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FREE GUIDE · ARANJUEZ

Royal Palace of Aranjuez

The Porcelain Room, the Throne Room, the Arab Cabinet and the gardens of the Tagus — the 7 must-see stops of the Royal Site of Aranjuez, explained one by one

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Your visit at a glance

The spring residence of the kings of Spain and one of the jewels of the 18th-century Bourbon age, the Royal Palace of Aranjuez is the heart of a Royal Site that Unesco declared a Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site in 2001. It's not a palace to rush through: the best of it lies in the detail of its courtly rooms —the Porcelain Room, the Throne Room, the fabulous Arab Cabinet— and in a set of historic gardens that the Tagus keeps green in the middle of the meseta. This tour brings together the seven must-see stops of the estate, with the context to understand each one and 1, 2 and 3-hour routes so you can choose according to the time you have. The order is simple: first the palace, when it opens and the light is good; then, at a leisurely pace, the Parterre, Island and Prince's gardens, the last of these home to the exquisite Labourer's Cottage.

At a glance

PRICE
€9 general · €4 reduced

FREE ENTRY
Wed & Sun afternoon (EU/Ibero-America)

HOURS
Tue-Sun 10am-6pm (7pm in summer)

TIME
2-3 h (palace + gardens)

STOPS
The 7 must-sees

GETTING THERE
C-3 commuter line from Atocha

TV

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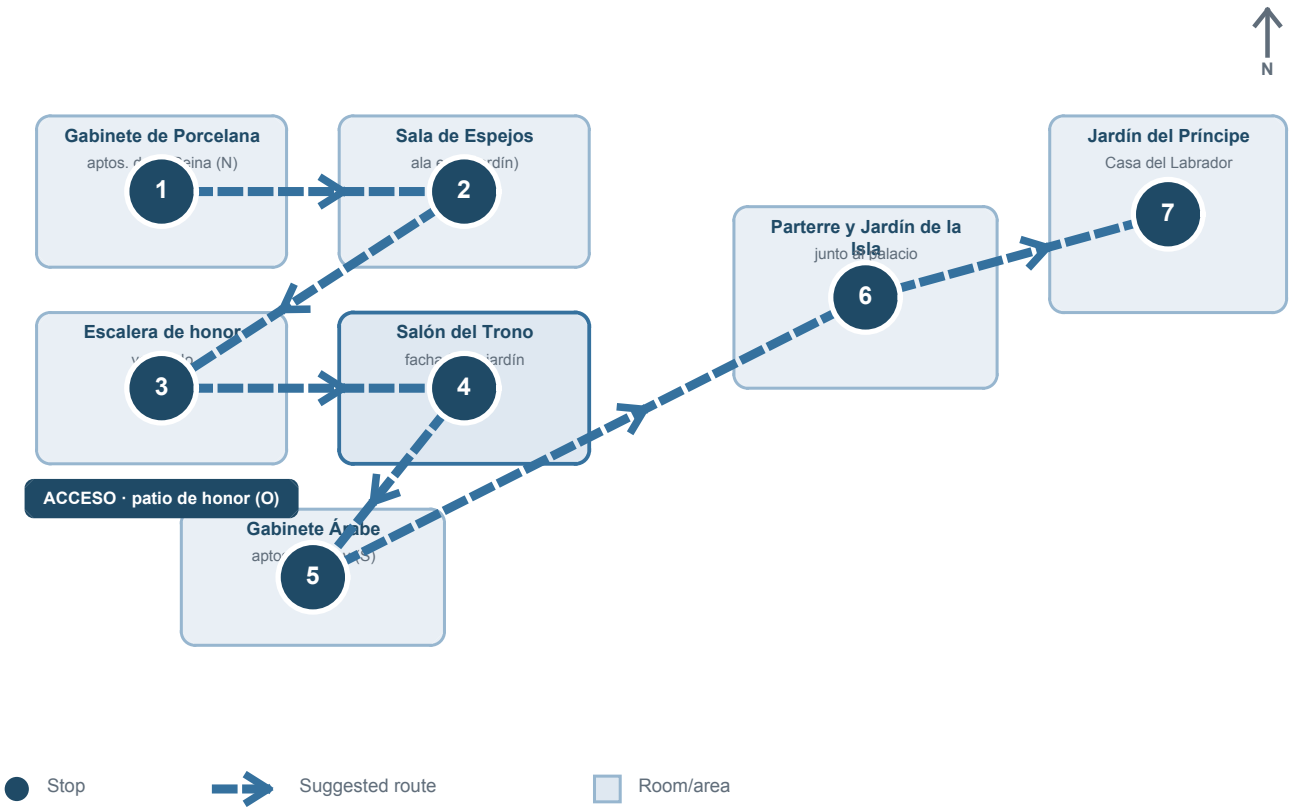
With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.

Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket
On Civitatis, with free cancellation. Skip the ticket-office queue.
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The map and the route

Organise your visit in two blocks. First the PALACE, first thing: go in through the main façade and the monumental staircase (1) and walk the royal rooms in the marked order, which is one-way — the Throne Room (2), the Hall of Mirrors (3), the Porcelain Room (4) and the Arab Cabinet (5). Then, the GARDENS: head out to the Parterre and the Island Garden (6), right beside the palace, and save for last the vast Prince's Garden with the Labourer's Cottage (7). Follow the numbers on the stops: they run in the most comfortable order for making your way around the Royal Site.

PALACIO DE ARANJUEZ · PALACIO Y JARDINES (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)



El palacio, en U abierta al oeste, reparte el apartamento de la Reina al norte y el del Rey al sur en la planta principal. Los jardines se extienden al este, junto al Tajo (la Casa del Labrador, más lejos). No a escala.

Visiting order: PALACE: 1 Façade and staircase › 2 Throne Room › 3 Hall of Mirrors › 4 Porcelain Room › 5 Arab Cabinet — GARDENS — 6 Parterre and Island Garden › 7 Prince's Garden and Labourer's Cottage

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

2 Throne Room

Royal apartments, main floor · 10 min

A solemn room of royal power, with a vault exalting the Monarchy. Here, during the Mutiny of Aranjuez of 1808, Charles IV abdicated in favour of his son Ferdinand VII, opening the crisis that Napoleon exploited.



Throne Room of the Royal Palace of Aranjuez.
Photo: JI FilpoC · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

PICTURE IT

The allegorical vault and the throne canopy; picture the scene of the 1808 abdication.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: the full account of the mutiny that broke out beneath these vaults — and how a single March night changed the fate of the Crown.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

4 Porcelain Room

Royal apartments, main floor · 10 min

A room unique in the world, clad from floor to ceiling in porcelain from the Royal Factory of the Buen Retiro (around 1765), by order of Charles III. Garlands, oriental figures and animals modelled in relief cover the walls and ceiling.



The Porcelain Room, clad with Buen Retiro ceramics.
Photo: JI FilpoC · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

DON'T MISS THIS

Pick a single figure on the wall and follow its outline with your eye: you'll see it stands out in relief, modelled in ceramic and not painted. Even the great ceiling chandelier is porcelain.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: how this room unique in the world was assembled, plaque by plaque — and which Italian city gave the king his passion for porcelain.

5 Arab Cabinet (Smoking Room)

Royal apartments, main floor · 10 min

An Orientalist room from the time of Isabella II (mid-19th century), the work of Rafael Contreras, restorer of the Alhambra. Its plasterwork and muqarnas are inspired by the Hall of the Two Sisters in Granada: a Romantic dream of the Alhambra.



The Arab Cabinet or Smoking Room, inspired by the Alhambra.
Photo: Herbert Frank from Wien · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

LOOK UP

The muqarnas of the ceiling and the polychromy of the plasterwork, copied straight from the Nasrid language of the Alhambra.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

The full story of this stop (twice the text), its «ONE FACT» box and all 7 stops of the route, one by one.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

7 Prince's Garden and Labourer's Cottage

East of the town, beside the Tagus · 50 min

The largest garden in Aranjuez, created in the late 18th century for the future Charles IV, with avenues, ponds and a landing stage on the Tagus. Within it, the Labourer's Cottage is a hugely luxurious Neoclassical pleasure pavilion, a hidden jewel of the estate.



The Labourer's Cottage, a pleasure pavilion in the Prince's Garden.
Photo: José Luis Filpo Cabana · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

THE HIDDEN LUXURY

The contrast between the landscape garden and the meticulous luxury of the interior of the Labourer's Cottage.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

The full story of this stop (twice the text), its «ONE FACT» box and all 7 stops of the route, one by one.

Practical tips

Best times

Go first thing for the palace (better light and fewer people in the rooms) and save midday-afternoon for the gardens. In summer, avoid the midday heat by strolling the Island, the shadiest and coolest area.

Buy your ticket in advance

On long weekends, in spring and at weekends Aranjuez receives many visitors and the ticket desk can cost you time. Getting your ticket online and choosing a time slot lets you go in with less waiting and secures your access to the palace on the day you want. Arrive a few minutes before your time. The gardens, by contrast, are free to enter.

Getting in free

National Heritage offers free entry (unguided, with accreditation) for citizens of the EU and Ibero-America on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons: 15:00-18:00 in winter and 15:00-19:00 in summer. There's also free entry for everyone on 18 May (Museum Day) and 12 October. The gardens are free to enter. Confirm hours and requirements on the official website.

With children

The gardens are the great family plan: plenty of room to run, the landing stage and ponds of the Prince's Garden, and a tourist train that tours the grounds without tiring the legs. The Porcelain Room tends to impress the little ones too.

Accessibility and services

The palace has an adapted route, and in the entrance area there are toilets and an information point. The gardens are flat and easy to stroll, though very large: for the Prince's Garden, the tourist train is a good option if you have reduced mobility or young children. Confirm services and wheelchair loans on the official website.

Combine it

In season, come from Madrid on the historic Strawberry Train (Tren de la Fresa), with period carriages and attendants handing out strawberries. You can also pair it with another Royal Site such as El Escorial.

Practical info

Address: Plaza de Parejas, s/n, 28300 Aranjuez (Madrid). Getting there: on the C-3 commuter line from Madrid-Atocha (about 45-50 min) to Aranjuez station, a short walk from the palace; by car via the A-4. Guide price (National Heritage): general admission €9, reduced €4 (ages 5-16, students up to 25, over-65s); free for under-5s; the gardens are free to enter. Guide hours: Tuesday to Sunday, roughly 10:00-18:00 in winter and 10:00-19:00 in summer; closed on Mondays and some public holidays. Confirm prices, hours and free windows on the official website before your visit, as they vary by season.

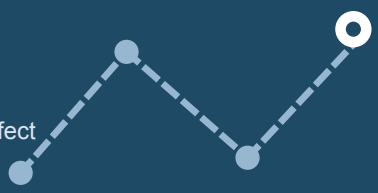
Official website: www.patrimonionacional.es/visita/palacio-real-de-aranjuez

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THE COMPLETE VERSION

Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Royal Palace of Aranjuez: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

1 **Main façade and monumental staircase**
Entrance and vestibule · 10 min

3 **Hall of Mirrors (Queen's Cabinet)**
Royal apartments, main floor · 10 min

6 **Parterre Garden and Island Garden**
Beside the palace façades · 40 min

PREMIUM Guide · Royal Palace of Aranjuez

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» **Check availability and prices**

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