

Baeza, a World Heritage Site

Transcript

Just 9 km from Úbeda lies the town of Baeza. Founded by the Romans, and along with Úbeda, declared a World Heritage Site for its fine Renaissance heritage, Baeza's streets and squares are a showcase of different architectural styles.

The Plaza de los Leones, a unique example of Renaissance art, gives us an impressive idea of the degree of splendour and nobility that Baeza achieved during the 16th and 17th centuries. On one side is the Old Butcher's Shop, with a superb coat of arms belonging to Philip II. Enclosing the square is the Villalar Arch and the Jaén Gateway, remains of the Old City Walls.

The impressive monumental feel of Baeza is best expressed in the Plaza de Santa María, built by a number of distinguished architects from Baeza. The square contains a surprisingly original fountain of the same name, built in the shape of a triumphal arch.

Presiding over the square stands the Cathedral, built on the site of the Old Arab Mosque. It was started in the 13th century, it was not finished until the 18th. The main altar with its impressive Baroque altarpiece and its cloister, illustrate the work of various renowned architects over the centuries.

Facing the Cathedral stands the Old Seminary of San Felipe Neri, which has been turned into the 'Antonio Machado' International University, as a tribute and in memory of the writer, who spent many years of his life in Baeza.

The brilliant hand of the architect Vandelvira is apparent in the Convent of San Francisco. The building is considered by many to be his masterpiece.

The Jabalquinto Palace, with its delightful façade, is a superb example of the Gothic Isabelino style. Opposite stands the little Romanesque Church of Santa Cruz.

In the Old Centre of Baeza, the Town Hall is one of the finest buildings. Plateresque in style, in the past, it has housed the Palace of Justice and the Headquarters of the Old University. It hides a delightful courtyard in its interior.

To walk through the streets of Baeza is to enjoy an exceptional display of Renaissance architecture.