

*Poetas  
viewpoint,  
Cercedilla*

# The Madrid Region: a Refuge for Writers

Literary tours through  
the region, by  
Carmen Fernández Etreros



**Comunidad  
de Madrid**



# The Madrid Region: a Refuge for Writers

The great beauty of its landscape and the serenity found in many corners of the region of Madrid have conquered the heart of many a visitor. More than a dozen of Madrid's municipalities have been the permanent or summer residence of renowned writers and artists. Towns like Alcalá de Henares, Cercedilla and Aranjuez preserve, in their streets, buildings and monuments, the contribution of these writers to the daily life of the areas.

One way of discovering the uniqueness of these towns and villages is visiting the places where these writers lived and their favourite spots. We propose these seven self-guided literary walking tours to discover the areas that were home to, or the favourite writing locations of, authors like Vicente Aleixandre, Gerardo Diego, Leopoldo Panero, Jacinto Benavente, Miguel de Cervantes, José Luis Sampedro, Gerardo Diego, Carmen Martín Gaité and Francisco Umbral.

**Alcalá de Henares** has become a must-visit for anyone looking to learn more about the life of Miguel de Cervantes, one of the most important writers of all time. The universal author of *The Quixote* was born and wrote many of his works in this city located at the east of Madrid. We can follow them in his footsteps through the streets and buildings of Alcalá.

There are also beautiful and serene locations like the Guadarrama mountain range, which became a summer refuge for writers, architects, politicians and artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this marvellous natural setting you'll find the Poetas viewpoint, a four-hour mountain walking route with spaces dedicated to literary figures, including Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Rosales, Antonio Machado, José García Nieto and Leopoldo Panero. There are several

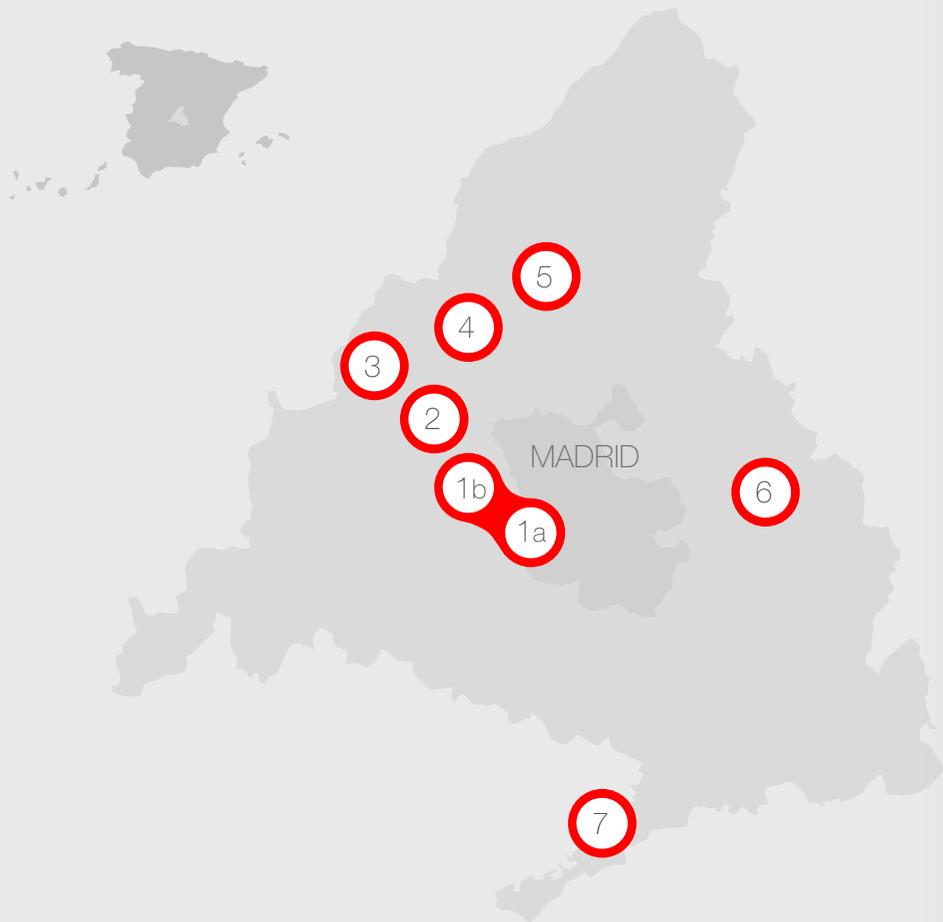
inscriptions of their works carved into the rock of the viewpoints in the hills of the Sierra de Guadarrama.

Female writers too sought inspiration here; Carmen Martín Gaité and Gloria Fuertes spent long summers in the villages of **El Boalo** and **Cercedilla** respectively. The region was also home to two Nobel laureates for literature in Jacinto Benavente and Vicente Aleixandre, who found, in **Galapagar** and **Miraflores de la Sierra**, the peace and quiet they needed to write their celebrated works.

The majestic **Aranjuez** was also home to the young José Luis Sampedro for five years. The writer has always said that the year's spent here were fundamental to his literary work.

Discover these writers' footsteps with our Guide to Literary Tours of the Region of Madrid. It's also worth remembering that many other writers lived or summered in the Madrid region, including Carlos Fernández Shaw in El Pardo, Juan Pérez Zúñiga in Cubas de la Sagra, Elena Soriano in Fuentidueña del Tajo, Silverio Lanza in Getafe, Julio Escobar Cubo in Los Molinos, Antonio Robles in Robledo de Chavela, Arturo Serrano Plaja in El Escorial, Ángeles García-Madrid in Torrejón de Ardoz, Juan de Mena in Torrelaguna and Juan Farias in Villaviciosa de Odón.





## Literary Tours in the Region of Madrid

**Tour 1:** Pozuelo de Alarcón and Majadahonda  
**Gerardo Diego and Francisco Umbral**

**Tour 2:** Galapagar  
**Jacinto Benavente and Ricardo León**

**Tour 3:** Guadarrama mountain range  
**Luis Rosales and Gloria Fuertes**

**Tour 4:** El Boalo  
**Carmen Martín Gaité**

**Tour 5:** Miraflores de la Sierra  
**Vicente Aleixandre**

**Tour 6:** Alcalá de Henares  
**Miguel de Cervantes**

**Tour 7:** Aranjuez  
**José Luis Sampedro**



# Pozuelo and Majadahonda: Gerardo Diego and Francisco Umbral

## **Tour 1: A refuge in nature for Gerardo Diego and Francisco Umbral**

These writers found peace and tranquillity in these areas on the edge of the city of Madrid, which became their favourite refuges.

*La Asunción de Nuestra  
Señora church,  
Pozuelo de Alarcón*

## Tour 1



1. House of Gerardo Diego in Pozuelo de Alarcón
2. Cemetery of Pozuelo de Alarcón
3. Francisco Umbral Municipal Library

Fleeing from the hustle and bustle of Madrid in search of a refuge to write and rest, these two writers found just what they were looking for in these areas on the outskirts of Madrid. Gerardo Diego spent long periods in Pozuelo de Alarcón and Francisco Umbral spent his final years in Majadahonda.

## Gerardo Diego and Pozuelo de Alarcón

Pozuelo de Alarcón is a peaceful area and the perfect place for rest and relax. It offers natural spaces like Adolfo Suárez Forest Park and the small Schoenstatt sanctuary. It is also home to a number of cultural centres, such as the MIRA Cultural Space.

Gerardo Diego Gendoya was born in Santander in 1896. He spent many years living in the city of Madrid itself on Calle de Covarrubias but preferred to retire to his summer home in Pozuelo to rest. As well as a writer, he worked as a literature professor. He was also an accomplished pianist and a great lover of painting.

Gerardo Diego was the driving force of the avant-gardes, especially the Creationism movement, which he discovered through his friendship with the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro.

He was also responsible for the rediscovery of the Spanish Golden Age poet Góngora and attempted to provide

Schoenstatt Sanctuary,  
Pozuelo de Alarcón



## House of Gerardo Diego

some form of cohesion to the *Generation of 27* group of poets. The first public event organised by the Generation of 27 was held in Seville on 16 and 17 December 1927. At that meeting attended in addition to Gerardo Diego, iconic writers like Rafael Alberti, José Bergamín, Jorge Guillén, Juan Chabás, Federico García Lorca and Dámaso Alonso.

In the 1950s, Diego and his wife Germaine purchased a house in the well-known Colonia Santa María neighbourhood in Pozuelo de Alarcón, alongside Carlos Ruíz Sports Centre. The house was quite small and rather uncomfortable and lacked running water. The family had to collect their water from a well. The couple would change Madrid for Pozuelo when they sought rest and relaxation and a change of scenery. In his final years, Gerardo Diego also enjoyed the landscape of the area in the residential area of Monteclaro, where his daughter Elena lived and where he wrote his last verses.

## Cemetery of Pozuelo de Alarcón

Gerardo Diego died in 1987 and was buried in the cemetery of Pozuelo de Alarcón. His family rejected the opportunity to have his remains lying in the Pantheon of Illustrious Men in



Grave of Gerardo Diego,  
Cemetery of  
Pozuelo de Alarcón

Santander because the poet had expressed his wish to remain close to his family after death. His wife and his daughter decided that the cemetery of Pozuelo should be his final resting place.

A tall cypress tree was planted alongside the grave and a plaque was erected with these beautiful lines: "You have emptied me, emptied me of fruit and blossom, you have destituted me of everything, all for you, Lord".

Although the Gerardo Diego Foundation is based in Santander, he is very fondly remembered in Pozuelo de Alarcón. The writer has been honoured with both a street and a secondary school named after him in the area. The Gerardo Diego Prize for Poetry, Illustration and Recitation was also created for primary and secondary school pupils.



[Tourism in Pozuelo de Alarcón](#)  
[Pozuelo de Alarcón Council](#)

Majadahonda is one of the most popular places chosen by citizens of Madrid to escape the hustle and bustle of the city. It boasts a privileged natural environment and inviting spaces like the Parque Colón and the natural

area home to the Monument to Mota and Marín - formed of 4 arches and a cross - close to the cemetery. It was built in homage to two Romanian legionnaires who died at this spot during the Civil War.

The writer and poet Francisco Umbral spent 30 years in Majadahonda, on the outskirts of Madrid and close to Pozuelo de Alarcón. As he told in an interview with the photographer María España (1):

*"Paco was a man of the city, and suddenly he discovered a village like Majadahonda. It struck him as a very nice area, very clean and surrounded by nature. He suddenly discovered things like a bud on a rosebush, a bird perching on a branch, because in the city he didn't see these things nor did he live this way. He also preferred young people to the old and here there were lots of young boys and girls, joyful full of life. Majadahonda even has a very beautiful name. He very much liked this village".*

In his final years, Francisco Umbral (1932-2007) found in this peaceful area the perfect place to write and escape the hectic life of the capital.

The Umbral Foundation was founded on 12 January 2009 for the memory and study of his literary and journalistic work. The institution also organises the Francisco Umbral Prize for the Book of the Year.

Majadahonda Council also named the Municipal Library in his honour. The library can be found at Plaza de Colón.

Francisco Umbral  
Municipal  
Library



[Tourism in Majadahonda](#)  
[Majadahonda Council](#)

## Francisco Umbral and Majadahonda



# Galapagar and the writers Jacinto Benavente and Ricardo León

## **Tour 2: The clean air and natural environment of Galapagar enchanted these two writers**

In almost every corner of the mountain village there seems to be some sign of the genius of Jacinto Benavente. It's a natural space that also captivated the writer Ricardo León.

*View of the interior of  
Ricardo León's house,  
Galapagar*

## Tour 2



1. *La Asunción Parish Church*
2. *Monument to Jacinto Benavente*
3. *Jacinto Benavente Theatre*
4. *Cemetery of Galapagar*
5. *El Torreón, the house of Jacinto Benavente in Galapagar*
6. *La Quinta de Santa Teresa, house of Ricardo León*

Galapagar is located some 38 kilometres from Madrid in the northern mountain range, surrounded by rockrose and pines and was home to two great writers, the Nobel Laureate Jacinto Benavente and the author Ricardo León. Both found the fresh air and tranquillity they needed to write in Galapagar.

### Jacinto Benavente's love for Galapagar

The writer Jacinto Benavente wrote several of his later works in the garden of El Torreón, his estate in Galapagar. The writer liked to enjoy the spectacular views of Madrid and the neighbouring area of Torrelodones as he worked. His estate was located in a privileged setting, in the upper part of the of this traditional mountain village in Madrid's northern mountain range. He considered Galapagar his "source of inspiration" and at this impressive house he penned around 23 comedies, including his last, *El marido de bronce* (The Bronze Husband).

Jacinto Benavente was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1922, one of the few Spanish writers that has received the award. He was born in Madrid in 1866 and



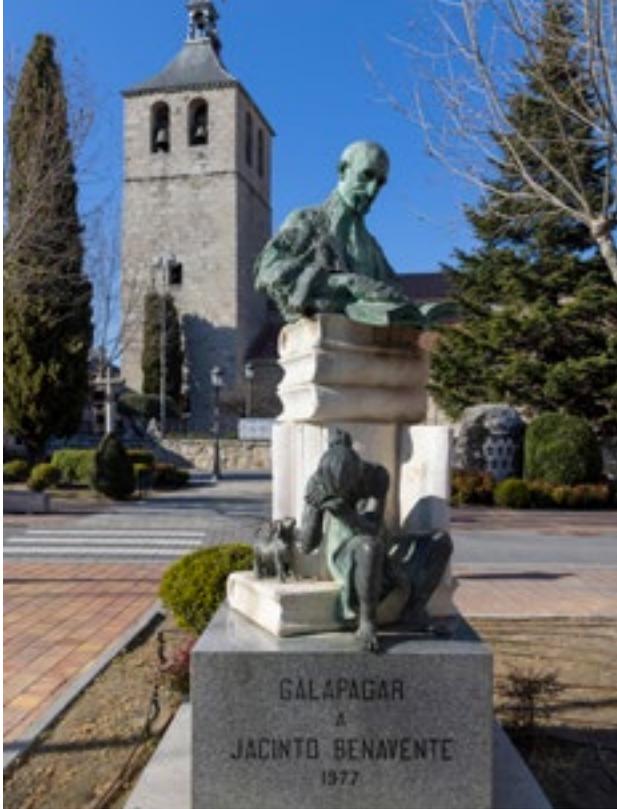
*Monument to Jacinto Benavente, Galapagar*

as well as writing for theatre he was a director, screen writer and cinema producer. A prolific writer, he produced 172 works over the course of his career. During his long life, he also dedicated time to poetry and journalism, his articles for the newspaper *El Imparcial* a particular highlight.

### La Asunción Parish Church

Our trail in the footsteps of the author in Galapagar begins in the Plaza de la Constitución, beside the Parish Church of La Asunción. This is a beautiful Gothic style building from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the square, a popular meeting place, we find a monument to Jacinto Benavente, erected in 2016 by Zarateman. Galapagar is a village that preserves the rural and austere spirit so typical of Madrid's mountain range.

### Monument to Jacinto Benavente



*Monument to Jacinto Benavente, Galapagar  
El Torreón, residence of Jacinto Benavente in Galapagar*

### Jacinto Benavente Theatre

At Calle Guadarrama 66 we find La Pocilla cultural centre and the Jacinto Benavente Theatre, named after the author. There are a number of works put on here and the writer's love of the theatre is preserved.

### Cemetery of Galapagar

Benavente was so smitten with the area that in his will, he asked to be buried there and shrouded in a Franciscan monks' sackcloth with a rose and a cross. The dramatist died at his Madrid home on Calle Atocha on 14 July 1954. Two days later his final wish to rest in the shade of the mountain range was granted when he was buried at the old cemetery of Galapagar (El Chopo). On 16 July, the Mayor of Galapagar Lucas Guadaño and Parish Priest Fr. Valentín Navío López received the funeral cortège along



with the village locals and some friends. His final journey was from the church to the cemetery of El Chopo where he received his final farewell.

A tall stone cross indicates the tomb of Jacinto Benavente in the cemetery. A tradition begun by friends and admirers of gathering on the anniversary of his death 16 July for a reading of his work by his tomb was observed for many years. In 2016, the Council of Galapagar resurrected the tradition in memory of the author, gathering neighbours and admirers around the grave for reading of passages of his work to mark his anniversary.

El Torreón:  
The house of Jacinto  
Benavente in  
Galapagar

Galapagar is a village that retains much of its traditional appearance. The next stop on our trail is the author's home. To reach it we make our way from the old town hall along the Fuente de las Colmenas path. There we encounter the beauty of the Madrid mountain ranges, between meadows with cows and horses grazing and an old abandoned apiary. If we follow the Cordel de Hoyo we reach the imposing estate of El Torreón, where the playwright wrote works like *La Malquerida* (The Unloved Woman) and where he spent much of the last ten years of his life.

The family inherited the house upon his death, before selling it almost 30 years later. The new owners use the gardens to host weddings and other events. The imposing palace has four floors and its restoration has even conserved the original wooden feature to maintain the spirit of the original.

Located in upper Galapagar, it offers views of all of Madrid. The palace is located on an estate of 100,000 square metres, of which 7,000 are gardens. It is said that King Philip II used to walk and hunt on these lands when he visited the work on El Escorial. It is an impressive setting, surrounded by forests and one where the Nobel Laureate wrote many works.

**The other  
Galapagar writer:  
Ricardo León**

The writer Ricardo León also chose Galapagar as his residence. The author, who was closely associated with the modernist movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, lived in Galapagar between 1920 and 1943. Ricardo León's remains were laid to rest in the village cemetery.



*El Torreón, residence of  
Jacinto Benavente in  
Galapagar*

La Quinta de  
Santa Teresa

León, who enjoyed great publishing success but was somewhat forgotten over the years, rubbed shoulders with the likes of Francisco Villaespesa, Juan Ramón Jiménez and Gabriel Miró. He was inducted into the Spanish Royal Academy in 1915, occupying chair B. His work includes the novels *El amor de los amores*, *Alcalá de los Zegries*, *Casta de hidalgos*, *Humos de rey* and *Cristo en los infiernos*. He also wrote the memoirs *Europa trágica* and two books of poetry: *Lira de bronce* and *Alivio de caminantes*.

In 1921, he married María del Carmen Garrido, with whom he had eight children, living together at La Quinta de Santa Teresa in Galapagar. A majestic granite palace with a slate roof, it is reminiscent of the construction of El Escorial. The estate boasts 10,000 square metres of gardens with conifers and all manner of trees.



Valle-Inclán's dedication to his friend Ricardo León

View of the interior of Ricardo León's house, Galapagar

Today, part of the house is separate to house the museum that is open for visits. Here we can see León's enormous library, the chapel and the display room. Visitors can see his furniture, books, letters, brass and other writing objects. In the display room are first editions of books and the writer's correspondence with contemporaries like Azorín, Emilia Pardo Bazán, José Echegaray or the brothers Álvarez Quintero.

Over many years, the Quinta de Santa Teresa hosted gatherings of writers to discuss literature and the world at large. Jacinto Benavente, himself a local resident, Camilo José Cela and José Martínez Ruiz "Azorín" spent many an evening there.

In Torrelodones, close to Galapagar, another well-known writer, José María Gabriel y Galán was buried in a small cemetery surrounded by holm oaks opposite the Casino de Madrid. The author chose the spot specifically to be close to his home in Las Matas. The poetry of José María



Gabriel y Galán was conservative in both structure and content, far removed from modernism. Through his work, the author defended tradition, Catholic dogma, the family and the peasant life and he did so with a singular social sensitivity.

Around Galapagar, municipalities like Hoyo de Manzanares were also home to important writers. A twenty-something Camilo José Cela once had to spend a summer here at a sanatorium at the end of the Civil War. A collapsed lung saw the author of *La Colmena* hospitalised in July 1942 in room number 8 of a comfortable tuberculosis sanatorium at Hoyo de Manzanares.



[Tourism in Galapagar](#)  
[Galapagar Council](#)



# The Guadarrama mountain range and the Poetas viewpoint

**Tour 3: These immense mountains have witnessed the love of a generation of poets**

In the 1950s, many writers sought a new way of thinking and a new way of life in the mountains of Madrid and found the perfect inspiration for their works in these landscapes.

*Poetas viewpoint,  
Cercedilla*

## Tour 3



1. *Cercedilla: Plaza Mayor, Plazuela Giner de los Ríos and the Church of San Sebastián*
2. *Luis Rosales Cultural Centre*
3. *Poetas viewpoint*
4. *In the footsteps of Gloria Fuertes in Cercedilla*

In the 1950s, many writers found their perfect refuge to write in the Guadarrama mountain range. We can visit the original Mirador de los Poetas, or Poets' viewpoint, where the unforgettable lines of Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Rosales, Antonio Machado, García Nieto and Leopoldo Panero are inscribed in the rocks

The charm of the natural landscape of the Guadarrama mountain range captivated all those who encountered it for the first time. An impressive mountain range, it is located between the sierras of Gredos and Ayllón mountain ranges and straddles the north-west of the province of Madrid and the provinces Ávila and Segovia and boasts forests of wild pine, oak and holm oak. Visitors can admire the majesty of the imperial eagle and black vulture overhead, and might encounter deer, wild boar and hares along the way.

The area around the village of Cercedilla, with its incredible landscapes, has been favoured by many writers for rest and relaxation. In the 1930s, the villages in the area became a refuge for a brilliant cultural elite who spent long periods in the Guadarrama mountain range, enjoying the landscapes and a way of life in touch with nature.



*Church of San Sebastián, Cercedilla*

In Cercedilla, writers and artists, like the painter Sorolla, found inspiration in the beauty of the landscapes and the energy of the mountains and forests. Today we can follow their footsteps through the streets and landmarks like the Plaza Mayor, Plazuela Giner de los Ríos, the Rincón de Gloria Fuertes, the Church of San Sebastián, the Luis Rosales Cultural Centre and Pradoluengo Park.

### **Luis Rosales and Cercedilla**

The writer Luis Rosales was one of the great admirers of the Guadarrama mountain range, and he summered in Cercedilla from the year 1961. Luis Rosales was born in Granada and moved to Madrid at the age of 22 to complete his studies in Philology. The writer belonged to the generation of 36 and won a number of awards during his lifetime. In 1962 he was inducted into the Spanish Royal Academy and was awarded the Cervantes Prize in 1982.

The writer took advantage of long summers in the area to write poetry, work in the garden, tend the orchards and meet and chat with the village locals. It was the poet's dream to buy a house in the area. In fact, he told his close circle of friends that when the writer Leopoldo Panero died, also one of his close companions, he thought that that same could happen to him at any moment and that he wanted to realise his dream of having a house in the country.

The writer's house, which is close to the Camino Viejo de El Escorial has been restored and refurbished so there is only a small corner that evokes the house that was once home to the writer who sought refuge to write and meditated there.

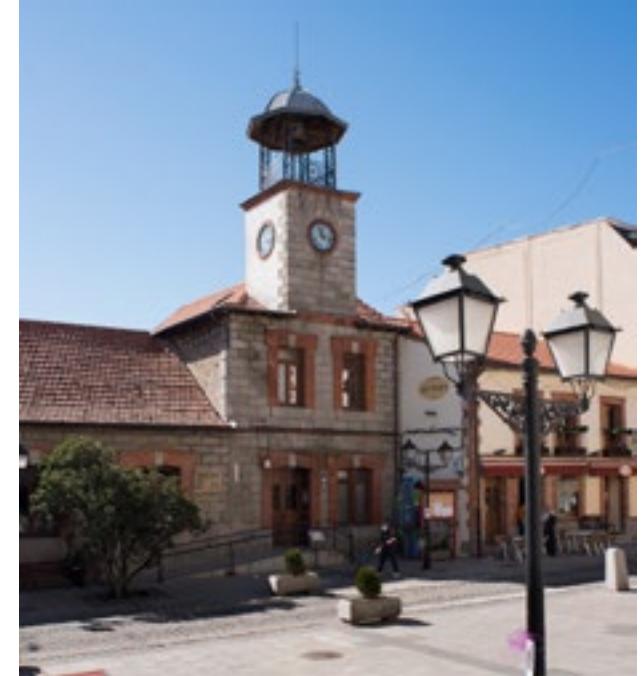
Inside the house, we can read the following verses:

***We have bought  
a small house - we are no longer  
that poor - in the countryside,  
and I have lived in Cercedilla  
my last youth.***

*Rhymes. Letter in two acts which, like so many other letters, I have not put in the post.*

Luis Rosales

From his house in the Cercedilla countryside, he enjoyed some beautiful views of the landscape but today there are newly built houses that were not there in Rosales's time. It was the perfect place to write if he needed some peace and quiet. The poet himself confessed in several interviews that he could not write unless totally isolated because he needed full concentration.



*Day centre for the elderly, Cercedilla*

He found this tranquillity in Cercedilla and, consequently, several of his books are dated in August as he would often finish them during his stays at the summer house. His poem *Testamento (Will)* (1) is dedicated to the village:

***The nights of Cercedilla  
I carry them in my solitude,  
and they are the last border I would like to look at.  
I would like to die one day  
looking at this sky, and give  
a body to this land that  
has given me freedom.***

*Testamento*  
Luis Rosales

Locals say that the poet would work from eleven to seven without stopping for lunch and that he asked not to be disturbed during these hours. His wife was responsible for ensuring nobody interrupted him. His friends say that he never saw anyone before eight o'clock.

His presence in Cercedilla was one of the reasons why one of the viewpoints on the Senda de los Poetas or Poetas path was dedicated to Rosales, where we can read these verses:

***The nights of Cercedilla  
I carry them in my solitude,  
and they are already the last border  
I would like to look at.***

*Testamento*  
Luis Rosales

Luis Rosales loved walking through Cercedilla past its iconic landmarks like the clock tower of the Retirement Centre, the church of San Sebastián, the Plaza Mayor and the Frontón level crossing. The poet died at the age of 82 and was buried in the village cemetery, sheltered by his beloved mountains for ever.

The Cultural Centre is located on Calle del Arroyo and was inaugurated in 1988. Visitors interested in the poet can enjoy a permanent exhibition where they can admire a number of the poet's personal items and remember his work.

In Cercedilla, the original natural space known as Poetas viewpoint was created. It's a curious spot and a result of the initiative of the Cercedilla Cultural Foundation. Today there are a number of trails we can take to reach the Poetas viewpoint. Most are for hikers but there some options suitable for all the family like the route that takes us past the Ducha de los Alemanes waterfall. This trail begins at the carpark at the Majavilán fountain. This point can be reached by car, bus or train and the excursion takes about four hours. Poetas viewpoint offers spectacular views of the Sierra del Guadarrama and the Fuenfría val-



*Retirement Home,  
Cercedilla*

ley, from Cercedilla to Siete Picos, La Maliciosa and Mount Abantos.

The purpose of the viewpoints was to draw visitors' attention to the need to protect, care for and value the Guadarrama mountain range. Several poets' lines are inscribed on Guadarrama mountain range, including Luis Rosales, Vicente Aleixandre, Gabriel García Tassara and Luis García Nieto. We can read this verse from Rosales:

***Sharpen Seven Peaks in the shadow  
its sharp teeth.***

*Dedicatoria, a mi hijo. Geografía es amor*  
José García Nieto

The history of the Poetas viewpoint dates back to 1984, when a group of people travelled along the Aurrulaque trail to the Navarrulaque meadow. There, they read aloud the *Manifesto in Defence of the Guadarrama mountain range*. This viewpoint was given the name of Vicente Aleixandre as the writer had died that same day. The viewpoint is formed by a metal platform above a block of rocks on one of which we can read one of Vicente Aleixandre's poems:

Luis Rosales  
Cultural Centre

Poetas  
viewpoint

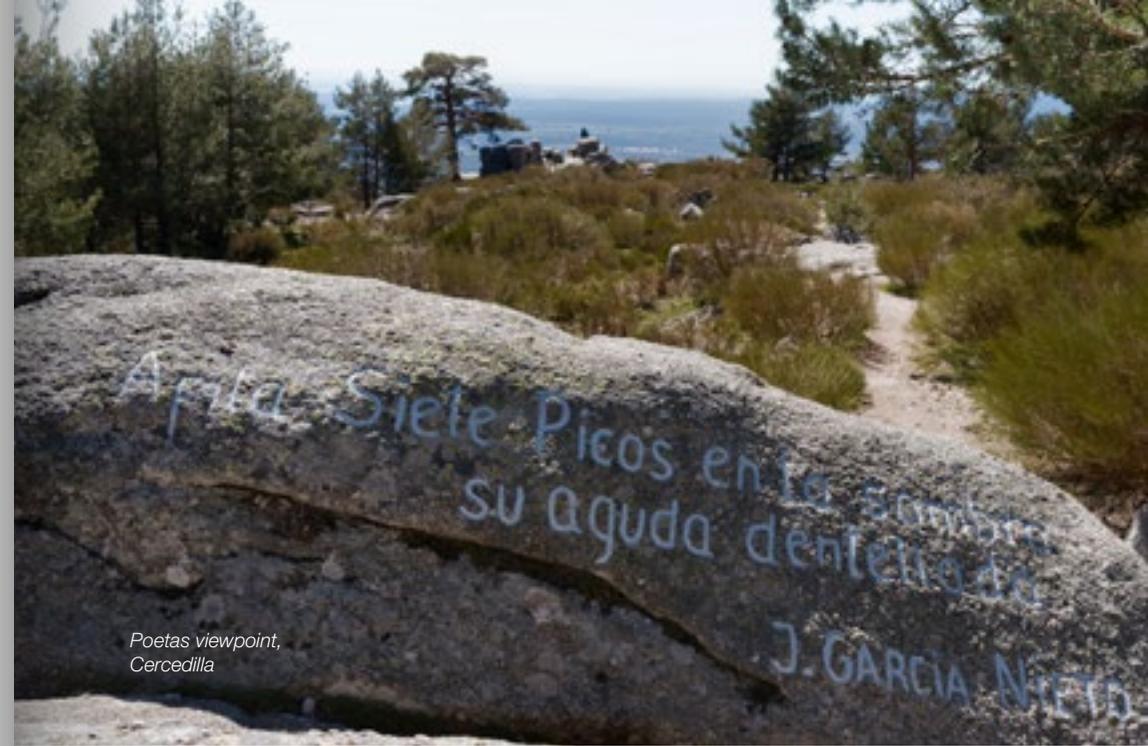


Poetas viewpoint,  
Cercedilla

*On this lonely peak I look at you  
fields that you will never return through my eyes.  
Immense sunstone, eternal world  
and the nightingale so weak that on its edge  
bewitches it.*

Vicente Aleixandre

Later, other viewpoints were dedicated to other writers like Antonio Machado, José García Nieto and Leopoldo Panero. The trail leads us to the Camilo José Cela Solar Clock in the Navarrulaque meadow. It was erected in honour of the author of *Cuadernos de Guadarrama*.



Poetas viewpoint,  
Cercedilla

### **Leopoldo Panero and the Guadarrama mountain range**

The writer Leopoldo Panero is another of the great admirers of the Guadarrama mountain range who dedicated lines to the mountain. Leopoldo Panero (1909-1962) was another member of the Generation of 36, who won the National Literature Prize in 1950.

He stayed there for eight months and fell in love with a patient, Joaquina Márquez, who died a short time later in a sanatorium in the Alps. Leopoldo Panero wrote a number of his most expressive poems for the woman, such as the romantic poem *Joaquina Márquez* written in 1945 (2). His love for the landscape was palpable in his *Verses of Guadarrama*.



Landscape of the  
Guadarrama mountain  
range National Park

*Where the eagles go  
a vehement, dark, stormy light floats over the sum-  
mits of the  
the peaks of the high Guadarrama,  
where the eagles go. The afternoon descends, slowly,  
along the green paths, warm with broom. Between  
the stones  
shines the sleepy light  
of the hidden and cold sun. The light, from branch to  
branch,  
like the flight of a bird, behind the shadow it flees.  
Suddenly, silence grows like a flame.  
I am afraid. I raise my eyes. God strikes  
my heart. The mist of the snow cools down  
as cold as a memory. Peace floats over the mountains,  
and the soul dreams its own remoteness.  
A vehement light from my dream springs  
towards love. The afternoon sleeps at my feet, gloomy.*

Versos del Guadarrama  
Leopoldo Panero

Leopoldo Panero's poetry has been recognised for find-  
ing its own unique poetic voice after the Civil War. His

### **Rafael Alberti's time in the Guadarrama mountain range**

work evolved from his early stages, influenced by the  
Generation of 27 and avant-garde movements like Dada  
and Surrealism - as well as free verse - to become one of  
the most regarded bodies of poetry of recent history.

Although he never kept a home in the area and his house  
museum is located in Astorga in León, where he lived  
with his brother Juan, throughout his life he regularly visit-  
ed the Sierra de Guadarrama and these visits provided  
much of the inspiration for his excellent poetry.

Another writer seduced by the landscape of the Sierra de  
Guadarrama was the poet Rafael Alberti. The poet, who  
would go on to become a member of the Generation of  
27, was diagnosed with a lung condition in 1920 and, as  
happened to other sufferers, was advised to spend a  
period in the mountains, in the area of San Rafael, in the  
province of Segovia. A plaque was erected by the  
Council, referencing the vital influence on the area of the  
poet, "who found in San Rafael his poetic vocation and  
source of inspiration."

He referred to the beauty of those mountain landscapes,  
in compositions like *La arboleda perdida* (4):

*The San Rafael mountain range where the air of pines  
and the Guadarrama sun filled my lungs with new life  
again, being reborn a few days after losing myself  
along those paths of poplars and touching the blue of  
the windy summits... the bouncing of the water from  
the peaks. ... the old lonely pines of the heights.*

*The Lost Grove*  
Rafael Alberti

In this privileged natural environment, the poet also began to write the first verses of *Marinero en Tierra (Sailor on Dry Land)* (5), a work published in 1924. This is one of the great poetry collections of the Generation of 27, a reflection of the writer's excellent work.

*Hotel of lost blues,  
of eyelids closed,  
guarded by crickets,  
faintly  
moved by the wailing  
of the trains.*

*The one o'clock train...,  
the two o'clock train...  
The one that goes to the beaches  
takes my heart away.*

*With the nostalgia of the sea  
my girlfriend drinks beer  
in the restaurant car.  
The moon is slipping  
alone, through the snowdrift.*

*The train's firefly  
pierces the gorge.  
Forgotten, my girlfriend  
dreams of the Sardinero pearl grey beach.*

*Balcón del Guadarrama*  
Rafael Alberti

On 17 March 2007, San Rafael unveiled a monument to the poet, the work of artist Óscar El Segoviano, and which includes some lines from *La arboleda perdida*, which he wrote in the area.

*Landscape of the  
Guadarrama mountain  
range National Park*



## **Gloria Fuertes and Cercedilla**

The poet always recognised the importance of this scenery to this work, as a source of inspiration for his early works. It is also a place that has a special significance in the life of the author, as it was here he recovered his health thanks to the clean mountain air. As stated by the poet: "They filled my lungs with new life again".

The poet Gloria Fuertes (1917-1998) also spent summers in Cercedilla. The writer, who was born and died in the capital, had a great love for the mountain village. Over the years, her work has become increasingly valued and not just her poems but also her children's songs.

Gloria Fuertes was a popular poet at a time when poetry was heavily intellectualised, even among the so-called generation of 50 in the post-war era. For her, it was important to know what was happening in the streets and in people's everyday lives. She created a very personal aesthetic, far removed from *postismo* and other literary currents of the time. She also wrote children's poetry and wrote for children's television shows, like *Un globo, dos globos, tres globos*.



Meadows of  
Guadarrama

### Gloria Fuertes’ corner in Cercedilla

The writer was a close friend of César Manrique, whom she met in New York. The architect designed one of the houses in the famous Colonia Camorritos, Cercedilla’s exclusive private community built in the 1930s.

In 1998, Gloria Fuertes was invited to officially open Cercedilla’s local festivals. She was also on hand to personally inaugurate the Gloria Fuertes’ corner, an open air reading space in the village. Initially, it also contained books by the author but they are no longer there. At the opening of the festivals, the writer was thrilled that this small corner of the village had been dedicated to her so that locals could read her works, saying: “What a great idea. To read me is to love me”.

Although she was born and lived on Calle de la Espada in the central Madrid Lavapiés neighbourhood, the poet is closely associated with Cercedilla, where she found the peace necessary to write and she always returned when she had the opportunity. During her time in the United

States, she missed the landscape of the Sierra Guadarrama so much that she wrote these famous lines:

*I change New York skyscrapers  
for a pine tree in Cercedilla;  
Sescujana river for Manzanares dry river;  
Chesterfield for Bison  
Cadillac for donkey,  
refrigeration installed for “pay-pay”,  
whisky for a small glass of wine,  
Fifth Avenue for Calle Tribulete,  
television for a balcony in Argumosa,  
washing machine for Pepa singing  
“El Último Cuplé”.*

*Lejos de mi pueblo*  
Gloria Fuertes



Tourism in Cercedilla  
Cercedilla Council  
Tourism in the Sierra de Guadarrama



# El Boalo and Carmen Martín Gaité

**Tour 4: A refuge in the Madrid  
mountain range for swimming,  
relaxing and writing**

The Salamanca-born writer summered in this area and wrote some of her best known novels here in her father's study.

*House of  
Carmen Martín Gaité,  
El Boalo*

## Tour 4



1. Church of Santa María La Blanca in El Boalo
2. House of Carmen Martín Gaité
3. House of the writer Luis Sanguino in Mataelpino
4. A section of the Camino de Santiago crosses El Boalo and Mataelpino: Pilgrims' hostel

The writer found her refuge to rest, swim and write in this beautiful corner of Madrid. Today, the family home has been converted into the Centre of the Foundation for 1950s Studies and houses her library and a number of family memories.

## El Boalo and Carmen Martín Gaité

### Church of Santa María La Blanca

The small municipality of El Boalo is located in the north-west of the Madrid region. The village itself is beautiful, sitting below the southern slopes of the Madrid mountain range and shares the same municipality with Cerceda and Mataelpino. A unique corner of the Guadarrama mountain range to breath fresh air, rest and walk through the quiet streets.

The landmark sights in this area are the Church of Santa María La Blanca, an extraordinary 16<sup>th</sup> century church; the writer Luis Sanguino's house in Mataelpino, and the Camino de Santiago, which crosses El Boalo and Mataelpino, where there is a pilgrims' hostel. You can also visit the house that Carmen Martín Gaité once kept in the area.



*The Camino de Santiago, passes through El Boalo*

### House of Carmen Martín Gaité

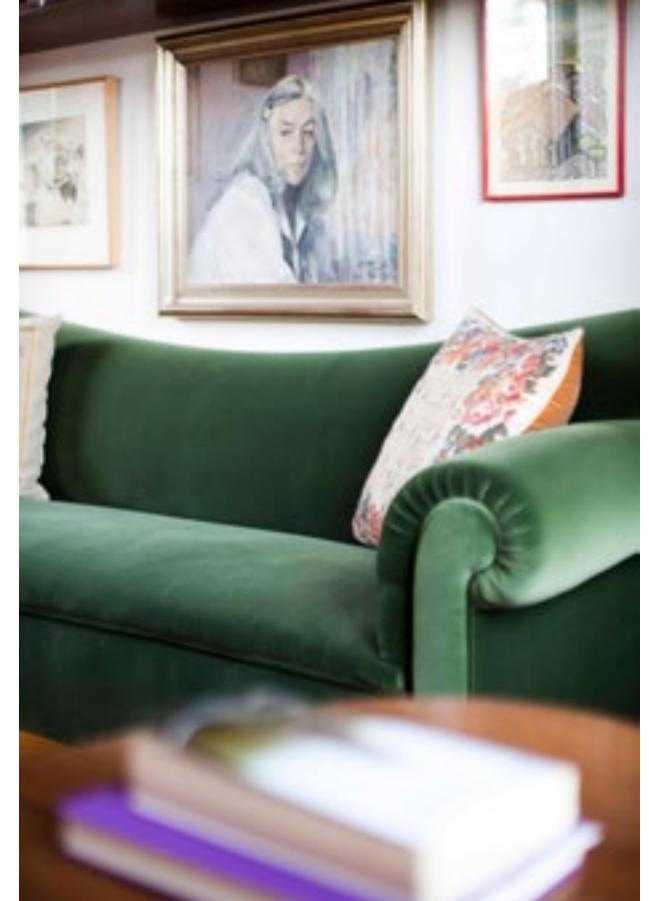
Carmen Martín Gaité usually spent weekends and summers in this corner of Madrid. The writer's family home, where she enjoyed the peace and quiet she needed to write, opened to visitors in 2019, thanks to the work of her sister, the Centre of the Foundation of 1950s studies and the local Council.

The Martín Gaité family home is located in the *Rincón de los Prados* and is a traditional 1950s granite construction. Three generations of the family have lived here, enjoying the spacious rooms, garden and swimming pool. It was recently renovated to house the author's library, recreating her workspaces.



House of Carmen  
Martín Gaité, El Boalo

Today, the family home is the Centre of the Foundation for 1950s Studies and open for visitors. It is a beautiful house full of family mementos, photographs, framed religious pictures and an excellent library. The writer often spent time in her father's office where she wrote well-known books like *Retahílas*.



Interior of the house of  
Carmen Martín Gaité,  
El Boalo

On 23 July, the anniversary of her death is marked in El Boalo. She was buried in the cemetery of El Boalo. A guided tour of the house museum is held on the last Sunday of every month.



Tourism in El Boalo  
El Boalo-Cerceda-Mataelpino Council



# Miraflores de la Sierra and Vicente Aleixandre

**Tour 5: The writer enjoyed the magic and peace of the Plaza del Álamo**

The clean air in this corner of the sierra helped the writer recover from illness in his youth and he found the refuge he sought to write and think.

*View of  
Miraflores de la Sierra*

## Tour 5



1. Plaza del Álamo
2. House of Vicente Aleixandre
3. The Space for the Poetry of Vicente Aleixandre

The writer found his refuge to rest, swim and write in this beautiful corner of Madrid. Today, the family home has been converted into the Centre of the Foundation for 1950s Studies and houses her library and a number of family memories.

Over the course of his life, the poet Vicente Aleixandre spent long periods of summer in Miraflores de la Sierra. The village, which still retains its traditional charm, lies some 49 kilometres north of the capital. It marks the start of a number of roads and paths to the mountain passes of Canencia and La Morcuera.

It's a quiet spot in winter, but in summer it fills with tourists and those who keep a holiday home owners. It makes for the perfect place to rest and escape the heat of the capital in the summer months. Illustrious past residents include the poet Vicente Aleixandre and the doctor and scientist Santiago Ramón y Cajal. Both kept homes in the village and enjoyed the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of the local people.



Church of  
Santa María la Mayor,  
Miraflores de la Sierra

### The link between Vicente Aleixandre and Miraflores

Aleixandre was born in Seville on 26 April 1898 and began visiting the Miraflores area from 1925. He was a great admirer of the village, its landscapes and environment and the local people, who considered him a quiet, amiable man.

His famous poem *El canto del ruiseñor* (*The nightingale's song*) is inscribed on a rock at the Poetas viewpoint in Cercedilla, built as a memorial in the year of his death.

Vicente Aleixandre lived to the age of 85 and some of his best known works like *Destrucción o el amor* and *Sombra del paraíso* best-known written in his house in this village. His father had the house built to recover from illness.



View of the historic centre of  
Miraflores de la Sierra

Just 49 kilometres from Madrid, it boasts a good climate and fresh air that were so crucial to the health of the writer who was awarded the National Literature Prize in 1977.

The writer, who attracted attention with his poetic surrealism, was born in Seville but moved to Madrid where he lived for the rest of his life, while spending long periods in Miraflores de la Sierra in summer. Vicente Aleixandre was renowned as a poet during his lifetime. As well as the Nobel Prize for Literature, *La destrucción o el amor* was awarded the National Literature Prize in 1934. He also won the Critics' Prize for *En un vasto dominio* in 1963 and for his work *Poemas de la Consumación* in 1969.

Aleixandre spent his first summer in Miraflores de la Sierra in 1910, but illness forced him to spend long periods in

the village in 1925. At the age of 27 he was diagnosed with a severe tuberculous nephritis and the area became the perfect Madrid mountain refuge to rest and recover. With this in mind, his father, Cirilo Aleixandre, rented a comfortable *hotelito*, as the villas of that time were called. The writer spent an unforgettable five months in the area, which saw a great improvement in his condition.

But unfortunately, in 1931 he suffered a more serious re-occurrence of the tuberculous nephritis and he had to have a kidney removed. The writer, in a deteriorated condition, returned to the area in 1932 to a villa his father had had built called "Vistalegre". Luckily, Vicente Aleixandre gradually recovered thanks to the clean mountain air and was soon writing poems again. Although he couldn't have imagined it at that time, these poems composed during his illness would be fundamental to his future literary career as they were published in the prestigious *Revista de Occidente*.

From that moment his literary career took off thanks to his early publications. The house of Vicente Aleixandre was always open to writer friends, such as Luis Cernuda, and he loved to receive them and share evenings of endless conversation. Locals are also proud of the fact that the poet wrote his first book, *Destrucción o el amor*, in the area, for which he won the National Literature Prize in 1934.

Illness again changed the poet's life in 1937 during the Civil War. Once again, his father, despite the difficult circumstances, brought him to recover at his house in Miraflores. The poet was obliged by the doctor to observe a period of complete rest. By the end of the war, his physical condition improved gradually and in 1944 he completed, in his beloved Miraflores villa, his most recognised work *Sombra del paraíso*.



Plaza del Álamo,  
Miraflores de la Sierra

## La plaza del Álamo and the poet

Our Miraflores tour begins at the Plaza del Álamo, the heart of the village in summer, where locals and visitors alike stroll, shop and enjoy the many terraces.

In the centre of the municipality stands a great centenary tree where the writer often sat to rest and enjoy the relaxed ambience of the village. Vicente Aleixandre dedicated the poem *El Álamo* (7), to his beloved tree, included in the collection *En un vasto dominio* (1962). Locals tell that the writer loved sitting on the round stone bench surrounding tree for some respite from the summer heat.

*In the centre of the village  
was the big tree.  
It was a minimal square,  
but the very old tree  
overflowed it.  
Everything was sleeping, and the great poplar tree rised  
with grandeur.  
Ten men would not encircle its trunk.  
How lovingly they would embrace it  
Measuring it!  
Ever-living grandfather of the people,  
august by age and presence.  
The village is on the escarpment of a mountain range.  
Above the Najarra. Below, the plain, with an enor-  
mous thirst  
to get lost,  
The tree: a black poplar, a negrillo, as it is called there.  
The poplar “Let’s go to the poplar”.  
We are at the poplar...”  
Everything is poplar.  
And there is nothing but poplar anymore, which is the  
the only sky of these men.*

*El álamo*  
Vicente Aleixandre



Fuente Nueva, Miraflores de la Sierra

The poem *El Álamo* is inspired by the enormous dry elm tree that presides over the square in Miraflores and has today become one of the iconic sights in the village. In 1990, the tree, already three hundred years old, suffered Dutch Elm Disease, and although attempts were made to save it by injecting fungicides, the great tree failed to flower the following spring.

Ultimately, the decision was made to conserve its lifeless trunk rather than move it from this emblematic spot where it had stood for three centuries. To protect it, in 2002 it was declared a protected monument and a bronze bust of the poet was erected beside it in 2008. In 2017, it was replaced with an exact replica made from the bark of the trunk that was all that remained of Vicente Aleixandre's beloved tree.



House of Vicente Aleixandre, Miraflores de la Sierra

### The house of Vicente Aleixandre in Miraflores

For centuries, the tree has been a silent observer of the daily life of Miraflores residents. Every summer, locals and distinguished summer visitors like Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Vicente Aleixandre himself would chat under the tree. It is even said that the 19<sup>th</sup> century general, Rafael del Riego, who often spent holidays in the village, liked to sit beneath the elm.

Although the poet mainly lived in the city of Madrid at Calle Velintonia 3 (today Calle Vicente Aleixandre), he spent long periods of the summer at 'Vistalegre', the house originally acquired by his father for him to recover from illness.

The house is located on grounds in La Colonia, an area of the village where Madrid's upper middle classes built summer homes at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a privi-

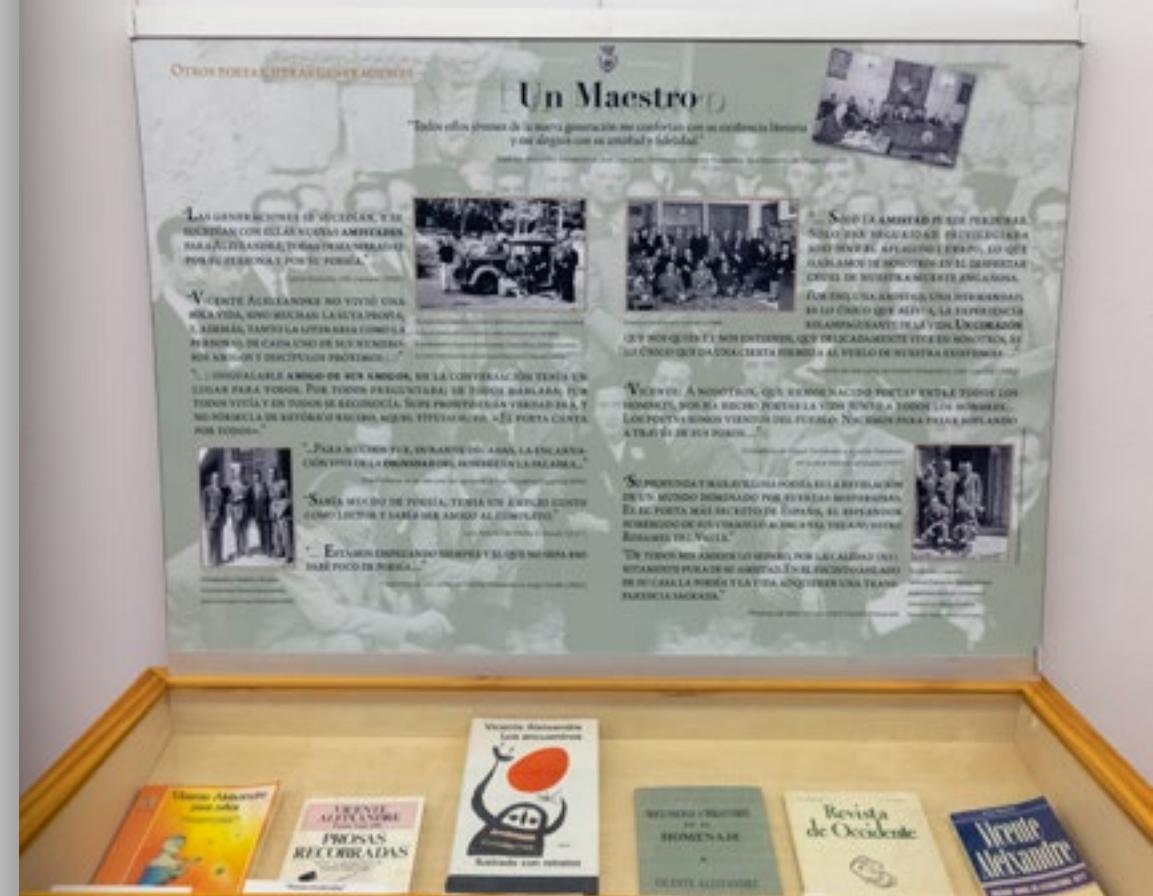
leged locations as it sat opposite Villa Asparina, the house of another Nobel Prize winner, the doctor Santiago Ramón y Cajal, with whom the poet maintained a close friendship.

Although the poet spent significant periods of his life here, upon his death the villa was abandoned. Unfortunately, a fire later destroyed all but the structure of the building. The fire saddened the locals, but fortunately, years later, the house was rebuilt.

Today, the house is owned by the sculptor Miguel Rius and even though it has been completely renovated inside, he was able to preserve the poet's memory with a room dedicated to the Nobel Laureate. Although not open to visitors, we know that the poet's writing desk-rescued from the ashes after the fire and later restored-has been preserved. There are also photographs of the author in different periods, with his colleagues from the Generation of 27, and images of the house when it suffered the fire.

While the private house is not open to the public, we can visit a site dedicated to the memory of the poet at the Villa de Miraflores Art Centre on Travesía de Bustarviejo. The centre is designed as an interactive space with 3 different exhibition rooms where visitors can view first editions of a number of the poet's works and those of some other writers from the Generation of 27.

The centre also hosts regular projections of photographs of the poet and of the local area. The centre aims to educate visitors on the life and work of Vicente Aleixandre.



Space for the Poetry of Vicente Aleixandre, Miraflores de la Sierra

### The Space for the Poetry of Vicente Aleixandre

The Space for the Poetry of Vicente Aleixandre remains open Monday to Friday from 10 am to 2 pm. Admission to the centre is free and visits can be booked by telephone.



Tourism in Miraflores de la Sierra  
Miraflores de la Sierra Council



# Alcalá de Henares and Miguel de Cervantes

## **Tour 6: The writer's footsteps still echo loudly in many parts of the city**

The celebrated writer was born in Alcalá de Henares and we can still hear his and his family's footsteps echo through its streets today. His literary genius is a constant presence across the city.

*Plaza de Cervantes,  
Alcalá de Henares*

## Tour 6:



1. Antezana Hospital
2. The Cervantes Birthplace Museum
3. Plaza de Cervantes
4. The Universes of Cervantes Visitors' Centre
5. The Printing Press of La Galatea
6. Corral de Comedias theatre, Alcalá de Henares

The city where the writer was born in 1547 is filled with the indelible marks left by him and his family. Places like the old Antezana Hospital, the Cervantes Birthplace Museum and the Plaza de Cervantes have become essential visits for anyone looking to find out more about the life of Cervantes.

The city of Alcalá de Henares is located in the north-east of the region of Madrid. Located on the right bank of the river Henares in the countryside of La Campiña, Alcalá de Henares is a beautiful, historic and populous city that has become a cultural hub thanks to the importance of its university but above all as the birthplace of the writer Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.

Miguel de Cervantes was born on 29 September 1547 in Alcalá de Henares and is today considered one of the most important writers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and in the history of world literature. An essential author known throughout the world for his most universal work *Don Quixote of La Mancha*.



*Courtyard of the Colegio Mayor de San Ildefonso, University of Alcalá de Henares*

As well as Cervantes there are also traces of the medieval Castilian poet Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, who was born in Alcalá de Henares around 1283. The basis of this belief is the line “*daughter, greetings from one who is from Alcalá*”, found in stanza 1510 of the *Libro del Buen Amor*, one of the most celebrated works of Castilian literature. The line has helped experts sustain the hypothesis that the author was indeed born in Alcalá de Henares.

## Following the footsteps of Cervantes in Alcalá de Henares

Alcalá de Henares is famed across the world for its monuments and as the birthplace of Cervantes. Many of the city's streets are intricately linked to the history of the author and his family. Walking these streets offers an opportunity to find out more about the life of the author.



The old Antezana hospital, Alcalá de Henares



Courtyard of the old Antezana Hospital, Alcalá de Henares

## Antezana Hospital

We propose a literary walking tour that takes us to the different buildings that remind us of the life and work of the author: the Antezana Hospital, the Cervantes Birthplace Museum, the Plaza de Cervantes, the Universes of Cervantes Visitors' Centre, the printing press of *La Galatea* and the Corral de Comedias theatre.

Our route begins on Calle Mayor. There we find the Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia Hospital or the Antezana Hospital. The writer's father, Rodrigo, worked here as a bloodletting surgeon. The hospital was founded by Luis de Antezana in 1483 to cater for local patients. We can visit the interior of this emblematic building and discover its place in the history of Cervantes's father.

## Cervantes Birthplace Museum

The next stop on our trails is in the Cervantes' Birthplace Museum is located beside the hospital. The exact birthplace of Cervantes has been a source of fierce debate and

controversy for many years. In 1949, Luis Astrana Marín, author of *Vida ejemplar y heroica de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, indicated this as the correct location. Alcalá de Henares City Council purchased the property in 1954 and built this interesting museum to Cervantes.

The Cervantes Birthplace Museum was opened in 1956 as a museum and library. The museum was transferred to the Regional Government of Madrid in 1985. While some renovations were carried out in some rooms in 1997 and 2003, the aim has always been to preserve the original spirit of the house.

The rooms, distributed across two floors are decorated to give an indication of people's daily life and customs in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the Cervantes Birthplace Museum we can also view a selection of editions of Cervantes's works from different eras and in different languages in the temporary exhibition rooms.

The rooms of the museum overlook a picturesque columned interior courtyard. In one of its corners is a well, used by the family to collect water, as the majority of households did in that era. The lower floor is where Rodrigo de Cervantes, the writer's father and a medic, attended guests and patients. The family's living quarters and rooms were upstairs.

The mission of the Cervantes' Birthplace Museum is, above all, to promote the life and work of the author and it offers regular cultural activities throughout the year. Admirers of Cervantes' work can enjoy workshops, exhibitions and themed tours about the writer.



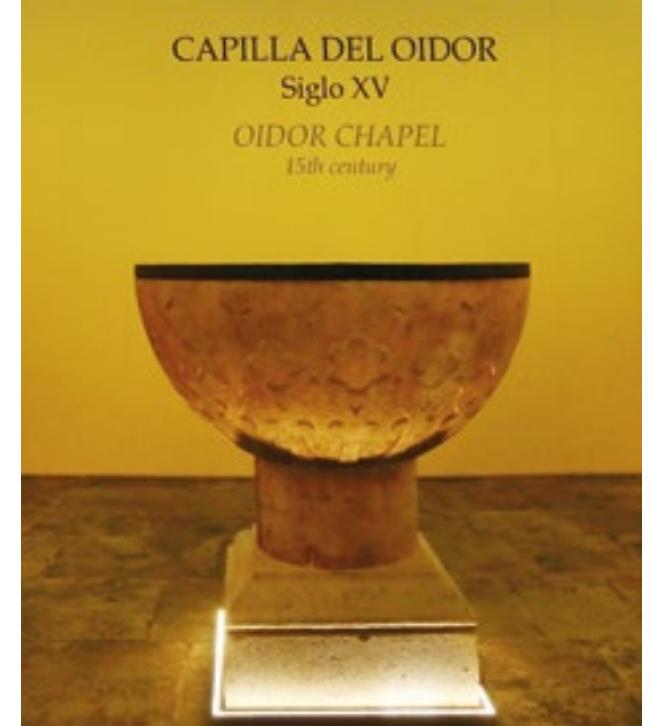
Plaza de Cervantes,  
Alcalá de Henares

## Plaza de Cervantes

The Alcalá de Henares' main square and was named in honour of the writer in 1879. We find a monument to Cervantes by the sculptor Pedro Nicoli, a statue of the author, unveiled the same year. It is one of the most popular meeting places in the city.

## The Universes of Cervantes Visitors' Centre

Our next stop is the Oidor Chapel. The building houses the conserved baptismal font of the writer and we can also find the Universes of Cervantes Visitors' Centre. The centre was opened by the City Council in 2005 and is another important location dedicated to the life and work of the author. We can find a number of editions of *The Quixote* on display to the public. The Oidor Chapel also has a display of a copy of the baptismal book of the parish of Santa Maria containing the entry for Miguel de Cervantes.



Cervantes's baptismal font,  
Oidor Chapel,  
Alcalá de Henares

## The printing press of *La Galatea*

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Alcalá de Henares was known for its numerous printing presses where dedicated engravers and framers also plied their trade. Printers like Stanislaw Polono, Juan de Mey and Andrés de Angulo were some of the most well-known of the time. On Calle Libreros, a street dedicated to the sale of books, was the printing press of Juan de Gracián. It was here that the first edition of Cervantes' novel *La Galatea* was printed. Today, the building has disappeared and all we can find is a plaque commemorating the printing location of the famous pastoral novel.

In the Plaza de Cervantes we find the Corral de Comedias de Alcalá de Henares theatre, also known as the Corral de Zapateros. This *corral de comedias* or open-air courtyard theatre was built in the year 1601 and was opened to the public the following year.



Corral de Comedias,  
Alcalá de Henares

## Corral de Comedias, Alcalá de Henares

The stone patio of the original design, from which the audience accessed their seats, was conserved in this new incarnation. The *cazuela* was a seating area reserved for women. Here we can also find the *aposenos*, which were closed rooms used as accommodation for different guests.

This space was transformed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to make it the perfect place for small events and chamber concerts. At that time, the courtyard was covered by a cupola that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was covered with plaster and painted. The boxes, distributed across two tiers, were also built,

forming a circle around the patio. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the space was converted into a cinema and retained this function until 1970.

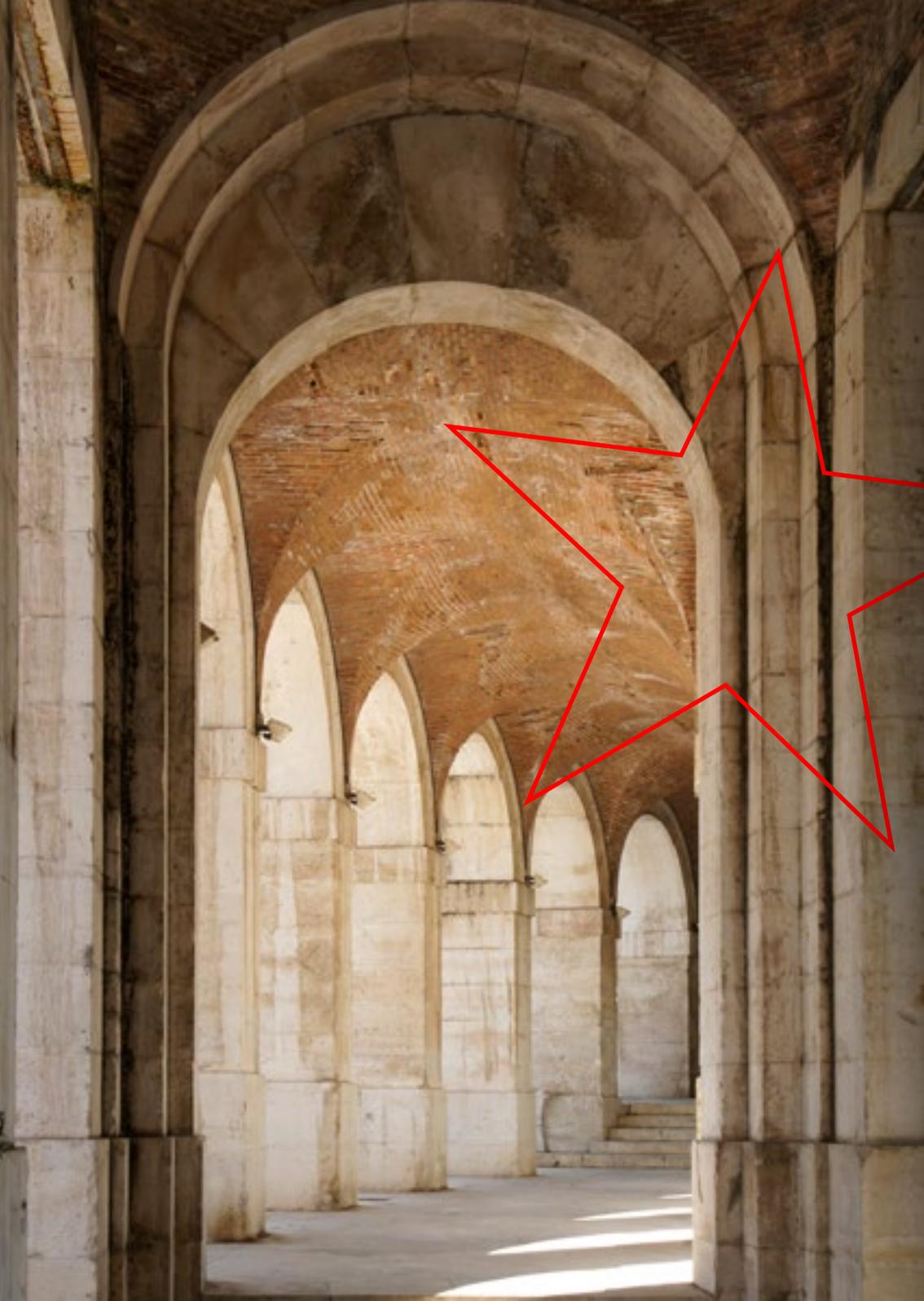
In the 1980s, the Regional Government of Madrid embarked on a restoration process with the goal of reconverting the venue into a theatre space. Today, management and programming is overseen by the Teatro de La Abadía in Madrid.

The Corral de Comedias de Alcalá de Henares offers guided group tours that reveal the evolution of the building from its original design as a *corral de comedias* in 1602. On these tours, visitors can see the original stage mechanisms used in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Finally, we have one last stop to recommend on our Cervantes trail: the Casa de la Calzonera. This house, located on Calle de la Imagen, belonged to the writer's uncle, Juan de Cervantes. On the same street sits the Convento de la Imagen, where the writer's sister, Sor Luisa de Belén held the position of prioress three times. It's a beautiful and curious building and an example of Plateresque architecture attributed to Alonso de Covarrubias.



[Corral de Comedias Theatre](#)  
[Tourism in Alcalá de Henares](#)  
[Alcalá de Henares City Council](#)



# Aranjuez and José Luis Sampedro

**Tour 7: The beauty of Aranjuez  
became a source of inspiration  
for the work of Sampedro**

Although he only lived in Aranjuez during its adolescence, the writer was enamoured by its unforgettable beauty. A life's passion for which he received the Gold Medal of the City in 1996.

*Plaza de San Antonio,  
Aranjuez*

## Tour 7



1. *Prince's Garden*
2. *Royal Palace of Aranjuez*
3. *Aranjuez train station*

The writer José Luis Sampedro arrived in Aranjuez with his family when he was just a teenager. The city opened its doors and he was seduced by the beauty of its monuments and avenues. He considered the city of Aranjuez to be fundamental to his life and work.

Located in the south of the region of Madrid, Aranjuez boasts a wealth of artistic, cultural and monumental heritage. A magical place, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001. Every day, visitors from all over the world flock here to discover the splendour of sights like the Royal Palace of Aranjuez, the Church of San Antonio de Padua and the marvellous Prince's Garden.

Numerous artists and writers were enchanted by the majesty of Aranjuez and spent several years of their life there. They include the writer José Luis Sampedro, but also figures like the painter and writer Santiago Rusiñol and the musician Joaquín Rodrigo.

The destiny of the city changed radically when King Philip II decided to permanently establish the Madrid court here in 1561. The area witnessed the arrival of the innovative ideas of the Renaissance, which would definitively change the city and its physical appearance. Two centuries later, under the reign of the Bourbons Ferdinand VI and Charles III, construction began on the planned city



Royal Palace  
of Aranjuez

along the lines of French Baroque. Aranjuez is very well served by transport links and has been ever since the train first arrived in 1851 during the reign of Isabella II, attracting many visitors.

### **Aranjuez and José Luis Sampedro**

The writer José Luis Sampedro was born in Barcelona in 1917 and arrived in Aranjuez as a teenager. His father, a military doctor, was stationed at the orphans' school in the city. From the moment the author arrived in the city, he fell in love with every corner of the city and he himself admitted that although he was born in Barcelona, his birth as a writer took place in Aranjuez.



Casa del Labrador,  
Aranjuez

***I enjoyed the immense privilege of spending my life, in the decisive age of adolescence, in the Royal Site. My earthly paradise is located on those banks of the Tagus.***

*Real Sitio (7)*  
José Luis Sampedro

The World Heritage city appears in many of his works, including *Octubre, octubre, El río que nos lleva* and *Real Sitio*. In *Escribir es vivir*, one of his last works, he remembers the impact on his life of this *city on the edge of La Mancha*, with its palace and its gardens, acquiring great symbolic significance in his novels.

To discover José Luis Sampedro's favourite corners of the city, we suggest a simple walking tour that begins on Calle de la Reina. Since 2018, the publishing house *Doce Calles*, the *Friends of José Luis Sampedro* Association and



Prince's Garden  
Aranjuez

## Prince's Garden

the *Aranjuez Civic Forum* have been running guided tours for the public to discover the emblematic sights of Aranjuez.

Calle de la Reina is opposite the Prince's Garden and the site of the Sampedro family home. The writer lived there from age 13 to 18, before going on to study in Madrid. Nearby stands the Godoy Palace and the Palace of the Dukes of Osuna, once the lodgings of the famous Farinelli.

The writer loved to stroll through the Prince's Garden which, in the past, was a space used by the court and closed off from the citizens of Aranjuez. It is surrounded by the river Tagus and contains numerous curious trees and plants from all over the world. The garden is referenced in a number of works that also refer to other Aranjuez beauty spots like the famous pond, the Royal Pavillion, the Narciso fountain, the Los Chinescos Bandstand, the Apollo Fountain, the pond-with its classical



Interior of the Royal  
Palace of Aranjuez

## Royal Palace of Aranjuez

and Chinese gazebos, the Ferdinand VI jetty and the Primavera Orchard.

It's a walk the writer took on numerous occasions, either alone or in company. He loved to take in the beauty of the Prince's Garden and the Museum of Royal Barges.

Another of his favourite places was the Royal Palace of Aranjuez, which can be accessed by the gate located the Hercules and Antaeus fountain in the Jardín del Parterre. The Royal Palace of Aranjuez has been the preferred country residence of Spanish kings for centuries. It is

surrounded by 111.23 hectares of public gardens on a fertile plain at the confluence of the rivers Tagus and Jarama. It's a must-see for all visitors and was one of the writer's favourite places.

Sampedro was also a regular visitor to the San Antonio square with its 18<sup>th</sup> century arches. Also known as Plazuela de la Mariblanca, the vast square is popular with locals and visitors to enjoy the lively atmosphere. At the end the novel *The river that carries us*, the protagonists visit the Casa de Oficios y Caballeros, which overlooks the square.



Aranjuez  
Train Station

## Aranjuez Train Station

One of the writer's favourite corners of the city that appears several times in his work is Aranjuez train station. The railway arrived in Aranjuez in 1851 during the reign of Isabel II and brought transcendental change to the area because many travellers changed here for connecting journeys to other parts of the country. Today, the imposing Neomudejar building impresses with its beauty and decorative mosaics. From the ceiling of the main concourse hang five circular forged iron lamps. It is an iconic space and for many years was the gateway to the city.

The writer was closely associated with Aranjuez throughout his entire life and in 1990 he was invited to officially open the Motín festivals and named *Amotinado Mayor*, an honorific title. In 1996, he also received the Gold Medal of the city. After his death, he was posthumously declared an Adoptive Son of the City.



A carriage of the  
"Strawberry Train",  
Aranjuez

In 2017, the City Council named a public park after the author in the Plaza de Abastos, beside the Isabel de Farnesio Cultural Centre. There are also other spaces in Aranjuez that bear his name. The Adult Education Centre, the José Luis Sampedro Study Hall and the Library of the Doménico Scarlatti Secondary School also bear his name.



[Tourism in Aranjuez](#)  
[Aranjuez City Council](#)  
[National Heritage in Aranjuez](#)

About the author  
Carmen Fernández  
Etreros



Carmen Fernández Etreros was born in Madrid and holds a degree in Journalism from the Universidad Complutense. As a journalist she has collaborated with a number of media outlets including *ABC*, *Informativos Telecinco*, *Sapos y Princesas* and *the Gaceta Complutense*. She has also worked in the publishing sector as a copy writer, proof reader and editor. She has also taught Communication Media and Processes and in recent years has delivered a number of literature, writing and literary criticism workshops. She currently runs the culture and literature website *Topcultural*. As a writer she has written a graphic novel, *Galdós: un escritor en Madrid* and the novel *El secreto de Clara León*.

IG: [@carmenfetreros](https://www.instagram.com/carmenfetreros)



## Tourism in the Region of Madrid

[www.turismomadrid.es](http://www.turismomadrid.es)

## Photos

Photo archive of the General Directorate for Tourism of the Autonomous Region of Madrid:

© Amador Toril: cover, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 52, 53, 55, 64

© ASF Image: 62, 66, 70

© Belén Imaz: 35, 56, 59, 69, 71, 72-73, 75

© Javier Sánchez: 36-37

Alcalá de Henares City Council Photographic Archive:  
60, 63

Photographic Archive of the Fundación de Ferrocarriles  
Españoles: 74

Carmen Etreros's Photographic Archive: 77

## Sources



(1) Interview with María España in *Majadahonda Magazin*  
*majadahondamagazin*

(2) *25 años de Luis Rosales en Cercedilla: 25 poemas*.  
Fundación Cultural Cercedilla, 1986.

(3) *En lo oscuro* de Leopoldo Panero.  
Editorial Cátedra, 2011.

(4) *Por donde van las águilas y otros poemas* de Leopoldo Panero.  
Comares, 1994.

(5) *La arboleda perdida* de Rafael Alberti. Seix Barral,  
1987-1988.

(6) *Marinero en tierra* de Rafael Alberti.  
Biblioteca Nueva, 2003.

(7) *En un vasto dominio* de Vicente Aleixandre. Alianza  
Editorial, 1978.

(8) *Real sitio* de José Luis Sampedro. Destino, 1993.

Published 2021



**Comunidad  
de Madrid**

