

THE CALVARY AND CHURCH OF SOLITUDE

On the hill of the Calvary (el Calvario) you will find the Church of Solitude, the construction of the church began in the year 1872 by the Oratory of Solitude and it was later restored by Federico Arocas (the minister) in 1942, a franciscan that dedicated part of his life to the maintenance of the church, it's embellishment and the reclamation of local folklore. In the church you can find the "Virgin of Solitude", revered by the people of Cofrentes, especially by those who were entrusted with the transportation of timber along the river, whom paid thanks to the Virgin for their safe return after these arduous journeys.

The Minister's house is joined to the Church of Solitude. Inside are the main rooms of the church house, a kitchen and a bedroom; which are separated by a curtain the cleric himself braided, as well as making the stools, book shelves and photo frames by hand too. Another curiosity you can visit on the pastures of the hill of the Calvary are stone carvings by the minister himself. According to his ideas, they are a recreation of the tomb of the Virgin and Christ, distributed in the surrounding pastures.



CERAMIC TILE MURALS



One of the most dramatic periods in the town's history and itself the valley was the expulsion of the Moorish people. This meant the loss of the majority of the population, and with that a significant economic change for the Dukedom of Gandía. Despite opposition from the nobles, on 9th April 1609, the King decreed their expulsion. Before the loss of their livelihoods, belongings and removal from the valley, the Moorish uprising began in Teresa of Cofrentes, whereby on the 19th October the revolt of Muela de Cortes took place with 2530 moorish people rising in arms. A total of 21 ceramic murals represent the whole valley, walking through the town of Cofrentes we can find three of them, which tell the story of various events that took place over those years.

SAINT ANA'S CAVE



Traditionally, it is said that Saint Ana's Cave was the exit of a tunnel that crossed the settlement, coming from the castle in order to escape the fortress in the case of a siege. The appearance of pantries or passages linking one house to another has fed this idea, just like the existence of sally-ports (small doors), false doors, links with emblematic buildings (like churches) and other paths of communication. Currently, one can observe various structures like wine cellars and winepresses. These are closely related to the family economy in addition to the manufacturing of wine and the storage of other food items such as meat and farming products.

WASH HOUSE



The settlement relied on numerous water fountains for public use from which the citizens collected water with jugs on a daily basis. There were also irrigation channels bordering the town, although in order to wash clothes, the women would go to the riverbed.

The main wash room was constructed in the second half of the fifties and reformed in 2013, and although it was an improvement and a step forward for the town, it came about at a time when customs were changing and the absence of amenities lead to the arrival of water in the home.

Anyway, its value did not last very long, as after 1957 they started to install drinking water in the home, upon request. A few years later, in 1961, big protests were held which finally led to the town passing the right to hook up the general pipeline.

Today, the wash house is nothing more than a distant memory of something that once contributed to substantially improving the lives of our neighbours.



RECOMMENDED ROUTE:

- 1.- CASTLE, CLOCK, MUSEUM AND CERAMIC TILE MURAL 1
- 2.- CHURCH
- 3.- CERAMIC TILE MURAL 3
- 4.- SAINT ANA'S CAVE
- 5.- THE CALVARY AND CHURCH OF SOLITUDE
- 6.- CERAMIC TILE MURAL 1
- 7.- WASH HOUSE



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Heritage route



The winding streets of Cofrentes date back to the Islamic era and have barely changed over the passing of the centuries, inviting us to wander along them and step into a piece of the town's history.

We start the trail at the foot of the castle at the Tourist Information point. The fortress not only rules over the town but also the confluence of the Júcar and Cabriel rivers, a useful vantage point that over centuries has been used to watch wood transportation through its domains.

At the entrance to the castle there is a tiled mural narrating the expulsion of the Moorish people from Cofrentes, the mural's design uses the river Cabriel to illustrate the fierce battles that took place. The visit to the castle itself is absolutely worthwhile to find out all about the history of Cofrentes, through features such as the fortress, the museum and the clock. What's more you can enjoy the stunning views from the very top of the Homage Tower and these alone make the ascent worth it.

Upon leaving the castle we come to Saint Joseph's Parroquial Church and from there we continue walking to the next stop. On the way there's a rest area dedicated to the 'Pastor' and continuing on we come to one of Cofrentes' look out points, known as the 'Era del Chulo'. This lookout point is practically located right on the confluence of the Júcar and Cabriel rivers and displays a tiled mural which further illustrates the expulsion of the Moorish people.

Walking even further along the path we reach the border of the town and the Church of Solitude, a new stop on our ancestry trail which allows walkers to pass through the fourteen stops of the Via Crucis (the Way of the Cross).

Back on foot we dive back into the streets of Cofrentes and head towards the Julio Ángel Pardo square. Here you'll find the concluding ceramic mural illustrating the end of the expulsion of the Moorish people from Cofrentes. From the plaza we go down towards the old, yet now restored, wash house before making the final ascent up San Antonio street coming back to the start of the trail, the castle, where we finish the tour of the architecture, the history and the culture of this town.

Audioguides into Cofrentes App. Free download.



CASTLE, CLOCK, MUSEUM



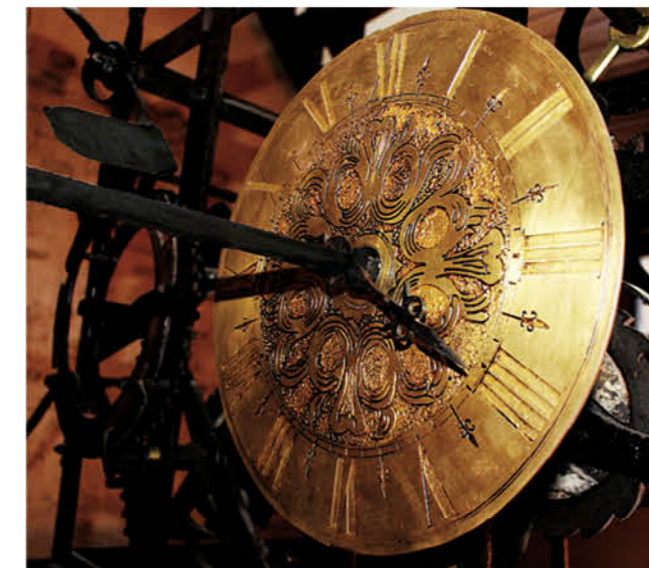
The fortress of Islamic origin was a key part of the valley's defence from the outset, forming part of the border between the Christian and Muslim kingdoms, as well as being a strategic point for the control of the river and transportation of wood by the river itself. The castle was documented in the 12th century, although the hill would have been populated before this, at least since the time of the Bronze and Iberian ages.

The architectural features you can see at present are, for the most part, from the palatial reform of the 17th century, above all on the upper enclosure which surrounds the courtyard of arms, arch-like in construction, where it maintains the division of the rooms.



In the same visit you can also gain access to the museum. The showroom displays historical remains that have been discovered through archaeological excavations of this very site, creating an exhibition of the different historical ages in which the hill was inhabited (dating back to the Bronze Age up until the 19th century).

On the upper floor of the "Homage Tower" is the Clock. One of its most interesting characteristics being that it was a blacksmith's clock of foundry that dates back to the second half of the 18th century, sharing similarities with only two other clocks, that of the Bern Clock Tower (Switzerland) and the Castle of Dover (England).



The visits are guided in schedule in the morning and evening and start of the Tourist Info, just person at the foot of the castle.

CHURCH

The origin of the building has two versions to the story, the first marks the beginning of the 13th century, claiming the church settled on the base of an old Muslim mosque. Whereas the second version comes from the 17th century, specifically in 1621, claiming the church was newly-built of ionic order with eight side chapels and two doors.



Currently the building consists of a single nave for worship (originally restored in 1961), an annex in which the sacristy is located, as well as a bell tower. The roof of the main nave was recently restored in 2014, by means of a multi-coloured coffered ceiling with a gold leaf design and a central painting representing Saint Joseph's dream (el Ángelus).

The Church tower can be found at the foot of the central nave, next to the Epistle.

Regarding it's architecture, it has Arab traces which suggests that it could have once been an old

minaret (aligning with the first version of the church's origin story) or it could be as a result of structural tradition (supporting the idea of it once being a new build) as the area was already inhabited by a large number of Mudejar and Moorish people, despite the decree for their expulsion in the early years of the 17th century.

