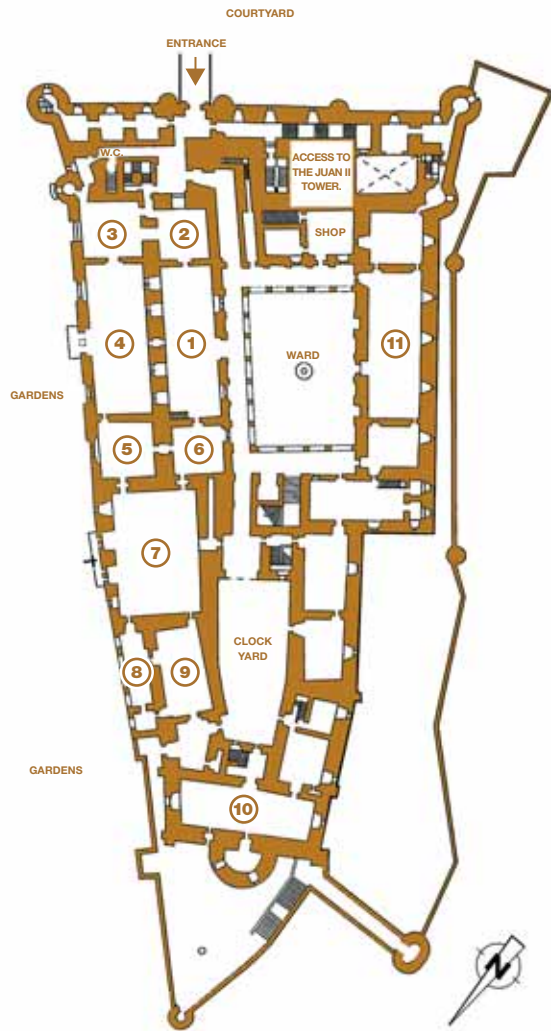


MAP AND GUIDE FOR VISITING THE ALCÁZAR OF SEGOVIA



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ALCÁZAR DE SEGOVIA

...let yourself be conquered

On 13 December 1474 Princess Isabella emerged from the Alcázar to be proclaimed Queen of Castile in the old church of San Miguel in Segovia's Plaza Mayor.

The unique silhouette and privileged location of the Alcazar of Segovia arouses admiration in all who behold the palace. The first written record of the Alcazar dates back to the beginning of the XIIIth century. It became one of the favourite residences for the crown of Castile throughout the Middle Ages. The accession to the throne of the Trastamara Dynasty meant a new thrust for the Alcazar of Segovia in all architectural, institutional, political and symbolic respects. It was under the auspices of this house that the Alcazar was turned into a real palace. Queen Isabella the Catholic made her way from there on 13th December 1474 to be crowned Queen of Castile in the Main Square of Segovia.

The wedding between Felipe II and Ana of Austria – his fourth wife – was also held there. This King also fostered important reforms to the palace, such as the roofing topped with sharp slate spires providing the Alcazar with the Central European castle look that makes it so distinct from the other Castilian Fortresses. Once the Court settled in Madrid, the Alcazar lost its status of royal residence, and was used as State Prison for over two centuries. King Carlos III established the Royal Artillery School in 1764, and the Alcazar was chosen as its seat until the 6th day of March 1862, when its roofing was destroyed and the fabric damaged by a dreadful fire. Restoration works began in 1882 and when the stonework was concluded in 1896, Regent Queen Maria Cristina on behalf of King Alfonso XIII handed over the Alcazar to the Ministry of War to be used solely by the Artillery Corps.

The upper part of the building has been housing the General Military Archive ever since 1898. The Patronato del Alcazar (Castle Trust) was incorporated in 1951 in order to undertake the upkeep of the building.

Several halls can be visited in the Alcazar, each of them belonging to its different building stages:

The decoration in “mudejar” style is outstanding in the **Sala del Palacio Viejo** (1) (Old Palace Room), also called Sala de Ajimeces because of the Romanesque mullioned-windows that used to let in light to the original palace before the Sala de la Galera (Galley Room) was attached to it. It dates back to the times of Alfonso X.

The **Sala de la Chimenea** (2) (Fireplace Room) is part of the restructuring of the Alcazar in times of Philip II. This room is adorned with magnificent XVIth century furniture.

The **Sala del Solio** (3) (Throne Room), built during the reign of the Trastamara Dynasty, houses the throne commissioned for the visit of Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenia on occasion of the centenary of May 2nd 1808.

The **Sala de la Galera** (4) (Galley Room) is named after its old moulded ceiling resembling the hull of a ship upside down. Queen Catherine of Lancaster had this room built in 1412, while her son Juan II was still a minor.

The **Sala de las Piñas** (5) (Pine cone Room), which was built by order of Enrique IV, is named after the peculiar 392 pine cone carvings on its moulded ceiling.

In the **Cámara Regia** (6) (Royal Bedroom), the doorways in “neo-mudéjar” style are replicas of those located in the palace belonging to Enrique IV near St. Martin's church in Segovia.

The **Sala de Reyes** (7) (Monarchs Room) is decorated with a frieze depicting the monarchs of Asturias, Castile and León. The present layout was projected following the directions of Philip II.

The **Sala del Cordón** (8) (Cord Room) is named after the Franciscan cord decorating its walls, which, according to a Segovian legend, was fitted by order of Alfonso X “el Sabio” (the Wise) as a sign of penance for his excessive pride.

The **Chapel** (9) witnessed the nuptial veiling ceremony between Philip II and Anna of Austria. It keeps “*The Epiphany*” painted by Bartolomé Carducho (1600), which was rescued from 1862 fire.

The **Sala de Armas** (10) (Armoury) is located under the Keep and holds a collection of weapons dating from different times. The Halls of the **Royal Artillery School Museum** (11) portray the period when the Alcazar was the seat of this institution.

In 1764 Charles III chose the Alcázar of Segovia as the home of his newly created Royal Artillery School, the oldest active military academy in the world.