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# MANZANARES EL REAL CASTLE



CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM



## Manzanares El Real Castle

### *Feel the history*

From its advantageous position in the Sierra de Guadarrama National Park, the castle of Manzanares el Real opens up a window to the remote as well as the more recent past.

As well as its undeniable medieval and Renaissance significance, it has a markedly symbolic import for the region's modern history, as it was the stage for the first moves that would eventually lead to what is today the Madrid Region and to the drafting of its Statute of Autonomy.

Its interior contains an interesting overview of the monument's history. Original works of art –17th-century Flemish tapestries, easel paintings or suits of armour- and historicist 19th-century furniture that emulates the styles of the Spanish Renaissance contribute to creating a living stage for the era in which it was built and inhabited.

# Manzanares El Real Castle

## *Between knights and humanists*

The castle was built in the 15th century by the 1st Duke of the Infantado, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. The building work was continued by his son Íñigo López de Mendoza, who enlisted the help of the architect Juan Guas, one of the leading exponents of the Late Gothic style in Castile, and architect to the Catholic Monarchs. Diego and Íñigo were respectively the son and grandson of the famous Marquis of Santillana, author of the well-known *Serranilla* poems.

This building is the architectural embodiment of a society straddling two eras, the chivalric medieval period (the defensive elements such as the outer wall and turreted gateway), and the new Renaissance that we see in the great halls, the decorated facades and the magnificent vantage points that are typical of Humanism palaces.

Although the town already had a castle, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza decided to build a new one and abandon the old one, using its materials for the new castle and creating a building in keeping with the important position that the Ducal House was steadily gaining.

Diego lived in the new castle until his final years and died there in 1497. However, his son and heir, Íñigo Lopez de Mendoza, decided to move the family seat to Guadalajara, where the Mendoza family's original houses were located, and where work was already being started on the new ducal palace, the Palace of El Infantado.

The castle was used by the Mendoza family for a little under a century, and was abandoned from 1530 onwards. The area gradually deteriorated over time and was used as a storehouse, stable and even as a cinema and school during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39).

### *Serranilla VII*

The mountain-maiden of La Finojosa

From Calatrava as I took my way  
At holy Mary's shrine to kneel and pray,  
And sleep upon my eyelids heavy lay,  
There where the ground was very rough and wild,  
I lost my path and met a peasant child:  
From Finojosa, with the herds around her,  
There in the fields I found her.  
Upon a meadow green with tender grass,  
With other rustic cowherds, lad and lass,  
So sweet a thing to see I watched her pass:  
My eyes could scarce believe her what they found her,  
There with the herds around her. (...)

Íñigo López de Mendoza,  
Marquis of Santillana  
(1398-1458)

John Pierrepont Rice (translator).  
From: Hispanic Anthology: Poems Translated  
from the Spanish by English and  
North American Poets, collected and arranged by  
Thomas Walsh. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1920.



# A Walk Trough The Castle

## *A fortress and a palace*

The Manzanares El Real Castle holds a strategic position overlooking the Segovia Cañada Real (or royal drovers' road), which was used by the Mesta (the first cattle breeder guild in Europe that was operational from the 13th to the 19th centuries) to move livestock around Spain on a seasonal basis. The whole building is enhanced by the robust curtain walls and wall-walk. An imposing gatehouse protected by flanking towers gives way to the interior after crossing the old moat, which is filled in today.

The **hallway** to the main building served as initial defence and interior layout. In the **bailey**, overlooked by the Mendoza family's coat of arms, two beautiful arcaded galleries with late Gothic-style columns and balustrades introduce us to the palace area.

A **second hallway** leads inside, where the collection of tapestries and some pictures of the Virgin Mary and still-lives are exhibited. The reproduction of a large safe shows us the way in which the House's administrators deposited income from rents and taxes.

Climbing the staircase, in the upper courtyard we find a spacious living area where the masters enjoyed their daily life.

The first hall houses a series of paintings, notably an anonymous portrait of King Ferdinand VII of Spain (1784-1833) and religious works painted by José Maea (1760-1826), a Valencian artist who became director of the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and whose collection is also owned by Madrid Regional Government.

In the **Santillana Hall** we can see a copy of the portrait of the Marquis of Santillana, Don Íñigo, based on the one included within the *Altarpiece of the Gozos de Santa María* (doc. 1455), by Jorge Inglés, which can be seen in the Prado

Museum. We can also contemplate the 17th century painting *Procession of the Virgin of Candelaria*, in which the old (and no longer existing) Atocha Hospital in Madrid is depicted.

In the **Infantado Hall**, we find more images of historical figures associated with the castle: a copy of the portraits of the Constable of Castile, Don Álvaro de Luna and his wife Juana Pimentel, based on the Altarpiece from the Luna chapel in Toledo Cathedral by Sancho de Zamora and Juan de Segovia (ca. 1488). Álvaro de Luna was King John II's favourite and a sworn enemy of the Marquis de Santillana and the Mendoza family. However, in 1460, with the marriage of his daughter María to Íñigo López de Mendoza, the 2nd Duke of the Infantado, the Mendoza House's predominance was confirmed.

The **Ladies' Room**, on a stand, is a recreation of a Spanish women's social meeting room up to the 18th century, based around the aesthetics of Andalusian palaces. Amongst mats, rugs and cushions, noblewomen and their ladies would spend their days embroidering, playing instruments or reading, surrounded by chests, acting as primitive wardrobes, where they'd keep their clothes and costumes.

A light wooden staircase leads us up to the most private and intimate area, the **bedroom and dressing room**, as well as the chapel, all recreated here with furniture and costumes from theatrical scenes.

At the top, the Juan Guas **loggia** invites us to gaze upon the Santillana reservoir's calm waters. From the walkway, we can also see the **private chapel** and what must have been two floors of large windowed halls. Above the reused apse, a large keep tower was planned. This part of the castle was never completed.

In the **southwest tower**, there are still remains of the original decoration with granite (probably polychromed) balls, framed by tracery with sgraffito in lime. The tour of the castle culminates with a walk down the spiral staircase, returning us to the bailey.

# The Garden of the Senses

## *Cultivation and recreation*

The recent restoration of the landscape around the castle has created a space reflecting different aspects of 15th century life. All the plants and materials used here have been selected based on existing historical documentation.

There is a garden devoted specifically to growing **medicinal and industrial plants**: aromatic ones for garnishing meals, textile plants for making cloths

and baskets, and medicinal ones for curing diseases and healing wounds; there are also **crops and foodstuffs** that are a staple of human and animal diets, with cereals, vines with grapes for eating and for producing wine and also, assorted fruits and vegetables. And in a nod to the Duke's beautiful **fruit tree orchard**, which perhaps gave its name to the town, we find the apple (manzana in Spanish) orchard where, along with the apple trees, pear, cherry and almond trees also grow.

The landscaped areas were also used as **play areas and the scene of tournaments**. The castle's garden has a maze and an arena, a space in which various activities recreating jousts and games from olden times are currently carried out.

### Limited capacity



### Limited Mobility



### Information and booking of activities

91 853 00 08 / 91 852 86 85

Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 5 pm.

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### Opening hours for the Castle and the enclosure

Ticket office: 10 am to 5 pm.

Castle: Tuesdays to Fridays, from 10 am to 5.30 pm.

Saturdays, Sundays and Bank holidays, from 10 am to 6 pm.

Garden and enclosure: from 10 am to 7 pm.

During the summer, the ticket office will open one hour before the event start time and will remain open until the performance commences.

Closed on Mondays and the following days:

January 1st, May 1st, December 24th, 25th and 31st and local holidays.

Opening hours are subject to changes when special activities are programmed.

For more information about the private use of the castle facilities (renting of halls, shootings, photographic reports, etc.), please check [www.turismomadrid.es](http://www.turismomadrid.es)

