

## MARIBEL'S GUIDE TO SEGOVIA ©



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## WEB RESOURCES

### INFORMATION ON THE WEB

- Info Segovia - [infosegovia.com](http://infosegovia.com) (Spanish only)
- Segovia Turismo - [segoviaturismo.es](http://segoviaturismo.es)
- Turismo de Segovia - [turismodesegovia.com](http://turismodesegovia.com)
- Turismo Castilla y Leon - [turismocastillayleon.com](http://turismocastillayleon.com)

## TRAVEL PLANNING SERVICES

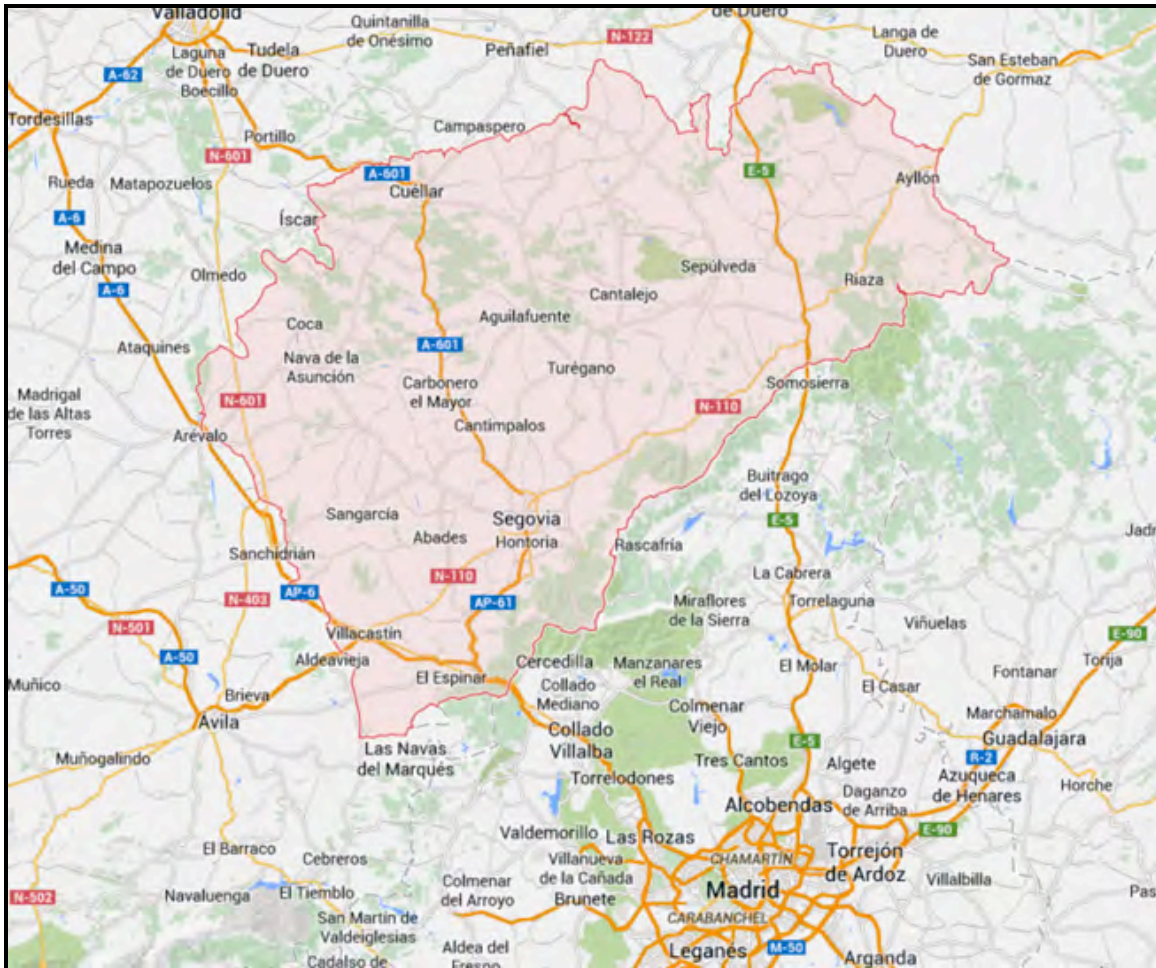
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## ARRIVING IN SEGOVIA

Beautiful, elegant, serene, graceful, light and airy Segovia, the essence of Old Castile, architecturally harmonious with its buildings of warm, honey-colored stone, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. I do admit that I love this city more than somber, brooding, tourist-driven Toledo, primarily because it impresses as an elegant city with its own vibrant cultural life and economy, a city that does not need or want to depend so heavily on the tourist trade. And tourists visiting Segovia seem to be more easily integrated into the city rather than to overwhelm it. While I admire Toledo's architectural and vast artistic riches, its spectacular setting and its fascinating history of three cultures/religions living together for centuries in relative harmony, I adore Segovia.



For those visiting Madrid, I highly recommend a day trip to this lovely city. For those with extra time, better still, spend a night or two. If you stay at the gently priced 3-star **Infanta Isabel** in the Plaza Mayor, ask for a room with balcony. The 3-star **Don Felipe** is 5 minutes from the Plaza Mayor. The renovated 16th century 4-star **Palacio de San Facundo** is nearby on the quiet square of the same name. The 4-star **Eurostars Plaza Acueducto** faces the Aqueduct Square. You'll be within minutes of everything wonderful Segovia has to offer. All have parking available.

And the Plaza Mayor is a great place to while away the evening surveying the lively scene at an outdoor terrace.

## TRANSPORTATION

### DRIVING TO SEGOVIA

Segovia lies 58 miles (93 km) northwest of Madrid, about an hour and a half drive, an easy day trip, but do plan to spend the entire day to do the city justice. The best driving route: Take the A-6 then the AP-61. Print your driving directions from [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com).

When you arrive you'll find metered parking in blue zones but you will need to feed the meter every two hours. Thus, it's best to park in the underground garage on Avenida Padre Claret, €5,10 for two hours, just 500 meters from the aqueduct ([www.isoluxaparcamientos.com](http://www.isoluxaparcamientos.com)). From here all sights are walkable.

### HIGH-SPEED TRAIN

Since the high-speed rail line from Madrid to Segovia was inaugurated December 2007, it now makes this very quick rail journey of less than 30 minutes; it's the very best and easiest way to reach the city. These trains depart from the **Chamartín** rail station, in the northern section of Madrid rather than from Atocha station where one catches the high-speed lines to Barcelona, Valencia, Córdoba, Sevilla and Málaga.



There are several different types of trains on this route - the AVANT, which runs only to Segovia, like the AVANT to Toledo, and the Talgo and Alvia trains, which go on to northern coastal cities. The latter two offer two classes of service, tourist and *preferente* (business class). But for the very short ride, one doesn't need to purchase the more expensive *preferente* class seat-tourist class will do just fine. The AVANT trains offer only one class of service. Although quick and very comfortable, you won't be afforded

beautiful scenery on this rail journey, as most of the trip is spent passing through three long tunnels.

The least expensive and most convenient of these trains is the AVANT, with a flat fare of 10,30€ each way for the roundtrip ticket. The ride on the AVANT is as smooth, comfortable and just as quick as the other trains, so if the AVANT train schedule suits you, and most likely it will for your day trip, take the AVANT and save a few Euros. For a full day, I suggest departing on the 9:55 am AVANT and returning on the 4:07 pm or 6:15 pm AVANT. You can see the current schedule, purchase your tickets and print them at: [www.renfe.com](http://www.renfe.com). If you experience any problem, then you can purchase your tickets through Renfe's official U.S. representative [Petrabax.com](http://Petrabax.com).

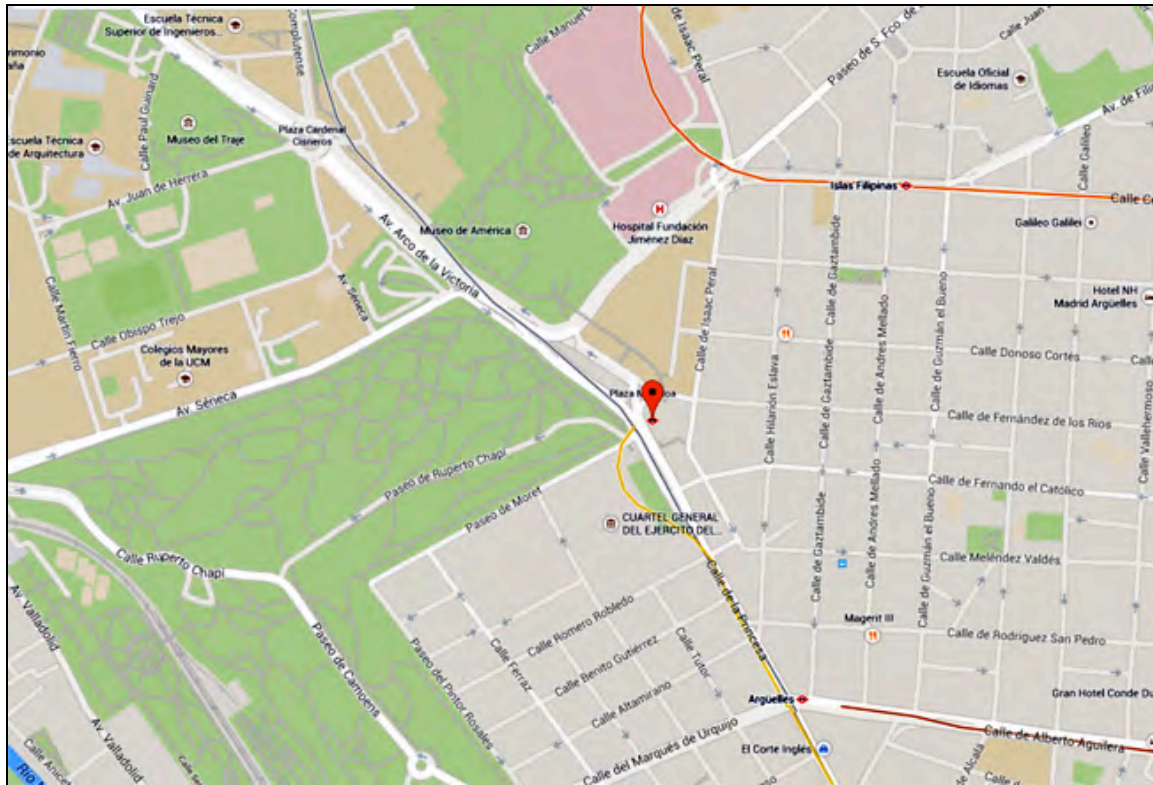
When choosing your destination, make sure to select Segovia-Av from the drop down menu. The high-speed trains all arrive at the Guiomar AVE station built exclusively for the high-speed line. The Intercity and ALVIA trains are also available, but with limited departures and returns. You can also purchase your tickets at any Spain rail station or at the Renfe counter at the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas airport in Terminal 4, Floor -1, open from 5:20 am to 11:30 pm. See the map at: [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es) for the exact location. The counter rarely has lines.



Again, you will arrive at the new **Segovia-Guiomar AVE station** ([www.adif.es](http://www.adif.es)), which was built in a field, “in the middle of nowhere”, 6 kms from the city center. You will find bus #11 waiting for you, as the bus schedule is set to the train schedule. Take it (fare: 1,03€), and the bus will drop you off directly in front of the aqueduct. Before you leave the station, note the bus schedule for your return, or print a copy from here: [www.urbanosdesegovia.com](http://www.urbanosdesegovia.com). At the top click on *Mapas de Líneas y Horarios*, then select *línea 11*. The bus ride from the station to the aqueduct takes 20 minutes. Taxi fare runs about 10€.

## TRAVELING BY BUS

Since the December '07 inauguration of the high-speed train line, I have switched my allegiance from bus to train because it gets me there quickly and in style. However, La Sepulvedana ([www.lasepulvedana.es](http://www.lasepulvedana.es)), the bus company, still offers frequent departures to Segovia from their location in the **Intercambiador de Moncloa**, Plaza Moncloa, in the Chamberi district.

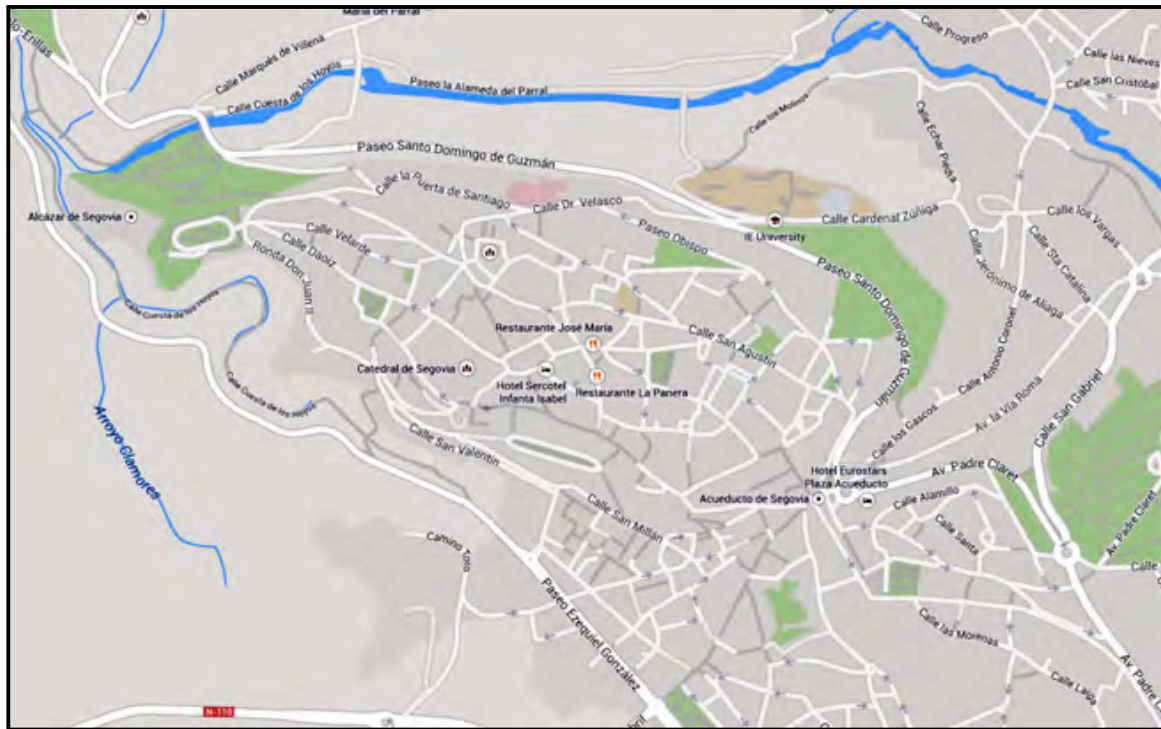


The nearest metro stops are Argüelles (lines 3, 4 & 6), 7 minutes walking, and Islas Filipinas (line 7), a 10-minute walk or 5 minutes by taxi.

It should be noted that on arrival at the Segovia bus terminal the return ticket should be surrendered at the ticket office there in exchange for another one showing the time of departure for the return trip. The ride takes around 55 minutes and drops passengers at the Segovia bus station on Paseo Ezequiel González, which is a short and pleasant walk from the Aqueduct. The bus fare is 8,30€ one-way, 6,56€ for the return on a roundtrip ticket. Tickets can be purchased online.

## SIGHTSEEING IN SEGOVIA

On at the aqueduct square, the Plaza del Azoguejo, your first stop should be at the Tourist Office, the **Centro de Recepción de Visitantes**, which has audio visual displays, a mock up of the city, has plenty of brochures (sites, lodging, restaurants), posters for purchase, guided tours of the city (in high season, depending on demand, some are given in English), even a tasteful museum-type store for a souvenir or two. The center is open daily from 10:00 to 8:00.



The tourist office offers guided visits. Please check [www.turismodesegovia.com](http://www.turismodesegovia.com) for the current schedule.

1. **World Heritage Morning Tour** to the principal monuments of the city for a fee of 13,50€, 10,50€ for students, seniors and holders of the Tourist Card, “Segovia’s Friends”. Monday-Friday at 11:15, Saturday and Sunday at 11:45. The tour lasts for 2-1/2 hours.
2. **World Heritage Afternoon Tour** to the principal monuments of the city for a fee of 10,50€, 7,20€ for students, seniors and holders of the Tourist Card, “Segovia’s Friends”. Monday-Thursday and Saturday and Sunday at 4:30. The tour lasts for 2-1/2 hours
3. **Tour the Aqueduct** departs from the visitor center at the foot of the Aqueduct on Wednesdays at 12-noon and lasts 1-1/2 hours. Includes a visit to the Convent of San Antonio del Real. Tour costs 6,50€ for general admission, 4,50€ for students, seniors and holders of the Tourist Card, “Segovia’s Friends”.

## THE MAJOR SIGHTS

### CATHEDRAL

A hodgepodge of styles (the typical Spanish “architectural mess”) but primarily late Flamboyant Gothic, the last great Gothic cathedral built in Spain, begun in 1525 by Juan Gil de Hontañón (the architect of Salamanca’s “new” cathedral) and completed 65 years later. The first chapel on the right (#1) has an altarpiece of the burial of Christ by my favorite Baroque sculptor/painter, Juan de Juni. The cathedral boasts elaborate choir stalls and a Hispano-Flemish Gothic cloister. The cathedral museum, **Museo Catedralicio**, houses 17th century Flemish tapestries, gold and silver chalices, monstrances, 16th century paintings (works by Van Eyck) and other treasures.



Cathedral hours: October-March from 9:30 to 5:30 and April-September from 9:30 to 6:30. Admission: 3€. Entrance to the Cathedral is free on Sundays from 9:30 to 1:15 pm. Guided visits to the Tower are available daily at 10:00, 12 noon and 4:00, costs 5€.

Museum hours: Open daily April 1st-September 30th from 9:30 to 6:30, 1 October 1st-March 31st from 9:30 to 5:30. Admission: 2€ ([museo-catedralicio-segovia](http://museo-catedralicio-segovia))

### THE ROMAN AQUEDUCT

Almost a kilometer in length, 30 meters in height (at its tallest point), built in the first century, A.D., probably on the orders of the Roman Emperor Trajan, is constructed of granite blocks, an engineering marvel, the blocks having been put together without one ounce of mortar or metal clamps. It's the largest and best preserved in Spain from the Roman Empire. It once transported water from 15 kilometers away and was used up until



the 19th century. Several years ago, it went through a billion-peseta renovation to make it last another few thousand years or so.



### ALCÁZAR

The fairy tale, Disneyesque, elegant and graceful castile, the official residence of Queen Isabella's father, Juan II and brother Enrique IV, and where Isabella was proclaimed Queen of Castile in 1474, where she and Ferdinand first met and where Columbus came to receive the financing for his venture.



Inside it's been quite heavily restored due to a fire in 1862 when it was a military school, and the results are a bit ersatz. However, highlights include the authentic looking Throne

Room, where above the thrones of the Catholic monarchs you'll see the words "Tanto Monta", meaning that Isabella held as much power in Aragón as Ferdinand in Castile, in other words, equal sovereignty, a room with an elaborately carved and gilded ceiling dripping with pineapple shaped stalactites (la Sala de las Piñas) and an artillery museum plus the keep, the Torre de Homenaje, with its 150 huff and puff steps. If you have the energy, the views are more than worth the workout. Longish but very doable walk down the very narrow Calle Daoíz from the Plaza Mayor. **Very**, very crowded on weekends/holidays. Go early before the tour busses arrive. Takes 45 minute to tour. Entrance fee: 5€, 3€ for seniors. Visit to the tower: 2€ Audio Guide: 2€.



Open October-March, from 10:00 to 6:00, except Friday and Saturday in October when it is open from 10:00 to 7:00. Open April-September from 10:00 to 7:00.

Check current schedule at: [www.alcazardesegovia.com](http://www.alcazardesegovia.com).

### THE LOVELY ROMANESQUE CHURCHES

Segovia has the largest collection of Romanesque churches of any Spanish city (14).

- **IGLESIA DE SAN ESTEBAN** - has a Byzantine tower, one of the highest and best in all of Spain.
- **IGLESIA DE SAN MILLÁN** - from the 12th century, the best example of Segoviano Romanesque, is located outside the walls near the public car park at Av Fernández Ladreda.
- **IGLESIA DE SAN CLEMENTE** - along Fernández Ladreda, just steps from the Aqueduct, is noted for its unique structure.
- **IGLESIA DE SAN MARTÍN** - halfway up the pedestrian thoroughfare (Calle Cervantes), which runs from the Aqueduct to the Plaza Mayor.

You'll notice on your walk up to the Plaza Mayor the unusual Moorish plaster wall decorations on the buildings, called *esgrafiado*, typical of Segovia. Some say "graffiti" came from the term.

These churches are open only during worship services except during the summer and Holy Week, when they open from 11:00 to 2:00 and 4:30 to 7:30.

### **MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO ESTEBAN VICENTE**

If you enjoy contemporary art, you'll surely enjoy a visit to this very interesting Museum behind Plaza San Martín on Plazuela Bellas Artes. In its 12th year of existence, it has undergone a major expansion from its original structure, the former palace of King Enrique IV, dating from 1455.

Esteban Vicente, born in Turégano, who became an America citizen and died in Long Island in 2001, was an abstract expressionist and a member of the New York School and a friend of Pollack, De Kooning and Rothko and greatly influenced by Miró. He donated a wonderful collection of 153 of his works to create this museum, housed in a beautiful 15th century palace. The museum also displays fine special exhibits, such as "Telefonica Cubist Collection", through May 3, 2015 ([museoestebanvicente.es](http://museoestebanvicente.es)). General admission: 3€. No photographs allowed.

Open:

- Tuesday-Friday from 11:00 to 2:00 and 4:00 to 7:00.
- Saturday from 11:00 to 8:00.
- Sunday and holidays from 11:00 to 3:00.
- Closed Monday, December 25th, January 1st
- Thursday - Free to all

### **LA JUDERÍA**

In the Old Jewish quarter, wander the back streets below the main pedestrian thoroughfare to explore Sephardic Segovia. It can be found from Judería Nueva Street down to the Plaza de Socorro then up Martínez Campos to Judería Vieja Street. In the 1400s it housed five synagogues (none remains) and a cemetery. This Sephardic Center, **Centro Didáctico de la Judería** gives visitors the opportunity to take a virtual tour of Segovia's ancient Jewish culture-its calendar, its religious practices, its writing, form of life and customs. There's also a small gift shop specializing in Sephardic products ([juderia.turismodesegovia.com](http://juderia.turismodesegovia.com)). General admission: 2€.

Open:

- Monday and Tuesday, 11:00 to 3:00
- Wednesday and Friday, 11:00 to 2:00 and from 4:00 to 6:30
- Thursday and Saturday from 12:00 noon to 2:00 and from 4:00 to 6:30
- Sunday (except public holidays), 11:00 to 2:00.
- Closed December 25th and January 1st and 6th.

### **HOUSE-MUSEUM OF ANTONIO MACHADO**

For those who love the works of this Generation of 1898 poet, his home, where he lived from 1919-1932 when professor of French at the University, is open to visits via guided tour. A very modest abode, it's maintained exactly the way it was inhabited by the poet, with the original humble furnishings ([machado.turismodesegovia.com](http://machado.turismodesegovia.com)). General admission: 2,50€, free on Wednesdays.

Open:

- Monday-Sunday, 11:00 to 2:00 and from 4:00 to 6:30
- Sunday – closed in the afternoon in low season
- Guided visits are available at 1:00 and 5:30 (fall & winter) and 6:00 (spring & summer)

### A COUPLE OF OTHER VERY WORTHY SIGHTS TO CONSIDER...

#### *Below the city walls*

When leaving Segovia, don't forget to drive down (direction: to the **north** towards Santa María la Real de Nieva) below the city, following signs from the aqueduct square on your right towards La **Fuencisla** (pink sign) to the confluence of the 2 rivers, the Eresma and the Clamores, where you'll see a picnic area/park and usually kids playing soccer in the field. Follow the signs (if you see them) to the "merendero" (picnic area) or follow the *ruta turística* or *vista panorámica*. Park your car where the children play soccer at the river's edge and take that quintessential, perfect picture postcard photo of the Alcázar floating above you. This is a magical moment, particularly at sunset. Unforgettable, and most tourists miss this entirely.

Segovia is actually shaped like an ocean liner (its nickname being the "Stone Ship"), long and narrow, protected by the two rivers on either side and anchored on a rocky outcrop above the plain, the Alcázar being the prow of the ship, the cathedral the mast, the Aqueduct the stern.

While you're in this area, follow the road to Zamarramala (Arévalo) to find the lovely twelve sided, 13th century **Iglesia de la Vera Cruz** ([www.ordendemalta.es](http://www.ordendemalta.es)), said to have been originally founded by the Knights Templar, it now belonging to the Order of Knights of Malta and built on the pattern of the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem with a circular nave. Inside there is a two story inner chamber in the center where Templar secret rituals supposedly took place.



This church is somber and mysterious and totally unique. On Good Friday at nightfall, the Order of Malta knights celebrate a candlelight procession from the church up to the

village of Zamarramala. At one time the church held a piece of the True Cross (thus the name La Vera Cruz), but it was moved to Zamarramala.

Open **Tuesday-Sunday** from 10:30 to 1:30 and again from 4:00 to 7:00 (closes at 6:00 pm in the fall/winter). Admission: 1,75€

Go back to the main road and follow the Eresma River upstream to the **Monasterio de Santa María del Parral** ([www3.planalfa.es](http://www3.planalfa.es)), occupied by the Hieronymite order. The main reason to stop here and ring the doorbell is for the daily mass with Gregorian chant at 1:00 pm and at **noon** on Sundays and holidays. Guided visits are free, but one should make a donation. If you find yourself in Segovia during **Holy Week**, you'll find a popular late evening mass (11:30 pm) on Holy Saturday.

Open Wednesday-Saturday from 10:00 to 12:15 and 4:15-7:00. Open Sunday from 10:00 to 11:00 and 4:15 to 7:00. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

Down in the river area there's also a café/restaurant in neighboring Zamarramala, **La Postal**, right beyond the Carmelite Convent on the highway. We drive here for the panoramic views. Drive across the highway on to the meadow for spectacular photo ops of the city. Unforgettable vistas.

## FESTIVALS IN SEGOVIA

### SAN JUAN AND SAN PEDRO

The festivals of San Juan and San Pedro, held between **June** 24th and 29th, include fireworks, concerts, dances and at least one, if not two major bullfights, part of a two-day **Feria de San Pedro**, with Spain's leading matadors, which the King and his daughter, Infanta Elena, usually attend.

Check the schedule the week before at: [portaltaurino.com/segovia/segovia\\_index.htm](http://portaltaurino.com/segovia/segovia_index.htm)

### SAN FRUTOS

The feast day of Segovia's patron saint is celebrated on October 25th.

### TITIRIMUNDI

The International Puppet Theater Festival takes place on the Plaza Mayor in May.

### MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL

Performances are held in the Teatro Juan Bravo on the Plaza Mayor, in July.

### LAS ÁGUEDAS

This unique festival in Zamarramala is held on the Sunday following February 5. It has been declared a festival of National Tourist Merit. This almost 800 year tradition dictates that the married and widowed women of the village have the privilege of governing the town for 24 hours, and two village women are named co-mayors, *alcaldesas*, for the day. This festival in honor of Santa Águeda (Saint Agnes) is celebrated with a procession carrying the image of the saint, with the village women all dressed in native costume,

followed by a solemn mass (the priest being the only male allowed to walk in the procession), ritual dances (only the women can participate), a burning of the *pelele*, a straw figure representing men, and food stands are placed around the church for participants to partake of *tajada*, a sausage braised in white wine.

If a man of the village attempts to participate in the celebration, he is surrounded by the women and poked with knitting needles call men-killers, *Mata hombres*. The same happens to any foreigner who isn't willing to pay the toll, *peaje*, collected by the women as a fee to partake of the festivities!

### **HOLY WEEK (SEMANA SANTA)**

The religious processions during **Holy Week (Semana Santa)** have been declared of Regional Tourist Merit and are more solemn, somber than their counterparts in southern Spain. On Palm Sunday there is a special concert in the cathedral, and the first procession of the week begins from the cathedral at 12:30 pm followed by a procession each day. The religious fervor of Holy Week reaches its zenith on Maundy Thursday in the evening to Good Friday, when there are several daily processions, culminating with the final Resurrection of Jesus procession beginning at 11:45 am on Easter Sunday, ending in the cathedral.

See [www.semanasantasegovia.com](http://www.semanasantasegovia.com) then click on “procesiones” for the schedule and photos of the processions. During Holy Week all of the city's churches and monasteries are open to visitors to contemplate the beautifully decorated floats, *pasos*, which will be carried in the week's processions. Holy Week opening hours are from 10:00 to 2:00 and 4:00 to 7:00.

Pedraza's local fiestas are held September 7-12, in honor of la **Virgen del Carrascal** with the procession carrying the image of the virgin on the 8th, on the 9th the town celebrates its *encierros*, bringing the herd of young bulls to be fought that afternoon up from their grazing land and through the village. On the 9th and 10th bullfights take place in the square, and on the final day of the fiesta, the 12th a gigantic *caldereta*, lamb stew, is prepared on the square for the enjoyment of all.

On the first two Saturdays in July, Pedraza celebrates its nationally renowned **Noche de las Velas** when 35,000 candles illuminate the town, and classical music concerts are celebrated both inside the castle and on the Plaza Mayor. The latest edition of this festival brought in 13,000 visitors. This is a truly magical experience!

## DINING IN SEGOVIA

### GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES OF THE SEGOVIA PROVINCE

- *Cochinillo asado*: roast suckling pig (also referred to as *tostón*)
- *Judiones de la Granja*: tender white haricot beans
- *Cordero lechal*: roast baby lamb, served in quarters in a clay casserole
- *Cabritillo*: roast baby goat
- *Truchas de Valsain*: local trout
- *Niscalos a la Segoviana*: Wild mushrooms sautéed with garlic and parsley
- *Sopa castellana*: a garlic soup with ham, topped with poached egg
- *Chorizo de Cantimpalos*: the local spicy cured sausage
- *Ponche segoviano*: a moist-sugar glazed sponge cake
- *Leche frita*: a rich dessert made of milk, sugar, flour, egg, butter and cinnamon

## THE BIG THREE LEGENDARY ROASTING TAVERNS

### MESÓN DE CÁNDIDO

There's great roast lamb along with Segovia's star gastronomic attraction, roast suckling pig, to be had at the atmospheric and world famous Mesón de Cándido, a favorite of King Juan Carlos and Antonio Banderas, to name just two. The current chef, Alberto, is the legendary Cándido's grandson, who is busily bringing the family's famed eatery back into culinary glory. Four generations of the Cándido family have run this atmospheric roasting tavern (*horno de asar*) since 1905. The 15th century building was declared a national monument in 1941, and it stands in the shadow of the Roman aqueduct on the Plaza del Azoguejo. It's divided into cozy rooms with rustically charming Old Castilian décor and tons of memorabilia and photos of the celebrities and royalty who have dined here over the years (my first visit was in 1970, and I've returned once each year since).

I most enjoy sitting upstairs at a table overlooking the aqueduct. The star attractions here are the roast lamb and roast suckling pig, *cochinillo asado* (called *tostón* at Cándido), but other dishes shine as well, such as the sea bass (*lubina*) and wild mushrooms (*setas confitadas*).

Waiters still carve the roast suckling pig with the edge of a plate rather than a knife; two thrusts of the plate are given along the spine and four across. According to legend, this unusual carving method began when a plate accidentally slipped out of the master roaster's hand just as he was holding it over a piglet straight out of the oven. Check the web page ([www.mesondecandido.es](http://www.mesondecandido.es)) to read all about its history, peruse the menu, see the dining rooms and make a reservation.

### MESÓN DUQUE

Equally good but not quite as scenically located, is the almost equally famed Mesón Duque on pedestrian Calle Cervantes between the aqueduct and the Plaza Mayor, on the left side going up ([www.restauranteduque.es](http://www.restauranteduque.es)). Another "Master Roaster" that has won numerous culinary awards, this mesón is the oldest in the city, dating from 1895. It's now in the hands of the daughter and son of Dioniso Duque. The bar downstairs has won

several tapas competitions, and the upstairs dining rooms are cozy and attractively decorated in Old Castilian style. Their typical Segovian menu of *sopa castellana*, *cochinillo asado* and *ponche segoviano* for dessert runs slightly less than the competition.

### **JOSÉ MARÍA\***

If you're not a great suckling pig aficionado, then choose José María, to the east of the Plaza Mayor on Cronista Lacea, 11, for your nice sit down meal, as the menu is more varied (including over baked porgy, *besugo*), and the wine list from Castilla-León and the Ribera del Duero regions is superb. It is less tourist frequented but slightly less atmospheric (no romantic views of the aqueduct). The owner calls his wine cellar-museum "el altar del vino". Also yummy croquettes are served at the bar. In fact, with your drink at the bar, you'll be offered a free *tapa* and will be asked to choose among several offerings, including *croquetas*, or a slice of a special omelet, *tortilla*. As does Cándido, José María serves one of the best roast lambs (critics actually prefer his over Cándido's) and suckling pigs in the region. And his lemon sorbet (*sorbete de limón*) is for me the best in town.

All three of these venerable roasting taverns, **Cándido**, **Duque** and **José María** receive one *sol* (sun) from the reliable Repsol guide and a 6.75 or 6/10 in the Gourmetour guide. You can't go wrong with any of the three competitors, so it's a matter of choosing which one suits your personal taste-the product delivered will be essentially of the same high quality.

*For the above-mentioned restaurants, **one must reserve**, particularly on weekends.*

## **GASTRONOMIC OUTPOSTS**

*True gastronomes and wine lovers looking for a sit down, gourmet meal, however, should head straight to one of the following:*

### **DI VINO**

The chic gastronomic outpost of this wine crazed **Lucío del Campo**, just a few steps down the street at Calle de Valdeláguila, 7. He created this new designer done space to house his collection of 11,000 wines and to offer creative gourmet fare.

We dined at the large table to the left of the bar and were delighted by their offering of very reasonably priced gourmet *tostas* (like very large canapés) with highly interesting wine pairings, a unique concept. We shared five large *tostas* (four would have done the trick nicely), the *tosta de Payés* with foie paired with a sauterne from Zamora, a *Tosta de Chapata y Tiznao de Bacalao* (cod) with black olives paired with a hard to find Rioja red, a *Canelón Frito de Rabo de Toro* (oxtail) y *Crema de Patata* paired with a local Duratón red, a "*Tosta de Tramezinin con Torta del Casar* (creamy Extremadura cheese) y *Champiñón* paired with a Tarragona red and a *Tosta de Chapata y Revuelto de Salmón* paired with a rosé from the Penedés. All a real delight, since each yummy dish came paired with unusual Spanish wines that we had never tried before. And the price for this feast is extremely reasonable. DiVino's female sommelier, Henar Puente, won the "Spain



sommelier of the year” award in '04, the first woman ever to have earned this honor ([restaurantedivino.com](http://restaurantedivino.com)).

They offer a fixed price lunch menu in the bar, including wine and coffee for 26€, a four-stage degustation menu for 25€, drinks not included, and a 3-course child's menu for 16€. A place for dedicated gourmands-highly recommended.

Tel: (+34) 921 461 650

### **RESTAURANTE MARACAIBO-CASA SILVANO**

At Paseo Ezequiel González, 25, you'll find another highly regarded (and pescatarian friendly) Segovia restaurant. The restaurant, under Óscar Hernando, a Euro-Toques chef, has received two Repsol suns. Closed Monday. ([www.restaurantemaracaibo.com](http://www.restaurantemaracaibo.com))

Tel: (+34) 921 461 545

### **FOR MORE CASUAL DINING**

Or, if you are watching your budget, choose the more casual and less expensive **Narizotas** with a youngish feel, eclectic menu and outdoor terrace dining in the summer.

### **LA CUEVA DE SAN ESTEBAN**

Very popular with the locals is lively tavern/restaurant behind the Plaza Mayor, **Cuevas-Mesón de San Esteban**, at Valdeáguila, 15, is owned by Lucío del Campo, who won the “Golden Nose” award in '02 as Spain's top sommelier. It serves tapas and raciones at very gentle prices in a slightly bohemian cave-like ambiance of rustic wooden tables in front, plus it has a dining room in the back built from a former “aljibe” or Moorish cistern.

The Restaurant is open Monday-Thursday for lunch from 10:00 to 4:00 and for dinner from 7:30 to midnight. On Thursday to Sunday it's open from 10:00 am to midnight. The Segoviano menu is 24€, including bread and wine. There is also a fixed price lunch menu, including water and bread, for only 10€, served Monday-Friday from 12:00 to 4:00.

### **LA TASQUINA**

If you're looking for a nice selection of interesting wines by the glass accompanied by some delicious tapas, you should head to Segovia's best wine bar, Restaurante Bar Vinoteca **La Tasquina**, Calle Valdeáguila, 3, which runs behind (north of) the Plaza Mayor and the Teatro Juan Bravo. It's quite popular among the locals, and our choice for a glass of wine and tapa before a meal. Its owner, Francisco Plaza, has won the “best sommelier of Castilla-León award in '07. And for budgeters, this *vinoteca* serves a bargain priced *menú del día* for only 15€ in its small dining room.

## LODGING IN SEGOVIA

While there is no 5-star luxury property in the city to date, there are several fine moderate-to-budget options (featured in Rick Steves Spain guide, and thus, very popular).

### EUROSTARS PLAZA ACUEDUCTO

This 4-star boasts an enviable location just 200 meters from the aqueduct. The 72 simply furnished guest quarters sport the usual creature comforts: safe, mini bar, a/c, satellite TV, 2 phones, work desk, lounge chair and queen beds but no pillow menu and closets are quite small. 24-hr room service is provided. Some baths have Jacuzzi showers. Some rooms have aqueduct views, and 8 are triples. Within the hotel you'll find a coffee shop, a small gym and a buffet breakfast is served for 15€.

The hotel also offers free Wi-Fi and a parking garage for an additional charge of 12€ per day. It receives excellent reviews on Booking.com. Please be sure to read through the most recent guest reviews both on Booking and Trip Advisor ([www.eurostarshotels.com](http://www.eurostarshotels.com)).

### PARADOR DE SEGOVIA

For families with small children, I also recommend the state run 4-star Parador, which



has an enviable perch with fantastic views of the city, 2 kilometers outside Segovia. Follow the C-601 toward Valladolid and you'll see the Parador sign on your right just when you reach the city limit sign. It's an easy choice for families, particularly in the summer, as there's an outdoor pool (as well as an indoor one), ping pong table, plenty of garden space for kids to play and thus very popular.

No discernable charm, no designer touches, won't win any design awards (the furnishings need an update as the décor is quite dated) not stunning to contemplate, unlike the historic Paradors housed in ducal palaces, monasteries, convents and castles. It just looks very much like a purpose-built, large brick French Alpine ski lodge (think Chamonix) with a vast lobby. But there's plenty of free parking, a very decent dining room (even has a Eurotoque chef

and notable wine list) with memorable panoramic views of the city from the large floor-to-ceiling windows and a children's menu. Plus these Parador rooms are predictably large, always pleasant, with great baths and most here have balconies, and it represent a good value.

This Parador often has rooms available through the Paradors own discount programs, such as the 5-night Plan or its discount plan for seniors over 55 (Golden Passport) or

those under 35 (Young Getaway), and it offers specials during the slow months of November through February. Check for discounted Fixed Rate, “Tarifa Unica” rates on the Parador booking site. Add 18€/person for the buffet breakfast ([www.parador.es](http://www.parador.es)).

### **PALACIO DE SAN FACUNDO**

This lovely and stylish, recently renovated 4-star boutique hotel, located at Plaza San Facundo, is housed in a converted 16th century palace on a quiet square in the heart of Segovia’s old quarter, just 100 meters from the Plaza Mayor and mid-way between the Plaza Mayor and the Aqueduct-a very convenient location for easy sightseeing. It has 29 guest quarters, all equipped with safe, A/C, hair dryers, free Wi-Fi, flat screen TV, some four-poster beds and glistening baths. The hotel also has an elevator, a handy garage and a bar-café found in the beautiful former cloisters, surrounded by granite columns and covered with glass roof ([hotelpalaciosanfacundo.com](http://hotelpalaciosanfacundo.com)).

It’s become quite popular due to its really convenient location (and parking), and you’ll notice that the guest book has been filled with comments and pictures of celebrities, local and international, who have recently been guests. Prices do run on the high side compared to the properties listed below, but there’s a lot to like here.

Tel: (+34) 921 463 061

### **HOTEL CÁNDIDO**

This 4-star superior property was opened ’06 by the owners of famed Mesón Cándido and offers 94 rooms and 10 suites, all well appointed with the usual 4-star amenities, including a pillow menu, internet access, flat screen TV, a free mini bar (soft drinks, juices, water), some four poster beds, baths with separate shower, plus restaurant, free Spa with indoor pool, Jacuzzi and gym.

This is now my lodging of choice for families arriving by car, and it receives excellent Trip Advisor and Booking reviews. However, it’s not within the Old Quarter but instead located in the new section of the city on Avenida Gerardo Diego, about 2 kilometers from the Aqueduct. So its location (as well as the Parador) doesn’t make it handy for those who come by train.

It best serves families or couples with a car; those who want spacious grounds, attractive public rooms, plush accommodations, a restaurant and a heated pool.

This 4-star is also very competitively priced-can sometimes be as economical as staying at the Parador. And the rooms are more sumptuously appointed than the Parador ([www.candidohotel.es](http://www.candidohotel.es))

Tel: (+34) 921 413 972

### **HOTEL SAN ANTONIO EL REAL**

This is another 4-star property that sits outside the Historic Quarter with free parking but from here guests have a 15 to 20 minute walk to reach the Plaza Mayor. It is housed in a section of a designated National Monument, the 15th century Monasterio de San Antonio el Real. It offers 51 smallish rooms, some with queen and king size beds, all outfitted

with free Wi-Fi, CD and DVD players, flat screen TV, safe and mini bar. The hotel also has a bar/café, restaurant and small gym.

While the rate of 100€ or under provides a decent value, the hotel does not provide a truly luxurious experience. Some guests complain of thin walls and unpleasant piped music in the common areas. Please read the guest reviews on Booking and Trip Advisor to compare this property to the others listed above ([www.hotelsanantonioelreal.com](http://www.hotelsanantonioelreal.com)).

Tel: (+34) 921 431 574

### **HOSTERÍA PALACIO AYALA BERGANZA**

Converted 15th century palace and former atelier of the 20th century Impressionist painter Zuloaga. Not a picture perfect location, in the once Moorish San Millán quarter, next to the Romanesque church of San Millán, but only a five-minute walk from the aqueduct, 300 meters away. The 15 luxurious, country style rooms and 2 suites are designer-pretty and very spacious, particularly the suites. Rooms have a 37" flat screen TV, free Wi-Fi and A/C.

If you need garage parking, a nearby public garage gives a discounted rate to hotel guests ([www.hosteriaayalaberganza.com](http://www.hosteriaayalaberganza.com)).

Tel: (+34) 921 460 448

If you're in need of wine and *tapas* without venturing further beyond, the hotel offers an adjacent Taberna. And if you need Internet access, you'll find a computer at the reception area. Not much public space here save a small sitting area and breakfast room (breakfast costs an additional 11€), but there's a pleasant interior garden.

### **INFANTA ISABEL**

If you want to be smack in the heart of the town, choose this well maintained Sercotel property with 37 rooms, some with balconies overlooking the Plaza Mayor. It's a perfect "Rick Steves" sort of lodging (in a good sense), not luxurious but dependable, serviceable, functional, friendly, with a very handy café downstairs.

A reconverted late 19th century style home, its wrought iron balconies look out on both the Cathedral and the lively Plaza Mayor. The guest rooms have reproduction French Empire style furnishings, parquet floors, pretty, unique headboards with all the necessary amenities: A/C, satellite TV, mini bar, free Wi-Fi, internet corner and safes, baby sitter on request. Parking is available. The corner rooms are said to be the most capacious ([www.hotelinfantaisabel.com](http://www.hotelinfantaisabel.com)).

The downstairs café and restaurant, **Casares**, is an inexpensive and attractive spot to have coffee, drinks and *tapas* or a full meal of the famous *cochinillo asado*. See [www.restaurantecasares.com](http://www.restaurantecasares.com).

Tel: (+34) 921 461 300

## **APARTMENTS**

### **CASA VILLENA**

These 3-key tourist apartments provide exceptional comfort in a beautiful setting for those who travel to the city by car. They are found down in the Eresma valley, San Marcos quarter, below the Alcázar, with views of this Disney-perfect castle looming above.

The 5 apartments sleep from 2-4 people and have complete kitchens, nice furnishings, Living room with television, double bedrooms and new baths. Minimum stay is 2 nights ([www.casavillena.com](http://www.casavillena.com)).

Tel: (+34) 619 709 490 / 921 447 176

## **A RURAL RETREAT JUST 6 KM OUTSIDE THE CITY**

### **LA CASONA DE ESPIRDO**

This charming 3-star inn, a renovated 19th century country home, can be found in the well-kept, tranquil village of Espirido, just 6 km east of Segovia. It offers only 8 spacious rooms with beamed ceilings, a/c, TV and complimentary Wi-Fi. One ground floor room is handicapped accessible. The friendly owners, Carmen and Juan Mari, offer their guests a fixed price dinner for only 17€ in the dining room with fireplace, but no lunch is served, since most guests have lunch in Segovia while touring. In the summer dinners are served on the porch facing the garden.

For a stay of more than 2 nights, breakfast is included in the rate. Rates here are quite reasonable. The inn is a member of Rusticae, is recommended in the red Michelin guide and is represented by Inns of Spain. ([www.espirido.com](http://www.espirido.com)).

Tel: (+34) 921 449 012