

Visit to the Alcazaba of Málaga

History

Constructed on the ruins of a Roman fortification during the reign of Abd-al-Rahman I, the first Emir of Cordoba, in around 756-780AD, the Alcazaba's original purpose was as a defence against pirates, thanks its commanding position with views over the city, down to the sea and across to Africa.

The fortress was rebuilt by the Sultan of Granada, Badis Al-Ziri, from 1057-1063AD, while the fortified double walls that connect the Alcazaba to the neighbouring Castillo de Gibralfaro, over the Coracha ridge, were built by the Nasrid ruler Yusuf I in the 14th century, when most of the inner palace was also refurbished. As a palace, it was home to a number of Moorish rulers.



View of the Alcazaba

The Alcazaba has a distinct feel from its more famous, younger neighbours, the Alcazar of Sevilla and the Alhambra of Granada. It was already three centuries old when the others were build. After the reconquest, it fell into decay until restoration work began in 1933, and continues slowly today. Two of its original three walls remain, as well as over 100 towers and three palaces.

Visit

The attendees that would like to join us will visit the Alcazaba, an impressive group of buildings built on a hill and adapted to its shape, dating from the 11th century. They formed the palace-fortress of the Moslem rulers of the city.



Courtyard of the Orange Trees

One of the first researchers, the professor L. Torres de Balbá, discovered the fortifications at the entrance, forming part of the city walls, along with the *Puerta de la Bóveda* (Gate of the Vault) built in an angular way to increase its defensive value, and also the *Puerta de las Columnas* (Gate of the columns) built using Roman marble columns to hold up the Moorish horseshoe arches.

The first walled precinct, the Lower Precinct, is reached through another gate, the *Torre del Cristo* (Christ's Tower), so called due to its use as a chapel for many years. The precinct is a wide space, following the contours of the hill, completely surrounding the upper precinct, with a *Patio de Armas* (Weapon Courtyard), now a garden, a defensive bulwark overlooking the coast and its eastern end leading to the Coracha (a walled part) which connects it to the Gibralfaro, a castle built in the 14th century to house the troops and protect the Alcazaba.

The second and upper precinct, the Walled Precinct is strongly defended at both ends, to the west by the *Puerta de los Cuartos de Granada* (Gate of the Halls of Granada), its only access, now restored, and to the east by the *Torre del Homenaje* (Homage Tower) consolidated in its semi-ruinous state.

The Gibralfaro Palace is inside this precinct and built in the 11th, 13th and 14th centuries. Besides, there are the houses of servants, dating from the 11th century. All this area has now been restored, and there is an exhibition about Moslem ceramics and pottery. In the Gibralfaro Palace, there are three consecutive courtyards, the first, the *Patio de los Surtidores* (The Courtyard of the Jets of Water) with a row of calphal arches leading to the Torre de la



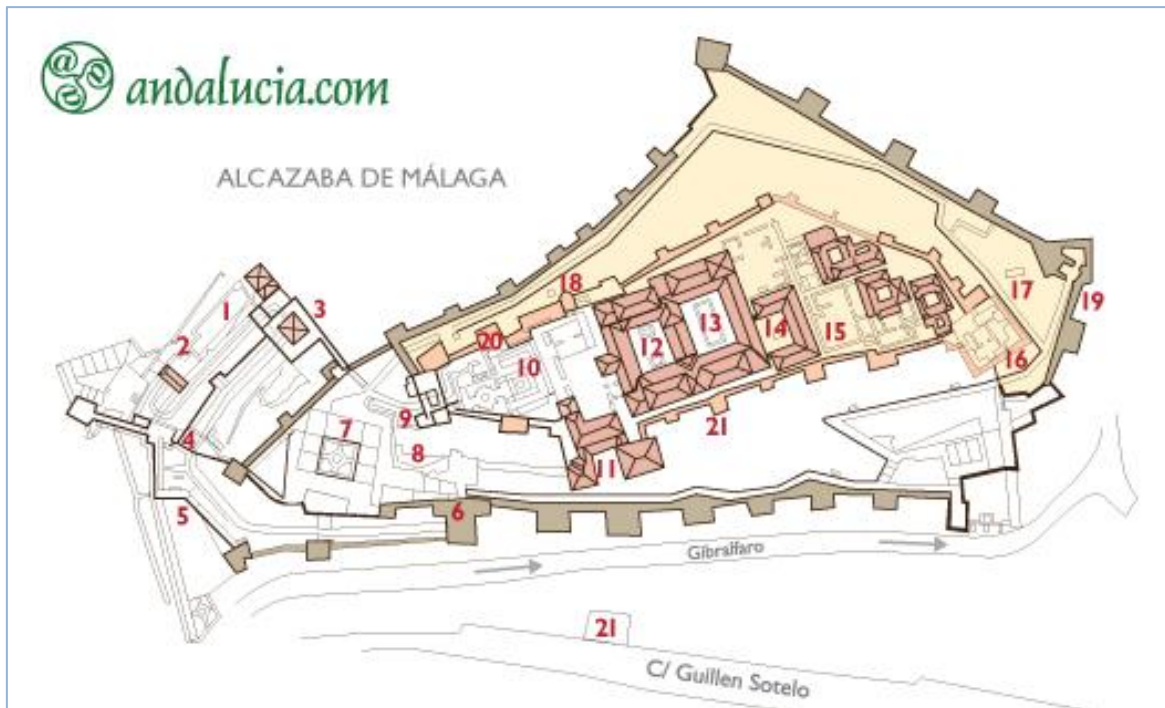
Courtyard of the Pool

Armadura Mudéjar (Tower of the Mudejar Armor) with a 16th century carved wooden ceiling, and the *Torre de Maldonado* (Maldonado's Tower) with lovely marble columns and showing a splendid view of the city.

The Nazari palace is reached through a restored pavilion, and contains the *Patio de los Naranjos* (Courtyard of the orange trees) and the *Patio de la Alberca* (Courtyard of the Pool), behind there are the quarters of servants.

The Alcazaba was mostly built of limestone, which crumbles easily, and has required frequent rebuilding throughout its existence. The most extensive restoration was carried out by Badis, the Ziri king of Granada in the Taifa era, from years 1040 to 1065. He fortified and enlarged it so extensively that some chroniclers considered him the original builder. The greater part of the palace dates from 14th century, and it was largely restored in 1930.

Map of the Alcazaba de Málaga



Key

1. Entrance
2. Way in
3. First Angled Gate - Puerta de la Bóveda (Gate of the Vault)
4. Puerta de las Columnas (Gate of the Columns)
5. Exit to the Haza de la Alcazaba
6. Second Angled Gate - Torre del Cristo (Christ's Tower)
7. Plaza de Armas
8. Silo
9. Puerta de los Cuartos de Granada (Gate of the Halls of Granada) leading to upper precinct
10. Silo, Garden and Patio de los Surtidores (Courtyard of the Jets of Water)
11. Torre de Maldonado (Maldonado Tower) and Torre de la Armadura Mudéjar Tower of the Mudejar Armor)
12. Patio de los Naranjos (Courtyards of the Orange Trees)
13. Patio de la Alberca (Courtyard of the Pool)
14. Patio del Aljibe (Courtyard of the Aljibe)
15. 11th Century dwellings
16. Torre del Homenaje (Tower of the Homage)
17. Well
18. Dungeons
19. Access to the Coracha and the Gibralfaro
20. Toilets
21. Access to lifts