

# TOLEDO - THE CITY OF THREE CULTURES



Toledo is situated a mere 70 kilometres from the Spanish capital Madrid; yet it is not only its location which makes Toledo ideal for day trips or longer stays. It is known as 'the city of three cultures' as it has combined Jewish, Muslim and Christian cultures for a number of centuries. Even up until today, all the three religions are visible here and, indeed, each religion is well represented. All of the city's districts are littered with churches, synagogues and mosques.

This is definitely not a typical feature for most of the Spanish cities. The epitome of Toledo's multiculturalism lies in the fact that it was granted UNESCO status thanks to the Mudéjar architecture which delightfully combines Muslim aesthetics and Christian practices.

The fact that Toledo is a living representative of every period of civilisation in the Iberian peninsula is symbolised by two main pieces of architecture, the first being its 16th century renaissance fortress, the second being its 15th century Gothic cathedral. The sightseeing, however, does not stop at these sights as the tower of San Andrés and the Caves of Hercules are sometimes even accessible free of charge as long as the trip is organised by the consortium of Toledo. Fortunately for most tourists, this is usually the case.

Even Toledo's cuisine is representative of the three cultures that dwelled here throughout the ages. For example, a traditional dish of partridge is often found on Toledo menus and is reminiscent of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cooking. Indeed, Toledo is the city of marzipan, a typical Arabian product from almonds and sugar. Let's not forget the city's famous La Mancha wine, which most non-Toledan Spaniards tend to link the city with. The regions of Santa Bárbara and Santa Teresa are littered with tapas bars which serve up a host of gastronomic delights, all to be washed down with a glass of Toledo's best La Mancha beverages.

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