



CASTILLA  
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**CUENCA**



**THE HISTORY, NATURE,** culture, rich gastronomy, unique crafts and festive variety offered by the towns and city of Cuenca become, for the curious tourist, unparalleled experiences. Any demand, whether cultural, artistic, gastronomic, adventurous or to enjoy nature has assorted and complete offers to all public in these lands of great history, particular landscape chromaticism **and surprising modernity.**



Abstract Art Museum  
in the Hanging houses.

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## CUENCA, A CITY TO REST

Crossing the bridge of San Pablo in Cuenca, at a height of sixty metres over the water of Húecar river, enjoying the unique view of the Hanging Houses it is one of the surprises that await you in this city of light. Abstract city and visual shout, as Camilo José Cela and Julián Marías said. Cuenca, unforgettable and dreamt trip you should not delly.

The existence of Cuenca goes as far back as to the VIII century in Arabic texts. Alfonso X el Sabio granted it the title of City. In 1963 it was declared picturesque scenery and in 1996 UNESCO included it in the list of World Heritage. Come and you will see why.

Stroll in Hoz del Júcar (sickle Júcar).



Cuenca from Cerro del Socorro.





Going across the arcade of the city Council, colourful façades and bustling canopies enliven its Main Square. The Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de Gracia will charm you. This building was in transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic period, with marked Norman influence, and which construction was extended for centuries.

## **CUENCA, CITY OF MUSEUMS**

Looking for them, you will walk among very valuable buildings. Churches as San Pedro, San Martín, El Salvador, San Antón, San Miguel, San Nicolás or Franciscanos Descalzos. Convents as Angélicas, Concepción Franciscana, Petras or Blancas. Mansions, old palaces, wall canvas... and Torre de Mangana (Mangana Tower), which clock has been giving the time to the citizens of Cuenca during centuries.

The Episcopal Palace preserves a magnificent cloister and welcomes the offices of the Diocesan Museum. It shelters works of precious metals, tapestries, sculptures, altarpieces and paintings. Among its authors you will recognise artists as astonishing as Juan de Borgoña, Martín Gómez or El Greco.

In the house of Curato de San Martín, example of medieval architecture, a detailed walk through the history of Cuenca awaits you. It is in the Provincial Museum where the architecture rests from Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages are preserved. Most of them come from the Hispanic-Romanic cities of Segóbriga, Valeria and Ercavia. Take notes of what you see; it will be of use when you will walk through the Regions of Cuenca.

The Science Museum, in Merced Square, includes traditional and contemporary architecture. It has an intriguing offer. You will get closer to astrology knowledge, the world's formation process and spatial exploration.





More than two hundred fossils are featured in the Paleontologic Museum of Castile-La Mancha. Its star is Pepito, a hunchback dinosaur, scientifically known as *Concavenator Corcovatus* found in Las Hoyas. You will see life-size reproductions of these enigmatic animals which dominated Castile-La Mancha millions of years ago and that today come back to Cuenca.

In Cuenca you will go back and forth. Do not mind. Let us go back to the Hanging Houses. The Abstract Art Museum has been sheltered there for 50 years, it is essential to see. Sponsored by Gustavo Torner (from Cuenca) and his friend Fernando Zóbel, it gathers the work of internationally well-known Spanish artists such as Eduardo Chillida, Antoni Tàpies, Antonio Sempere, Gerardo Rueda, Pablo Serrano, Rafael Canogar or Luis Feito, as well as the before mentioned Zóbel y Torner.

If your hunger for admiration is not yet satisfied, do not worry. In the old convent of Carmelitas Descalzas (Barefoot Carmelite), Antonio Pérez Foundations keep a great collection of this poet, editor and artist during his bohemian life committed to culture. In a short distance from the Main Square, Casa Zavala (Zavala's House), headquarters of the Antonio Saura Foundation, has a selection of this painter's work of art, a man born in Aragón and from Cuenca at heart. This spot is the promotion of contemporary arts.

Pepito in the Paleontologic Museum / Beach of Cuenca in Júcar river / Canoeing.





Cuenca deserves a leisurely visit. You will not regret it. In the old Convent of San Pablo, which façade is from the end of the XVI century, is the National Tourism Parador. It is not the only restored heritage building used for hotel or hostel purposes. Look and find intriguing restaurants and welcoming lodgings where you can enjoy a cuisine which masterfully brings together modernity and tradition. Enjoy your meal and rest.

Remember that Cuenca is a city of museums. Let us look for more. In what used to be the palace of Girón and Cañizares opens its doors the Museum of Semana Santa (Easter Week), where pieces related with this celebration are exhibited. It is declared as Festival of International Tourist Interest. Without its culture of Cuenca cannot be understood. The same occurs with its other festivals such as San Julián and San Mateo or its Week of Religious Music, which has taken place since 1962.

## **HISTORY, LANDSCAPE AND ADVENTURE**

The invite to explore the province is irresistible. Its regions, from the Mountain Range to the Manchuela (region from Cuenca and Albacete), passing through Alcarria or La Mancha, amass unique and surprising landscape, cultural, festive and gastronomic values. At your fingertips there are attractive offers to practice cycling, hiking and other adventure sports. The rural accommodation offer is wide and with high quality.

Continuing through Hoz del Júcar (Sickle Júcar), the natural site from the Enchanted City, your imagination will flow with such whimsical rocky shapes moulded by the water. Take a look at Poblado del Salto de Villalba, to Ventano del Diablo (viewpoint in a drilled stone). In the small town of Uñanos the beautiful pond is waiting and, a little further, the Toba Reservoir.

Tragacete is a mountain village where Júcar river rises. Cuervo river also appears in this area next to Vega del Codorno. It is one of the most beautiful settings of Castile-La Mancha, amazing those who see its natural spring hasten between rocky places and moss. Its surroundings, declared Natural Monument, reach with no limit great beauty when in winter days its streams freeze.



Uña Pond.





Cuervo river.



Near the birth of another river, Escabas, the Hunting Park of El Hosquillo awaits you, where deers, fallow deers, mouflons, roe deers, mountain goats, wolves and brown bears live. Its tall cliffs and steep slopes, filled with gall oaks are impressive. To visit you must book ahead of time.

Beteta, distinguished enclave of this mountain range, extends to the feet of the Arab Castle of Rochafriada. The Hoz (Sickle) composed by the Guadiela river invites you to walk through willows, poplars, pines, hazelnut and lime trees. The mineral water from the SPA Solán de Cabras is greatly appreciated and declared of public utility by Carlos IV in 1970. Do not miss the views from Cuervo river offered by the nearby viewpoints of the Queen and King.

Cub in El Hosquillo / Solán de Cabras SPA.



Las Majadas Alleys.



On the way to Priego, you will cross valleys with a lot of osiers which dye in red the cold winter months. Close to Alcantud, the Hoz of Tragavivos will surprise you with its spectacular nature. The walking tour is worth it, as eagles and vultures fly over you.

Tarancón, second settlement of the province and distinguished communication centre, preserves interesting monuments and buildings of remarkable manchego flavour. Its Living Passion and Romería de Nuestra Señora de Riánsares (religious festivity) are festivals of great interest. After having some of the wine produced there, you will see the silhouette of the Uclés Monastery, built during the XVI and XVII centuries, known as “El Escorial de la Mancha”. At a very short distance, in Saelices the roman city of Segóbriga awaits. It is one of the best preserved ensembles of the era in Spain.

Huete has roman, Visigoth, Arab, Jew and Christian remains. Do not be surprised to stumble upon ancient palaces, mansions and religious monuments as de Episcopal Palace.

The best time to visit Almonacid del Marquesado is during the first days of February, coinciding with the Candelaría and San Blas festivities, when the neighbours are celebrating La Endiablada (festivity in honor of The Virgin Candelaría and San Blas).

It is one of the most interesting popular and most colorful festivals in the region. Once you have heard the sound of the great cowbells you will never forget it.

The course of Záncara river will take you to La Mancha in Cuenca, region where San Clemente’s majestic elegance stands out. Locality declared historic and artistic ensemble and which each year trembles with the religious pilgrimage of the Virgin to the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Rus that congregates thousands of people. Las Pedroñeras is well known for its purple garlic luck in the regional agriculture industry and for being an essential element to the gastronomy which you can savor in the area.



Leaving El Pedernoso and Santa María de los Llanos we get to Mota del Cuervo. The windmills will remind you that you are following Don Quixote's steps. It is land of pottery, in which the best jugs of the region were moulded and fired. In the near Laguna de Manjavacas, you will see numerous aquatic and migratory birds and most of all flamingo flocks. You must not miss its religious pilgrimage of Nuestra Señora de la Antigua.

The Spanish culture owes a lot to Fray Luis of León, born in Belmonte. His famous castle is the most emblematic monument of the area. Prominent heritage ensemble, the villa formed part of the marquisate of Villena. Villaescusa of Haro, in a few kilometres, also preserves a great amount of architecture relics of a flourishing past, which you will appreciate walking among the remains of the ancient Dominicos Convent.

La Manchuela is a transitory region between La Mancha and Serranía. It is a space between the course of rivers Júcar and Cabriel and reservoirs Alarcón and Contreras, where you will be able to practice nautical sports. In Valeria you will find remains of a Hispanic-Romanic settlement. Valverde del Júcar is a village famous for its Moors and Christian festivities.

Alarcón awaits us with its set of artistic history built over a promontory that surrounds Júcar river. The battlements of the castle are privileged watchtowers to watch over these border lands in times of the Reconquest. Their stay, with over thirteen centuries of history, host today a National Tourism Parador where resting is worthwhile.

Close to the reservoir of Contreras and Minglanilla, stop by the Natural Reserve of the Gorges Cabriel. You will see an impressive gorge carved by the waters, highlighting its breathtaking "Knife" limestone formations sculpted by erosion. Its steep walls provide shelter for protected birds such as Bonelli's and golden eagles and peregrine falcons, besides highlighting the abundance of pines, willows, poplars, junipers, arbutus and mastic. An interpretive trail, six kilometers long, will move into this unique place which marks territory between Castilla -La Mancha and Valencia.



Let us go over more mountain enclaves of the province. Villar del Humo is located in a rugged landscape with abundant shelters, caves and torques. In the area a dozen places with cave paintings of Levantine art have been found, listed by UNESCO as World Heritage. The ones preserved in Selva Pascuala coat are considered its the most representative.

The view in the valley of River Cabriel from Engudiano castle is breathtaking. As much as the feeling of crossing the viaduct over the River Turia you will find near Santa Cruz de Moya. Then you will know Landete, Alcalá de la Vega, Cañete, Campillos-Sierra, Laguna del Marquesado, Pajaroncillo... Seized by the beauty of these mountain landscapes and facing the return to Cuenca, make a stop at Fuentes and La Cierva, where thousands of pieces of dinosaur fossils are located, turning the area in one of the most important paleontological sites in Europe.

## **CRAFTWORK, CUISINE AND WINE**

Cuenca is a province of famous craftsmen. The traditional Iberian clay-masterful bulls are created by Pedro Mercedes. It is emblem of his pottery, highlighting the work done in workshops located in Priego, Mota del Cuervo or the capital itself. Various objects wicker, woven carpets and tapestries, guitars and musical instruments, craft paper and bookbinding certify the skills of the men and women of this land that transform humble materials into small works of art.

Every journey deserves a good epilogue. Do not leave without tasting the gastronomy from Cuenca. Morteruelo (pork liver with game meat and bread crumbs), ajoarriero (gravy usually for cod or fish made with potato, egg and garlic), trout, zarajos (appetizer of marinated lamb intestines roasted or baked), partridges and other game dishes based on traditional cuisine. All delicious dishes have now evolved. You must accompany them with the native wines welcomed in the province: La Mancha, Manchuela, Ribera del Júcar and Uclés. 🍷





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