

C I U D A D   R E A L

*You'll want to come back  
Castile-La Mancha*



Castilla  
La Mancha  
Turismo







## *Ciudad Real, somewhere in La Mancha*

### HISTORY

In order to balance the immense power of the military orders (Calatrava, St John and St James), Alfonso X the Wise founded *Villa Real* (a Royal Borough belonging to the Crown) on what used to be Pozuelo de Don Gil, near Alarcos.

He granted the Borough a charter (*Carta Puebla*) to favour resettlement and he granted its inhabitants a series of privileges. These privileges were increased in 1262 and later confirmed, in 1282, by Sancho IV.

In the fourteenth century, construction work was started on the Gate of Toledo and on the walls surrounding the town. In 1346, Alfonso XI held the Parliament of Castile here.

In 1420, King John II, the father of Isabel I, granted the borough the title of town and it became known as *Ciudad Real* (Royal Town).

The town's period of maximum splendour was during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel: In 1475, they confirmed the privileges of the *Vieja Hermandad* (Old Brotherhood), a kind of militia against banditry; in 1483, they set up here one of the seats of the Inquisition; in 1485, Queen Isabel visited the town and, in 1494, the King and Queen founded a Chancery or assizes court to solve all kinds of administrative disputes. This body was to remain in Ciudad Real for eleven years before moving to Granada in 1505.

During the Middle Ages, Christians, Moriscos (Moslems who had converted to Christianity) and Jews lived in the town, as can be seen from the names of different districts and the door of the synagogue which is preserved today in the Provincial Museum.



In 1691, Ciudad Real was the capital of La Mancha region, although in the following century, only for a short time (1750-59), the capital was Almagro.

In 1797, an Economic Society of Friends of the Town was created to try to take advantage of the reformist attitudes of the privileged classes to promote the progress of the town. By then the town had approximately 9,000 inhabitants. Archbishop Lorenzana built a Poorhouse, which remained until the arrival of French troops in 1809, when it became a military barracks. It continued to be used as a military barracks until it was demolished towards the end of the twentieth century.

In 1863, the train from Madrid went as far as Ciudad Real and in 1877 the diocese of Military Orders was created, separating a large part of the territory of the province of Ciudad Real, which up until then had belonged to the sea of the archbishopric of Toledo.

The garrison at Ciudad Real played an important role in the restoration of the monarchy after the First Republic: under the command of the Count of Balmaseda, they joined the troops of General Martínez Campos and proclaimed Alfonso XII king.

The troop stationed at Ciudad Real, on this occasion the artillery of Ciudad Real, played another important role a few decades later, in a brief uprising against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. This uprising was put down very quickly as there was no support in any of the other regions.

From an urban point of view, the town began to grow more steadily from the 1920s onwards and new housing districts were built for the working-classes (mostly labourers and railway workers) outside the town walls.

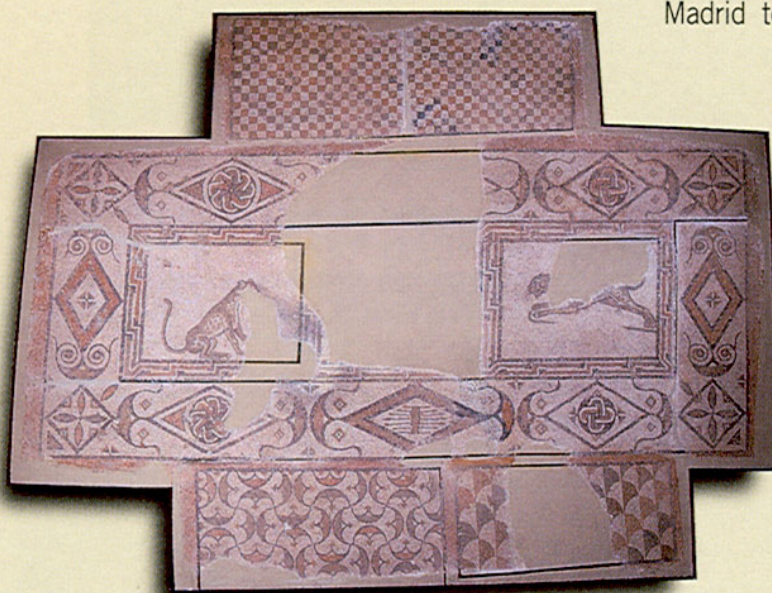
There was a population of just under 20,000 inhabitants in 1920 and by the end of the Civil War (1939) that figure had become 32,000. The population in the 1990s was over 60,000.

The most significant changes to the town in recent years are the new university campus which holds the Main Offices of the University of Castile-La

Mancha, built in 1985, and the new high speed train, (the AVE from Madrid to Seville, which stops at Ciudad Real) inaugurated in 1992. This train has improved commuting with Madrid considerably.



*Carta Puebla  
(Charter)*



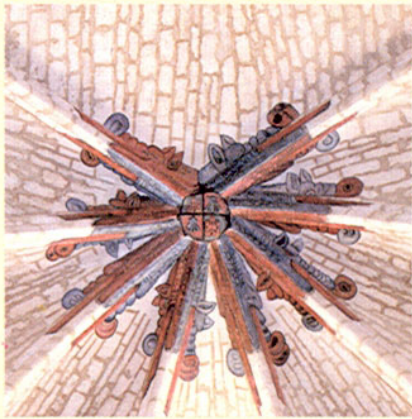
*Roman Mosaic at Albadalejo.  
Ciudad Real Museum*







## ART



*Church of Santiago (St. James). Vault*

There is little left to see of Ciudad Real's glorious medieval past. We know that there was a royal palace and important walls around the city (4.5 metres long), but all that remains are some ruins in the area of the Tower. We also know that there were 130 turrets. Of the eight town gates, there remains only the *Puerta de Toledo* (Gate of

Toledo), built during the reign of Alfonso XI in 1328. This gate has six arches: the two outer arches are ogival and the four inner arches are horseshoe-shaped. The coat of arms of Castile is situated on the outer part of the gate and is flanked by two solid square-based turrets.

The medieval city was divided into denominational districts: the Christian district in the south; the Moorish farther south and the Jewish quarter. Nowadays, new districts have grown up in and around these quarters.

Three churches, situated almost on the vertices of an imaginary triangle, following Alfonso X's plans, form an artistic group which allows us to admire the Gothic architecture of Ciudad Real. The Church of Santiago (St James) is the oldest and dates from the end of the 13th century. It was finished around the mid-14th century.

It has been restored recently by the Regional Government and we can now admire its Mudejar ceiling, discovered under Baroque vaults, its apse and pseudotransept and the paintings on the vault of the apse with the apocalyptic seven-headed dragon.

The Holy Church of the Basilican Priory of the Military Orders of Santa María del Prado, known also as *Santa María la Mayor*, has been a cathedral since 1875. The oldest part of this building is the gate to the temple, which dates from the end of the 13th century or beginning of the 14th century and has a lobed rose window. The modern temple was built over several periods: the apse was built in the 15th century; the vaults in the 15th and 16th centuries; the



*Door of the Synagogue.  
Ciudad Real Museum*

Madonna chapel and the new sacristy are 17th century Baroque and the tower is a reconstruction (1825) of the tower that was destroyed in the 18th century.



*Church of Santiago  
(St. James). Fresco*





Provincial Government Headquarters



Ciudad Real Museum

Inside, there is a magnificent Baroque altarpiece with an image of the Madonna del Prado on a silver throne. This work was started by Giraldo de Merlo and Juan de Hasten, finished by Cristóbal Ruiz and Pedro Ruiz Delvira and based on a design by Andrés de la Concha between 1612 and 1616.

The third medieval church in our imaginary triangle is the Church of San Pedro (St Peter), possibly the most interesting historic building in Ciudad Real. It is Gothic, from the end of the 14th century. Parts were added in the 15th century and it has been restored. The temple has three entrances: the Door of Pardon (*del Perdón*) with five slightly ogival archivolts and decorations with spheres and rosettes; the Gospel Door (*Puerta del Evangelio*) also has ogival archivolts and the Epistles Door (*Puerta del Epístola*) has studded wooden panels. The façade has a magnificent Gothic rose window and an 18th-century tower with a spire.

Inside, we can find the Chapel of the Coca family with the tomb of Fernando de Coca, a precentor from Coria and canon of Sigüenza. The sarcophagus is similar in style to those carved by Doncel. There is also a beautiful Isabelline grille in the Chapel of Jesus of Nazareth and a choir with stalls from the 16th century. This building was declared to be of historical and artistic interest in 1974.

Opposite the cathedral, we can see the *Casa de Hernán Pérez del Pulgar* (the house of Hernán Pérez del Pulgar), a nobleman whose feats in the storming of Granada were the subject of many stories and ballads. The house has a doorway dating from the 14th century, which was restored in the 17th century. Inside, there is a courtyard with columns and a Renaissance staircase.

Other religious buildings are the *Parroquia de la Merced* (the Parish Church of La Merced), a Baroque building from the 17th century with a particularly interesting façade or the Convento de la Merced (Convent of la Merced), which dates from the 14th century and today is a school. We can also find the *Convento de Carmelitas* and the *Convento de Franciscanas* (the Carmelite and Franciscan convents). The latter has a statue of the Madonna and Child which dates from the 14th century and is popularly known as *La Porterita*.



After the disappearance of the Christian, Moorish and Jewish quarters which made up the town in its era of maximum splendour, the architectural style of Ciudad Real as we know it today is nineteenth-century or from the beginning of the twentieth century. The most important buildings include the *Rectorado de la Universidad* (the Headquarters of the University of Castile-La Mancha); the former *Palacio Medrano* (Medrano Palace) with its beautiful Renaissance façade; the former



*Headquarters of the Provincial Government. Interior*

Casino –today the Music Conservatory of Ciudad Real- which was built by the architect Sebastián Rebollar at the end of the nineteenth century; the *Palacio de la Diputación Provincial*, home to the Provincial Government, which was also built by Sebastián Rebollar at the end of the nineteenth century and has an interesting collection of paintings from the 19th and 20th centuries, including works by painters like Angel Andrade, Hurtado de Mendoza, Pérez Rubio, Palmero, Antonio López or Gregorio Prieto, etc, and an important collection of sculptures and the *Colegio San José*, a magnificent building, which was once the local branch of the Bank of Spain, in the Plaza del Pilar.

The Provincial Museum is a modern building (1976) and contains important archaeological finds –from the Lower Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages- from the province, including the door of the former synagogue. The Museum holds regular exhibitions of private collections and works by local artists, including Antonio López, Gregorio Prieto, Villaseñor, Angel Andrade, Palmero, etc.

Other museums worth visiting are the museum of Elisa Cendrero, where the town's historical archives, with documents from the 13th to the 19th century, are located. This building is decorated with 19th-century paintings and decorative art furniture and objects (tapestries, fans, etc.). The *Museo Diocesano* (The Museum of the Diocese) is located in the former Archbishop's Palace and has an important collection of art treasures from convents and churches of the province, including fourteen pieces of the *Portapaz de Uclés*, by Francisco Becerril (1565). Around the *Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Alarcos*, eight kilometres from Ciudad Real on the road to Piedrabuena, there are important Iberian and Roman archaeological remains. This was also the scene of the battle of Alarcos (1195), one of the most important battles of the Reconquest. The castle was one of the most important sanctuaries in La Mancha.



*Alarcos*



*Hermitage at Alarcos*



## GASTRONOMY

Our food, which was immortalised by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* (he mentions no less than 150 ways to prepare food), is abundant and tasty.

Ciudad Real is the window of La Mancha, as far as food is concerned, and all the restaurants here serve food from all over the region. La Mancha is a game lover's paradise: venison, wild boar, rabbit and, above all, partridge, form the basis of many recipes: rabbit in garlic and tomato sauce, hare with rice, pickled partridge, partridge stew or partridge with butter beans, etc.

*Pistos* (a kind of ratatouille), roasts, aubergines, *migas* (fried bread with bacon, spicy chorizo sausage and paprika), *gachas* (a thick porridge made with lentil flour and flavoured with garlic, pork and chorizo sausage) *galiano* or *gazpacho* (a thick soup made with partridge, rabbit, herbs and spices and a special unleavened bread called a *torta*) and *caldereta de cordero* (lamb stew) complete the menu. The most typical dish is *tiznao*, a stew made with ingredients that have been roasted beforehand: ingredients include flaked codfish, dried peppers, garlic, onion, olive oil and water.

And delicious wines to wash down all this food. This area has an abundance of wines with *Denominación de Origen* (similar to the *French Appellation d'origine contrôlée*) La Mancha and Valdepeñas. These wines have improved greatly over the last few years due to better production processes and will surprise even the most demanding wine-lover.

Manchego cheese is a magnificent *hors d'oeuvre* and is gradually being used in local recipes. It is also delicious served with honey as a dessert. Other desserts include the typical *bizcochá* (a sponge cake), *torrijas* (bread soaked in milk and fried in batter with honey or sugar and wine), *flores manchegas* and *pestiños* (pastries), *arroke* (honey syrup) and *mostillo* (grape, syrup).



## LOCAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

There are no arts and crafts which are typical of Ciudad Real, however we can find around a hundred wood sculptors, marquetry artists, sculptors of religious statues, barrel-makers, jewellers, forgers, cutlers, designers of products made with vegetable fibres, designers of leather goods, potters and producers of ceramic products for industry, bookbinders, producers of glazed ceramic objects, stained glass designers and textile designers, particularly lacemakers and silk decorators.

In the local shops, we can buy all kinds of products that are made in the province: lace from Almagro, Almodóvar del Campo or Pedro Muñoz, ceramics from La Solana, Puerto Lápice, Castellar de Santiago or Membrilla, rugs from Valdepeñas, sickles from La Solana, wrought iron from Villarrubia de los Ojos, Almagro and Arenas de San Juan, boots, leather goods or the famous knives from Santa Cruz de Mudela or Puertollano.





## FIESTAS

The most important *fiesta* (local festivity) in Ciudad Real is held on July 31st in honour of the patron saint of the town, the Virgen del Prado. This fiesta is known as the *Pandorga* and has been declared to be of interest to visitors to the region. Interesting features of this festivity are the tributes to the patron, where young girls (*Dulcineas*) dressed in regional costume offer flowers to the Virgin, and the *convidá* or invitation from the *pandorgo*, or chief steward of the festivities, who, together with the Dulcineas, is chosen by the mayor of the town. There is also a procession and a folk festival.

The *Carnavales* (Carnival) is also a very colourful festivity. The local people join different groups and use their imagination to try to design the best costumes. The most important day of the Carnival festivities is the *Domingo de Piñata* (the first Sunday of Lent. The celebration of the "*Entierro de la Sardina*" (a burlesque celebration of Ash Wednesday) is also very original. During the Carnival celebrations, Ciudad Real also plays host to many groups and processions from other villages in the province. Holy week is another important festivity, and the most important procession is the Silent Procession.

On Whit Sunday the *Romería de la Virgen de Alarcos* (pilgrimage to the Virgen of Alarcos) is held, to commemorate the Battle of Alarcos which took place during the Reconquest and led to the extinction of the population.



The Mayor elects the "Pandorgo"



Carnival



Ambulance Red Cross	926 222222
Bus Station	926 211342
Fire Station	006
Guardia Civil	062
Hospital	926 213444
Police	092
Taxi	926 213040
Train Station (RENFE)	926 220202

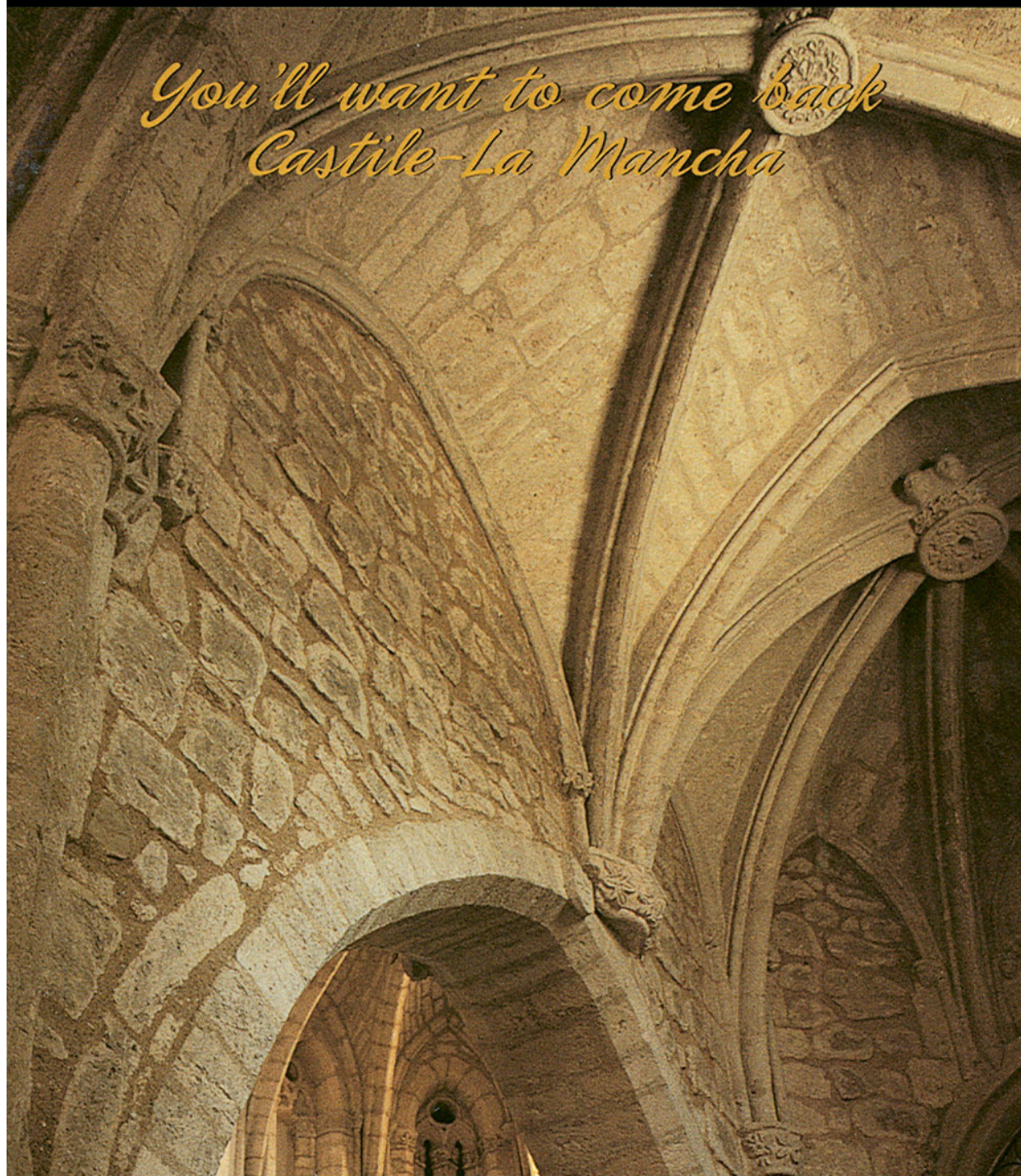
### CIUDAD REAL MUSEUMS

Ciudad Real Museum	926 226896
Museum of the Diocese	926 250250
Elisa Cendreno	
Historical Archives	926 227462
López Villaseñor Museum	926 255200



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Consejería de Industria y Trabajo  
Dirección General de Turismo, Comercio y Artesanía

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

Delegación Provincial  
CIUDAD REAL: Alarcos, 21, 1.ª planta  
CIUDAD REAL 13071 • Tel.: 926 279696 • Fax: 926 279674



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