

Madrigal de las Altas Torres

MONUMENTAL HERITAGE

- 1. Saint Nicolás of Bari's Church
- 2. Saint Maria del Castillo Church
- 3. Augustinian Convent of Extramuros
- 4. Purísima Concepción Royal Hospital
- 5. Juan II Palace
- 6. Caños Font
- 7. Friar's Cellar
- 8. Peñaranda or San Hilario's Gate
- 9. Arévalo Gate
- 10. Medina Gate
- 11. Cantalapiedra or La Alberca Gate
- 12. The Walls
- 13. Saint María's bread baskets
- 14. Town Hall (1868)
- 15. Royal Prison
- 16. Pocillos Aqueduct

STATELY HOMES

- 17. Vergara Thicket (Stone Arch)
- 18. Ruíz de Medina
- 19. Fernández de la Mela
- 20. Roldán
- 21. Samaniego
- 22. Old Synagogue
- 23. Luengo
- 24. Modernist Home
- 25. Porticoed Homes

Visit Queen
Isabel's Route



**Madrigal de las
Altas Torres**
Ávila, España



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SOME HISTORY!

Madrigal de las Altas Torres

Surrounded by endless cornfields and grooves, the historic village of **Madrigal de las Altas Torres** appears like an island in the ocean. A charismatic wall surrounds its humble houses whilst the monastery of Extramuros lies close by within the shadow of the wall.

With a height of 65 meters, the **San Nicolás** tower has represented the village's most important look-out for more than a thousand years. It is one of the epicentres of the radial streets, which are mainly cobbled. Although the origin of **Madrigal** is a mystery (possibly Arabic or Visigoth), its importance grew as a defensive bastion on the old frontier with the **kingdom of León**.

As the heart of purist Mudejar, its most representative monuments include the royal palace, four churches, two convents, the royal hospital, the wall with its four entrances and palatial houses.

The greatness of the village is not only measured by the height of its towers, but by its important native historical figures. The greatest of all being: **Queen Isabel I of Castilla**, born in this royal village in 1451. Other important inhabitants included humanists, scholars, saints, emigrants... even ambitious conspirators from various kingdoms.

You are invited to enjoy **this magical place** and to experience how these figures had an impact on the history, the culture, the people, and the landscape.

i The Queens Route! Buildings and history

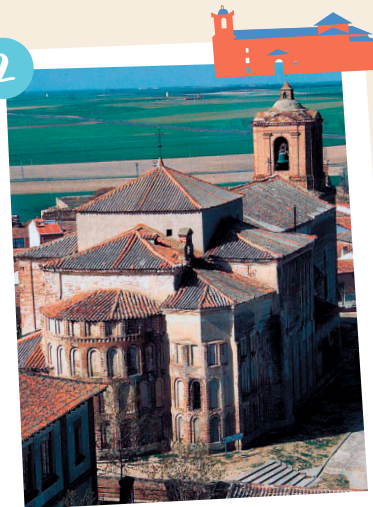
The **Queen** lives in **Madrigal**. This isn't a rhetorical device, but rather conveys the reality found in the monuments, cultural acts, folklore, writings, and tradition that are exalted by her venturesome life. The **village** are proud of their Queen but their admiration for her is by no means dogmatic. The main attractions are.

1. Saint Nicolás of Bari's Church

Raised in the **13th Century**, although possibly built over a previous temple, the church is characterised by an impressive bell tower which **Manuel Gomez Moreno** considered to be "**the queen of Mudejar style towers**". The tower acts as a lighthouse for the wonderers and as a vertical icon of the village. Look, you can already see the weathercock!

Its interior does not disappoint. It is one of the temples with a greater **patrimony in the south of Castilla** as it shows a unique Mudejar roofing, stalls that have been awarded with the **Europa Nostra Prize**, remnants from a gothic altarpiece recently recovered, and the baptismal font where Queen Isabel I and thousand of her countrymen where baptised.

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2. Saint Maria del Castillo Church

Perched in **the tallest point in the village**, next to the remains of an ancient fortification which surely precedes to the resettlement of the zone. Modest, but pure in its romanticism found in the asymmetric apses of the conserved bricks. Next to it, a **natural monument**, the old elm in front of a panoramic view of the landscape that lit wonderers.

The roman mural paintings from the high altar and the presbytery have been found. They connect the **artistic and religious sensibilities** from almost a thousand years ago.

3. Augustinian Convent of Extramuros

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Its origin goes **back to 1335** but was occupied by the **friars in 1528** and it's remains provide an understanding of its history. **Gaspar de Quiroga**, **archbishop in Toledo** and protector of **Fray Luis de León**, was the patron that spent almost all his fortune on the building. The building served as a university lecture and has seen multiple diverse political events. **Princess Isabel** hid among friars and worshipers from **Ocaña** because of the arranged marriage of her brother and rival. Within these walls lie many stories of scholars, grief, and love.

4. Purísima Concepción Royal Hospital

Its huge structure reflects the importance that **Madrigal** had in María de Aragón's heart. She was the first spouse of king **Juan II of Castilla** and on many occasions, she spent her money on the village.

The building housed the **poor and helpless** for almost half a millennium and in different forms continued up until 1943. As for now, it acts as **the Tourism office**, a **museum dedicated to the humanist and human rights defender Vasco de Quiroga** and a **nature classroom**.

4



5. Juan II Palace

Packed with Castilian characteristics: austere but solid, severe but enjoyable. The building was loaned in 1525 by **Emperor Carlos V** to the Augustinian nuns, who expanded it and still guard it. On the 22nd of April 1451, a child called **Isabel** was born in one of its humblest bedrooms. The mixture between a **palatial and monastic life** is not only reflected in the artwork — in which we can include a true portrait of **the Catholic Kings** or the spectacular tombs of two kings' daughters. — but also, in the room where the **Castilian Parliament** was celebrated, in the mud floors that transmit an air of timelessness.

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12. The Walls

Some scholars believe that there was previously a fence although it would have had to be significantly smaller than the one built at the end of the **12th Century**. Its clear monumental purpose can be seen in the four imposing gates, the double walled sections and its pentagonal towers that provided security as well as beauty. The wall created a military superiority compared to cities that were considered to be more significant, for example, it is close to matching **Avila's perimeter**. The walls were purposely wide to provide one third of the space for planting. The best way to enjoy its beauty is by walking along side it during the warming light of sunset.

12



i medieval village!

Madrigal
de las
Altas Torres

17. Vergara Thicket (Stone Arch)

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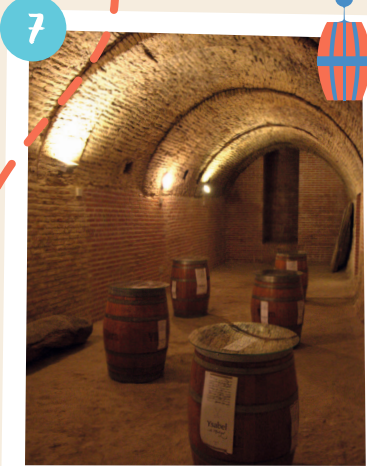


A **Plateresque building** from which only the frontage remains. **Carved in granite stone resembling an altarpiece** with an abundance of decorative features that were quite common in the Spanish Renaissance.

It served as the house of the **doctor Nicolás de Soto**, who worked for **Queen Isabel**, her two children and King Fernando.

7. Friar's Cellar

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The friars from **San Agustín Extramuros** convent were owners of generous extensions of Hawthorns that made **Verdejo Wine**, one of the most famous wines of the time exemplified by many references in the classics of the Golden Age.

When **the huge amounts of grapes** outgrew the cellars a new one was built in 1732 from an existing one previously built in the 15th Century. It is formed by three canons: "**el chico**", "**el gótico**" y "**el de los arcos**".

NATURE AND LANDSCAPE Country Land

The history of Madrigal cannot be separated from its nature, as it combines a backdrop of both land and sky. It has one of the biggest **ZEPA** zones in **Europe** home to emblematic species like the bustard (arguably the heaviest flying bird), the lesser kestrel and many others. This is the reason why **King Juan II of Castilla** and the talented theologian **Alonso of Madrigal**, **El Tostado**, were two expert falconers.

