

# World Heritage City

**Comenius Multilateral Project: Beyond words**  
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**Terradillos – Salamanca**  
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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



## SALAMANCA: "The Golden Town"

Salamanca is probably best known for having the oldest university in Spain and one of the oldest in Europe. This university is still what gives good atmosphere to the town. You can see hundreds of students passing through the streets and enjoying numerous and beautifully decorated bars until late at night (perhaps you may wonder when they have time to study).

This charming town is untouched in its architectural purity. In central areas all recent buildings are constructed in Salamanca's best tradition. The city has been declared "World Heritage Site" by UNESCO. It is a very attractive place to visit if you are looking for cultural values, want to enjoy night life and learn a bit of Spanish.

Salamanca is one of those towns which, although not large in extension, impress any of its visitors. All the buildings in the centre of town, even the new ones, are made of the *stone from Villamayor*, which contains a high concentration of iron making possible very filigree works, and its characteristic golden colour gives strong personality to all the town.

Salamanca is exceptional and unique. UNESCO has recognised this fact, giving its old town the World Heritage designation. Plaza Mayor Square, the University, the Clerecía building, the Cathedrals, Seashells House... there is a long list of monuments, houses and palaces to see in Salamanca, so take your time and enjoy!



## Main Square / Plaza Mayor

This large square, designed in 18th century by Churriguera is without doubt among the most beautiful in Spain. It forms the real centre of the town, not only geographically. In the streets around there are many important monuments, as the church **Iglesia de la Purísima**, the striking **Monterrey Palace**, the **Monastery of Saint Ursula** in Street Bordadores, the **Capuchins Church** in Street Ramon y Cajal and the **College of the Archbishop of Fonseca**, an outstanding work of the 16th century with a splendid Renaissance court.



## The Cathedral / La Catedral

When we speak about the Cathedral of Salamanca we are referring specifically to two churches joined together. On one hand, there is the Old Cathedral dating from the 12th-13th centuries, and on the other, the New one from the 16th century.

The Old Cathedral is in the Romanesque style and the Gallo Tower is what stands out.. The mural painting which covers the vault is the work of Nicolás Florentino. In this great pictorial work it is possible to see the image of Christ at the Last Judgement.

The New Cathedral, completed in the 18th century by Churriguera, is a prototypical example of *plateresque* style which is so typical for Spain, marking the transition from Gothic to Renaissance. Spaniards call this cathedral "La Nueva", the new one, as the old Cathedral still exists at its side.

A narrow street, *Calle Calderón*, leads you from here to the University quarter.





### The University / La Universidad

The **University of Salamanca** is one of the oldest in the world, founded by King Alphonse IX in 1218, only a short period of time after the Universities of Bologna and Paris. The building you can see today however was built at the time of the Catholic Kings, and is considered a masterwork of Plateresque style.

The façade is ornamented with numerous figures, the most famous among them the "**frog on a skull**", which numerous tourists try to make out, not easy considering the large number of small figures. It is said that if you can spot the frog without any help you'll enjoy good luck. Of course everybody who comes to Salamanca must find the frog, especially students if they want to be successful in their examinations.

In the University's interior certainly the huge **Library** of 160.000 volumes is the main attraction. Worth visiting is also the staircase with relieves showing scenes of bullfighting and the customs of students in old times who used to write their names at the façade with bulls blood.

In the centre of the square in front of the University there is **statue of Fray Luis de León**, a famous poet and professor who was persecuted by the Inquisition. When after years in prison he came back to give lessons, his first words were: "As we mentioned yesterday..."

Many people continue coming from all parts of Spain to study at the University, and the students represent a significant percentage of the city's population (the University has 36000 students, approximately). The support of the student population is one of the most important economic activities in the city.

These young people (also consisting of international students studying the Spanish language) provide Salamanca with a highly active night life, specially when school is in session on both weekdays and weekends. This has led Salamanca to be in the top list of cities with the highest bar per inhabitant ratios in Europe.



**Detail on the façade of the University / Detalle**



### Fray Luis de León room / Aula de fray Luis de León

The fray Luis de Leon room represents a typical XVI century classroom.

The adjacent seat at the pulpit was for the assistant, the person in charge of repeating the reading of each day's lesson.

Benches in the right were reserved for important figures that passed by the city and were interested in hearing the teachers speak that day.

Benches in the left were reserved for the people accompanying them.

Benches and tables in the centre were for the students, who seated according to their social classes; first, noble people; behind, the scholars living in student residences; behind these, those living in hostels. Then, the pupils protected by the professors, who lived in their houses. And last, those known as capi gorriones (today known as Tunos). These were the first students to enter the classroom, not as a privilege but in order to warm up the seats of the noble ones. Once they were warm, they were allowed to return to their seats.

At this moment, they had the so called "right to kick": The teacher permitted them to stamp their feet for a while so as to get warmer, and then class started.



### Anaya Palace / Palacio de Anaya

Diego de Anaya, the Bishop of Seville had a palace built on this site in 1401, opposite the Cathedral on one side of the city's most attractive and romantic square. This Renaissance palace, just in front of the Cathedral, is currently housing the faculties of languages of the University of Salamanca.

The architectural style is pure neoclassical, although you might spot one baroque carving of a coat-of-arms. The parts worth visiting are the courtyard, the majestic staircase, the bust of Miguel de Unamuno (by Victorio Nacho), and the main hall with paintings of Felipe V and Carlos III (by Antonio González Ruiz). Take a break in the faculty's café (which used to be the stables).



**Seashells' House / Casa de las conchas**

Halfway between the Cathedral and the Main Square (Plaza Mayor) is the Casa de las Conchas. The shells wall on the Casa de las Conchas is a famous landmark of the town.

Today the Casa de la Conchas is a modern library, but it was once a palace of Rodrigo Maldonado, a knight of the Santiago (Saint James) Order. The palace, which is considered one of the most representative examples of isabellinian Renaissance style, was built in the 1500's. The shell that adorns the building is the emblem of the Santiago Order.



**The Clerecía / La Clerecía**

This fine example of Spanish baroque architecture has belonged to the Pontificia University since 1941. King Felipe III was responsible for ordering its construction in 1617 and the work took almost 50 years to

complete. The two striking towers and the impressive baroque dome (designed by Andrés García de Quiñones in the mid-18th century) confuse some visitors into thinking that this great Jesuit church is the Cathedral. The interior galleries, side chapels and Tuscan-style pilasters are all outstanding examples of their kind. The sculpture of the suffering Christ, carved in 1760 by Luis Salvador Carmona, is magnificent.



**The Clerecía at night / Vista nocturna**



**15th century University Hospital / Hospital del Estudio**

In the Patio de las Escuelas (Schools' Square), recognisable by the statue of Fray Luis and the plateresque façade of the university, you can also see the old hospital, which currently houses the university rector's office. It's the oldest building on the university campus, and was founded by Fray Lope de Barrientos in 1413, to help poor students. If your sight is good and you are patient, you can spend ages looking at the grotesque positions of the figures on the balustrade at the top of the building.

The **Old Library** is interesting for its impressive fresco-painting "The Heaven of Salamanca".



**The Heaven of Salamanca / El cielo de Salamanca**



**Roman bridge / Puente romano**

In the year 300 B.C. Rome had conquered all Hispania. Salamanca known as Salmantica, was one of the main crossing routes in the so called Silver Route. This bridge was built in the year 89, in times of the Trajano Emperor. Roman dimension of the bridge is today 192 m. long. The Iberian bull sculpture located at the entrance was found immersed in the river Tormes.

This place is the starting point in 1454, of the story of the most popular character in the picaresque literature, Lázaro de Tormes. Near the entrance we will find the statue of the sculptor Agustín Casillas immortalizing Lázaro and his blind master.



**Pre-Roman Art of Celtic Origin**

This powerful image of a wild boar or a bull belonging to the Celtic period of history in Spain is probably the oldest work of art preserved in the province. When the Romans arrived they respected it as an indigenous totem that brought good harvests and they left it in place. However, during the 12th century it was thrown into the river. There is no record of when it was recovered, but it was referred to in the famous picaresque novel *El Lazarillo del Tormes* in the 15th century.

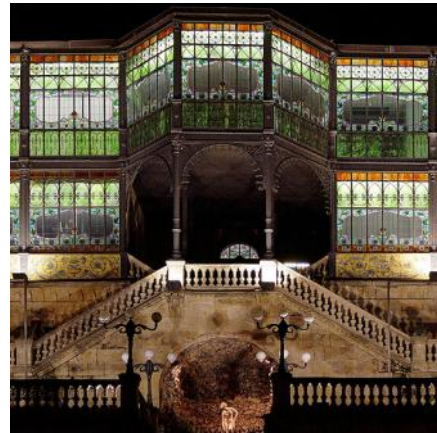
The statue was once again mutilated and thrown into the river and remained there until 1864 when it was hauled out and placed at the entrance to the Roman Bridge. It has now become one of the city's symbols of identity and appears on the coat-of-arms alongside the evergreen oak and the Roman Bridge.



**Art Nouveau and Art Déco museum / Casa Lis**

The city's Art Nouveau and Art Déco museum, an example of Modernist architecture, was built in the early years of the 20th Century.

Within the museum is a large collection of art deco and art nouveau jewellery, vases, statues, furniture, and ceramic figures.



The museum displays around 3000 pieces representing the artistic tendencies in Europe among 1830-1920.

This museum is worth a look just to visit the building. The stained glass and ironwork construction is a marvel to contemplate.



**Saint Esteban Convent / Convento de San Esteban**

The **Convento de San Esteban**, also of 16th century and built by *Juan de Alava* is another masterwork of *plateresque* style.

The grandiose and overelaborated Major Altar by José Churriguera, from the end of the XVII Century is located inside, where we can see San Esteban´s Martyrdom by Claudio Coello.

The cloister houses incredible places such as the Salón de Profundidades, where Cristobal Colón, the discoverer of America, told the reason of his journey to the 'New World'.



**Saint Esteban convent at night.**



**Las Dueñas Convent / Convento de las Dueñas**

The convent of Las Dueñas in Salamanca for enclosed nuns has one of the finest Renaissance cloisters in Spain but also a fine view of the Cathedral.

The Dominican nuns founded the convent in 1419. It is located at the end of the Gran Vía Street. You really ought to try the delicious sweets made by the nuns.



**Abrantes Palace / Palacio de Abrantes**

This square tower is part of an old 15th century palace located opposite the little square called Plaza de San Pablo, close to the two cathedrals. In keeping with the majority of these palatial mansions, the imposing keystone doorway leads to a simple internal courtyard. The façade that looks out onto Calle Jesús features a pretty window divided by a stone column carved with the insignia denoting noble heraldry.

This is the same street referred to in the book *Estudiante de Salamanca* (The Student of Salamanca) as Calle del Ataúd. The building now houses the Institute of Latin American and Portuguese Studies.



**Orellana Palace / Palacio de Orellana**

Standing on the same side of the street as the Salina Palace is the Orellana Palace, dating from the end of the 16th century.

The decoration is limited to an alternating series of triangular and rounded shapes over the windows on the first floor. This rather cold architecture suggests Neoclassical influences.



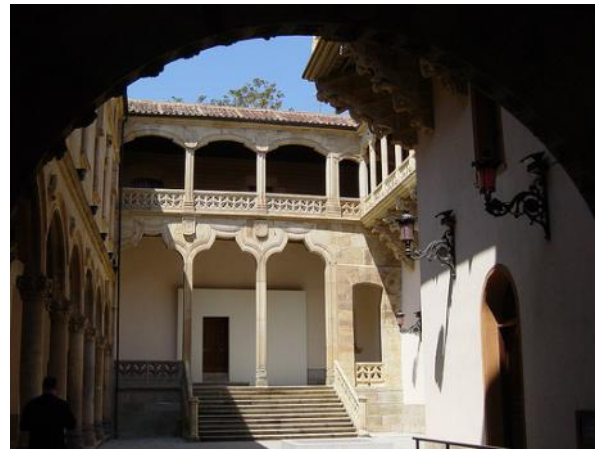
**Clavero Tower / Torre del Clavero**

It is an eight side tower, that seems more artistic than military. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the tower is the remain of a fortress, headquarter of the Order of Calatrava. It is located a few metres from Plaza Mayor (Main Square).



**La Salina Palace / Palacio de la Salina**

The palace was commissioned by Rodrigo de Messía and designed by the architect Gil de Hontañón. It was built in Renaissance style. It owes its name to the fact that it used to be a salt storage. Inside we will see an irregular courtyard, decorated with figures whose bodies are twisted. At present, this building is the seat of Salamanca's Provincial Council.



**Tower of the Air / Torre del Aire**

In a little central square, away from the more touristic area and opposite the Castilla and León Assembly building, stands this imperial-looking tower belonging to the old 15th-century palace which the Fermoselles had built. Its unique Italian-style Gothic tower is beautiful, with many windows.

The Palace of Fermoselles, is close to Gran Vía Street, the most important avenue in Salamanca because most of official buildings are located there. The tower is known as Torre del Aire (Tower of the Air). Today it belongs to a religious order and is used as a hall of residence for girls.



**Monterrey Palace / Palacio de Monterrey**

This is one of the finest existing examples of Spanish Renaissance architecture and you'll find it in the pretty little Plaza de Monterrey. It rivals the royal palaces in Seville in terms of beauty. It was built for the aristocratic Monterrey family in 1539 by the architect, Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón and now belongs to the Alba family.

The exterior is eye-catching: the two towers bear coats-of-arms belonging to noble families like the Fonseca, Zúñiga and Maldonado. Even the chimneys are outstanding works of art and display family shields in the corners.



**Pontificia University / Universidad Pontificia**

Formerly the Sacred Spirit Royal College, founded by the wife of Felipe III, Margaret of Austria, in 1611, it was one of the bastions of the Jesuits in Spain until they were expelled in 1767. It was designed by the royal architect, Juan Gómez de Mora in a "U" shape, and took 150 years to build. Since 1941 its has belonged to the Universidad Pontificia (Papal University). The Claustro de los Estudios faculty is considered one of the most outstanding baroque buildings in Europe, and the staircase in the main hall is also a must-see. There's a café in the academic area.



**Immaculate Conception Church  
Iglesia de la Purísima**

Five minutes from Plaza Mayor, very close to Monterrey Palace, is this marvellous church built in the 17th century in accordance with the purest Italian style rules of architecture.

The eight-sided Madrid-style cupola, which replaced the original which collapsed two years after it was built, is striking. Inside, the decor is basically marble, with five altarpieces, a magnificent pulpit and statues of the founders praying.

The most striking feature, however, is the splendid painting of the Immaculate Conception, by José de Ribera, on the main altar.



**Pontificia University Cloister / Claustro**





**Rodríguez de Figueroa Palace**  
**Palacio de Rodríguez de Figueroa**

Leaving the Plaza Mayor by Calle Concejo, you come to this imposing palace, which now houses the Salamanca casino. It was built by Juan Rodríguez de Figueroa, who belonged to the court of Carlos V and Felipe II, in the 15th century. There are various very beautiful decorative medallions on the façade, some of which also feature on other palaces. Inside you can admire a lovely courtyard that has a second floor extension, where exhibitions, book launches and other cultural activities take place.



**Arias Corvell Palace / Palacio de Arias Corvell**

This attractive 16th century Renaissance palace is located in the unusual little square that bears the same name, close to the Calle Toro. The design of the facade and doorway present a rare combination of decorative styles and the hallway inside still bears the remains of an old staircase decorated with plant motifs. The Renaissance-style courtyard contains pillars with semi-circular arches and fine medallions. There's an inscription here that refers to a tale about the old residents. Apparently, a sacristan tried so hard to wrench a ring from the finger of the seemingly deceased Marchioness of Almarza that the shock brought her back to life. The duke of Wellington lived here for a short of time. The palace now houses the Spanish-Japanese Cultural Centre.



**Alonso de Solís Palace / Palacio de Alonso de Solís**

You'll find this palace on the corner of Plaza de los Bandos, close to the Plaza Mayor. Maria of Portugal stayed here when she came to Spain in the 16th century to marry Felipe II. The former state telecommunications company, Telefónica, had the palace re-designed in a neo-plateresque style in 1934 with turrets like those on the Palacio de Monterrey, and use it as office space. The window looking over Calle Concejo is one of the few remaining features of the old palace. The main façade carries the coats-of-arms belonging to the Solís family.



**Palace of Alvarez Abarca**  
**Casa de Álvarez Abarca**

This magnificent mansion belonged to the Alvarez Abarca family and you'll find it on the way down Calle Serrano, not far from the Casa de las Conchas. The head of the family and his sons were all professors of medicine at the university and served as the queen's physicians. If you look closely, you'll notice that two windows display a combination of attractive Gothic and more restrained Renaissance styles of design.

There are three floors and a little tower with irregular shaped windows. The Abarca coat-of-arms and that belonging to his wife's family decorate the sides of the

main doorway. The building now houses the Fine Arts Museum.



**Solís House / Casa de Solís**

This simply-decorated 16th century stately home is located close to the San Benito Church and the pretty little Plaza del Corriño. The façade is very similar to the Corpus Christi Church which was founded by one of the Solís family and was probably designed by the same architect as the house. The doorway is in the shape of an *alfiz* (rectangular surrounded by a horseshoe-shaped arch) and features the Solís family coat-of-arms and insignia belonging to other noble branches of the family. The balustrade resembles a medieval tower. The building now belongs to the university's publications department.

connected with jealousy and love affairs. This must have had something to do with the four skulls under the upper windows of the façade. To the right of the façade, you'll see the house where Miguel de Unamuno lived and died (Casa Museo de Unamuno). If you like taking photographs, do take one of these two houses, with the statue of Unamuno in front.



**Miguel de Unamuno**



**Death House / Casa de las muertes**

From the quiet little Plaza de las Ursulas, with the magnificent apse of the Anunciación Convent in the background, you will see the marvellous plateresque façade of Juan de Alava's 16th century mansion. In the 18th century there were lots of tales about the name of this enigmatic house, which has a history of violent deaths



**Rural Councillors House / Casa de los Sexmeros**

The inscription - dating from 1713 - on the façade of this old palace declares that it belonged to the city councillors, or sexmeros, who represented the rural districts. It's located in the pretty and quite square of the same name, next to the Romanesque-style San Julián Church. Look closely and you'll notice traces of showy

Gothic design around one of the upstairs windows. There's a lovely patio inside with Renaissance-style columns supporting the upper floor. The remains of the original kitchen can still be seen. The Salamanca Chamber of Commerce use this building as their headquarters. The square outside is a pleasant place to rest and relax in the summer.



**Doña Maria la Brava House**  
**Casa de Doña Maria la Brava**

In the Plaza de los Bandos, very close to the Plaza Mayor, stands a 15th century Gothic mansion which belonged to Doña María de Monroy, called la Brava because she was the heroine of one of the most tragic events in local history. After her two sons were killed by a rival gang she went after the murderers, not stopping until she had placed their heads on her sons' graves.

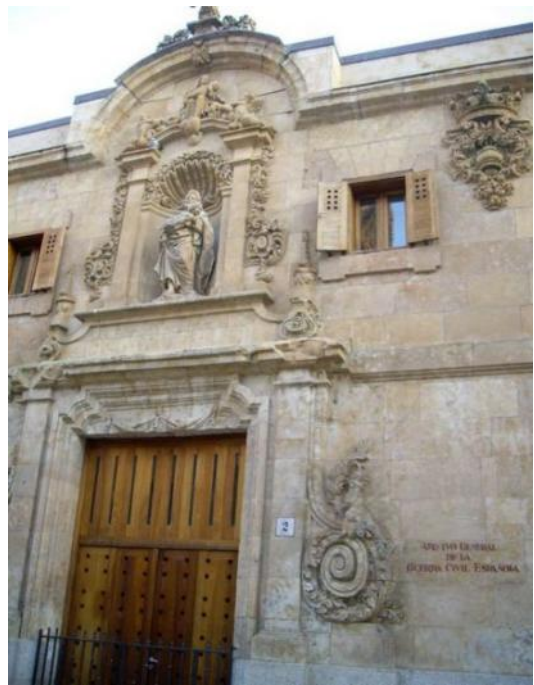
On the façade, as is customary for Castilian noblemen's houses, there is a gate with a semi-circular arch with large keystones and a balcony with metal railings, which dates from the 18th century, flanked by the shields of noblemen. The house is not open to the public, as it belongs to the Official College of Pharmacists.



**Saint Pelayo College / Colegio de San Pelayo**

Parts of an original university college, founded by Francisco de Valdés in 1566, have been incorporated into the modern building housing the Faculty of Geography and History. You can still see the two original entrances to the college in the Calle Cervantes, for example. One of the entrances led into the chapel and the other led into the

college itself. The architect, Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, designed them in Renaissance style.



**Saint Ambrosio College / Colegio de San Ambrosio**

You'll find this school close to the cathedrals on your way down Calle Tentenecio heading towards the river. It was originally built as an orphanage and was later remodelled by Joaquín de Churriguera in the 18th century. His intricate baroque façade features a niche bearing a statue of Saint Joseph and the Infant Jesus. Salamanca town council's coat-of-arms graces both sides of the entrance. The archives relating to the Spanish Civil War have been housed here since the end of the conflict.



**Miguel de Unamuno's House**  
**Casa de Miguel de Unamuno**

This house was built in 1758 and it was the residence of Salamanca University's rectors. Here Miguel de Unamuno, the famous writer and philosopher from the Basque Country, lived from 1900 until 1914.

Unamuno worked first as a professor of Greek and later as university rector. He was one of the most remarkable of modern Spanish thinkers. In this museum, you can visit the office and library containing more than 6000 books and manuscripts belonging to him.

There is a 20min guided tour available. Moreover, researchers who want to study Unamuno's works and life will find that there are facilities available for this endeavour.



**Remains of the Roman walls / Murallas romanas**

You'll find the best views of the old city walls and the impressive 15th century Gothic stone cross from the Roman Bridge. The Romans built the first defensive walls here using the natural course of the river and the cliffs above as guidelines.

The invading Arab armies destroyed most of the Roman construction and it wasn't until the Arabs were expelled in the 12th century that the returning Christian population built another city wall. Few remains of either wall survived Carlos III's policy of city expansion and improvement.



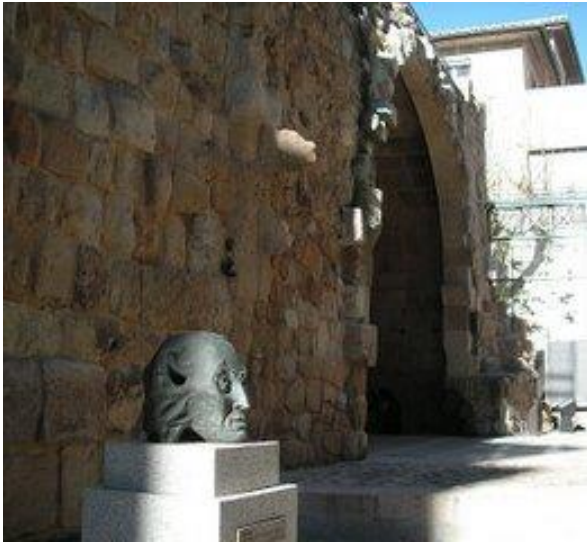
**Calixto and Melibea Orchard  
Huerto de Calixto y Melibea**

You'll find this famous orchard in the old town, close to the Catedral Vieja (Old Cathedral) and the defensive walls. It's an oasis of lush vegetation and tranquility in the midst of the city and is probably the place that inspired Fernando de Rojas to write his tragicomedy La Celestina in 1502.



All manner of plants and trees grow here: olive trees, cypress trees, acacias and almonds. Try and visit when they're in bloom. The two wells that the character "Melibea" fetched water from to water the sweet-smelling herbs are still here today, and so are the herbs - bay leaves, rosemary and mint. It's worth taking a walk through here to enjoy the garden and the views of the two cathedrals and the majestic Torre del Gallo tower.





**The cave of Salamanca**  
**La cueva de Salamanca**

The cave of Salamanca is actually not a cave at all, but the crypt of the ruined 12th century church of San Ciprian. Cave or not, it has a sinister reputation. According to legend, here Satan himself taught fortune telling, palm reading, spells and black magic to 7 students for 7 years.

Some say he took on the form of the *sacristán* (caretaker) of the ruined church during the lessons, others a hand on a chair, still others a male goat. However he dressed himself, all of the accounts agree on the students' tuition: one human soul. At the end of the 7 years, so the story goes, the students drew lots to see which of them would settle the bill by spending the rest of his life in the cave of Salamanca - in service to Satan.



**Bull Ring / Plaza de Toros La Glorieta**

The Glorieta bull ring in Salamanca was built in 1892 and officially opened on September 11th, 1893. It's classical in style, and has three levels, made of stone, wrought-iron and brick. The ring is 54 metres in diameter, and there's seating for almost 11000 spectators.

There are two main times of year for seeing a good bullfight in Salamanca: June 12th for the feast of San Juan de Sahagun, with the traditional *Las Hermanitas de los Pobres* bullfight (held since 1947 with a view to raising funds for that institution), and September 12th to 21st during Salamanca's big fiesta.



**Congress and Exhibiton Palace**  
**Palacio de Congresos y Exposiciones de Castilla y León**

This is one of the most representative pieces of late 20th-century Spanish architecture, designed by Juan Navarro Baldeweg in 1985. All kinds of shows and cultural events take place here. An effort has been made to make the building look simple in keeping with the nearby walls.

There are two different parts. The main one is the enormous prism, which houses the auditorium and other rooms, while the smaller one is for exhibitions. There's a café on the lower floor.



<http://maps.google.es/maps>

