

The Cathedral Towers of Salamanca



salamanca

Ieronimus





The Cathedral Towers are one of the most representative emblems in Salamanca. From a distance their landmark profile can be seen rising up from the horizon; from close up the impressive towers, 100 metres tall, loom up fearfully. The tour of the inside of the towers enables visitors to learn how the towers were built and to go into their 900 years of art and history. The documentary exhibit IERONIMUS shows visitors some of its wonders: the Old Cathedral and its altarpiece, the outside platform atop the Torre Mocha, from where the murmur of the River Tormes can be heard, the Torre del Gallo, the inside platform overlooking the New Cathedral, the balcony overlooking the Anaya Square and the Bell Tower, with a sublime panoramic view at the top. This exhibit offers both natives of Salamanca and visitors from elsewhere a unique view of the city.

IERONIMUS

Ieronimus is the Latin name referring to Jerónimo de Périgueux (1060?-1120?), one of the most famous bishops in Spain, despite hailing from France. He was a key person during the Reconquest of Spain, chaplain to El Cid Campeador and Bishop of Valencia. He was later appointed to Salamanca when the Diocese was restored in 1102, during the Christian resettlement of the land by Count Raimundo de Borgoña and Doña Urraca. He was in charge of the construction of Santa María Church, the first of the two temples that make up the Cathedral complex of Salamanca: the Old Cathedral, built between the 13th and 15th centuries, and the New Cathedral, which was erected between the 16th and 18th centuries.

THE TOUR OF THE CATHEDRAL TOWERS

Many historical, architectural and archeological studies have examined the great value of the inside rooms of the towers during its restoration process. All of the spaces now opened for the tour were previously in ruins, terribly damaged or walled off and inaccessible.

The first rooms show the original spirit of the construction, which was part of the defensive structure of the city. So it was named *Fortis Salmantina*.

The Dungeon

It was built in the 13th century and modified in the 17th century to include a door with an outside entrance. Those who came here fleeing from justice, not always so fair, sought protection from the Cathedral.

The Jailor's Room

Built in the 13th century, its name defines perfectly its purpose.

The Governor's Room

This is the space with the two-part window from the 12th century that opens onto the Old Cathedral and the expanded area that was built over the entrance portico in the 17th century. Originally, it was intended for the Governor, the head of the fortress. Nowadays, it is the place for honoring church music, since this Cathedral and its Music Chapel were a benchmark in Spain and Europe during the Renaissance and the Baroque.





The Torre Mocha Room

Built in the 13th century, this ancient crenellated watchtower was expanded on several occasions until finished in the 18th century. On display in this room are documents related to the construction of the New Cathedral, as well as a collection of historical drawings of the towers that highlight the importance of archives and archivists in the history and life of the Cathedral.

The High Room

This room took the shape it has today after intermittent stages of building over the years. It shows visitors blueprints and photographs related to the architecture of the Cathedral and its recent restorations.

Outside Platform Atop The Torre Mocha

This outside platform overlooks the Cathedrals, the city and the banks of the River Tormes. This place helps visitors understand the monument as a whole, as well as the unique way in which the Old and the New temple merge.

The Vault Room

This architecturally exceptional room, located inside the Bell Tower, was built in the 13th century. Its various constructive features, as well as the items there exhibited, tell visitors about life in the Cathedral, about its inhabitants and their works, and about how the towers and the Cathedral struggled with all the events that occurred during the 18th century: the burning of the Bell Tower in 1705, all the problems related to its restoration and expansion and the 1755 Lisbon earthquake.



The Inside Platform Overlooking the New Cathedral

On this tour visitors can also enter the New Cathedral and look down on its immense and grandiose central nave from the height of its inside platform. Seeing the New Cathedral from this unique, spectacular perspective gives visitors a better understanding of what makes it different from the Old Cathedral – the ceremonious spaces it was designed to contain, the importance of the choir, the role of the chapels – . Seeing the changing motifs used for the coffered ceiling also helps visitors understand the stages involved in building it and the importance of light in Gothic cathedrals as a constructive, atmospheric and spiritual component.

Balcony Overlooking The Anaya Square

A spiral staircase from the 16th century leads to this outside platform over the main façade. From there, visitors can enjoy a unique view of the Cathedrals and the historic centre of Salamanca: the Dominican Monastery of San Esteban, the Anaya Square, the San Sebastián Church, the Clerecía, the Pontifical University, the Rúa Antigua, the San Martín Church, the Main Square and the historic buildings of the University of Salamanca.





Clock Room

A wonderful exhibition space where visitors can learn about the Tower Clock, one of the first to be implemented in a Spanish Cathedral, and look at its original mechanism. Better still, the new exhibit allows visitors to be part of the so-called *Tiempo de las Catedrales* (Era of the Cathedrals), which chronicles the history of this influential and essential period in the life of the city.



Bells Room

Here visitors can look at the city from the uppermost vantage point in all four directions: the 100-metre-tall Tower Bell – one of the highest historic towers in Spain, second only to the Giralda (Seville). Visitors can also try their hand at “bell ringing”, one of the most characteristic sounds of any cathedral, with more than 100 notes resounding the spiritual and social heartbeat of the city. They will even receive their very own “peal of bells” as a gift from the Cathedral.



Ieronimus. The Cathedral Towers of Salamanca
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