

AUDIOGUIDE

THE COSTUME MUSEUM

1. Seeing and preserving

Welcome to the Costume Museum, a Centre for the Investigation of the Spanish Ethnographic Heritage. The Museum is arranged into fourteen areas which offer you the opportunity to learn more about costume in Spain and how it developed over the centuries. Our clothes reveal information about all of us. Clothing enables us to identify our occupation, social group, place of origin and religious and cultural beliefs.

The clothes and textiles on display require special conditions due to their fragility. One of the aims of the Museum is to ensure that they are not damaged by external elements which could result in their deterioration. For this reason the lighting level in the rooms is kept very low.

The layout of the collection follows two separate but interlinked routes. The first is the visit to the permanent collection, while the second covers the Education Area located in the outside corridor and which is intended to act as a backup to the main collection. To reach this area, go through the blue doors which you will see in each section of the building. We would recommend that you visit the Education Area after you have seen the collection, but whatever you do, don't miss it as you will learn a great deal and enjoy the fascinating interactive displays.

All the rooms have interactive screens which offer the visitor more specific and detailed information about the costumes on show.

2. The remote past

Very few items of clothing have survived prior to the 17th century. In order to study costume of this early date we therefore have to look at other sources, such as art. Sculptures offer us a three-dimensional representation of dress, while painting can be a guide with regard to colours. For this reason in the display case on the left you can study the development of clothing from Iberian culture onwards, covering the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages, and concluding with the 17th century.

To see the oldest exhibit in the Museum, look at the display case opposite which has four items dating from before the 18th century. Particularly worth noting is the woman's sleeveless doublet which was the basic garment for the upper body in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was worn over a blouse or shirt and could be covered by other garments. The *pourpoint* – equivalent to the doublet – derived from early 17th-century French male dress. The cuts or slashes were made with the intention of revealing the rich and costly undergarments.

2.1 The funerary apparel of the Infanta Doña María

This display case houses a marvellous exhibit dating from the 13th century: the funerary apparel of Doña María, daughter of Fernando III “The Saint”. It consists of shirt, stockings and over-garment. The body of the Infanta, who died in 1235 at the age of five, lies in the Royal Pantheon of San Isidoro in León.

3. Musical party

In the first half of the 18th century men wore rich, costly garments of an almost feminine luxury.

French-style male dress consisted of a frock coat, waistcoat and breeches. On the left you will see a silver frock-coat - the oldest in the collection - dated around 1740. It is made from a particularly luxurious silk brocade of a type used for one-off pieces. Frock-coats of this period had deep, wide side folds supported by a rigid inner framework so that they spread out and emphasised the wearers’ hips in imitation of the female skirt. Next to it is an example of the most common type of female dress worn by all social classes consisting of a short jacket dating from 1740 and a skirt. The jacket is richly embroidered with a design imitating a garden.

Next, a group of female jackets gives an idea of the richness of the materials and colours, evoking the Rococo spirit of the times. They vary in the treatment of the cuffs, known in Spain as “boot cuffs”. These jackets could fasten all the way down the front or be open in a v-shape, fastened with a triangular element known as a stomacher.

Lastly, this case also exhibits a selection of male waistcoats, of the type worn under the frock-coat. With or without sleeves, these developed from the long, straight-fronted type to shorter ones with the fronts cut at an angle.

4. The elegant crowd take a stroll

The area of Madrid known as the Paseo del Prado was a gift to the citizens from Charles III. As a background to this display you can see a print of the same title by Ginés de Aguirre which evokes the atmosphere of the second half of the 18th century. The three dresses exemplify women’s fashion of the time. The French style dress, known as a sack dress, with its distinctive pleats on the back is ornamented with little baskets and small flowers. The dress on the left is “à la polonaise” or Polish-style, in tones of salmon pink and green, with the outer skirt drawn up in a less formal and more comfortable design. The one on the right is the practical “English-style dress”.

The two examples of children’s dress follow the design and type of adult clothing.

5. Male frock-coats and female bodices

In the adjoining case we can look at a series of male frock-coats which reflect the trend of the period towards simplicity, and which have less side pleats. They range from the oldest (the first here) to the one dating from the end of the 19th century. This plainness is

emphasised by the choice of single-colour cloth and less elaborate embroidery. Also evident is the introduction of a stand-up collar which became higher towards the end of the 18th century. The high-collared frock-coat made its first appearance around 1764: the last coat in the case is of this type, in green with metal buttons.

The women's bodices that you see next are characteristic of the different types common in the second half of the 18th century. These begin with a half-length sack type, followed by some short bodices, of which the last, made of white nainsook is particularly interesting with a projecting panel at the back.

6. Footwear

Learning about the history of dress means learning about accessories as well. These small objects are an integral part of the process of embellishing our appearance. Many of them can be considered works of art, reflecting the personal taste of their owners. Shoes, stockings, gloves, fans and bags were all essential items of the 18th-century female wardrobe, complementing the dress.

Women's shoes could have backs or alternatively no heels, like mules. At this period there was no difference between the form of the left and right shoe. The display case shows the development of the shoe: from the enclosed, pointed ones of the early 18th century to the more open ones terminating in a point that curved up in the Oriental manner.

With regard to stockings, silk ones were the most highly prized, plain or embroidered with gold or silver.

7. Hands for holding

Gloves were an essential accessory, while mittens were all the rage. These were skilfully embroidered using lace or metallic thread. The muff was a very popular item with both men and women as it was a highly effective way of warming the hands.

The bag first appeared at the end of the century and can be considered the female accessory par excellence. The various bags seen here were ironically known in Spain as "Ridicules" due to their small size. The present display includes some fine examples, along with purses and wallets.

8. Classicism and the middle classes

Fashion reacted to the Neo-classical style after it had triumphed in the fine arts. The social upheaval evident in France as a consequence of the French Revolution affected the whole of Europe and brought about a complete change in dress, which now aimed for a type of simplicity already hinted at in men's clothes. Now female clothes also followed this direction.

To the right of the display case you can see the shift dress that reflects this desire for change, simplicity and freedom. The dress falls from the corset and the interior stays,

puffing out the skirts that adapt themselves to the natural form of the body. Dresses of this type were normally made of muslin which is a light, translucent fabric. The waist-line is located below the bust in imitation of classical sculpture. Men replaced the frock coat with the dress coat and the French-style suit, with Court dress still richly embroidered.

Next we can look at the way clothing developed in the first decade of the 19th century. The high waist remained in fashion but the cloth used was heavier with very long sleeves. This is the case with the brick-red dress dating from 1810. Next to it is a high-waisted dress coat with broad lapels and fine woollen trousers. The series of waistcoats on display to the left reveal how the earlier type evolved into the modern waistcoat. Cut straight at the bottom, from then on it was the element that added a note of colour to masculine dress.

9. The Spanish *Majo* and *Maja*

The costume of the Spanish popular type known as a *majo* consists of three garments: a jacket, short waistcoat and brightly coloured and decorated breeches, with a sash around the waist and a hairnet. One example of this fashion is the green silk suit ornamented at the shoulders in gilt thread.

Examples of accessories worn with the *majo* costume are on display in the small adjoining display case: a black lace mantilla, a typically Spanish appliqu  shawl and two hair nets, the head wear particularly associated with this type of costume.

The women's or *majas'* costume used the same ornamental vocabulary and featured jackets with lapels that fitted tightly at the waist without stays. One example here is the dark brown jacket with long sleeves and beautiful buttons.

Worn with this costume were two typically Spanish garments: the skirt, which was always black, and the mantilla. *Maja* costumes could also be high-cut, as in the example in the next case, which is black with tiny blue beads.

An example of the survival of this type of costume in the 19th century is the one formerly belonging to the young Infanta Isabel, popularly known as "La Chata". This example features all the characteristic elements of the *maja* costume.

10. From processional giants to fashion magazines

The exchange of dolls dressed in the latest fashion was normal between European courts from the 16th century onwards. They were used as models by tailors and dressmakers and were excellent ambassadors of fashion prior to the appearance of fashion magazines at the end of the 18th century. Some examples are on display here, wearing 18th- and 19th-century dress.

Below this you can look at a multi-media display: it shows the development of the fashion trade in Madrid over the past 500 years as well as the processional figure known as the Tarasca. The peak of Spanish fashion in the 16th and 17th centuries coincided with a growth of the textile arts and crafts in Madrid and at this period the city could be described as the

world capital of fashion. During this time one of the most bizarre ways of displaying the latest fashions was the Giantess known as La Tarasca who figured in the Corpus Christi processions wearing the latest styles.

The Romantic period coincided with the publication of the first fashion magazines in Spain. Together with prints and bookplates, these allowed the public to learn about the latest fashions month by month.

11. Shopping

The number of shops offering ready-to-wear clothing and the large number of fashion houses indicate the significance of the fashion industry in Spain at this period.

The street became the ideal showcase for display, while the window displays of the smaller shops tempted the passer-by. In this sense, streets with shops had an important social function as the activity of walking around city streets required clothing that was comfortable and easy to wear. Such outfits became known as Outdoor Dress.

The Romantic era saw the creation of a new shape for women's dresses, characterised by bell-shaped skirts, structure of hoops underneath called crinoline. This shape evolved from circular – as in the check dress with bell-shaped sleeves – to the elliptical, for example the red dress.

This period saw the spread of so-called “novelty” fabrics, particularly silk - plain, striped or checked – woven using dyed threads for both the warp and weft, as well as those worked with small motifs.

Outdoor Dress featured accessories such as hats, gloves and parasols. A sizeable selection of capes and jewels is on display in the cases next to the corridor, while there are charming parasols in the display case behind you.

12. Fashionable evening dress

Both the image projected by the individual, as well as that conveying the respectability of the family, had to be expressed through dress. A visit to an opening night at the theatre or a ball involved a particular rules of etiquette that affected both dress and behaviour. The sparkling candlelight and reflections from mirrors created a splendid setting for the display of female dress. Textiles, colours, lace, ribbons and silk trimmings were combined into a harmonious ensemble intended to emphasise feminine charms.

The most distinctive element of evening wear was the neckline, which was broad and low, evident in the example here. This licence was permitted as a result of the prevailing rules of etiquette but would have been unthinkable in other contexts or types of dress. A short cloak covered the wearer's shoulders on leaving the theatre. Evening dresses also featured skirts with long trains, as in the pale blue example here.

13. Bustles

From 1869 the bustle took over from the crinoline and played a key role in defining the female shape. A bustle consisted of an interior structure made of wires, starched flounces or whale-bone hoops sewed to an underskirt tied at the waist which acted to spread out and support the fall of the outer skirt. One can be seen in the case on the right.

The period between 1868 and 1890 is characterised by the so-called “Upholstery Style” in Spain, a term referring to the fact that clothes shared the same aesthetic as middle-class homes of the day. Trimmings, ribbons, tassels were incorporated into the drapes, flounces and panels of skirts. In contrast to the simple, narrow bodices, skirts became the objects of attention. At the same time the visual focus shifted to the back, with long graceful trains. The construction of these gowns became more complex in response to the new fashion started by the French couturier Charles F. Worth, one of the leading figures of the day. This new style is also evident in children’s clothing, as evident in the girl’s yellow dress here.

Among the ensembles on display in this case is a bodice, skirt and overskirt in ivory, striking for the contrast between the simplicity of the cotton used and the embroidered decoration. Also notable is the green silk dress, novel in its use of this colour and the way the dots are printed in *degradé*.

14. Popular dress, the mark of a trade

The image of folk costume is normally associated with the most elaborate types, i.e. those worn for popular celebrations. However, on a day to day basis this type of clothing was more modest in the use of materials, and was functional in its design.

Some professions or trades required particular clothes. This was the case with shepherds’ clothing – made of very resistant materials such as thick pieces of cloth or tanned hides. Similarly, sailors’ wetsuits were made of waxed canvas.

In other cases, costume provided information about the activity or geographical origins of the wearer. It acted as a walking advertisement, as in the case of the wet-nurse or orange-seller. Many of these working costumes have survived to the present day, converted into traditional costume, representative of the places of origin of their wearers.

Every costume is displayed with the tools or objects of the wearer’s trade: from the simple fisherwoman’s basket to a complex musical instrument, for example the blind musician’s hurdy-gurdy. On occasions he became no less than a walking puppet theatre.

15. Historical memory

This case has examples of types of garments worn across the centuries and which have survived in traditional dress. They are organised chronologically from left to right. While most are based on models developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, a few rare ones are earlier. We should take a look at these.

In the case of men’s clothing, the oldest piece is probably the cloak from Villanueva de Aezkoa. Its appearance is documented as early as the 13th century in the *Canticles de Saint*

Mary. It consists of a black cloak decorated with red edging and is located here in the upper row, first on the left. It evolved in the 16th and 17th centuries through a number of small changes until it took on its present form. Today, it is worn by civic dignitaries such as mayors and judicial officials.

Turning to the women's dress, the most outstanding pieces are the outfits from Ansó and Ibiza (first on the left). Both consist of very heavy, high-waisted skirts of a type known in Spanish as *basquiñas* and which first appeared in the mid-15th-century. They were principally worn by maids. The costume from Ansó has also retained its typical headdress. A new addition in the 17th century was the blouse with the high, frilled collar.

16. The display of wealth

All communities are marked by particular communal events, both public – such as fiestas and religious celebrations – and private – such as weddings and baptisms. Clothing played an important role in these occasions and came from a wide variety of sources: stored away in family chests or bought specially for the occasion, for example. It was also commonly lent for the event. The treasure that every woman could afford to display was her hair-style, prized for the length and complexity of the plaiting.

This display case shows two different ways of displaying wealth. The costume from Vistas de La Alberca is striking for the richness of the jewellery, which had symbolic and talismanic significance.

The costume worn by betrothed and married women in Lagartera is made up of a particularly large number of different elements and is also notable for its quality. Each piece is richly embroidered and decorated, including those not seen from the outside. Here you can see how this costume was worn: first the white underwear; then the first underskirt and the sash; next three more underskirts, the apron and the bodice, which together formed the interior structure of the outfit. For going to church it would have been completed by a white mantilla, a black skirt, a Manila shawl and a gilt filigree rosary. Some of these items were removed after church in order to add a bouquet of jewellery and artificial flowers, a headdress, and ribbons attached to the hair and the back of the costume.

17. Visiting clothes

Part of a lady's time was devoted to visiting and receiving guests. These social obligations were governed by their own etiquette, set out in guides to correct behaviour. The normal practice was to establish a day for the visit which would be stated on a visiting card sent to the other person. There were formal visits, which were brief, and informal ones which were not subject to fixed rules or pre-established duration.

The 20th century saw the development of a new silhouette for women. The skirt lost its volume and the bust became a new focus of attention, creating a serpentine form in harmony with the new spirit of Art Nouveau.

Among the examples on show is an ensemble consisting of a bodice and skirt in blue velvet. Note the unusual sleeves with their balloon shape which was in fashion between 1905 and 1906. Also worth noting is the grey princess dress on the left. Its cut, made from one piece of cloth and the long narrow shape, date it to around 1908 to 1910. It is made of silk crepe, a type of cloth with a matte, crinkled surface created from the high tension of the threads.

18. On the inside

Panels, boards and interior corsages were used since the 16th century with the intention of manipulating the natural forms of the female body. These were followed by stays in the 17th and 18th centuries, with corsets in the 19th century and other more recent forms of support. Such interior garments moulded the shape of the bust over the centuries in line with the prevailing ideals of female beauty.

Starting from the left, we can see three mid-18th-century female corsets of different types. The x-radiograph reveals their complex construction and the arrangement of the whale-bone stays.

In addition, the use of underwear has always been influenced by the realities of personal hygiene. Cotton undergarments helped to relieve some skin complaints. Furthermore, the choice of white was related to the fact that it was easier to wash.

Among the various items of female underwear, it was the corset that was of most interest to fashion designers, hygienists and moralists. The elastic ties seen here on the pink corset are a novel element. These were in widespread use from the end of the 19th century onwards as they did not reduce the circulation of the blood. Lace became extremely important in underwear, along with delicate fabrics, as we can see from the items on show here.

19. Fortuny, a creative genius

Mariano Fortuny was the son of the painter Mariano Fortuny and of Cecilia Madrazo. He became involved in the world of fashion through the theatre, producing lighting, sets and costumes inspired by historical designs. Fortuny's designs are timeless and unique.

He was the first designer to create a type of garment that freed the female body from any type of support, although only few women dared to wear it. This was the "Delphos" dress, an example of which is on display here. Fortuny controlled every stage of the production of this silk dress: the manufacture of the cloth, the dyeing and the pleating, a system that he patented in 1909. The cut is as simple as it was revolutionary: each dress is unique, as it is the body itself that defines the shape. The dress is tied with delicate cords of silk thread with small Murano glass beads. The Knossos was another Fortuny creation, a scarf of rectangular silk, completed with a Delphos skirt.

As you walk round the case to the left you can see some examples of Fortuny's designs based on historical models. His work for the theatre is represented here by a man's jacket which he designed for a production of *Othello* directed by Orson Welles.

20. Fortuny the collector. Fortuny the textile designer

Fortuny grew up in an artistic environment and became particularly interested in textiles as a result of his parents' collection, which he himself continued to expand with antique Oriental and European textiles.

The display case on the left is devoted to his activities as a collector of costume and textiles. Note the Moroccan *chilaba*, a Chinese *chi-fu*, a Greek waistcoat, some slippers and an Asian cap. Particularly important is a fragment of 15th-century Hispano-Arabic textile.

The adjoining case tells us something of his activities as a textile designer. Fortuny's designs reflect the experiments behind the development of his dramatic ensembles. They were made using the finest textiles such as silk, linen or cotton, on which he tried out various methods of printing.

Some were decorated using *wood-blocks*, resulting in the uniform overall application of a decorated motif. Others use *reserve printing*, applying the colour in the centre of the decorative motif which spreads out along the fibres in an irregular manner, giving the fabric an antique look. A third technique is *stencilling*, which Fortuny used to decorate his fabrics with gilt and silver metallic colours, imitating Venetian Renaissance velvet brocade.

For his choice of decorative motifs Fortuny imitated both European and Oriental designs.

21. Coffee and hot chocolate

Cafés and cinemas were favoured leisure locations for women. While in the past cafés had been primarily a male domain, now they benefited from a new, female clientele.

Since its opening in 1847 the hot chocolate bar known as *El Indio* was witness to the social changes evident in Madrid. In 1993 it was purchased by the Spanish State and entered the collection of this museum. Part of it can be seen in this display case, evocative of the atmosphere of the 1930s. On the left is the chocolate mill whose central figure is a South American Indian.

The inter-war period saw important social changes. Women took on new responsibilities, both at home and in the workplace, resulting in a different manner of dressing and of presenting themselves. Practicality was now the common denominator. Outfits were comfortable and simply cut, with a preference for straight lines and little interest in emphasising the female form. This display case has a grey crepe dress with silk thread chain-stitch embroidery in greys and blues. It recalls some of Jeanne Lanvin's designs.

22. The Roaring Twenties

The gradual arrival of women in the workplace and the generalised desire to overturn the old moral restrictions made women wish to seem more alluring and fun-loving. While pronounced feminine forms disappeared, with the breast flattened and the waist-line

lowered to the hips, there was a new flirtatiousness focused on the legs, which now became visible as hem-lines rose. Shorter hairstyles and a different way of using make-up defined this new Eve.

Other venues for leisure developed, and new types of music filled the dance halls and cafés. Shorter, looser dresses replaced the long, corseted gowns of earlier decades. New colours and flexible fabrics appeared, boldly decorated in line with the new aesthetic. Evening gowns were embroidered with sequins and small glass beads. Fabrics were lighter and dresses resembled night-gowns complicated by layered skirts and gores, as we can see in the examples on display here.

23. The 50s, cinema style

The 1950s were particularly influenced by the fashion that arrived from America, principally via the cinema. In the 1940s and particularly the 1950s, American cinema was a constant reference point for Spanish fashion and the ideal way for fashion ideas to spread.

The female shape underwent a variety of changes, although the prevailing outline was the one derived from Christian Dior's New Look. The practice of wearing different dresses at different times of day and for different occasions continued in use. Among the evening gowns on display here is one in natural silk with silver embroidery. The silk dress printed in orange and yellow has an integral starched petticoat which was essential to make the skirt billow out.

24. Christian Dior and contemporaries

This case focuses on Christian Dior. The so-called "New Look" that he created is characterised by a silhouette with rounded shoulders, pronounced hips and a very narrow waistline.

Opposite you can see the work of other designers of that period such as Castillo, Dessés, Carven and Heim who were influenced by Dior's new style but who developed their own particular approaches.

20. Cristóbal Balenciaga

Cristóbal Balenciaga was born in Guetaria (Guipúzcoa) in 1895. After his initial training in a Madrid fashion house, he opened his own in San Sebastián in 1914, moving it to Paris on the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1937.

Two years later Balenciaga present a new silhouette with sloping shoulders, a wasp waist and rounded hips, anticipating Dior's New Look and introducing a completely innovative style, as you can see from the day ensembles on display here.

Balenciaga reached his creative peak in the 1950s. Particularly outstanding were his black dresses which fitted tightly at the bust and flared out at the hips, his box-shaped coats

which had neither collars nor buttons, his Japanese-type sleeves, use of an Empire line, his tunic dress, sack dress, and see-through raincoats.

Balenciaga was passionately interested in the great Spanish Old Master painters, particularly Velázquez and Goya. He researched colours and materials in depth and was always particularly interested in the use of rich, heavy fabrics which he further embellished with hand-applied embroidery, sequins and beading. His remarkable technical mastery and dazzling skills as a couturier are evident in all his creations.

Balenciaga retired in 1968 after a career spanning 50 years. Courrèges, Givenchy and Ungaro considered him their master.

21. Haute Couture in Spain

This room is devoted to Spanish Haute Couture, its history and leading personalities. The term Haute Couture was first used in 1858 with the arrival at the French Court of the British fashion designer Charles F. Worth, who created the French Chamber of Couture in 1880.

Spanish Haute Couture started with the work of the designer Pedro Rodríguez, the subject of the display case on the left. He was the first to create a line that conformed to the specifications set out by the French chamber which stated that models were to be exclusive creations; that one collection should be presented in the designer's own studio every season; and that the clothes should be made in the designer's own workshops.

Rodríguez introduced the New Look into Spain, and his work reveals a Mediterranean influence, with the body presented as an object of desire. He aimed for richness in his use of materials, placing great emphasis on draping. Rodríguez was the most Baroque of the couturiers of this period and his clothing expresses a sumptuous quality.

In 1940 he founded the Haute Couture Co-operative along with Asunción Bastida, El Dique Flotante, Manuel Pertegaz and Santa Eulalia. Other notable individual names in Madrid were Herrera y Ollero, Vargas-Ochagavía, Raphaël, Marbel, Natalio and Rosina, designers represented in the display case opposite.

22. Haute Couture in Spain

Pertegaz can be seen as the designer who links the generation of Balenciaga and Pedro Rodríguez with the later designers who began to work in prêt-à-porter or ready-to-wear.

The influence of Balenciaga is evident in his early work with its preference for simple forms. In the 1970s Pertegaz became internationally renowned both for his haute couture and ready-to-wear, creating notably simple, plain dresses.

Elio Berhanyer was a leading figure of the 1960s and 1970s and is the subject of the display case behind you. Berhanyer's designs emphasised geometrical lines and solid forms evident

in his tailored suits and coats. One of his trademarks was the use of large, flat buttons made of metal and coloured paste.

The imposition of a Luxury Tax in Spain in 1974 resulted in the death of Haute Couture. Most fashion houses closed and the designers turned exclusively to ready-to-wear.

23. The present day

From the 1960s onwards, Haute Couture retained its lofty spirit of elegance and distinction, however, the new mood of the times gradually began to be felt. The new generation of designers experimented with different materials, for example Paco Rabanne with his dresses made of metallic plaques.

In the 1990s the number of different trends and different designers grew rapidly. The case devoted to International Haute Couture of the 1980s and 1990s has work by some of the leading names of the period, as well as illustrating the revival of some of the leading houses such as Chanel and Dior.

Finally, the social and economic revival that took place in Spain during the period of the transition to democracy resulted the end of Haute Couture and a new type of fashion industry, focused this time on ready-to-wear. Over the past 30 years a list of names has brought international fame to Spanish fashion design.

You may now enjoy voting to decide which clothes will be included in the next display in the multi-media activity located on the way out. After that, please don't forget to visit the Educational Area.

Our tour ends with a visit to a catwalk where you become the focus of attention, as we all contribute and participate in current fashion trends: our clothes and appearance reflect our own personalities and interests.