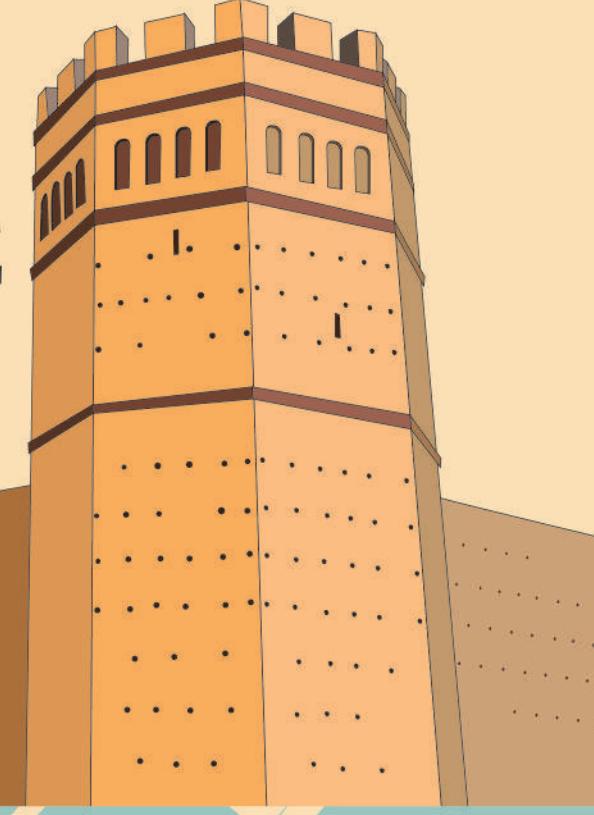


JEREZ FROM SQUARE TO SQUARE WITHIN THE WALLS

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Jerez town centre is an area of Historical and Artistic Interest and the best way to go about discovering its many attractions is by visiting each of its squares, an experience that allows you to discover traces left behind over the ages by a range of different cultures as varied as Phoenicians, Romans, Muslims and Christians, each of which have left their mark on the urban and architectural heritage to be found within the ancient city walls.

Create your own experiences and memories by visiting its museums, mansion houses, wineries, tablaos and flamenco clubs, taste its local dishes and delight in its sherry wines whilst enjoying these squares that occupy a privileged position in any visit to the city.

Plaza del Arenal. The main square of the city and one which over the years has provided the scene for tournaments, duels, bullfights and even horse races. In its centre proudly stands an equestrian sculpture, work of Mariano Benlliure. A few meters away, just outside the old city walls, we find the San Miguel barrio known for its flamenco traditions, with the far side of the square giving access to the Alcázar de Jerez, the Cathedral and the Palace of Virrey Laserna, the last Viceroy of Peru and of Spain in America. In addition to providing such privileged surroundings the Plaza del Arenal leads us to the Alameda Vieja.

Alameda Vieja. The Alameda Vieja is the main esplanade in the city and takes us to the **Alcázar de Jerez Monumental Complex** with its eleventh century Almohad architecture, housing such wonders as a Mosque, Arab Baths and the Villavicencio Palace. Just to one side we find the **Gonzalez Byass-Tío Pepe Winary** crowned by the Tío Pepe weather vane, whose size has earned it a place in the Guinness Book of Records.

Turning around we find ourselves facing the Cathedral, a temple in which gothic and baroque styles merge with neoclassical. Its bell tower stands to one side, its gothic lower half combining with a baroque upper half, and which allows spectacular views of the city. From the magnificent main entrance to the Cathedral we can observe and later make our way to the Plaza del Arroyo.

Plaza del Arroyo. This square owes its name ("arroyo" means "stream") to the stream that used to run down through the surrounding streets and used by the craftsmen of the tanners guild who settled in the area. Finally, in the sixteenth century, the stream was covered over and the square built. Here stood one of the entrance gates to the city, the **Puerta del Arroyo**, which once formed part of the city walls and dated from the year 1500. The most memorable building in the square is the **Palacio de los Condes de Puerto Hermoso**, where King Alfonso XIII once spent the night on his visit to Jerez in 1925, and to the right of this we find the baroque **Palacio de Bertemati**, current offices of the Jerez Bishopric, and whose most outstanding features are its balcony and façade. In the centre of the square stands a bust of the Jerez writer, Padre Luis Coloma, author of the children's tale '**Ratoncito Pérez**'.

In the neighbouring calle Salvador we find the **Hammam Andalusí Arab Baths Jerez**, an ideal place to relax. Further down, after climbing the steep cuesta del Espíritu Santo we come to **Bodegas Fundador** and the façade of the **Espíritu Santo Convent**, the first convent for nuns to be built in the city. Continuing our

walk around Jerez within the old city walls we reach the **Palacio de San Blas** and admire its magnificent ironwork balcony. Carrying on, we then come to Plaza Belén.

Plaza Belén. This square is presided over by a statue of the Virgin of Belén (Bethlehem) and takes its name from the monastery of descalced Franciscan friars who settled there in the mid-seventeenth century. On one side we see the neoclassical façade of the **Palacio de los Condes de Montegil** which leads us on to a recreational space which in turn gives access to another two squares that bear the names of the churches which stand there: **San Lucas** and **San Mateo** and once through these we then arrive at the epicentre of the San Mateo barrio, the Plaza del Mercado.

Plaza del Mercado. Here we find the old zoco, or Arab market, and during the Middle Ages the square was the stately urban centre of the city. The **Archaeological Museum** is currently located here and conserves collections originating from the different Neolithic, Phoenician and Roman archaeological digs within the municipal boundaries, the most outstanding piece on display being a Greek helmet dating from the seventh century BC.

The plateresque façade of the **Palacio de Riquelme**, dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century, adorns the square. Just a few metres away and sharing the same space, **Bodegas Tradición** offers a selection of the finest sherries as well as the **Joaquín Rivero** picture collection, which includes works of art by the great masters of Spanish painting of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

Beyond this unique space a labyrinth of narrow streets directs our steps towards the walls of the **San Juan de los Caballeros** church that, according to legend, guards the oath of loyalty made to King Sancho IV which the knights of Jerez sealed with their blood prior to the Moorish siege of 1285.

Leaving this church behind we then come to calle Chancillería, where the High Court of Appeal of Castilla stood in the reign of Henry IV until it was transferred to Granada in 1505. Chancillería presents us with the red and white brick neo-mudejar façade of the **Reparadoras Convent** standing on the corner of the Plaza San Juan.

Plaza San Juan. In this little square, almost hidden between the surrounding buildings, we find the **Andalusian Flamenco Centre** in the **Palacio Pemartín**, which dates from the fifteenth century and later refurbished in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

Our route now takes us down calle Francos, a commercial axis where merchants of the time were exempt from the taxes imposed on local businesses, until we reach the point where the street widens to lead us to the Plaza de la Compañía.

Plaza Compañía. Presiding over the square is the **Sala Compañía**, an old Jesuit church refurbished for use as a multi-purpose venue, with a façade of embossed columns and decorative tiles. Following our route of narrow winding streets we now follow calle San Marcos and enter one of the most dynamic squares in the city, Plaza Rafael Rivero, where we can then proceed to calle Torneria. But before we reach the square we find ourselves before the church of **San Marcos**, custodian of a spectacular seventeenth century altarpiece.

Plaza Rafael Rivero. Presided over by a bust of Rafael Rivero, former mayor of Jerez and responsible for bringing the first water supply to the city from a spring at El Tempul, some forty kilometres away. In this central square we can contemplate both the neoclassical façade of the **Palacio de Domecq de la Riva** and the baroque façade of the **Palacio de los Pérez-Luna** with its **sun dial** dating from 1777. To sit in this square and enjoy a glass of sherry and a tapa is just pure luxury.

Calle Tornería, the name taken from the presence of the guild of lathe turners, links the Plaza Rafael Rivero with yet another bustling square where a charming bandstand and a majestic Ficus invite us to stop and rest for a while; the Plaza, or Alameda, del Banco.

Plaza del Banco. Thus known because the headquarters of the Bank of Spain used to be located in the square where now stands the Central Library, which has the distinction of being **the oldest in Andalusia** and one of the oldest in Spain. Opened on April 23rd 1837, on National Book Day in honour of Miguel de Cervantes, the chronical of the event being written by Padre Luis Coloma, author of the children's tale '**Ratoncito Pérez**'.

The square includes the site once occupied by the San Cristobal Convent and is where the first cinematographic session ever to be held in Jerez was projected.

From here we turn back towards calle Torneria and come to one of the squares with most life in Jerez and one always closely linked to local trade, Plaza Plateros.

Plaza Plateros. The square owes its name to the concentration of Cristian and Muslim silversmiths and other craftsmen of the silver trade. It has had other names, but always related to local trades: Greengrocers, Bakers, Merchants. From here we see the **fourteenth to fifteenth century gothic-mudejar church of San Dionisio with its watch tower**. Restaurants and cafés invite the visitor to enjoy their stay in the city as they near the end of their walk, but first, Plaza de la Asunción.

Plaza de la Asunción. Also known as Los Escribanos (the Scribes), a name which it held from the fifteenth century, being adjacent to Calle Letrados (Lawyers) and the **Cabildo Viejo** (old Town Hall) built in 1575. This square combines the Mudejar style church of **San Dionisio**, Patron Saint of the city, the neoclassical style houses that surround it, such as the **Condesa de Casares Palace** (old city gaol) and the renaissance style **Cabildo Viejo** that, in turn, surrounds the statue of **Nuestra Señora de la Asunción**, from which the square took its name upon the inauguration of the monument in the 1950's.

For the final part of our itinerary, we leave Plaza de la Asunción behind and make our way to the Plaza de la Yerba.

Plaza de la Yerba. Within the city walls there was a small urban space that, together with Plaza Plateros, formed the bread and vegetable market. It was also known as the Vendors and Hatters Square given that in such a reduced space there were once up to eleven of these craftsmen. La Yerba takes us directly to Calle Consistorio, where we find the Town Hall, and finally return to our starting point in Plaza del Arenal.

