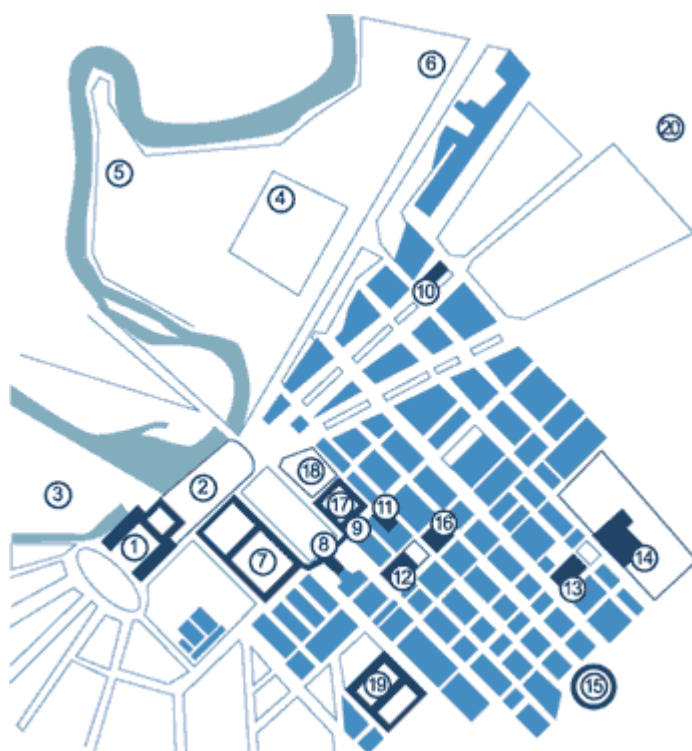


## ARANJUEZ



1. Palacio Real
2. Jardín del Parterre
3. Jardín de la Isla
4. Jardín del Príncipe
5. Casa de Marinos
6. Casa del Labrador
7. Casa de Oficios
8. Iglesia de San Antonio
9. Casa de Infantes
10. Casa de Alpajés
11. Teatro
12. Mercado
13. Hospital de San Carlos
14. Convento de San Pascual
15. Plaza de Toros
16. Ayuntamiento de Aranjuez
17. Oficina de Turismo
18. Jardín de Isabel II
19. Regimiento de Caballería
20. Polideportivo Municipal

The Royal Site of Aranjuez, located in the southern part of the Community of Madrid, is graced with works of art and monuments that make it one of the most important cultural attractions in Spain. Aranjuez was designated a Royal Site by the Catholic Monarchs who often came to this town to relax. It was the kings from the House of Austria however, who began construction of the palaces and gardens. During the time of Philip II, the Royal Quarters were built but were destroyed by fire in 1665. The first Botanical Garden was inaugurated during this same period. The Bourbon dynasty also showed an interest in the Royal Site. Philip V as a way of showing his appreciation to the people of Aranjuez for their support in the War of Succession, made this town into a royal center and constructed some of the most artistic parks, monuments, gardens and churches. Aranjuez reached its pinnacle as a vacation site for the Court under the reigns of Charles III and Charles IV. It was during the second half of the 18th Century therefore, that the Royal Palace was enlarged, the "Jardín del Príncipe" (Prince's Garden) was completed and the "Casita del Labrador" (Farmer's Cottage) was built. Aranjuez represents the voluptuousness of life in direct contact with natural beauty. Fine artists have reflected this grandeur, filling their works with grace and beauty. This is the case of the Catalan painter Santiago Rusignol or the well-known musician Joaquín Rodrigo who, although blind, sensed the magic of the gardens and palaces of Aranjuez and transformed it into music with his universally renowned "Concerto of Aranjuez".

Aranjuez is located in the valley formed by the basins of the Tajo and Jarama Rivers. This privileged location explains the fertility of the land which produces excellent fruit and vegetables such as the strawberries which are famous for their exquisite flavour and the asparagus which grows in abundance here. The natural beauty together with man's

creativity make Aranjuez a beautiful and pleasant place at any time of the year; attractive and well prepared to host its numerous visitors.

## **THE ROYAL PALACE**

The initial plans were DRAWN UP BY Juan Herrera, the same architect who designed El Escorial, but the project was carried out by Santiago Bonavia commissioned by Fernando VI. The building is made of white stone and brick and is of Baroque style. Initially, only the central part was built and later on, during the reign of Charles III, the architect Francisco de Sabatini, creator of the "Puerta de Alcalá" and the garden of the "Palacio de Oriente", added on the two lateral wings, thus completing the Royal Palace. Statues of the kings Philip II, Philip V and Fernando VI adorn the principal facade. A majestic staircase leads to a series of sitting rooms which hold some of the most exquisite 18th Century art. The names of some of these rooms are: "La Saleta de la Reina" (the queen's small room), "La Antecámara de Música" (the chamber), "El Anteoratorio" (the anteoratory), "El Oratorio" (the oratory), "El Salón del Trono" (the throne room), "El despacho de la Reina" (the queen's office). Then we come to an exhibit of extravagant 18th Century art in one of the most beautiful rooms of the palace: The Chinese Porcelain Room. The dome and walls are covered with perfectly fitted pieces of porcelain made in the factory of Buen Retiro. The tour continues through the Queen's Bedroom and Dressing Room, the Dance Hall, the Banquet Room, the King's Chambers, the Art Studio, etc.

The church of Antonio is located very close to the Palace in the square which bears the same name. It has a curved portico with a triangular gable and a stone balustrade. It dates back to the 18th Century and is the work of Isidro González Velázquez and Santiago Bonavia.

Royal Palace visiting hours are.

- Autumn-Winter. 10:00 to 17:15.

- Spring-Summer. 10:00 to 18:15.

Closed Mondays.



## **THE GARDENS, GREEN SPLENDOR**

The colour of Aranjuez is something that never changes as it finds its maximum expression in the gardens. The current design, of exceptional beauty, is the result of more than two centuries of work in search of perfection. The continual change of colour tones in each of the four seasons creates a variety of short-lived nuances within a stable colour scheme.

"El Jardín del Príncipe" (the prince's garden ), covering 150 hectares, offers the visitor a wide variety of trees: ashes, lindens planes, poplars, etc. Many of the tree species found here were brought from America, specifically requested by Charles IVV. A stroll along the spacious paths enshrined in silence is a true delight. Ponds. Fountains, benches, pavilions and statues all contribute to an extraordinary artistic collection. A thirty minute walk within this garden will bring your to the "Casa del Labrador" (farmer's cottage).



The "Jardín de la Isla" (the island garden) is a beautiful green area which runs the length of the Palace and is bordered by the Tajo River. It contains many trees,, wide avenues and a number of stone and marble fountains representing mythological figures and scenes. The "Jardín del Parterre" is located in front of the Palace and is the stage for the monumental "Fuente de Hércules" (Hercules Fountain), a work by Isidoro González Velázquez, an artisan from Aranjuez.

The gardens are open to visitors from 10;00 until sunset, all year round.

### **CASA DEL LABRADOR (FARMER'S COTTAGE)**

This miniature palace, which sums up the greatness and refinement of the Bourbon dynasty, is a Neoclassical structure and is located at the far end of the "Jardín del Príncipe". It is another creation of Isidro González Velázquez commissioned by the monarchs Charles IV and María Luisa de Parma. It is a three story building and was principally used for Court parties. The interior decoration is a mixture of the Neoclassical style with other tendencies in vogue at the time: Imperial, Pompeyan and Rococo to name a few. From among the different rooms, special mention should be mad of the "Gabinete de Platino" (platinum studio), a room used exclusively by the Queen and featuring hard wood decoration encrusted with gold and platinum. The French decorators Fontaine and Percier contributed to this luxurious room.

Visiting hours for the "Casa del Labrador" and "Casa de Marinós" are the same as the Palace.



### **CASA DE OFICIOS Y CABALLEROS, CASA DE INFANTES AND CASA DE MARINOS (KING'S AND KNIGHT'S QUARTERS, INFANTES QUARTERS AND SAILOR'S QUARTERS)**

The first two are located on one side of San Antonio Square, a vantage point from which one can view their splendid porticos. Their original function was to provide lodging for the servants and visitors to the Court. Juan de Herrera is responsible for the construction of the "Casa de Oficios y Caballeros" while the "Casa de Infantes" was the creation of Juan de Villanueva.

The "Casa de Marinós" is located within the immense park "Jardín del Príncipe". During its early days, it was used as a refuge for the sailors belonging to the "Escuadra del Tajo" (Tajo Squadron). During the second half of this century, it was refurbished and now houses the Faluas Museum.

### **SAN CARLOS HOSPITAL AND SAN PASCUAL CONVENT**

Charles III commissioned the construction of the hospital so that palace servants would have medical care. It has a simple brick portico enhanced by a triangular gable set in an arch. At present, the San Carlos Hospital houses different municipal offices and is also home to the Aranjuez Historical Archives.

San Pascual Convent, located across from the hospital, was built by the architect Francisco Sabatini between 1765 and 1770. The set of columns and pillars, crowned by a gable, stands out from the Neoclassical façade and its two towers.

### **ALPAJES CHURCH OR THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS**

Historically speaking, it is the oldest church of the Royal Site and special mention should be made of the magnificent window over which we find the shield of Charles II with the fleece. Its plain brick façade and the white stone decoration are the most interesting aspect of the exterior.

### **A LAST LOOK AT THE OLD CITY**

The magnificence of Aranjuez's monuments should not blind us to the rest of the city because the old, historical part of town is well worth a visit. A trip to the Royal Site should be topped off with a visit to the Market, an interesting example of iron architecture built in the middle of the 19th Century, or the Court Building constructed in

the 18th Century. We should also remember the Theatre, built in 1767, the Bullring, first built in 1791 and reconstructed in 1829 after suffering a devastating fire.

## **HOW TO GET TO ARANJUEZ BY HIGHWAY THE "STRAWBERRY TRAIN"**

Aranjuez is located 47 kilometers from Madrid on highway N-IV, otherwise known as the Highway of Andalusia N-400 which can be accessed five kilometres from this town. There are several bus lines linking Aranjuez with Madrid. There is also train service on the following lines: Madrid-Valencia, Madrid-Murcia, Madrid-Gandía, Madrid-Cartagena, Madrid-Cádiz, Madrid-Málaga, Madrid-Puente Genil, Madrid-Algeciras, Madrid-Granada and Almeria, Algeciras-Irún and Madrid-Toledo-Cuenca-Alcázar de San Juan.

For those that want a glimpse of the past, a ride on the "Tren de la Fresa" (trawberry train) is a must. Running between Madrid and Aranjuez every weekend, it is an exact replica of the train that ran on the second railway line in the history of the country. This historic connection between Madrid and Aranjuez was established during the reign of Isabel II through the initiative of the Marquis of Salamanca.

## **LODGING**

In Aranjuez there are hotels for every budget: a couple of three-star hotels, several hostels and the "Soto del Castillo" Camping Area open from April to September. It is a first class Campground located at kilometre 46.8 on the Highway of Andalusia and can accommodate 1,200 people.

## **POPULAR CELEBRATIONS**

Springtime: On the days leading up to May 30th, the feast day of its patron saint, Saint Fernando, Aranjuez offers an interesting pottery and ceramics fair, the typical running of the bulls and bullfights as well as an industrial/agricultural fair.

September: This celebration dates back to the old livestock fairs and the end of the harvest. Concerts, dancing, bulls and the traditional theatrical representation put on by the townspeople which goes by the name: "Motín de Aranjuez" (the Aranjuez uprising) which commemorates the popular uprising which took place on March 19th, 1808 against Godoy and which led to the abdication of Charles IV and put Fernando VII on the throne.

Carnival: An annual celebration held on the corresponding date. The popular "pelele" (stuffed figure), neighbourhood musical groups, costume balls and parades.

## **USEFUL INFORMATION**

Tourist Office  
Plaza de San Antonio, 9  
Tel. 91-891 04 27

Town Hall  
c/ Stuart, 91  
Tels. 91-891 00 55

Local police  
c/ Infantas s/n  
Tel. 91-891 00 22

Municipal Cultural Center Universidad Popular and the Municipal Musica School  
"Joaquín Rodrigo" and the Cultural Center Isabel de Farnesio  
c/ Capitán, 39  
Tel. 91-892 43 86

RENFE. Train information.  
Tel. 91-328 90 20 (Madrid)  
91 891 02 02 (Aranjuez)

Taxi Stop  
Tel: 91-891 11 39

Red Cross  
c/ Sol, 5  
Tel: 91-891 02 52

Post and Telegraph Office  
c/ Peña Redonda, 3  
Tel: 91-891 11 32

Tren de la Fresa (Strawberry Train)  
Every Saturday and Holiday from April to October (except August).  
Leaves "Puerta de Atocha" at 10.00.  
Information: Tel: 902 22 88 22

## MADRID

Tourist Information for the Community of Madrid  
Tel. 91- 429 31 77

General Information on Madrid  
Tel. 010

INFORIBERIA and Reserve  
Tel. 902 400 500

Transportation Consortium for the Community of Madrid  
Tel. 91-580 19 80

Business hours  
Small businesses:  
From 10 to 14 and from 17 to 20 h.  
Department Stores  
From 10 to 21 h.