

The town of Chelva is of great historical and cultural interest, as it preserves the traces of all the people who inhabited it. **Declared an Asset of Cultural Interest, with the category of Historic Site**, it is made up of a series of highly complex neighbourhoods, with a sinuous and enigmatic layout.

The historic centre of Chelva evokes its medieval past.

The temple, of cathedral-like dimensions, was begun in 1626, and its construction lasted eighty years.

Juan Bautista Pérez Castiel is credited with the exuberant interior baroque decoration, the large half-orange dome and the bell tower, considered the first of the Valencian Baroque, with a height of almost 60m. and an original clock that indicates the hours, days of the week and the month.



Built in the 11th century by the Muslims on a tuffaceous rock from which the whole territory was controlled, it is formed by a fortress, which is nowadays embedded in the Vizcondal Palace, and a walled medina, of which only one entrance gate remains, that of San Cristóbal. It still retains its enclosed structure, with alleyways, small squares, passages, passageways, passageways, etc. In the only square that is open, we find the 17th century Ermita de la Soledad, the result of a Christian reform of the first Muslim mosque in the town. Next to it is the reconstructed Hospital de la Villa, which functioned from the 16th century until the mid-19th century.

The Muslims of Benacacira, who were expelled by the Christian conquest and subsequently forced to be baptised, settled outside the walls, forming a neighbourhood with a very broken layout that goes into the orchard of Chelva, which has also been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest. There are three important squares, with unique buildings: the old Town Hall or Consejo de la Villa, in the Plaza del Arrabal, where we can still see a stretch of the wall; the hermitage of Santa Cruz, formerly the Mosque of Benaeca, and the Hermitage of Los Desamparados, from the 17th century. At the end of the district, on the old road to Valencia, the Hermitage of Loreto was erected in the 14th century, in Gothic style.

The Jewish quarter was also enclosed behind walls, protecting the small community settled along the entrance road from Valencia. The Azoque gateway, next to the old Town Hall, introduces us to this quarter, which has preserved its original layout intact, with narrow streets and access gates that isolated it from the outside world.

The first expansion after the medieval period took place in the area to the north of the Plaza Mayor, which was formed in the 17th century, coinciding with the new access to the city from Valencia and shifting the axis of power towards this area, which is reflected in the architecture: Palacio Vizcondal, Iglesia Arciprestal (Archpriestly Church).



Build from the old Muslim fortress and hidden by the transformations suffered during the 19th and 20th centuries, the building that was the palace of the Vizconde de Chelva is still preserved. At the back, architectural elements from the 13th century can be seen, as well as the remains of the Muslim tower and the wall that surrounded the Muslim quarter of Benacacira from the 11th century. This complex has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest.

In the Mudejar-Moorish quarter of Arrabal is the Hermitage of Santa Cruz, formerly the 14th century Mosque of Benaëça, which preserves its original structure intact and is the oldest of the two existing in the Valencian Community.

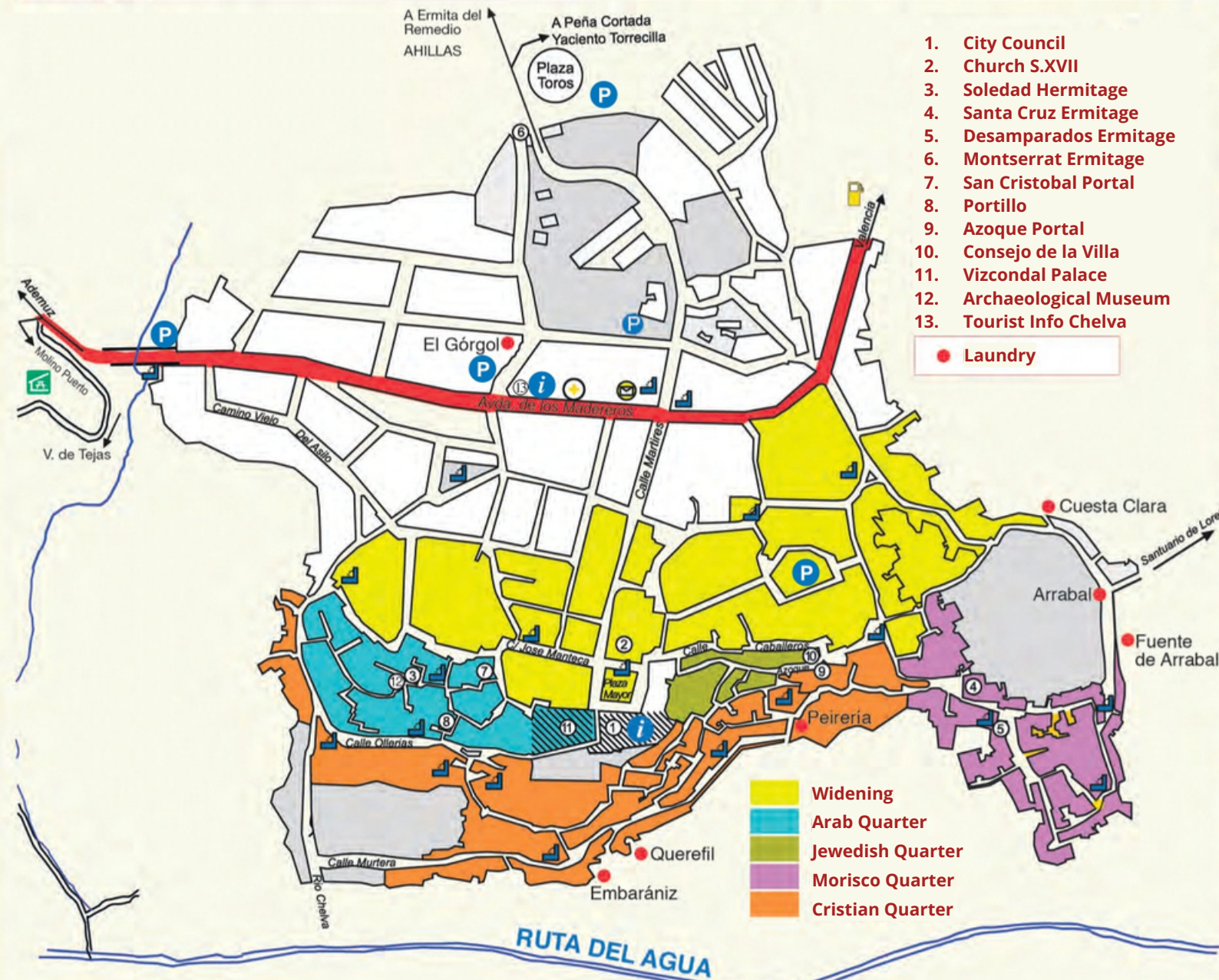
This Renaissance-style building housed Chelva's first town hall. It was built at the end of the 16th century and on its façade there is a bas-relief with the first known copy of the coat of arms of the town. It was used as the seat of the Council, where justice was dispensed, the town was governed and also as a storehouse for the tithes.



The Ermita de los Desamparados (Chapel of the Forsaken), from the 17th century, stands out, built for the devotion started after the plague epidemics suffered in the middle of this century. It contains an important sgraffito painting and a 17th century ceramic panel on the façade. La Ermita de Ntra. Sra. de la Soledad, end of the 17th century, whose current building is the result of a Christian reform of the first Muslim mosque in the town.



Located in the space where the old hospital of the 16th century used to be, in the heart of the Benacirra neighbourhood. Visitors can enjoy nine display cases, chronologically arranged from prehistoric times to the 19th century. The museum exhibits excellent archaeological pieces recovered in the excavations carried out in the municipality, these accompanied by posters and audiovisuals make the long history of Chelva known.





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Ruta del Agua...

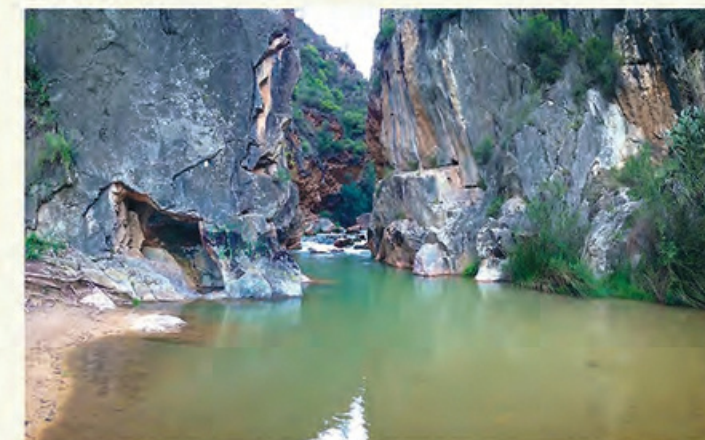
Water is Chelva's treasure. Throughout the municipality we can enjoy the crystalline waters of the river of Chelva with a quiet walk along the WATER ROUTE, as well as numerous springs, fountains and washing places. The springs have been a meeting place for the inhabitants of the village. People used to go there to collect water with their jugs and water jugs; the horses would also drink from the troughs at the beginning and end of the day.



Springs such as the Gitana, José Manteca and Ollerías; other ornamental fountains, located in the Plaza Mayor and in the Plaza del Arrabal; and many others that refresh the visitor during the tour through the historic quarters. In Chelva there are seven washhouses: the Górgol, the Peirería, the Embarniz, the Querefil, the Baño and two in the Arrabal neighbourhood, meeting points where women used to wash their clothes.



These places served, in turn, as meeting points where the events of daily life in the village were discussed. Along this route we can appreciate the complex irrigation system (declared BIC), we can also find remains of hydraulic mills. The Water Route is a circular tourist itinerary that combines nature and culture in a pleasant walk lasting approximately three hours with rest areas.



...Surroundings

"LA TORRECILLA"

It is located on a mound 1km north of Chelva, its privileged position allows it to control the northern territory of the valley, thus favouring the settlement of various cultures. Thanks to archaeological campaigns, it is known that there was an Iberian settlement in La Torrecilla between the 4th and 1st centuries BC. Later, at the end of the 12th century, the Almohads built a rural castle with a wall, a cistern, a tower and various rooms. During the Carlist Wars (mid-19th century) a new tower was built on the medieval ruins.



ROMAN ACUEDUCT "PEÑA CORTADA"

Declared an Asset of Cultural Interest, this colossal work of hydraulic engineering was built by the Romans in the 1st century AD. The aqueduct is one of the most important in the country and still preserves sections along 28 km. The most spectacular are: the Rambla de Alcotas bridge, the Barranco del Gato ravine and the Peña Cortada at the end of Calles, an impressive vertical cut followed by a gallery carved into the rock that can be visited.



SAN FRANCISCO'S CONVENT

The primitive convent dates back to the 14th century and was the first one where the Franciscan Observance was established in Spain; today the caves of the hermit monks are still preserved. The church of San Francisco, attached to the convent, is from the 16th century, in late Gothic style with a Renaissance façade. Although today it no longer houses any members of the Franciscan community, it is still used as a place of worship and religious spirituality.



SANCTUARY VIRGEN DEL REMEDIO

The sanctuary, located about 5 km from Chelva, in a privileged spot below the Pico del Remedio (1054 m) and with a beautiful view, houses the image of the patron saint of Chelva, Nuestra Señora del Remedio, which is brought to the village in pilgrimage during the patron saint's festivities. In the 19th century, frequent visits and the growing devotion to the Virgin led to the restoration of the neoclassical chapel and the creation of an inn next to it.



...Festivities

Many festivals are celebrated throughout the year in this town. San Antón. It is celebrated around 17th January. The town is lit up with the fire of more than a hundred bonfires. The festival is accompanied by traditions such as



the "empujón" round, "la cencerrá" and the "reparto de joyas".

In the last decade, the oral storytelling festival "Cuentantón" has been incorporated into the festival and attracts a large number of visitors to the municipality.

Alleluias. On Easter Sunday, thousands of coloured papers blessed with the word "alleluia" and allegories are thrown from the top of the church, which the villagers place behind the door to protect their house.

Procession of Corpus Christi and the tederos. Where traditional jotás are danced to the light of the tederos, small bonfires placed on supports, in the Plaza Mayor.

Patron Saint Festivities. In honour of the Virgen del Remedio, they are held in the last week of August, beginning with a pilgrimage to the Virgin from the Sanctuary to the village. During these festivities, bullfighting festivities are traditionally held in the municipality's century-old bullring.