Seville's history

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Numerous and varied cultures have been present in Seville's history. The **city's cultural, monumental and artistic legacy** gained over the centuries can be admired in its streets and museums. Seville's dark origins have provided legends such as the one that attributes Hercules as its founder. In order to appreciate the ancient history of Seville, one must visit the **Museo Arqueológico (Archaeological Museum),** a spectacular site in itself; once a Pavilion of the 1929 Exhibition. Here one can observe the remains of cultures that travelled from across the Mediterranean, bringing with them their distant gods. The **Tesoro del Carambolo** is a clear example of oriental influences assimilated by the ancient peoples of Seville.

Neighbouring Seville (Alcalá del Río) was the scene of the final battle between **Romans and Carthinigans (206 A.C.).** It was also the location of the first Roman colony in the region, **Itálica.** Known as the city of **Julia Romula Hispalis,** it was named after its founder, Julius Caeser (45 A.C.). He converted Sevillians into Roman citizens with full rights. In the 17th C Rodrigo Caro confirmed, "Although there were once great and suntuous temples and amphitheatres... everything has disappeared". This is just yet another reason to visit the Museo Arqueológico, where the Roman period is magnificently represented with findings from Itálica.

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The figures depicted on the city's shield of **San Leandro and San Isidro (Saints),** are accompanied on both sides by the conquering king from the Visigoth period, an era shadowed by the splendour of Islamic Seville, a period which followed immediately afterwards (712).
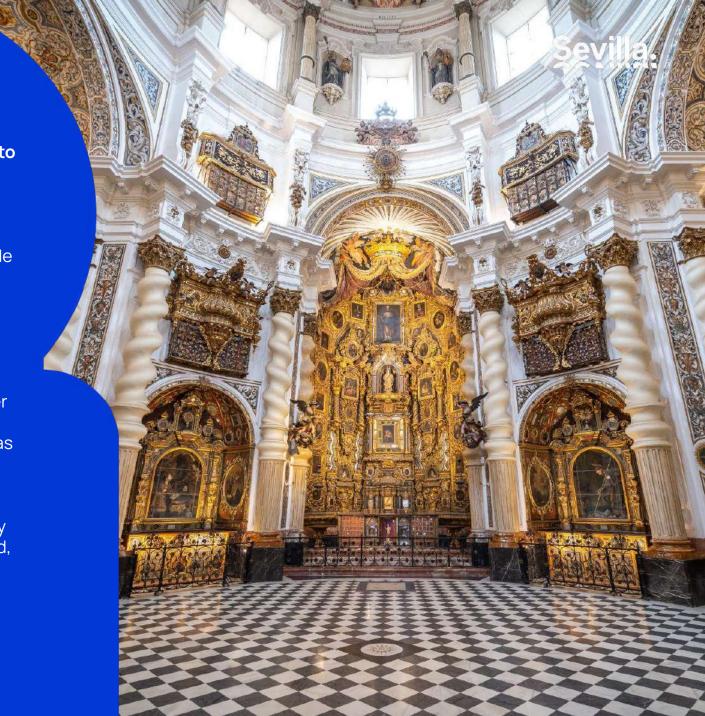
It was during the Almohade stage era (mid 12th C) when Isbiliya reached its greatest splendor. The **Mesquita Mayor** (mosque) was constructed. Its minaret became the symbol of the city. Renaissance touches crowned the building's tower and soon would become known as the Giralda.

The city was occupied by the Crown of Castile, conquered by **King Santo Fernando III** in 1248. Mosques were converted into Christian worship places. Even the Great Mosque (Gran Mesquita) fell under the same luck. A century and a half later considering the site's ruinous state, the ecclesiastic council decided to tear it down and in its place erect the **Catedral (Cathedral),** the indisputable symbol of Christian Seville. During the medieval period King Don Pedro built the Palacio Mudéjar (14th C) on the grounds of the ancient walled Islamic Alcázar.

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After the discovery of America, 16th C Seville became the Puerto de las Indias, monopolizing trade with the New Continent. The **Casa de la Contratación** was set up in the Alcázar and local merchants built the Casa Lonja which centuries later was converted into the **Archivo de Indias.** Many palace-homes were constructed during this period, such as the emblematic Hospital de las Cinco Llagas, today the seat of the Andalusian Parliament.

The 17th C brought in illustrious and universal artists, though a significantly progressive transfer of economic activity from the Americas to the city of Cádiz soon began to occur. The Hermandades de Pasión (Holy Week Brotherhoods) which has traditionally paraded without any order were soon organized under the Carrera Oficial (Official Route) body. The float's itinerary was coordinated according to seniority; Semana Santa (Holy Week) was becoming formalized and its profound religiousness was represented in works of artists such as **Montañés, Murillo, Zurbarán and Valdés Leal.** Their works can be found today in the Museo de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Museum) as well as in various city parishes. Important religious structures are built during this period, such as: the church of la Caridad, el Salvador and the impressive San Luis de los Franceses. Touches of Seville's Baroque master, Leonardo de Figueroa, are present in all of these churches.

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The 18th C brought the construction of the world famous **Fabrica de Tabacos (Tobacco Factory)**, an industrial building and scene of Carmen la Cigarrera. Another setting from this same opera, the **Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza (Bullring)** was also started, yet was not completed until the end of the following century.

Seville became known as an exotic destination for pioneers of the 19th C Romanticism movement. Some of these artists were excellent designers whose influence on the city remained intact up until contemporary renovations and the opening up of roads in and around Seville took place. This was a response to outward growth which brought down their walls. Two of Seville's finest examples of Arquitectura del Hierro (Ironwork Architecture) can be found in the **Puente de Triana (bridge),** inspired by the Carrousel of Paris, the other being the Naves del Barranco.

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The **20th C** started off with the preparations and promises of a World's Fair – Exhibition. This event was postponed for various reasons until it finally opened in 1929. This **Latin American Expo** left us the **Plaza de España,** the Plaza de América, and various country Pavilions representing different architectural styles and native pre-Colombian cultures. The century closed with yet another Exhibition, the **'92 Expo,** which commemorated the **500th anniversary of the Discovery of America.** From an urban point of view this event marked not only the incorporation of the **Isla de la Cartuja (Island),** but also the elimination of two old railroad stations which had become traffic obstacles within the city. The new station of Santa Justa, home of the High Speed Train (AVE) as well as major beltways were constructed for the opening of this fair.

The headquarters of the "Expo" has been converted into a **techno-park (Parque Tecnológico).** Many important companies also have their main offices on this site.

A few years have passed since that magnificent event and the history of Seville continues; the city is still growing.

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Los horarios y precios están sujetos a modificaciones por lo que se recomienda confirmar dicha información