

Chapter 1 : Andalusia, a region full of history - Glamour Houses

The Houses & Palaces of Andalusia [Patr Espinosa De Los Monteros, Francesco Venturi] on blog.quintoapp.com
**FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. With riches from New World conquests pouring into Seville in the 16th to 18th centuries, the Spanish nobility of Andalusia built exquisite houses and palaces.*

These buildings make Andalusia visually unique in Europe and have to be classed as its greatest architectural glory. Nor is the legacy of the Islamic era just a matter of the big, eye-catching monuments: It spread rapidly to the north, east and west, reaching Spain in In the Damascus- based Omayyad dynasty of caliphs, rulers of the Muslim world, were overthrown by the revolutionary Abbasids, who shifted the caliphate to Baghdad. Aged only 20, he made for Morocco and thence Spain. Omayyad architecture in Spain was enriched by styles and techniques taken up from the Christian Visigoths, whom the Omayyads replaced as rulers of the Iberian Peninsula. Chief among these was what became almost the hallmark of Spanish Islamic architecture – the horseshoe arch – so called because it narrows at the bottom like a horseshoe, rather than being a simple semicircle. Instead it created a broad horizontal space recalling the yards of desert homes that formed the original Islamic prayer spaces, and conjured up visions of palm groves with mesmerising lines of two-tier, red-and-white-striped arches in the prayer hall. The most important enlargement was carried out in the s by Al-Hakim II, who created a magnificent new mihrab, decorated with superb Byzantine mosaics imitating those of the Great Mosque of Damascus, one of the outstanding 8th-century Syrian Omayyad buildings. In front of the mihrab Al-Hakim II added a new royal prayer enclosure, the maksura. This transverse axis, at right angles to the central nave, creates the T-plan that features strongly in many mosques. At this early stage of Hispano-Islamic art, the plant and floral decorations were still relatively naturalistic: Medina Azahara, named after his favourite wife, Az-Zahra, was planned as a royal residence, palace and seat of government, set away from the hubbub of the city in the same manner as the Abbasid royal city of Samarra, north of Baghdad. Relatively few other buildings survive from the Omayyad era in Spain, but the little 10th-century mezquita in remote Almonaster la Real is one of the loveliest Islamic buildings in the country. Though later converted into a church, the mosque remains more or less intact. The Alcazaba at Malaga, though rebuilt later, still has a group of 11th century rooms with a caliphate-style row of horseshoe arches. The bays where the naves meet the qibla wall were surmounted by cupolas or stucco muqarnas stalactite or honeycomb vaulting composed of hundreds or thousands of tiny cells or niches. On walls, large brick panels with designs of interwoven lozenges were created. Three stages in the life of the Giralda: From the late 12th Century, tall, Square, richly decorated minarets started to appear. The Giralda , the minaret of the Seville mosque, is the masterpiece of surviving Almohad buildings in Spain, with its beautiful brick panels. This tall, austere brick building is based on an unusual octagonal plan inscribed within a Square. Muqarnas honeycomb or stalactite vaulting originated in Syria or Iran: The Nasrid rulers lavished most of their art-and-architecture budget on one single palace complex of their very own – but what a palace complex it is. The juxtaposition of fountains, pools and gardens with domed reception halls reached a degree of perfection suggestive of the paradise described in the Quran. A huge variety of densely ornamented arches adorns the Alhambra. The Nasrid architects refined existing decorative techniques to new peaks of delicacy, elegance and harmony. Plaited star patterns in tile mosaic have since covered walls the length and breadth of the Islamic world, and Nasrid Granada is the dominant artistic influence in the Maghreb Northwest Africa even today. Yusuf created the Palacio de Comares Comares Palace. Mohammed V takes credit for the Palacio de los Leones Palace of the Lions , focused on the famed Patio de los Leones Patio of the Lions , with its colonnaded gallery and pavilions and a central fountain channelling water through the mouths of 12 stone lions. One hallmark of Mudejar style is geometric decorative designs in brick or stucco, often further embellished with tiles. Elaborately carved timber ceilings are also a mark of the Mudejar hand. True Mudejar artesonados generally bear floral or simple geometric patterns. Mozarabic architecture was, unsurprisingly, much influenced by Islamic styles. It includes, for instance, the horseshoe arch. The majority of Mozarabic architecture is found in northern Spain: Designs were fairly simple, with low, rectangular towers and no outer rings of walls. Two of the finest caliphate-era

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forts are the oval one at Banos de la Encina in Jaen province and the hilltop Alcazaba dominating Almeria. Taifa Period In this 11th-century era of internal strife, many towns bolstered their defences. A fine example is Niebla in Huelva province, which was enclosed by walls with massive round and rectangular towers. So was the Albayzin area of Granada. Big rectangular corner towers such as those at Malaga and Antequera suggest the influence of the Christian enemy. Images added by the Islamic-Arts.

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