, cinnamon, and grated orange and lemon, all of which is prepared and placed between two wafers.

Alajú



CLIMATE AND FLORA

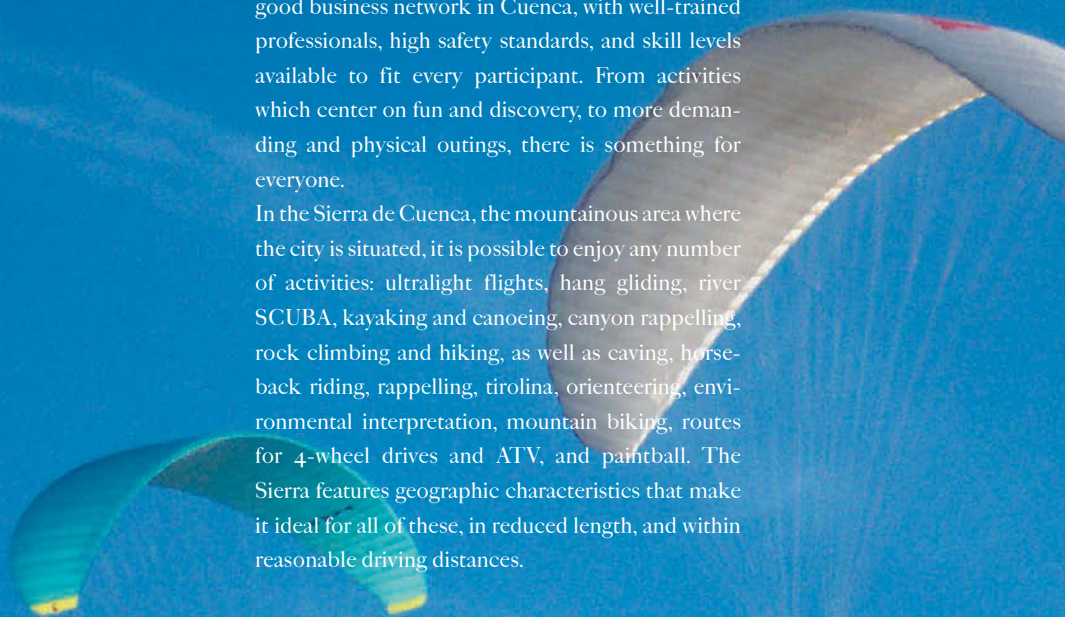
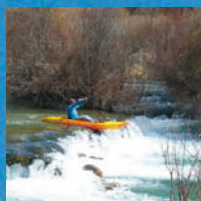
In the city of Cuenca and in the area in general, an interior or continental Mediterranean climate prevails. This is the largest area in Spain that enjoys a Mediterranean climate, in this case interior, not influenced by the sea. Local temperatures and precipitation conditions follow patterns influenced by the mountains. In summer, city weather is determined by the anticyclone of the Azores, but without excessive average temperatures, resulting in a climate which is quite pleasant. Years ago, the evergreen oak dominated, but today the most common tree in the mountainous areas is the pine (*albar*, *laricio* and *rodeno*), while next to the Júcar and Huécar Rivers, a distinct belt of vegetation is found, featuring groves of poplars, cottonwoods, elms and willows. In some cases, humans have altered the natural vegetation, replacing native trees with *bocinos*, colorful gardens on the terraces lining the gorges that dominate Cuenca.



ACTIVE TOURISM

Those who practice active tourism will find a good business network in Cuenca, with well-trained professionals, high safety standards, and skill levels available to fit every participant. From activities which center on fun and discovery, to more demanding and physical outings, there is something for everyone.

In the Sierra de Cuenca, the mountainous area where the city is situated, it is possible to enjoy any number of activities: ultralight flights, hang gliding, river SCUBA, kayaking and canoeing, canyon rappelling, rock climbing and hiking, as well as caving, horse-back riding, rappelling, tirolina, orienteering, environmental interpretation, mountain biking, routes for 4-wheel drives and ATV, and paintball. The Sierra features geographic characteristics that make it ideal for all of these, in reduced length, and within reasonable driving distances.



TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergencies 112

Transportation

Bus Station (+34) 969 227 087

RENFE (Trains)

Information (+34) 902 320 320

City Taxi

Radio Taxi (+34) 969 233 343

Tele Taxi (+34) 969 223 000

Post Office

Information (+34) 969 221 042

Lost or Stolen Credit Cards

Red 6000 (+34) 902 206 000

4B (+34) 902 114 400

American Express (+34) 900 814 500

Mastercard (+34) 915 192 100

Servired (+34) 902 192 100

Dinner's Club (+34) 902 401 112

El Corte Inglés (+34) 901 122 122

Tourist Information

Fundación Turismo de Cuenca (+34) 969 241 050
(Tourism Foundation of Cuenca)

Oficina Municipal de Turismo (+34) 969 241 051
(Local Tourism Office)

Oficina Turismo Agrupación Hostelería (+34) 969 235 815
(Hotel Industry Association of Cuenca)

Others

Theatre-Auditorium (+34) 969 232 797

Public Library (+34) 969 241 525

Local Library (+34) 969 240 403

Consumer Affairs (+34) 900 501 089

USEFUL DETAILS

Tourist Offices

Fundación Turismo de Cuenca
Centro de Recepción de Turistas
(Tourist Welcome Center)
Av. Cruz Roja, 1 - 16002 Cuenca
Phone: (+34) 969 241 050
Fax: (+34) 969 235 356
www.turismocuenca.com
info@turismocuenca.com

Ayuntamiento de Cuenca
C/ Alfonso VIII, 2 - 16001 Cuenca
Phone: (+34) 969 241 051
www.cuenca.es
ofi.turismo@cuenca.es

Agrupación Provincial de
Hostelería y Turismo de Cuenca
Pza. de la Hispanidad, 2 - 16080 Cuenca
Phone and Fax: (+34) 969 235 815
www.hotelesdecuenca.com
info@hotelesdecuenca.com

Websites

Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Cuenca
www.cuenca.es

Agrupación Provincial
de Hostelería y Turismo
www.hotelesdecuenca.com

Fundación Turismo de Cuenca
www.turismocuenca.com

Festivals

Holy Week
(spring - dates vary)
Declared of International Tourist Interest

Religious Music Week
(spring - dates vary)
Declared of International Tourist Interest

St. Mateo
September 21st
Declared of Regional Tourist Interest

This publication has been updated in February 2012, but the information herein (opening hours, closing days etc.) is subject to subsequent changes. We highly recommend visitors to check the listed web pages or contact tourist and information offices prior to their visit.

CUENCA TURISMO



Información Turística

FUNDACIÓN TURISMO DE CUENCA

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CUENCA. WORLD HERITAGE SITE

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Castillo-Arco de Bezudo
- 2 Archivo Histórico Provincial
- 3 Fundación Antonio Pérez
- 4 UIMP
- 5 Iglesia de San Pedro
- 6 Ermita de la Virgen de las Angustias
- 7 Plaza e Iglesia de San Nicolás
- 8 Casa Museo Zavala
- 9 Fundación Antonio Saura
- 10 Iglesia de San Miguel
- 11 Plaza Mayor
- 12 Catedral, Museo Episcopal y Museo Diocesano
- 13 Museo de Cuenca
- 14 Casas Colgadas (Museo de Arte Abstracto Español)
- 15 Puente de San Pablo
- 16 Antiguo Convento de San Pablo (Parador Nacional y Espacio Turner)
- 17 Ayuntamiento
- 18 Plaza de la Merced y Museo de las Ciencias
- 19 Torre de Mangana
- 20 Iglesia de la Santa Cruz
- 21 Iglesia de San Felipe Neri
- 22 Torre de San Gil
- 23 Puerta de San Juan
- 24 Iglesia de "El Salvador"
- 25 Puente de la Trinidad
- 26 Iglesia Virgen de la Luz y Puente de San Antón
- 27 Puerta de Valencia
- 28 Teatro Auditorio
- 29 Museo de la Semana Santa
- 30 Mirador del Cerro del Socorro
- 31 Los Rascacielos
- 32 La Cornisa del Júcar
- 33 Plaza Taiyo (Parque de los Príncipes)
- 34 Ars Natura

Pedestrian area
 Bikeway



AYUNTAMIENTO DE CUENCA

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