

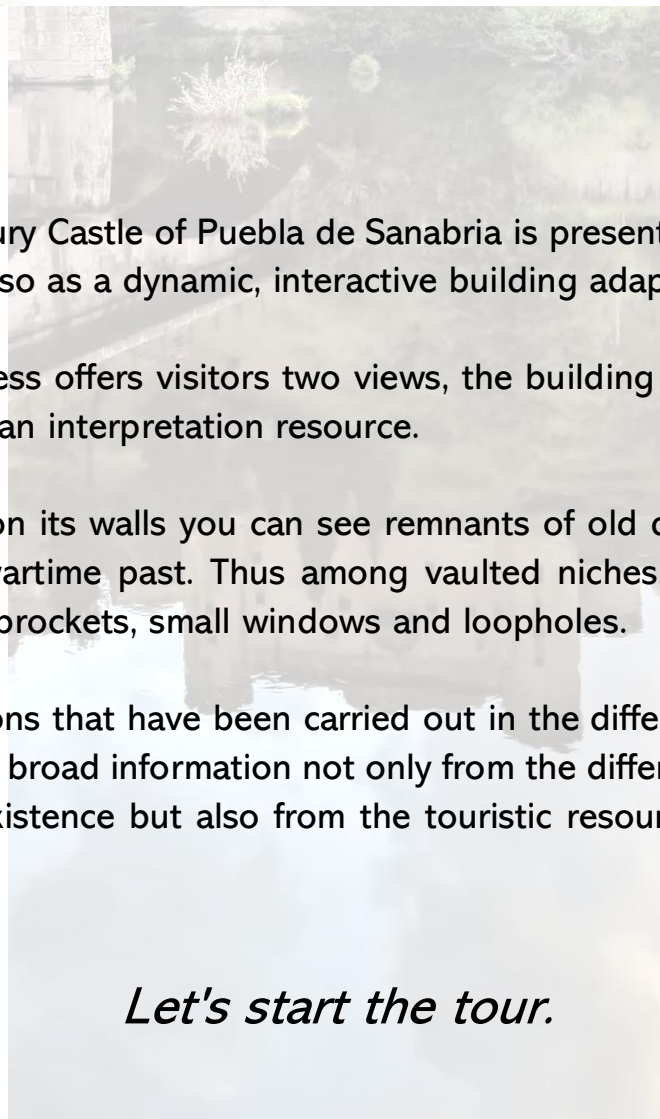
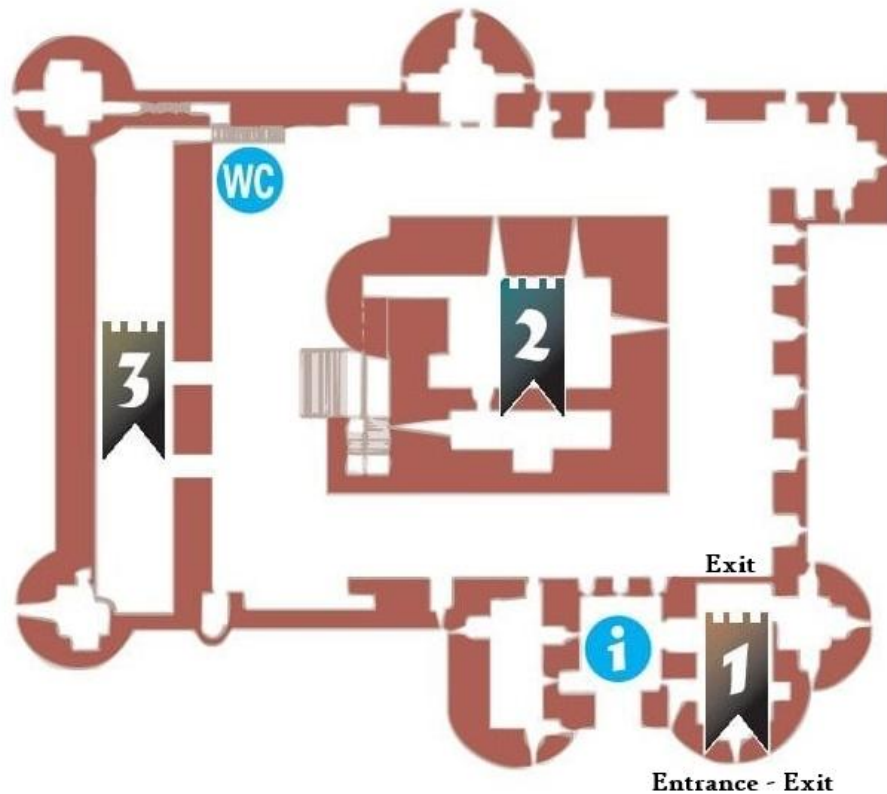
Visiting the Castle of Puebla de Sanabria



Ayuntamiento
Puebla de Sanabria



www.pueblasanabria.com



In the 21st century Castle of Puebla de Sanabria is presented as a monument that respects its age and also as a dynamic, interactive building adapted to the times.

This Renaissance fortress offers visitors two views, the building as the monument itself and the monument as an interpretation resource.

Inside the castle and on its walls you can see remnants of old dwellings and defensive gaps inherent in its wartime past. Thus among vaulted niches, fireplaces, privies and balconies we can find brackets, small windows and loopholes.

The museum adaptations that have been carried out in the different wings of the castle allow the visitor to get broad information not only from the different stages of the castle throughout its long existence but also from the touristic resources of the surrounding areas.

Let's start the tour.

Government House



You enter in the building through the main gate located on the northern part of the walls. The Government House stands here, where the Sanabria, Carballeda, Montesinho, Tera Valley and Villafafila Ecomuseum is located.



In the first room you can find the tourist office, the entrance to the whole building and later on, the exit.

In the second room is where we begin the journey through panelized information, computers and audiovisual media.

It is a land tour that begins in Sanabria, it takes us the Portuguese lands of Vinhais and Montesinho Park, later it leads to the river crossroads in Benavente and finally it takes us to the plains of Villafafila.

It is in this last room where this trip goes to the end with the birds' pictures of our travel, but this does not mean the end of the tour, which goes on to the Main Tower.



Privilege of Puebla de Sanabria given by Alfonso IX, King of León.

Main Tower



This tower, called "El Macho" is at the center of the courtyard. It is a square structure with a stone staircase as an addition. Its eighteen-foot-height makes it dominate the surrounding landscape. Since this place is the most protected in the whole town, the residential dwellings were located here.

Its four floors have become the Fortification Centre.



Basement.

An audiovisual room has been settled in this floor.

The magnificent stone arch, which is the building base, is really worth being emphasized.

Its primary purpose was domestic, as it was used as a cellar or pantry, because its temperature conditions made it accurate.

Attached to this room we find another space, which cannot be visited, where the real jail stayed. It was a prison reserved for the nobility and which had a hole called "you rot there", where prisoners were thrown and as they fell down and became injured, ended up dying of their wounds.

First floor.

This first floor gives us much information because it is here where more holes or openings have remained. This room was for servants, their living place as well as the working one. One of the holes leads to a service ladder used to go to the second floor, where the dining halls and rooms of the nobility were. The next hole is one of the many surveillance points that the tower has. These spaces were also called "suitors", since there the ladies sat to embroider to make profit either of the natural light from the windows and of the torches during the night.

At those moments of boredom, men tried to flirt them. This gap has as well two openings on both sides of the wall, which are niches. In this floor niches had a domestic function, used as shelves or cupboards. The next hole is a latrine, a real luxury sign for a castle at the time. The ultra-defensive nature of the castle shows the loophole that exists in the latrine. Loopholes are holes that were used to shoot with firearms and they were the next step in defense.

On the rest of the floor niches can still be seen, as well as surveillance points and a large fireplace that could be used for cooking. We have a wall with two large arches that could be used to separate spaces. Another detail of this floor is the conservation of the cavities which supported the old wooden beams.

Currently, on this floor we find an exhibition on the evolution of Renaissance clothing through various Spanish queens of the time.



Second floor.

The backlit panel shows us different information about the main parts of a castle. We see a Main Tower. It was the most important part of the castle because it contained the rooms of the nobility and it was the last defensive stronghold of a fortress. The name comes from the Latin name "Homo agere" (becoming a man of another) and in these places vassalage was sworn. Normally the tower was protected by a walled walkway, along which the night watch took place, and an advanced gateway, the bulwark.

The acrylic panel shows the different fortresses of the province, such as the ones in Castrotorafe, Alba de Aliste, Villalpando, Toro, Zamora, the Parador of Turismo in Benavente and Villalonso.



The niche that is located next to the big screen could be the space for a shrine inside the nobility private rooms. On this floor there are two large fireplaces to heat the old rooms and the acces to the balconies, which are, inside the tower, the only palace element which can be found.

Third floor

This is the floor that has undergone more changes over time. The backlit panel shows the social structure of the castle's period, the Renaissance. The two most important classes: the monks of San Martin and nobilities, the counts of Benavente, profited from the work of artisans, farmers and ranchers through tithes or charged taxes, since both were practically owners of all Sanabria. They came to be faced because of the fisheries of the lake, which the monks had exploited since immemorial times and they even had a lawsuit that the monks would win at the counts' expenses.

Mirador

Beside the warrior we would be on the eastern side. Here we see the Tera River which is one of the three rivers that are part of the natural moat of the castle. Southwards we can see the Culebra's mountain range and to the north the hill of San Juan and the Cabrera's mountain, border to the province of Leon. On the northern side the Castro River, the second one, can be seen and at the bottom, the Segundera's mountains which belong to the Natural Park of Lago de Sanabria. Westwards we can see the Candanedo Stream, the third river, and Gamoneda's mountain range at the background.

Already on the southern part you can see the Fort of San Carlos and the Portuguese Bastion.

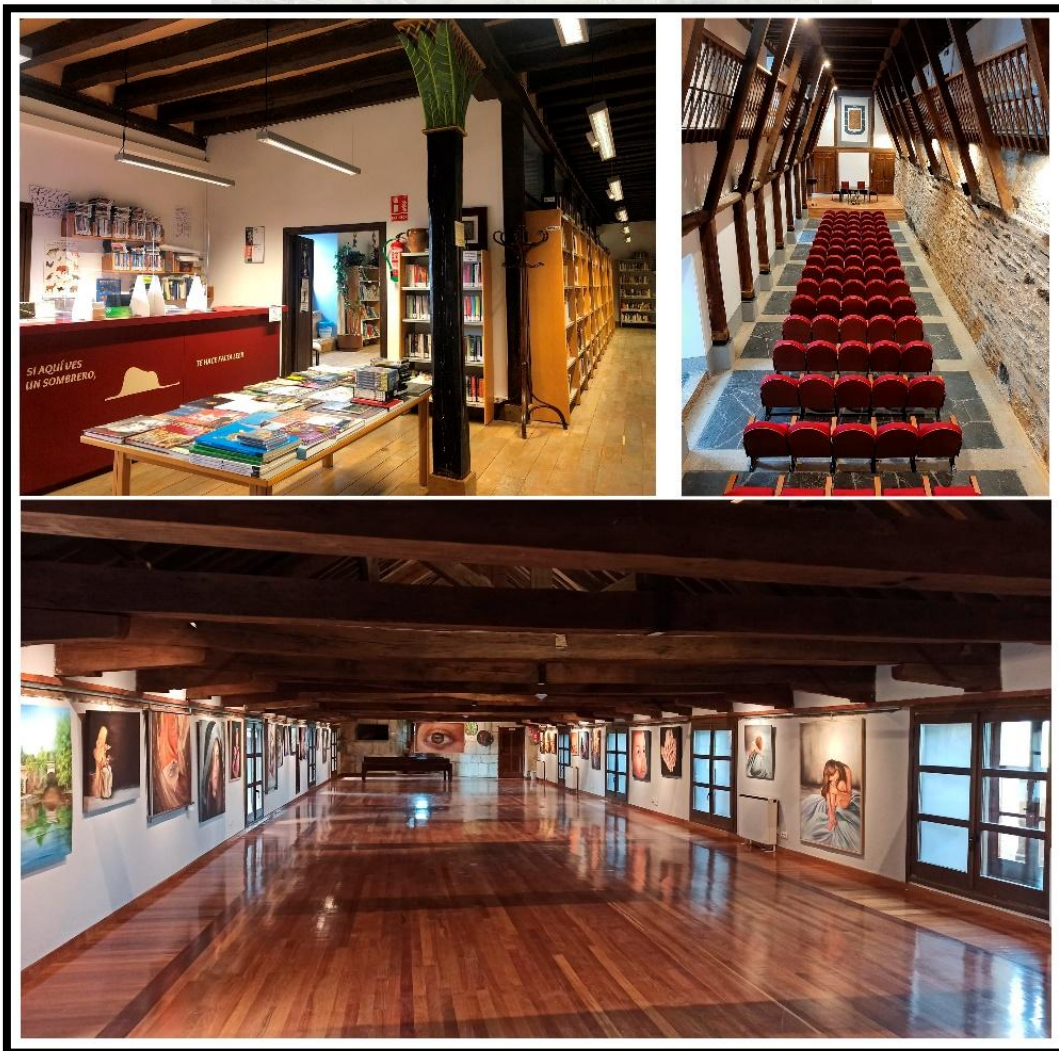
After finishing the visit, we can descend the inner modern staircase or the old stone one.



Culture House

3

Again at the courtyard we'll find in the East wing, the Town Culture House. There are three floors: Hall (Basement), Public Library (Ground Floor) and Exhibition Hall (First Floor).



HISTORY

The current Puebla de Sanabria castle stands on the same site where the old castle of the thirteenth century was built. Few data about it came across as its scarce remains have allowed much influence on the building. Some historians have wanted to see as the only previous tower, the nowadays tower known as "the Losada's", but it is mostly thought that the Middle Ages building was really a castle in the same location and of similar size as it is today.

The castle of Puebla belongs to the group of castles obtained by the king for the benefit of nobility families who, in certain circumstances, supported the monarchs in their business.

The III Count of Benavente, Alonso Pimentel, presumably undertook the survey work of the new castle in the mid-fifteenth century, as it seems from his will, dated in 1455, in which he yields his son Pedro half of their lands in Puebla de Sanabria, estates and the castle that he was building.

The works had to be put off for decades, firstly because of economical problems, and secondly, because of inheritance problems.

Of all the Alonso's children only the IV Count, Alonso Rodrigo Pimentel, became definitely the owner of Puebla de Sanabria, achieving in 1462 the resignation of his brother John, to the rights of Puebla, for fear of being caught by his brother.



Works would be resumed by the Fourth Count, Rodrigo Alonso de Pimentel and his wife Maria Pacheco, who built the majority of the construction between 1477 and 1482. This is deduced from the preserved documents, dating from the early decades of the sixteenth century, which describe the taxes and charges imposed by the Count, firstly to the people of Figueruela and later on, to all peoples under his jurisdiction, as a contribution for the construction of the fortress that he was building.



Coats of arms of the Pimentel (left) and Pacheco (right)

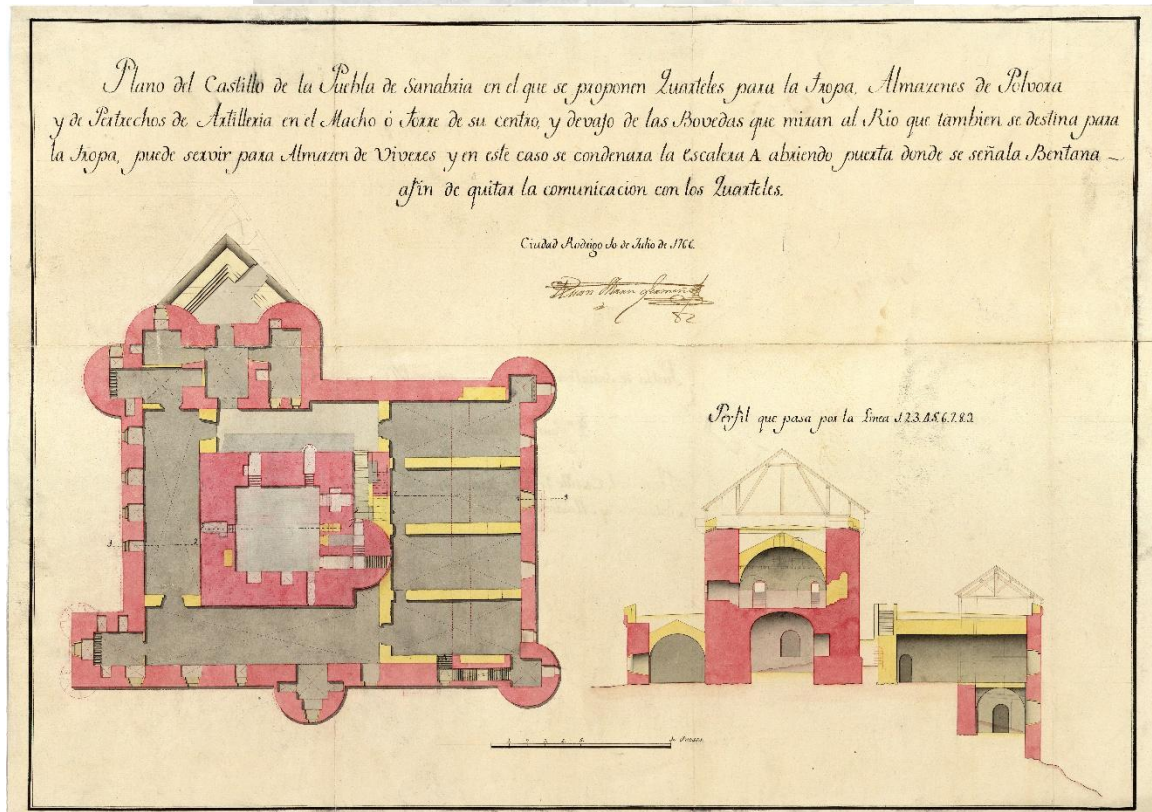
We can see their coats of arms which flank the main entrance of the castle: the Pimentel Family one on the left bucket, now almost rubbed out and that of the Pacheco Family, in his wife's honour on the right of the other bucket. Although they were the people who made most of the works in the fortification, it was his successors, Alonso de Pimentel and Ana de Velasco who ended up definitely the castle. A document dated 1530 has survived, in which the couple acknowledge to have rebuilt and improved not only the fortress and the walls but also the houses outside.

In fact, recalling that several years earlier, in 1506, there were great celebrations due to the visit from Juana I of Castilla, called "The Crazy", and her husband Felipe, called "The Beautiful", when they came to take possession of the kingdom after the death of Isabel "la Católica", it seems that at that time works on the castle had been recently completed.

Edward Cooper's research includes perhaps one of the most important data to be derived from a medieval book: the persons in charge of the construction of the castle of Puebla de Sanabria. He points to the figure of Juan de Herrera as head of the works of the castle and Garcia Labé as stonecutter master. From the first one, he gives no more information than his name and involvement as director of the work of the main tower; about the second one, he gives various comments and explanations. Firstly, he relates him to the work of Portillo Castle (Valladolid), commissioned to the stonecutter master by the fourth Count of Benavente, Rodrigo Alonso de Pimentel.

It cannot be determined exactly that relevant changes in its plan have been made from its construction until the first graphic record of the castle, but presumably it was not so, because in the first centuries of its existence, there was not any significant military event or any information known about contribution to the castle.

Every data shows that the original plan is nearly identical to what is now preserved.



"Plane of the Puebla de Sanabria's Castle in which proposed barracks for the troops, stores of gunpowder and equipment of Artillery in "El Macho" or central tower and under the vaults than looking to the river also engaged for troops, can be used for storage of food, and in this case, condemn the ladder a opening door where indicated window to remove communication with quarters.

Ciudad Rodrigo, July 10, 1766"

Legend of the Moorish Queen

In 1506, when the Moors were expelled from Spain, one beautiful Moorish Princess escaped the Christian siege in the city of Zamora. She chose to escape the port of La Coruna.

But this year, returned to Spain two very important persons for the Kingdom of Castilla. By that time came to La Coruna Juana I of Castilla, called "the Crazy" and her husband Felipe, called "the Beautiful".

When Felipe see the Moorish Princess hidden in the port, he couldn't fail to his fame, and took the princess than his prisoner.

When the entourage arrived at our castle, Juana I of Castilla, filled jealous, asked the Countess which enclose the princess, to separate it from Felipe.

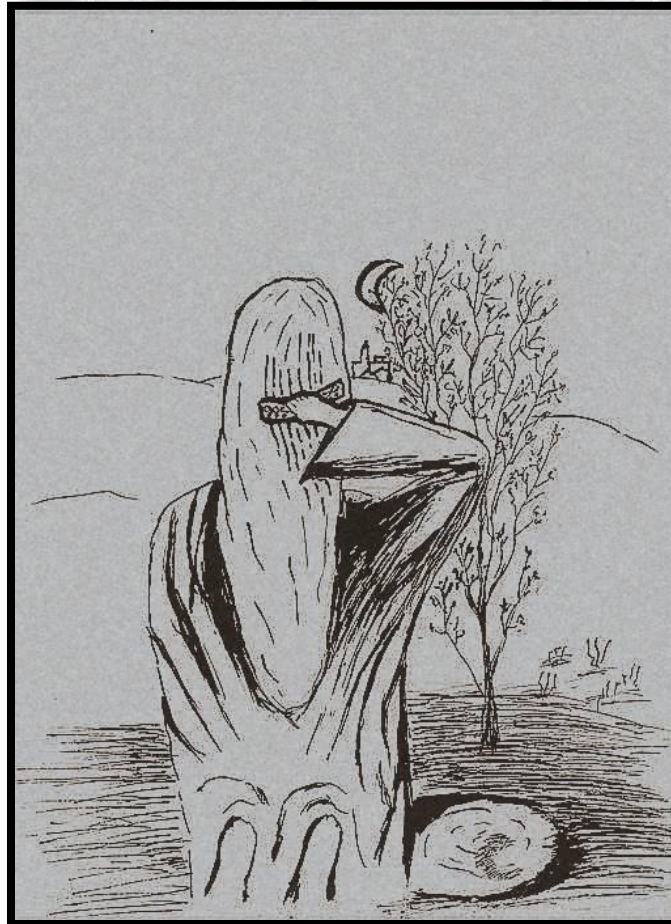
AND THIS WAS DONE!!! Countess ordered to construct a special cell in the castle for the Moorish Princess, a cell without exit.

But the princess, who was very beautiful, nice and kind, has been winning friend among her enemies. A few days passed in the castle before her arrest, but the necessary enough to have friends among the troops.

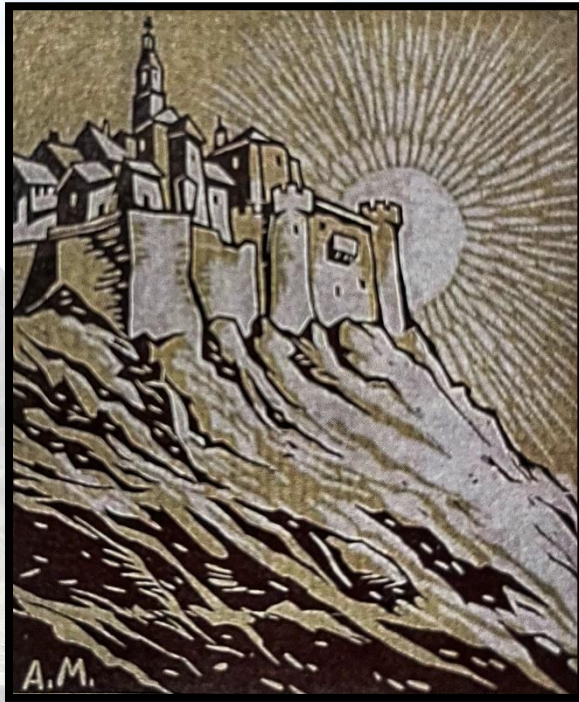
Ezequiel, one of the soldiers, was commissioned to build the cell for princess. But, dazzled with her, couldn't keep her locked up forever.

When the soldiers built the cell, made from it a secret passage that connected the castle with river. So, the Moorish Princess could leave his cell without being seen.

According to legend, even today, the full moon days, you can see the rays of the moon reflected in a silver comb, while a Moorish Princess combing her long hair in Valcuevo's fountain and you can hear a beautiful song in a foreign language.



You have visited the building that was her home for a long long time...you stepped on her tracks... maybe you have felt her soul, could be?



*You´re there, still, hypnotized.
In the summit, at the top of the crag,
steep over the last stones,
you show the disheveled head,
parted in the middle, bluish reflections,
trying to hide two red bald spot
between brightness elevated by wind.
Raised, on tiptoe and silence,
to long see what lives across the hills.*

"A. Moragón"



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