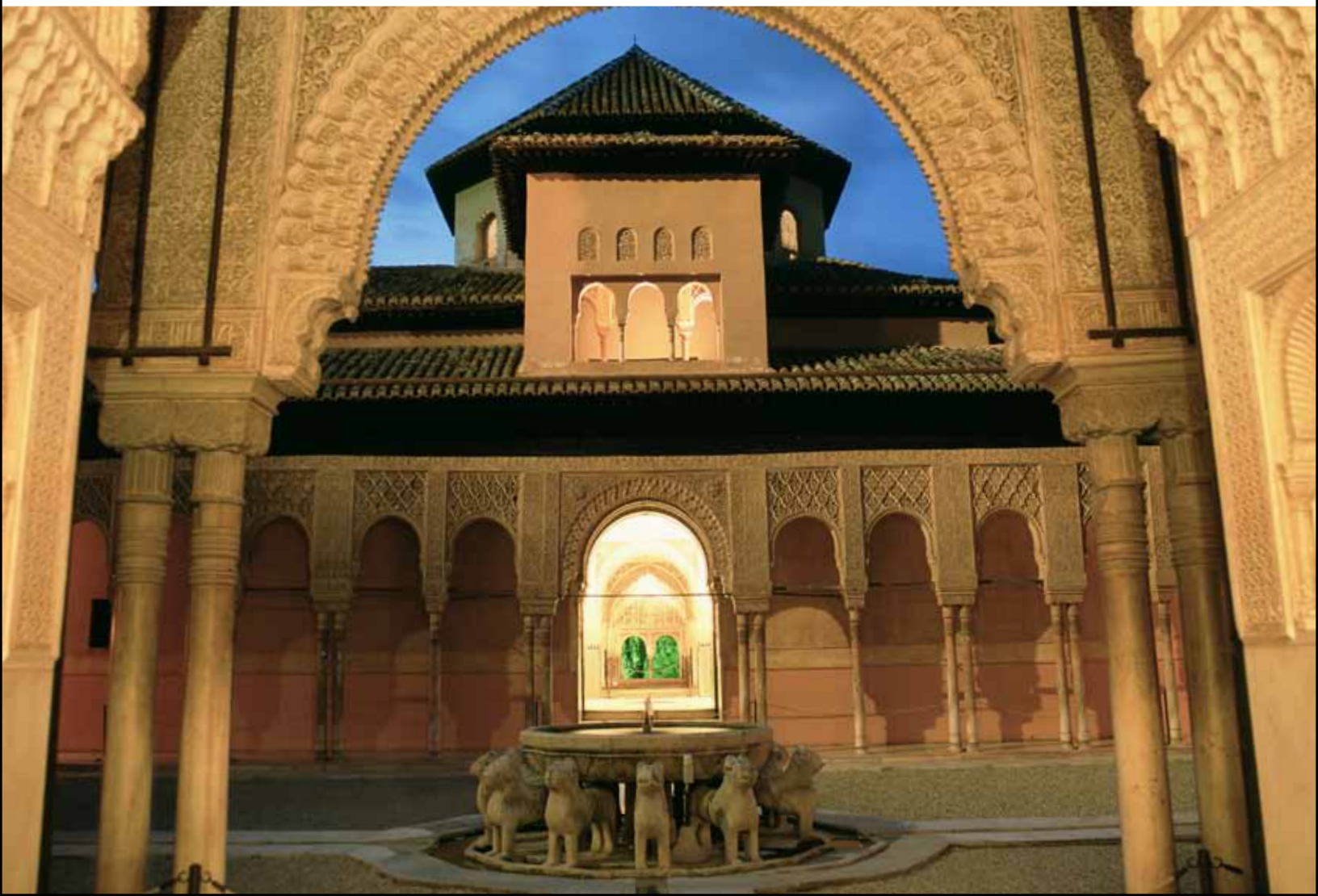


**TRAVEL GUIDES**

# The Alhambra Granada



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Panorámica de La Alhambra

## INTRODUCTION

In the 254-year period between 1238 and 1492, Granada was famed as one of the great capitals of the world. There was no other city at the time that could compete with her beauty, culture and delicacy. When on January 2nd, 1492, the Catholic monarchs Isabel and Fernando entered the Alhambra, they marvelled at the exquisite beauty of the palace and vowed to preserve it for posterity. Centuries after the Christian conquest, from the mid-eighteenth century until well into the nineteenth, romantic travellers - mainly French and English - raised the spectacular Nasrid Palace to mythological status. The Alhambra, one of the most magnificent monuments of human history, is the heart of Granada; this is where Hispanic-Muslim art took its last breaths, here it left clear testimony to the advanced level of technology and refinement in comparison with any other architecture of the time.

## THE MYTH THE ALHAMBRA

Until the first third of the nineteenth century, Spain was omitted from the Grand Tour - the educational rite of passage for wealthy young European gentlemen, mostly English and French. But a hunger for romance and glorification of the spirit in contrast to the roughness which accompanied the industrial revolution caused many of those travellers to turn their eyes towards Spain. In the European subconscious, the country still retained a sort of exotic fantasy image, highlighted by the memory of the lost Hispanic-Muslim civilisation. And so the

romantic travellers arrived in Granada with a suitcase full of clichés: at a time when Europe was pontificating about enlightened rationalism, Spain was considered the last bastion of spirituality, of Orientalism and of eccentricity. Those British and French envoys were formed by a legion of curious writers, artists, painters and wealthy visitors. There were even travellers from the other side of the Atlantic, including the American diplomat Washington Irving, who has passed into history as the prototype romantic traveller to Granada, the author of the celebrated *Tales of the Alhambra*, and unarguably the person responsible for popularising the Nasrid Palace, with which he

became familiar during his stay in 1826.

Granada and the Alhambra were an inexhaustible source of inspiration reflected in the sketchbooks of artists such as David Robert and John F. Lewis. During their visit in the first third of the nineteenth century, both artists sketched the eccentric irregularity of the Granada landscape, the city's varied architectural richness and the charm of the characters, costumes and customs of a time that the writer Richard Ford - considered the first Hispanicist - succeeded in describing better than anyone in his famous book, *A hand-book for travellers in Spain, and readers at home*.



Comares Palace, detail



Comares Palace, wall detail



Light and shadow play in every corner of the Alhambra

## PLANNING YOUR VISIT

There are different options when it comes to visiting the Alhambra, but the most common route is to start at the Alcazaba and then go on to the Nasrid Palaces. Once through the Lindaraja garden, the tour continues towards the El Partal area of the Palace and the towers that lead to the Alhambra exit. From there we follow El Paseo de los Cipreses - the Cypress Walk - to the Generalife.

After visiting the Nasrid Alhambra we have to retrace our steps to visit the Christian Alhambra. The Palace of Carlos V is the epicentre of this historical period, and is complemented by a visit to the Alhambra Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts as well as the nearby church of Santa Maria de la Alhambra.

An unhurried visit to the Alhambra and the Generalife takes about two and a half hours.

## Tourist Information

The Alhambra and the Generalife

[www.alhambra-patronato.es](http://www.alhambra-patronato.es)  
Information: 902 44 12 21

## Hours

**November-February**

### DAYTIME

Daily: 8.30 am - 6.00 pm.  
Ticket office open: 8.00 am - 5.00 pm.



Generalife

### EVENING

Visits only to the Nasrid Palaces.  
Friday & Saturday: 8.00 pm - 9.30 pm.  
Ticket office open: 7:30 pm - 8.30 pm.

**March-October**

### DAYTIME

Daily: 8.30 am - 8.00 pm.  
Ticket office open: 8.00 am - 7.00 pm.

### EVENING

Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 pm - 11.30 pm.  
Ticket office open: 9:30 pm - 10.30 pm.

The Alhambra is closed on December 25th and January 1st. Access to the Nasrid Palaces is only allowed within the time period indicated on the ticket.

General admission (includes visit to the Nasrid Palaces, the Alcazaba and the Generalife): 10 euros. Entry includes allotted times for visits

to all three areas. It is essential to respect the entrance time given on the ticket, particularly for the Nasrid Palaces, otherwise entrance will be refused.

Advance sales at branches of Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria Bank (BBVA). Phone: 902 22 44 60.

Advance internet booking:  
[www.alhambratickets.com](http://www.alhambratickets.com)

Limit of 7,700 visitors per day.



Detail of the *Sala de los Reyes* (Kings' Hall)

## HISTORY OF THE MONUMENT

There is an old legend, as picturesque as it is unlikely, that tells that the Alhambra was built at night, by torchlight, and the red of the flames coloured the walls of the fort so that the citizens believed they were the colour of blood.

The Alhambra - "the red castle" in Arabic - was originally commissioned by King al-Ahmar, who, in the mid-thirteenth century, had the Alcazaba built, the fortress and oldest part of the monument. His descendants extended the city and began to strengthen the defensive enclosure. The Nasrid Palaces are the work of the

two most famous kings of the dynasty, King Yusuf I (1333-1354) and his son, Muhammad V (1362-1391). Yusuf expanded and enriched the Comares Palace and also sponsored the work on the Patio de Arrayanes - the Myrtle Courtyard - and the throne room. Muhammad had the Arab baths built, and much of the work on the towers that surround the Alhambra perimeter. He was also responsible for the great Patio de los Leones - the Courtyard of the Lions - the private residence of the monarch and his family.

After the Christian conquest, the monarchs Isabel and Fernando commanded that the Alhambra be preserved, as did their daughter Juana. Their son, the Emperor Carlos had his

palace built next to the so-called Casa Real Vieja - the old royal house - which consisted of the Comares Palace and the Leones apartments. Felipe II set up new taxes destined to the preservation of the monument, but the situation deteriorated later when the Alhambra began to be neglected by successive Spanish governments. Carlos III (late eighteenth century) was to make a slight attempt to improve matters, but the French domination in the early nineteenth century destroyed parts of the monument. The travellers on the Grand Tour carried word of its beauty abroad. In 1870 the Alhambra was declared a National Monument and gradually work began on its recovery. In 1984 it was declared a World Heritage Site.

## THE ALHAMBRA VISIT

### Access Puertas (gates) & Alcazaba

The Alhambra is set on the Sabika hill, surrounded by a thick forest of Indian chestnut, plane trees, poplars, hackberries and elms which were planted in the early nineteenth century under the supervision of the Duke of Wellington. The trees reach to the walls and the turrets that protect the citadel, presenting a wild and rugged scenery that accentuates the magnificence of the palace complex in comparison with the mountains that surround Granada and rise to the Sierra Nevada.

The steep Cuesta de Gomez is an historic road, precursor of the Alhambra domains. It starts from one side of the Plaza Nueva, right alongside where the minibuses

park next to the entrance to the monument complex. The Cuesta ends at the Puerta de las Granadas (the Pomegranate Gate), which separates the city from the forest. There, the road forks: the right hand branch is tarmacked and open to traffic, while the path on the left is pedestrian, very steep and stunningly beautiful. It should be walked slowly, contemplating the tops of the tall trees that fringe the slope and the irrigation channels that flank the path and indicate the importance of water in the Alhambra Palace. The trail ends at the Pilar de Carlos V, an ornamented fountain, alongside the Puerta de la Justicia - Gate of Justice - one of the most important entrances to the Alhambra, where the *cadi* (the civil judge) handed down sentences to the common folk in Nasrid times.

Over the imposing horseshoe arch of the Gate of Justice, is carved an open hand. This is believed to represent the five precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer five times a day,

alms, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. The entrance is at an angle to the gate - a common technique in Hispanic-Muslim military engineering - and provides access to a gentle ramp leading to the Aljibes square.

The Aljibes square originated as a great pit that separated the Alcazaba from the Nasrid Palaces. After the Christian conquest, The Count of Tendilla ordered the land be filled in, and established large tanks of water there. On one side we find the Puerta del Vino (the Wine Gate), which gives entry and exit to the Calle Real - Royal Street - the main axis of the Medina (the old quarter of the city) and the boundary between the military and palace buildings.

But the Alhambra itself suggests a natural order to a visit, and it's best to start with the oldest part of the complex. The Alcazaba is a fortress whose every stone seems to bear the genetic code of the whole monument. This is where it all began.

King al-Ahmar ordered the building of the Torre del Homenaje and Torre de la Quebrada (the keep and Gorge Tower), as well as the famous Torre de la Vela (Tower of the Veil), which is closest to the crest of the hill and which continues to serve as a symbol of the Alhambra and the city. The three towers form a huge isosceles triangle at the foot of which lies the Plaza de Armas, where the brick foundations of the old premises occupied by the Nasrid army can be seen.

### The Nasrid Palaces

#### The Mexuar

The interior of the Alhambra comprises different apartments and areas whose construction, design



Alcazaba

**Mexuar Courtyard**

and functionality together reveal the history of the whole complex. The oldest part is the Alcazaba (the citadel), opposite which the Nasrid Palaces are located in the shadow of the huge Renaissance palace of Carlos V. Along the paths and roads that connect and separate the different monuments of the Alhambra you will find spaces that provide viewing points from which to admire the city and its historic districts. The delightful walk that links the Alcazaba to the Nasrid Palaces overlooks the Darro Valley and the Albaycin and Sacromonte districts with their garden villas and cave houses.

The Nasrid Palaces, which at the time of the Christian conquest were known as the Casa Real Vieja - the old royal house - are the result of the combination of three major monuments. The first is the Mexuar, the second, the Comares Palace and the third the Palacio de los Leones - the Lion Palace. The entrance is via the Mexuar, which is one of the areas that has undergone most changes since the Christian conquest. It is still not fully understood, but it is believed that this hall was intended for the tribunal of judges responsible for imparting royal justice. Four columns topped by Nasrid capitals rise in the centre of the hall to

support the weight of a series of corbels decorated with honeycomb work. The wooden balustrade still exists that served to support the choir built between the years 1630 and 1632, when the Mexuar was converted to a chapel.

Opposite the entrance, and facing Mecca, is the oratory. The plasterwork panels that decorate it were made in the early twentieth century; back in 1590 the explosion of a powder-house destroyed the original ornamental treasures. The next palace apartment is the Mexuar courtyard. It is set between the walls of the old courthouse and

the Comares Palace, and here we find a majestic façade that is one of the major artistic landmarks of the Alhambra. Opposite is the Cuarto Dorado - the Golden Room. It is clear that the courtyard is too small for such an extraordinary façade, and some experts have suggested that this amazing work of Hispanic-Muslim ingenuity could originally have been intended for a different location. What is certain, though, is that it was commissioned in 1369 to commemorate the taking of Algeçiras by Muhammad V. There are two doors in the wall which gives the visitor a choice of entrances. A wooden eave, a magnificent work

of Nasrid carpentry, completes the façade.

### The Comares Palace

The Alhambra is a mythical place, full of secrets, of half-tones and unanswered questions. The left hand door of the great façade gives access to a set of narrow, shady hallways set at angles to each other, which lead to the Patio de Arrayanes, the epicentre of the Comares Palace, where the Nasrid court established their government, and the Throne Room. The Patio de Arrayanes - the Myrtle Courtyard - is one of the great shrines of the art world, exceptional,

enduring, unique... From the south wing, the visitor is aware of three overwhelming sensations. The first is the brightness of the space, highlighted by the tranquillity of the water from the irrigation channel, where the columns of the north gallery are reflected alongside the magnificent Comares tower, the sky and the clouds. That quality of brightness differs depending on the time of day: in the morning the sunlight falls directly on this palace apartment, whereas the evening transforms it into a quiet, poetic, melancholy place.

The second sensation is created by



Patio de Arrayanes - the Myrtle Courtyard



Detail of the domed ceiling of the Sala de Abencerrajes

the space, a rectangle evoking the classical constructions that establish the outer courtyard as regulator of the different apartments of the house both private and public. And finally, the whole space is perfumed with myrtle; low bushes flank the pond and give out their sweet scent at the least touch to their pointed leaves.

The Patio de los Arrayanes - the Myrtle Courtyard - was built to dazzle every envoy or ambassador who visited. The gallery that faces the Comares Tower gives access to the Sala de la Barca and thence to the Throne Room where the sultan sat in state. The Comares Tower is 45 metres in height and can be seen from many points of the city, which establishes a connection between the Alhambra Palace and the historical districts that lie at its feet. Some of the most important pages of the Spanish history book have been written here. This is where Boabdil took the decision to fight against the Catholic monarchs. It is also where

he handed over the keys to the city to those same monarchs, Isabel and Fernando. From here he went into exile, never to return. Here, too, the monarchs of Castile and Leon confirmed their choice of Christopher Columbus as the admiral of the New World. Later, from this same base, Carlos V chose to start many of his military endeavours.

The Throne Room is a perfect example of the delicacy and sensitivity of Hispanic-Muslim art. The three walls of the hall open onto nine chambers, three to a side. The decoration is outstanding: the skirtings are richly tiled, and above them rise plasterwork and stucco wall facings in a succession of structures where the panel decorations alternate between geometric, floral and inscription. The domed ceiling represents the seven heavens of Islamic paradise.

### El Patio de los Leones - the Courtyard of the Lions

The Comares Palace and its magnificent courtyard were built during the reign of King Yusuf I. His son, Muhammad V, had the honour of extending the Palace by means of the Courtyard of the Lions, the last major landmark of Andalusí art and a reflection of the baroque Hispano-Arabic aesthetic. This rectangular space is reached by a diminutive doorway which opens in a wall of the Myrtle Courtyard, and here the master architects of the time dedicated all their skill and arts. At the time when it was built, there was no monument in the world that could compete with its beauty and artistry.

While the Comares Palace was used for governmental purposes, the Courtyard of the Lions was the private retreat of the Sultan, his family and his harem. The rectangular floor plan is divided into four parts, in the centre of which stands a fountain



Patio de los Leones: one of the fountain's twelve lions

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with the twelve marble lions who give the courtyard its name and whose mouths spit jets of water.

One hundred and twenty-four fine white columns of Macael marble support the four sides of the courtyard whose rectangular shape is made irregular by two richly-ornamented gazebos. Four rooms open off from the courtyard. The one to the west, the first to be viewed on entering the courtyard apartments, is decorated with honeycomb work. To the east is the Kings' Hall, to the south the Sala de los Abencerrajes; to the north the Sala de las Dos Hermanas (the Two Sisters' Hall) which leads through to the Sala de

los Ajimeces and beyond to overlook the Lindaraja. The Kings' Hall has three bedchambers decorated with paintings attributed to Italian artists of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The Abencerrajes and Two Sisters' Halls are crowned with stunning domes decorated with incredibly complex honeycomb carvings whose designs alter as the light changes through the day, and with them, the atmosphere of the rooms.

The Alhambra tour route now leads to the rooms of Carlos V, built in 1526 for the honeymoon of the Emperor after his marriage to Isabel of Portugal. The rooms, which are

decorated with Renaissance style coffering and French fireplaces, lead through to the Lindaraja and Reja Courtyards. Here, too, are the rooms where the American diplomat Washington Irving lived for a few months in 1826, where he filled extensive notebooks with details of his travels that he later used to write his famous book *Tales of the Alhambra*.

Some of the rooms of the Habitaciones del Emperador - the Emperor's Apartments - as this area of the palace is also known, were decorated by the artists Julio Aquiles and Alejandro Mainer, students of the great Italian artist Rafael..



Jardines de El Partal and Torre de las Damas: Partal Gardens and Ladies' Tower

### El Partal

Three Arab houses, one of which retains murals dating from Nasrid times, lead through to El Partal, a five-arched gallery set in the shadow of the Ladies' Tower. Opposite the gallery stretches a rectangular pond. Until a few decades ago the ends of the pond were marked by two stone lions; these are now on display in the Alhambra Museum on the ground floor of the Carlos V Palace. Marked paths lead to the ruins of the palace of Yusuf III whose importance is unknown as only the foundations of its main buildings remain. In their stead, the visitor walks through some delightful gardens that line the route to the Generalife, passing the Torre de la Cautiva (Tower of the Captive) and Torre de las Infantas (Tower of the Princesses) whose romantic atmosphere was enhanced when they were used as settings in some of Washington Irving's stories.

### El Generalife

The word "Generalife" means "garden of the architect", but its real significance remains unknown. It is believed that the Generalife was part of a series of farms and palaces that the Nasrid aristocracy built as retreats in the valley of Valparaiso. The valley is formed by rugged mountains that rise above the Sacromonte and the Fuente del Avellano (the Almond Tree Spring), at whose feet the cold waters of the river Darro run.

Over time, towards the end of the thirteenth century, El Generalife began to be included as part of the patrimony of the kings of Granada. They extended it until it became a summer palace, a place of relaxation for the sultan, his family and his court. It is known that during the reign of Isma'il I (1314-1325) El Generalife underwent extensive remodelling which indicates that it



Jardines del Generalife

was already functioning as a place for relaxation and pleasure at that time. After the Christian conquest, the management was the responsibility of a series of nobles appointed by the Spanish monarchs until, in 1921 it was included in the country's national heritage.

One of the questions that is often raised by historians is the proximity of El Generalife to the Alhambra palace complex. The explanation lies in the vulnerability of the Nasrid dynasty in Granada. The Nasrid kings knew better than anyone the fragility of their hold on their domains and were not prepared to risk long distances between their respective palaces for practical reasons and questions of security. El Generalife is located at the foot of the Cerro del Sol (the Hill of the Sun) and it offers some of the most beautiful views of the romantic city of Granada. At the foot of the white pavilions there are flowerbeds where fruit trees flourish, including ancient olive trees, almonds and pomegranates. La Torre de Agua (the Water Tower), opened in the twentieth century, establishes a path that connects the Alhambra with the Generalife

by means of a bridge breaching the height difference with the Cuesta de los Chinos.

Across the bridge we reach the Paseo de los Cipreses (Cypress Walk) and pass by the open air theatre where some of the biggest events and performances of the Festival of Music and Dance are held. The Jardines Bajos - the Lower Gardens - are a maze of flowerbeds created in 1931 with careful reference to the importance of water and vegetation in the Hispanic-Muslim culture. The flowerbeds are planted with cypresses, aromatic myrtles, roses and water plants including oleanders which decorate the many ponds leading to the Patio del Polo which is the entrance to El Generalife. On the lintel of the gateway there is a key carved, a symbol of welcome or a religious symbol.

A steep staircase climbs to the Patio de la Acequia - the Irrigation Channel Courtyard - the central part of the palace, a bright, rectangular space full of colours, sounds and subtle floral scents. Fountains now characterise this famous place, as do the arches open to the landscape, but during the Nasrid reign, the pond was still and the arches closed, accessible only by means of the balconies that overlook the garden and parterres and whose walls bear filigree plasterwork and arabesques. The Patio de las Acequia is overseen by two galleries reminiscent of the layout of the Alhambra's Patio de Arrayanes. Above this, in an upper section, we find the Patio de los Cipreses - the Cypress Courtyard - which has been more Christianised in its later remodelling. Here, water re-establishes a way of understanding human pleasure. The trunk of a dead cypress recalls an old story of love and betrayal. Legend has it that in the shade of this proud tree the wife of Boabdil met with the head of the Abencerrajes dynasty - historical

**Carlos V Palace**

rivals to the Nasrids - to give free rein to their love. The way out of the Sultana's Garden, as the Cypress Courtyard is also known, leads to the area known as the Jardines Altos - the Upper Gardens - with its main features, the water staircase and romantic pavilion, built in the twentieth century on the site of a presumed Nasrid oratory.

## Carlos V Palace

It was the summer of 1526 when Emperor Carlos V and the Empress Isabel of Portugal came to Granada from Seville, where they had married. The Emperor moved into the Royal Apartments of the Alhambra, but his new wife claimed that the place frightened her and she was settled into a wing of the Jeronimos Monastery, in the lower city. During his time in the city, the Emperor decided to build a palace befitting his rank, right in the heart of the Alhambra, alongside the old royal house that his grandparents Isabel

and Fernando had occupied after the conquest in 1492. For a time, the Emperor, lord over America and much of Europe, toyed with the idea of establishing his court in Granada and making it the capital of his empire. To this end, he commanded the architect Pedro Machuca to construct a building in keeping with that purpose. The first works were funded from the taxes paid by the Moors who had applied to the Emperor for protection in light of their increasingly uncertain position in the Christian Granada.

Pedro Machuca, who had trained in Italy in the shadow of Michelangelo, mapped out a circular courtyard inside a magnificent square. For twenty-four years, Machuca personally oversaw construction of his splendid work, but Carlos V, who spent his life warring across Europe, forgot his promise to make Granada capital of his empire. This did not prevent his son Philip II from supporting the project, now in the hands of Luis Machuca, son of Pedro,

the inspiration behind the palace, and Juan de Orea, who had helped Juan de Herrera, architect of El Escorial.

Over the years, the work on the Carlos V palace suffered various crises because of lack of funding and lack of support from the Spanish royal house. In the nineteenth century, the palace was in a sad state of neglect, despite the attempt by some local authorities to convert it into a museum. It was not until 1929 that the palace came under the protection and management of architect and restorer, Leopoldo Torres Balbas, to whom the Alhambra owes some of its most famous and successful restoration work.

Today the palace of Carlos V - perfectly integrated among the Nasrid-era buildings - is considered one of the most illustrious examples of Renaissance art in the world. Its circular courtyard, the setting now for plays and symphony concerts, is an example of exquisite harmony. It is 42 metres in diameter, set in a square

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measuring 63 metres on each sides and 17.40 metres in height.

Around the outside, the stone blocks are decorated with bronze rings held in the mouths and beaks of carved animals and birds. The two main façades include bas-reliefs illustrating the battles won by the Emperor

**The Palace Museums**

Museum of Fine Arts and Alhambra Museum  
Palacio de Carlos V.

Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 9am to 2pm  
Phone: 958 02 79 00. Free admission.

The Palace of Carlos V houses two museums, the Fine Arts Museum and the Alhambra Museum. The former, opened in 1958, occupies one of the upper floors of the Palace. Its collection was brought together after the confiscations of 1836, mostly from churches and convents of the city and the province. The collection is notable for the importance of some of the Andalusian paintings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the most valuable paintings are those by Alonso Cano, Bocanegra and the still life paintings of Sanchez Cotan. Cotan painted the famous Bodegon con Cardo - Still Life with Cardoon, one of the most illustrious paintings in the museum. The Museum of Fine Arts in Granada is also home to twentieth century paintings by Granada artists such as Gomez Moreno, Lopez Mezquita and Rodriguez-Acosta.

The Alhambra Museum, which was opened in 1870, is located on the ground floor of the Palace. Its seven rooms are arranged in chronological order. In the first, the display includes copies of the Koran and Andalusí coins. The second room, devoted to



Almohad Koran



Gazelle vase (fourteenth century)

the art of the Emirate and Caliphate of Cordoba, houses a display of pieces from the Medina Azahara. The third room contains pieces dating from between the Caliphate of Cordoba and the Nasrid reign in Granada, including the Almanzor font from the early eleventh century. The fourth and fifth rooms are dedicated to Nasrid art and the treasures on display include the famous Jarron de las Gacelas - the Gazelle Vase - a synthesis of Andalusí ceramic art. The sixth room houses a display of stelae



Nasrid bronze lamp



The Alhambra Museum

- commemorative funerary stones. Finally, in the seventh exhibition room, we can admire panels of tiles and objects of everyday life in the last years of the Nasrid kingdom.

In addition, the Palace of Carlos V has a conference room as well as a crypt in which many of the temporary exhibitions that take place throughout the year are housed.

## HELLO! RECOMMENDS: 10 UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

- Watch the sun set at the Alhambra. Whether from the Plaza de los Aljibes looking towards Albaycin, or from one of the many viewpoints the whitewashed Albaycin neighbourhood offers where you can see the last rays of the sun illuminate the marvellous Nasrid Palace.

- Visit the Nasrid Palace at dusk. Spring, summer and autumn are all recommended seasons for a twilight visit to the Mexuar, the Arrayanes Palace and the Courtyard of the Lions.

- Admire the stunning view from the Torre de la Vela. This is the most emblematic of the Alhambra's towers. From here you can see the lower city and the valley stretching

away towards the western region of Granada. To the east lie the buildings of the Alhambra Palace complex and the Sierra Nevada.

- Enjoy a concert or a ballet performance at the famous International Festival of Music and Dance which takes place each year in June. The best settings are offered by the Palace of Carlos V and the Patio de Arrayanes.

- Take a stroll from the Pomegranate Gate to the Door of Justice along the path that climbs beside the walls of the Alcazaba, by way of the Pilar de Carlos V, through the great forest of the Alhambra.

- Explore the botanical riches of the Generalife. First stop, the box hedges that stretch beside the Paseo de los Cipreses. Second stop, the maze of flowerbeds leading to the Patio del Polo.

- Listen to the sound of water that permeates the Alhambra and

provides a constant background murmur. The best fountains are at the entrance to the Generalife. The stream drawn by the waters of the main irrigation channel should not be missed.

- Take a photo from the Generalife galleries: they are one of the most magnificent viewpoints in the whole world. The galleries look out over the Alhambra and the Albaycin, making any and every view a winner.

- Enjoy coffee, lunch or dinner in the courtyard of the Parador, the state hotel situated in the old convent of San Francisco, alongside the palace of Yusuf III and El Partal. It offers a perfect view of El Generalife.

- Come back soon. There's no greater happiness than knowing that you'll soon return to the Alhambra: in future visits you will rediscover this magical place, and discover more about it. However well you know it, the Alhambra always holds further secrets to delight the visitor.



Fountains in El Generalife

## Shopping at the Alhambra

There are three bookshops inside the Alhambra grounds. The first is located in one of the wings of the main entrance pavilion. The second has its doors on the corner of Calle Real and the third is located inside the palace of Carlos V. They are not simply bookstores, though. They also offer a selection of gift items, including printed fabrics with motifs inspired by the Alhambra. Don't miss the chance to buy virgin olive oil from the Alhambra, made from olives from trees growing on the terraced land of El Generalife.

## WHERE TO EAT

### La Mimbre

Avenida del Generalife, s/n  
Tel. 958 22 22 76

A classic of Granada cuisine. Highlights of the menu include the *remoión* salad, la Mimbre *tortilla*, braised kid with garlic, and cod in la Mimbre sauce. There is a small winter dining room, but in good weather dining is on the attractive outdoor terrace. Reservations required.

### Jardines de Alberto

Alixares del Generalife, s/n  
Tel. 958 22 16 61

A former garden villa of the Alhambra estate with terraces facing the towers that overlook the Secano. Menu includes stuffed aubergines, stewed bull's tail and olive oil ice cream.

### La Yedra Real

Paseo de la Sabika, 15  
Tel. 958 22 91 45

The restaurant offers a wide variety of typical Spanish food to be savoured in a pleasant courtyard setting. The menu offers dishes such as homemade croquettes, salmon salad, and lamb with prunes and pine nuts. For dessert, truffle and chocolate cake.

## WHERE TO STAY

### Parador de Turismo de Granada

\*\*\*\*

Real de la Alhambra, s/n.  
Tel. 958 22 14 40. Fax. 958 22 22 64.

The chance to sleep in one of the seven wonders of the world is a luxury indeed. And that's exactly what's on offer at Granada's Parador. The Parador - a state owned hotel - is situated in a former convent built by the Catholic monarchs in the gardens of the Alhambra, set among fountains, tree-lined groves and beautiful views. The traveller can enjoy the spell cast by the surroundings and by the building itself and marvel at the aesthetic reconciliation of Andalusian and Christian cultures. The views from the rooms are outstanding, particularly those that surround the old Franciscan cloister. The restaurant offers local Granada cuisine and has a delightful garden which is a perfect place to enjoy a peaceful lunch or an unforgettable evening meal.

### Alhambra Palace \*\*\*\*

Plaza Arquitecto Garcia de Paredes, 1.  
Tel. 958 22 14 68. Fax. 958 22 64 04.

This is the most palatial hotel in the city, inspired by the Alhambra itself. A place of dreams, situated in the grounds of the Alhambra, just five minutes walk from the Nasrid Palaces and the Generalife. Its lounges and upper-floor rooms enjoy privileged views of the Alhambra complex and the Realejo district. It also has beautiful terraces that enjoy splendid views over Granada and the Sierra Nevada. To see the sun set here is guaranteed to make you fall in love with the city.

### America \*

Real de la Alhambra, 53  
Tel. 958 22 74 71. Fax. 958 22 74 70

Family hotel situated in the heart of the Alhambra, less than a hundred metres from the Patio de los Leones and a few steps from one of the entrances to the Generalife. The Hotel America is located in a house dating from the early nineteenth century and has seventeen spacious, bright and welcoming rooms. The hotel has a restaurant serving traditional cuisine and a quiet courtyard garden where the murmur of the fountain is a pleasant accompaniment to a peaceful evening.



Granada Parador