

# Cuenca

Castile-La Mancha · Spain

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



## Overview

Cuenca is a small walled city in central-eastern Spain, built on a rocky ridge between two deep river gorges. Its old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and it is famous for the "hanging houses" that overhang the cliff.

It is a quiet, atmospheric place with narrow streets, a Gothic cathedral and several modern art museums. It suits a day trip or one night from Madrid or Valencia.

## When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best seasons, with warm sunny days. Summers are hot in the day, and winters are cold, with frost and occasional snow.

Holy Week (*Semana Santa*) is the main event, with processions through the old town. The Religious Music Week is held around the same time.

| MONTH | CONDITIONS | DAY °C avg / max | NIGHT °C avg / min | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | 9° / 16°<br>Feels like 4° | 0° / -5° | Dry air |
| February | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 11° / 18°<br>Feels like 6° | 0° / -5° | Dry air |
| March | Good<br>Good for hiking | 14° / 22°<br>Feels like 10° | 2° / -3° | Dry air |
| April | Great<br>Great for hiking | 17° / 25°<br>Feels like 13° | 5° / -1° | Dry air |
| May | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 22° / 29°<br>Feels like 18° | 8° / 3° | Dry air |
| June | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 28° / 34° | 13° / 7° | ☀ 20 sunny days · Dry air · UV 8 (Very high) |
| July | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 32° / 36° | 16° / 11° | ☀ 28 sunny days · Dry air · UV 9 (Very high) |
| August | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 31° / 36° | 16° / 11° | ☀ 24 sunny days · Dry air |
| September | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 25° / 31° | 12° / 7° | Dry air |
| October | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 20° / 27°<br>Feels like 17° | 9° / 3° | Dry air |
| November | Good<br>Good for hiking | 13° / 20°<br>Feels like 9° | 3° / -2° | Dry air |
| December | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 10° / 16°<br>Feels like 6° | 1° / -4° | Dry air |

Best months: May, June, July, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

## Top sights

- A Casas Colgadas are the famous hanging houses, with wooden balconies over the gorge. One of them houses a museum of abstract art.
- B Catedral de Cuenca is one of the first Gothic cathedrals in Spain, with an unusual façade.
- C Museo de Arte Abstracto Español is a museum of Spanish abstract art, inside the hanging houses.
- The Puente de San Pablo is a footbridge over the Huécar gorge, with views of the old town.
- The Plaza Mayor is the main square, with the cathedral on one side and the town hall on the other.
- The Mangana Tower is a clock tower that is a symbol of the old town.



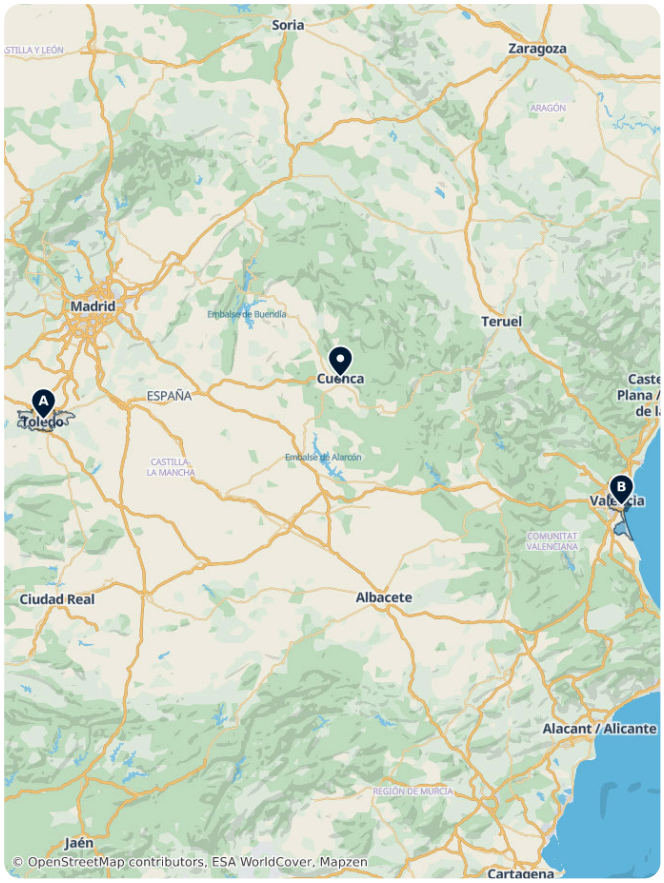

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## What to experience

- Walk across the Puente de San Pablo for the best view of the hanging houses.
- Take a short walk along the Huécar river gorge, below the old town.
- Try the local dishes in a restaurant on the Plaza Mayor or the old streets.

## Day trips

- **Ciudad Encantada** (about 30 km, 40 minutes by car): a park of strange rock formations carved by water and wind.
- **Serranía de Cuenca** (about 30 to 60 km): pine forests, rivers and walking trails.
- A Toledo (about 160 km, 2 hours by car): a historic walled city.
- B Valencia (about 200 km, 1 hour by train): a large Mediterranean city.




## Where to explore

Other places nearby:

- **Historic cities**: Toledo and Guadalajara.
- **Big cities**: Madrid and Valencia.

## Getting there

- **By air**: There is no commercial airport. Madrid and Valencia airports are the closest.
- **By train**: High-speed trains from Madrid take about an hour, and trains also run from Valencia. The high-speed station is outside the old town, so you need a bus or taxi to reach the center. Book on Renfe.
- **By bus**: Coaches run to Madrid, Valencia and nearby towns.

## Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town is small, but it is on a steep hill, with stairs and slopes. Wear comfortable shoes.
- **Public transport**: City buses link the upper town, the lower town and the train stations.

## Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

**Moderate**

The old town is small, but it sits on a steep ridge with stairs and slopes.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Low**

Steep streets make cycling hard in the old town.

# Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the old town. A car helps for Ciudad Encantada and the Serranía.
- **Parking**: Use a car park in the lower town, then walk or take a bus up.
- **Restrictions**: Car access to the old town is limited.

# Food & drink

Cuenca's food is hearty, made for cold winters. *Morteruelo* is a thick pâté of game and liver, *zarajos* are grilled lamb intestines wrapped on vine shoots, and *ajoarriero* is a garlic and cod dish.

The local sweet is *alajú*, made with almonds and honey, and *resolí* is a coffee-flavored liqueur.

## What to eat & drink

### BREAKFAST

**Churros · Churros con Chocolate**
Fried dough sticks served with a thick, dark hot chocolate for dipping — a classic Spanish breakfast or late-night snack.

### LUNCH

**Paella Valenciana**
A saffron-scented rice dish cooked in a wide, shallow pan. The traditional Valencian version uses chicken, rabbit, and green beans — best eaten at midday.

**Gazpacho**
A cold, blended soup of raw tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, garlic, olive oil, and vinegar, originally from Andalusia. Served as a drink or a starter, especially in summer.

### DINNER

**Pulpo a la Gallega**
Boiled octopus sliced onto a wooden board and dressed with olive oil, coarse salt, and smoked paprika — a signature dish of Galicia.

### SNACKS & STREET FOOD

**Jamón Ibérico**
Dry-cured ham from acorn-fed Iberian pigs, sliced paper-thin and eaten on its own or with bread. The finest grade, jamón ibérico de bellota, is one of Spain's most prized products.

**Tortilla Española**
A thick potato and egg omelette, served warm or at room temperature, found in virtually every bar in Spain. Often eaten as a tapa or a quick meal.

**Patatas Bravas**
Fried potato chunks served with a spicy tomato sauce or aioli — one of the most common tapas across the country.

**Pintxos**
Small snacks anchored to slices of bread with a toothpick, the Basque Country's answer to tapas. Found in bar counters across San Sebastián and Bilbao, often with elaborate toppings.

**Croquetas**
Crispy breaded cylinders with a creamy béchamel filling, typically made with jamón, bacalà (salt cod), or mushrooms.

DRINKS

Rioja Wine · Vino de Rioja

Spain's best-known wine region produces full-bodied reds from Tempranillo grapes, aged in oak. The crianza, reserva, and gran reserva labels indicate increasing age and complexity.

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## Safety & health

Cuenca is a very safe city. The old town is steep, so take care on stairs and wet cobbles, and bring warm clothes in winter. The altitude is about 1,000 meters, so summer nights are cool.

## History

Cuenca was a Moorish fortress until it was taken by the Christian king Alfonso VIII in 1177. The Gothic cathedral and the hanging houses date from the following centuries.

The city grew rich from wool and textiles, then declined. In the 1960s it became a center for abstract artists, and the old town was listed by UNESCO in 1996.

## Country facts

Quick practical facts for Spain at a glance:

CURRENCY

**EUR €**

EMERGENCY

**112**

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

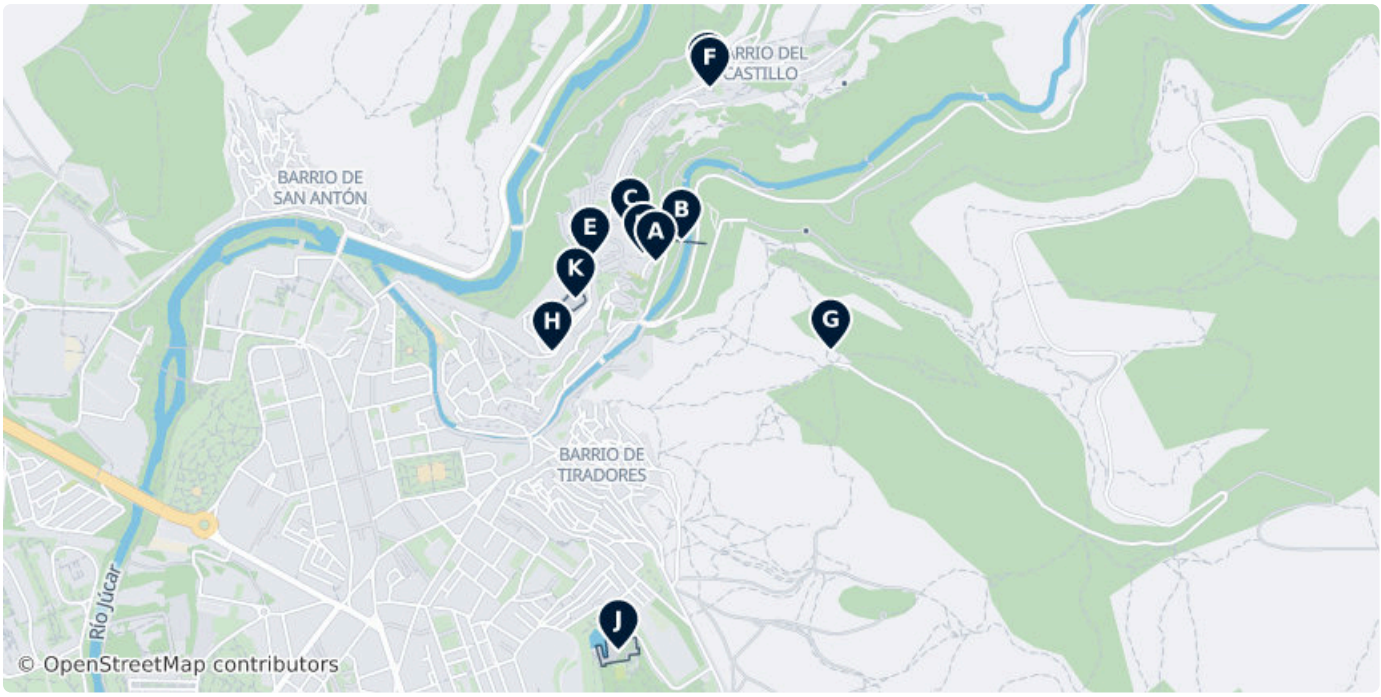
Spanish

TAP WATER

**Safe to drink**

# Cuenca Essentials

Cuenca is defined by its dramatic position atop a limestone spur between the Júcar and Huécar river gorges. This selection features the 14th-century Casas Colgadas, which cling to the cliff edge, and the landmark Cuenca Cathedral, the first Gothic cathedral in Spain. The list covers historical defenses like the Castillo ruins and Arco de Bezudo, modernist culture at the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art, and panoramic views from the Cerro del Socorro viewpoint.






## A Hanging Houses of Cuenca

The Casas Colgadas is a complex of houses located in Cuenca, Spain. In the past, houses of this kind were frequent along the eastern border...

2 Calle de los Canónigos, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07784, -2.12834)



## B Puente de San Pablo

A 1902 iron footbridge spanning the Huécar gorge. It replaces a 16th-century stone structure and provides the primary viewpoint for the Hanging Houses.

Puente de San Pablo, 16001 Cuenca, Spain
(40.07832, -2.12760)



## C Cuenca Cathedral

The Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Julian is a Roman Catholic cathedral in the city of Cuenca, Spain.

1 Calle del Obispo Valero, Cuenca 16001, Spain (40.07856, -2.12906)



## D Museum of Spanish Abstract Art

The Museo de Arte Abstracto Español is a museum in Cuenca, Spain established in 1966.

Calle de San Martín, 16001 Cuenca, Spain (40.07801, -2.12869)

march.es/arte/ingles/cuenca/, + 34 969 21 29 83



## E Ayuntamiento de Cuenca

An 18th-century Baroque building featuring a three-arched portal that connects the Plaza Mayor with the lower streets of the old town.

1 Plaza Mayor, Cuenca 16001, Spain (40.07793, -2.13021)

ayuntamiento.cuenca.es, +34 969176100

## F Castillo y restos Murallas

The ruins of a 13th-century fortress and medieval defensive walls located at the highest point of Cuenca's old town.

Calle del Trabuco (40.08163, -2.12680)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

## G Mirador Cerro del Socorro

A high-altitude viewpoint featuring a monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, offering panoramic views of the medieval city and surrounding river gorges.

Carretera del Cerro del Socorro, 16001 Cuenca, Spain (40.07592, -2.12335)

## H Túneles de Alfonso VIII

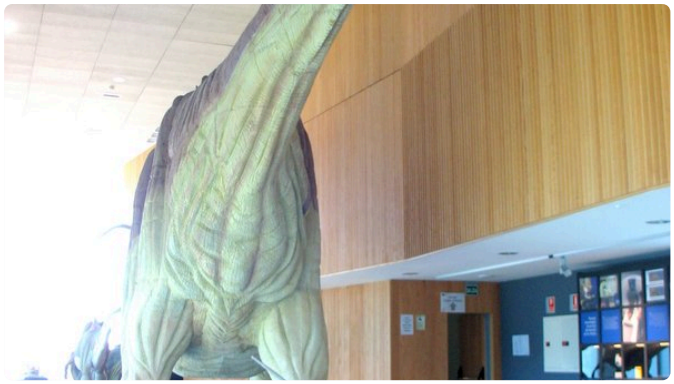
A network of subterranean passages and galleries used as air-raid shelters during the Spanish Civil War.

Calle Alfonso VIII 86, Cuenca (40.07588, -2.13129)

## I Arco de Bezudo

One of the remaining 16th-century gateways to the city, situated adjacent to the castle ruins at the top of the historical quarter.

19 Calle del Trabuco, Cuenca 16001, Spain (40.08174, -2.12687)



## J Museo Paleontológico de Castilla-La Mancha

This museum displays significant fossil finds from the Las Hoyas and Lo Hueco sites, including life-sized dinosaur reconstructions and regional prehistoric remains.

Calle del Río Gritos 5, 16004 Cuenca (40.06937, -2.12940)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mo | Closed |
| Tu–Sa | 10:00–14:00, 16:00–19:00 |
| Su | 10:00–14:00 |

mupaclm.es, +34 969 271 600

## K Museo de las Ciencias de Castilla - La Mancha

Housed in a former convent, this museum features interactive exhibits on astronomy, geology, and biology, alongside a planetarium.

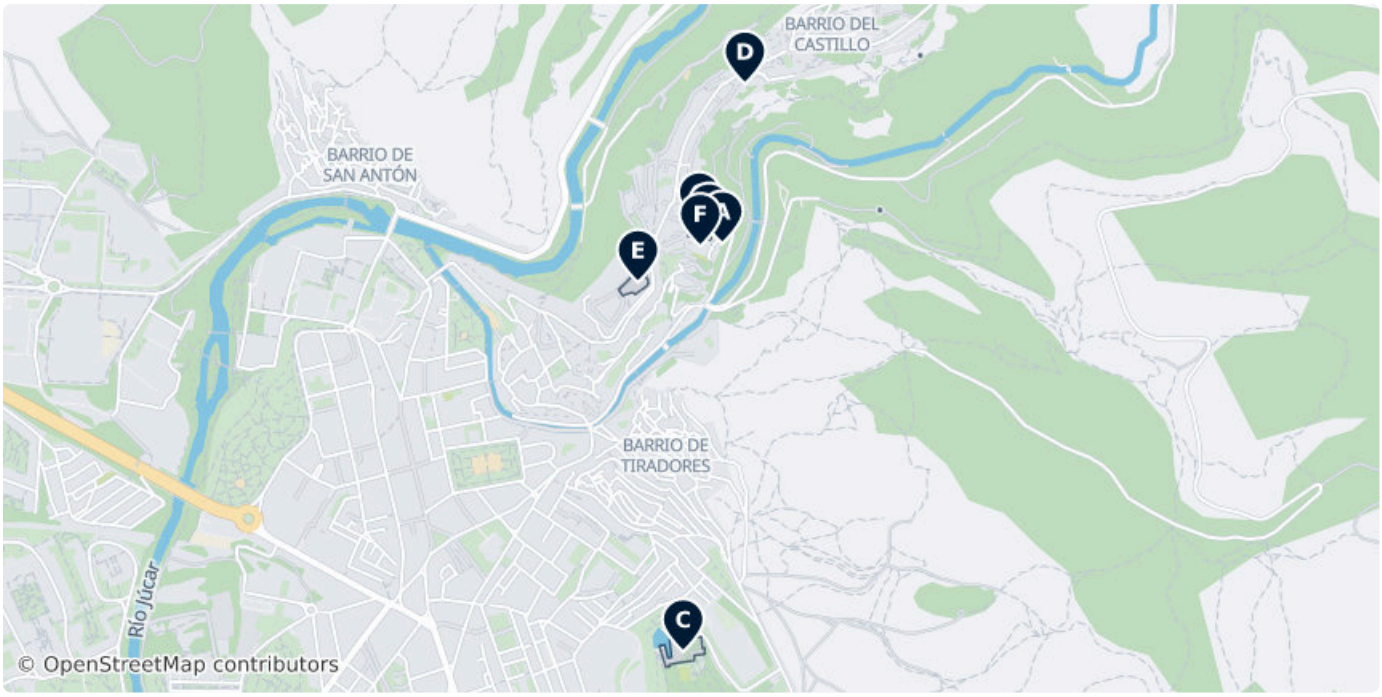
Plaza de la Merced 1, 16001 Cuenca (40.07704, -2.13062)

| | |
|---|---|
| Tu–Sa | 10:00–14:00, 16:00–19:00 |
| Su | 10:00–14:00 |

museocienciasclm.es, +34 969240320

# Museums of Cuenca

Cuenca's museum scene is defined by its dramatic location atop limestone cliffs and its preservation of historic architecture. The city hosts the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art within the 14th-century Hanging Houses, a landmark of Gothic design. Beyond art, the region's natural history is showcased at the Paleontological Museum, featuring dinosaur fossils from local sites like Las Hoyas. Other key institutions include the Museum of Cuenca, focusing on Roman archaeology, and the Science Museum, housed in a former convent complex.






## A Hanging Houses of Cuenca

The Casas Colgadas is a complex of houses located in Cuenca, Spain. In the past, houses of this kind were frequent along the eastern border...

2 Calle de los Canónigos, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07784, -2.12834)

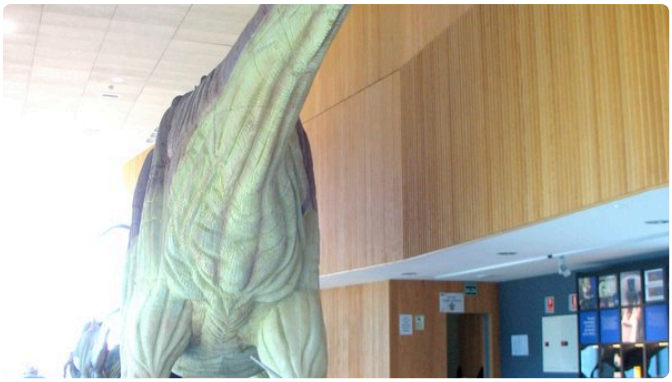


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Calle de San Martín, 16001 Cuenca, Spain
(40.07801, -2.12869)

march.es/arte/ingles/cuenca/, + 34 969 21 29 83



## C Museo Paleontológico de Castilla-La Mancha

This museum displays significant fossil collections from the Las Hoyas and Lo Hueco sites. Exhibits cover the Earth's history through the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic eras, featuring life-sized dinosaur replicas and interactive displays focused on regional evolutionary history.

Calle del Río Gritos 5, 16004 Cuenca (40.06937, -2.12940)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mo | Closed |
| Tu–Sa | 10:00–14:00, 16:00–19:00 |
| Su | 10:00–14:00 |

mupaclm.es, +34 969 271 600

## D Fundación Antonio Pérez

Located in the 17th-century Convent of Las Carmelitas, this contemporary art center houses the personal collection of Antonio Pérez. The galleries focus on 'found objects' and works by prominent 20th-century Spanish artists, including members of the influential El Paso group.

Calle de Julián Romero 20, 16001 Cuenca (40.08116, -2.12772)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mo–Su | 11:00–20:00 |

fundacionantonioperez.com, +34 969 23 06 19

## E Museo de las Ciencias de Castilla - La Mancha

Housed in a historic complex that once served as an asylum and convent, this museum explores astronomy, geology, and biodiversity. It features a planetarium and interactive exhibits detailing the formation of the universe and the natural history of the Castilla-La Mancha region.

Plaza de la Merced 1, 16001 Cuenca (40.07704, -2.13062)

| | |
|---|---|
| Tu–Sa | 10:00–14:00, 16:00–19:00 |
| Su | 10:00–14:00 |

museocienciasclm.es, +34 969240320

## F Museo de Cuenca

Situated in the 14th-century Casa del Curato, this archaeological museum documents the province's history from the Paleolithic era to the modern age. Highlights include Roman statues, mosaics, and artifacts recovered from the ancient cities of Segóbriga, Ercávica, and Valeria.

12 Calle de los Canónigos, Cuenca 16001, Spain (40.07779, -2.12893)

cultura.castillalamancha.es/museos/nuestros-museos/m...

## Palacio Episcopal

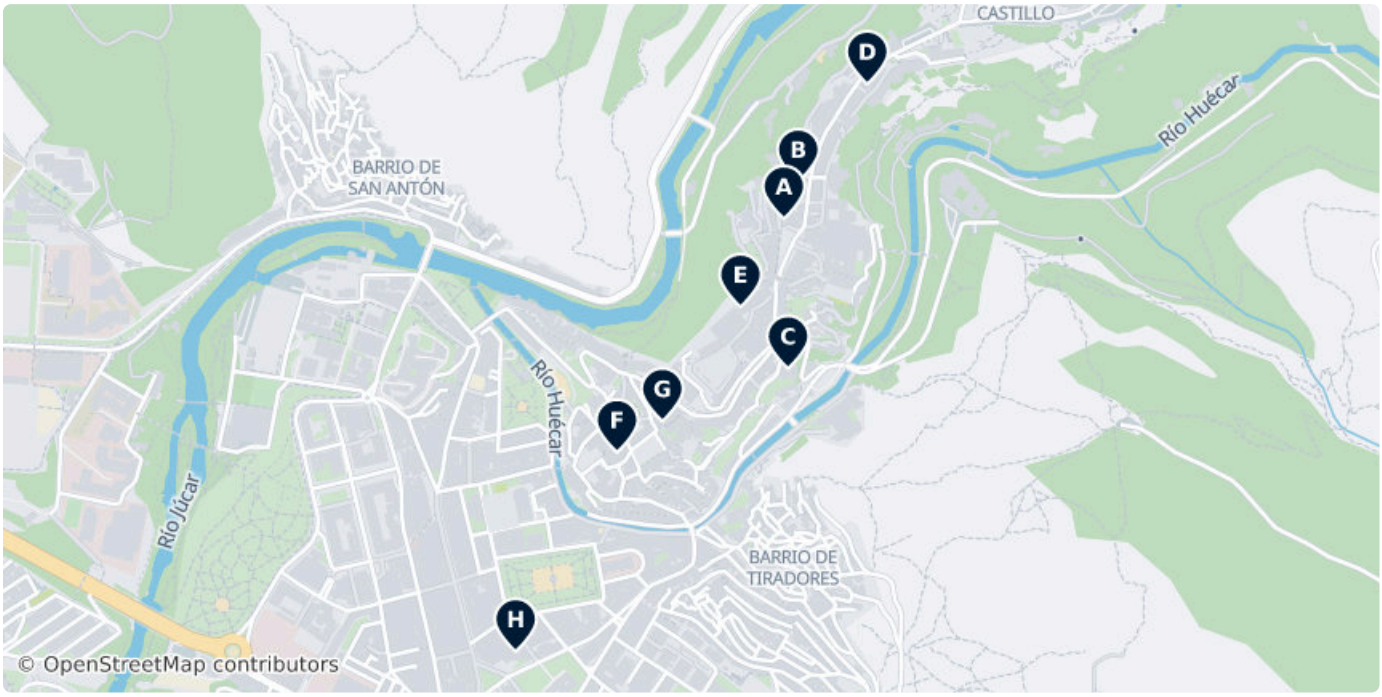
This 13th-century palace houses the Diocesan Museum's collection of religious art. The treasury includes liturgical goldwork, Flemish tapestries, and significant paintings, including two original works by El Greco and a collection of 16th-century altarpieces.

12 Calle de los Canónigos, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07823, -2.12896)

cultura.castillalamancha.es/patrimonio/catalogo-patrimo...

# Historic Churches of Cuenca

Cuenca's historic center is defined by its religious heritage, featuring a collection of churches and convents dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries. This list highlights significant sites like the early parish of Santa Cruz and the mid-18th-century Convento de San Pedro de las Justinianas. These landmarks showcase the city's architectural evolution, from medieval foundations to elaborate Baroque facades and Renaissance structures that now serve as both active places of worship and cultural spaces.






## A Convento de San Pedro de las Justinianas

Mid-18th-century convent founded by Canon Lujando, showcasing late Baroque religious architecture typical of the region.

2 Calle de Severo Catalina, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07884, -2.13006)

## B Iglesia de San Nicolás de Bari

A historic church with origins dating back to the 15th century, featuring architectural elements modified over several centuries.

1 Plaza de San Nicolás, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07941, -2.12977)

## C Iglesia de Santa Cruz

One of Cuenca's original parishes, this building represents the early ecclesiastical history and medieval expansion of the city.

(40.07652, -2.12997)

## D Iglesia de San Pedro

An 18th-century church notable for its unique octagonal floor plan, built atop the remains of a former medieval temple.

(40.08092, -2.12837)

## E Iglesia de la Merced

A 16th-century church featuring a prominent 18th-century Baroque facade, originally part of a Mercedarian convent.

4 Plaza de la Merced, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07747, -2.13094)

## F Iglesia del Salvador

An 18th-century church rebuilt on medieval foundations, serving as a significant site for the city's Holy Week processions.

1 Plaza del Salvador, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07522, -2.13343)

## G Iglesia de San Andrés

A 16th-century Renaissance church that currently functions as a cultural venue and headquarters for several religious brotherhoods.

7 Callejón de los Artículos, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07571, -2.13252)

## H Iglesia de San Esteban

A local parish church featuring a blend of historical architectural styles and modern wheelchair-accessible facilities.

3 Plaza de la Hispanidad, Cuenca 16001, Spain
(40.07214, -2.13548)

## DATA SOURCES

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|---|---|
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