



CASTILLA
LA MANCHA
X

IV CENTENARY OF CERVANTES

Medrano Cave in Argamasilla de Alba.



CASTILE-LA MANCHA CELEBRATES IN

2016 the fourth centenary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes. The pages of Don Quixote have contributed to the universal knowledge of the villages and landscapes of this region. Throughout his adventurous and intense life, the writer was related to different parts of this land. Toledo, Esquivias and Argamasilla de Alba, were crucial in his life. Follow his steps and encourage yourself to discover the charms of these, and other, Cervantes corners of Castile-La Mancha, an essential part of **our cultural heritage**.



FROM ESQUIVIAS TO TOLEDO

December 12 1584, in the parish temple of Esquivias, Cervantes got married with Catalina de Salazar y Palacios, neighbour of the locality. There is preserved the Book of Matrimonies and where the nuptials are documented. Catalina was the niece of the nobleman Alonso Quijada Salazar, whom some researchers think was the inspiration of the immortal literary hero Don Quixote. In that village, in a typical ramshackle house of the 16th century opens its doors Cervantes House Museum. In it you will learn in detail the relationship between Cervantes and this town. Enjoy the popular atmosphere evoking dependencies, in which cannot miss a typical wine cellar. The wines of this corner of Toledo have always been very much appreciated, so much that in times of don Miguel they were reserved for the Royal family and the nobility, being prescribed as a medical remedy for sick and maternity.

A compulsory stop for Don Miguel in his numerous movements from Esquivias to Toledo is Illescas. Privileged city by Cardinal Cisneros –in which Charity Hospital you can admire up to five works of El Greco–, in Plaza de Infanzones the author of Don Quixote used to look for shade under its repeatedly centenary Elm. Capital of La Sagra, treasures a rich Historic and Cultural Heritage.

The couple also had a House in the Toledo District of Andaque, near the banks of the Tajo river. Don Miguel spent various periods of his life in Toledo. There he observed and dealt with merchants, knights, armies, clerics and rogues. He took great notes from all for his literary work leaving scraps of them in the following books; *The illustrious mop*, *La Galatea*, *Rinconete and Cortadillo*, *The force of the blood*, *The works of Persiles and Segismunda*, *Journey of the Parnassus* and, of course, in *Don Quixote*. In the pages of his most universal novel, Cervantes relates that walking one day by Alcaná in Toledo, commercial district in the vicinity of the Cathedral, he bought a few folders written in Arabic characters in which were chronicled the ingenious adventures of a nobleman.. Four centuries later, these same streets maintain its bustle. Wander through them and steer to Plaza de Zocodover. In the backs of the stone benches you will see quixotic scenes recreated in typical ceramic tiling.

Zocodover is the Main Square of Toledo. Stay in front of the clock, look at the Arch of Blood and go down the stairs. At the footsteps Don Miguel awaits you. Take a picture with the statue and continue going down the street under his name. You will pass the Museum of Santa Cruz, where the great banner of the battle of Lepanto, in which the writer was wounded in a hand, is preserved. Continue walking up to building number thirteen. There opened its doors the famed Posada from Seville, at which premises Cervantes set *The illustrious mop*. In other pages of his works, Don Miguel cited it as one of the best and most popular hotels in Toledo. On its facade, a commemorative plaque perpetuates this memory.

You are very close to Tajo river, which Cervantes, in the Journey of Parnassus, said that its waters instead having sand it had grains of gold. Of course, that they were other best times for this river channels that, despite everything, still embrace powerful stone promontory where Toledo stands. From the Paseo del Carmen you will see remnants of the famous artifice of Juanelo, which was cited as one of the great attractions of the Imperial City in the pages of *The illustrious mop*.

LANDS OF GIANTS

Without abandoning the province of Toledo, you can visit Madridejos and Tembleque, places both with numerous references of Cervantes. In Madridejos each year are held quixotic sessions, there you will find the famous Uncle Genaro mill, one of the few windmills that persists from the time in which Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*. It conserves its structure and machinery intact.

And in these lands, the memory of Cervantes is present in each of the villages from La Mancha where you see a windmill hoist, as in Campo de Criptana, Alcazar de San Juan, Consuegra or Mota del Cuervo. In Consuegra they rise in Calderico Hill, and in Mota de Cuervo you will see the balcony of La Mancha. In both sceneries you can perfectly imagine the description of the battle against the giants, pure essence of the ideal that embody both the character and the author, whose eventful life was at all times a constant battle against seemingly immovable giants.



It is said that being captive in Medrano's House, in Argamasilla, Cervantes started writing Don Quixote. Meet this unique town and go down to the cave that was once the cell of Don Miguel. Imagine him sitting before a simple wooden table, with a good quill, paper and the dim light of an oil lamp, starting to write his novel: "In a place of La Mancha...".

You should not leave Argamasilla without visiting the House of Bachelor Sansón Carrasco, who together with the priest and the Barber put every effort to restore sanity to don Alonso Quijano. Near this town the Castle and the sanctuary of Peñarroya raise, where you must go to the Natural Park of las Lagunas de Ruidera, an environmental and tourist treasure of Castile- La Mancha. Its beauty and mystery were reflected in the pages of Don Quixote. Go down to the cave of Montesinos and dare to challenge the incantations of Merlin the magician.

In Manzanares they say that a goatherd narrated to a Knight of the Rueful Countenance the story of Marcela, the lovely and evil pastor. Story that Don Miguel undoubtedly collected in that area, to put it in his work, as a recreation of the burning of books in the library of the Marquis of Villena in Belmonte. The famous expungement of the library of Don Quixote. Near Uclés monastery, the visit to the heart of the order of Santiago is a must.



Peñarroya Castle in
Argamasilla de Alba.



Lagunas de Ruidera.

FROM “I VOTE A RUS” TO “THE CHURCH WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED”

Further South, is the place where the famous cry of “vote Rus” is originated, the Hermitage of the Virgin of Rus, in the Manor and Renaissance villa of San Clemente, where to know La Mancha Cuenca and Albacete.

You must also visit El Toboso, natal homeland of the peerless Dulcinea with its whitewashed façades, where the House Museum of Dulcinea, is located in a typical La Mancha mansion that recreates the time of Cervantes. Its parish church resulted in the sentence “the Church we have encountered”.

Go in the fields of Montiel, where the nobleman lived some of his most fabulous feats. And in taverns and ancient Inns of the way towards Andalusia, such as the preserved in Lapice Harbour. And the stately Almagro, in the Comedy Theatre, where representations of the plays of Don Miguel transmit charm and special thrill. And of course, Villanueva de los Infantes, geographic centre of the Campo de Montiel, who fight to be the homeland of Alonso Quijano.

Cervantes kept huge family ties in Cuenca, Alcalá and Guadalajara, and in the second part of Don Quixote recreates scenes and landscapes well-known and travelled by him. From the surroundings of Beteta, in the heart of the Conquense mountainous area, to the lands of Molina de Aragón and Sigüenza, where the famous adventure of Clavileño is recreated, Cervantes work links to his own biography, and his closest family, as plagued by Cervantes genealogy are the parish archives of Ocaña, Madridejos, Tembleque, Villafranca de los Caballeros...

“Who reads much and walks much sees much and knows much”, wrote Don Miguel. Do not despise his advice and in this Cervantes centenary enjoy his literary masterpiece and, with it, Castilla- La Mancha. It is great how much you have to see, meet, and enjoy. 🍷





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**IV CENTENARIO
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Castilla-La Mancha