

The Castle

Situated on a steep limestone massif, and at the highest point in the town, stands the Castle known as the Castillo de Casares.

From its location the Castle overlooks the valleys, hills and coastal plains that stretch from the mountains of Ronda to the Bay of Algeciras, with views of Jimena, Castellar and Gibraltar. It used to serve as communication link between the coastal coves and inlets of Manilva and Estepona and the forts, towers and villages of the interior, as well with as the city of Ronda.



The preserved remains of the fortress, and the results of the various excavations on its land, do not provide any information on settlement before the mediaeval period. Hence the earliest references to this fortress are Arabic sources from the thirteenth century, when, as part of the Benimerín protectorate, Casares became very important as one of the fortresses situated between the coast of the Straits and the Serranía de Ronda.

The walled enclosure has the form of an irregular polygon with many recesses and projections caused by topographic conditions, as the wall, especially in its southern, western and northern parts, follows the edge of a deep ravine known as "la planá." It is for this reason that the wall does not reach to great height, being in some parts (mainly the edge of the ravine) a simple parapet.

The perimeter of the Castle precinct is 770.50 m and its surface covers 23,692 m².

The population has been spreading - outside the walls, on the eastern slopes and on other nearby hills. Within the precincts are the ancient Church of the Incarnation from the late sixteenth century (probably constructed over the principal mosque, about which houses were also built); the Arrabal quarter (nowadays the Calle Arrabal); and the cemetery. Today, there are tourist facilities and other buildings within the precinct (houses in the traditional style, restaurants, and the Ethno-Historical Museum). This is one of the most picturesque and beautiful areas in the town and merits a visit.

Besides the remains of the wall, part of the walls and towers of the living quarters remain. They are located in the highest part of the hilltop.

With regard to the gates into the fortress, one point of access is found to the side at the "Arco de la Villa" (Town Archway). This opens into a square tower, forming a bent passage, which now houses the Ethno-Historical Museum. A second gate opens into the northern corner of the wall; this leads to the Arrabal quarter and is known as the "Arco del Arrabal" (Arrabal Archway).

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - **The Castle**
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis



Church of the Incarnation

This church was once a Franciscan-Capuchin convent. Its situation in Llano del Fuente square gives rise to its popular name of the “Iglesia del Llano”.

It has a single nave widening into a transept, taking the usual shape of a cross.

The bell tower, in the Mudejar style, originates from the sixteenth century. So does the rear courtyard, part of the old convent, which has a garden encircled by small fountains.

Restoration work has recently been undertaken. Its aim has been mainly to strengthen structures, above all in the roofing which has suffered substantial deterioration, and in the rooms that surround the sacristy and bell tower.



Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - **The Church of the Incarnation**
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

The Church of San Sebastian

This little church dates from the seventeenth century and is located in the Plaza de España, in the town centre.

Its ground plan is basilican, with a single nave. The church is distinguished for its image of the Virgin, “Nuestra Señora Del Rosario del Campo”, the patroness of Casares. In May in celebration of its pilgrimage the image is carried to its dedicated chapel, next to the junction of the Genal and Guadiaro rivers.



The church has recently benefited from major restoration work which has greatly improved the appearance of the interior of the building.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - **Church of San Sebastián**
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

Birthplace of Blas Infante

Located at Calle Carrera 51 is the house in which Blas Infante, the “Father of Andalusia”, was born on 5th July 1885.

Today, besides being a tourist information centre, the building houses a permanent exhibition with mementos of the life and works of this illustrious son of Casares, which brings us closer to a better understanding of him as a person and as a thinker.



The house also has a small hall which houses a variety of exhibitions through the year, generally featuring the work of local and regional artists.

Open Monday to Saturday from 11.00 to 14:30 and from 16.00 to 18:30.

Open Monday to Saturday from 9.00 to 14.00 (July and August).

Tel: (+34) 952 895 521

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - **Birthplace of Blas Infante**
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

Fountain of Charles III

Dating from eighteenth century work to restructure the water supply, the fountain in the square was completed in 1785 in the reign of Charles III.

It marks the conclusion of a scheme which was enacted through the eighteenth century to channel water from springs and wells in the Puerto de las Viñas area, and bring it to the town centre. These works also gave rise to the Fuente de la Arquita, another water distribution point two kilometers along the route to the town square.

Along with the construction of this work, Casares began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a number of improvements to the networks both of the water supply and sewage disposal, and these are still in existence today.

The fountain is designed in neoclassical style and is made up of three principal parts, and in the centre is a ceramic vessel that which distributes the water to four pipes and thence to four spouts. These pour into four basins of the same material as the main body of the fountain.

The lower and central parts are composed of carved sandstone blocks that form four columns and four supports. The final part consists of four slabs of the same stone with four pine cones on mouldings and a spherical cap topped by a castle of the same material. Today, although it has undergone several alterations the fountain retains its appearance and original structure, and continues to spout fresh mountain water.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - **Fountain of Charles III**
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis



Blas Infante Cultural Centre

In the castle area is the ancient Church of the Incarnation, built in the 16th Century on the foundations of the 13th Century Moorish fortress. The Church had three naves separated by semicircular arches supported by pillars. The tower is unquestionably in the Moorish tradition.

The Church was inaugurated as the Blas Infante Cultural Centre in July 2010. Within the impressive architecture of this historic building are housed several permanent exhibitions covering the ethno-history and architectural development of Casares up to the present day. The Centre is located at the highest spot in the locality and we can enjoy unbeatable views of the surrounding landscape from the bell tower and other viewpoints nearby. In its role as a Cultural Centre the building has a capacity of around 200 people and offers the opportunity to hold plays, concerts, lectures, and so forth. The Cultural Centre has a tourist information point and offers guided tours of the interior of the building.

Visiting times:

In the winter, Monday to Friday 11:00 to 14:30 and 16:00 to 18:30; Saturdays 11.00 to 16.00; Sunday closed.

In the summer, Monday to Saturday, 9.00 to 14.00; Sunday closed.

Phone : (+34) 952 89 55 21

More information: turismo@casares.es

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - **Blas Infante Cultural Centre**
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Laciyo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

The Roman Baths (Baños de la Hedionda)

The baths known as Baños de la Hedionda provide one of the historical landmarks of the Massif de la Utrera and of Casares in general. Their particular feature, the sulphurous water that runs through them, and its increasing exploitation by man since time immemorial, has served to enrich their role. This is not only in historical and scientific terms, but most importantly also in terms of cultural influence across the broad sweep of man's history in the area. The baths are situated in a territory which has been particularly rich in human activity across the ages.

The baths have many legends to explain their origin. One of them reflects the superstitious beliefs common in such cases: the story says that the demon that lived in these waters breathed his last on being expelled by St James, and this gave the waters their sulphurous smell. This legend is recorded by numerous authors, all travellers, some of whom made various modifications to the tale. However, the most popular legend is said to have an especially worthy origin based on history. In 61 BC, Roman troops under Julius Caesar were camped in the vicinity, ready to confront those of Pompey. Being infected with scabies, they found relief by bathing in the waters. However another version has it that it was Julius Caesar himself who was cured, of a herpes infection, and it was he that ordered the construction of the baths that we see preserved today.

What is certain is that from the earliest writings about the area in which mention is made of Casares, reference is made to this location and to the curative properties of the waters of the Hedionda.

Be that as it may, the area of the baths is important historically given the pioneering work by the Romans in the harnessing of the waters and the adaptation of facilities for their use. Subsequent renovations, necessary because of variations in the flow rate, led the Arabs to add touches to the structure and extend walls and channels. This work was brought to light in the most recent archeological excavations at the beginning of the 1990s. More work has taken place from the seventeenth to the end of the twentieth century, and this is partly preserved.

Although the remains we see today may seem out of line with the magnificence we associate with the Romans in this type of construction, studies undertaken seem to confirm their Roman origin, although there will have been some alterations to the original structure.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - **Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda**
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis



Aqueduct-Bridge to the Roman Baths

The bridge to the Baths is located near the Roman baths and crosses the River Manilva.

Built in the sixteenth century and restored in the eighteenth, the bridge had to do with the provision of irrigation water and the passage of people from bank to bank, especially those travelling between the Roman baths and the Camino del Vallecillo. It served as both bridge and aqueduct.

It is constructed of limestone from the nearby Sierra de la Utrera, with two arches over the river. Its length is 45 metres and the height above the normal river level is 2 metres.

An elegant structure, it has nevertheless a remarkable robustness in its foundations that it has maintained to this day.



Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - **Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths**
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

The Flour Mills

A series of historic water mills is to be found in the vicinity of the Utrera massif, built to harness all the energy that the waters of the Albarrán and Manilva rivers used to provide to power their machinery. With water-powered traction and of traditional Moorish design, these mills are of great interest for the special characteristics of their construction and machinery (nowadays not in use) used in the milling of agricultural products from throughout the area. These mills were licensed by the Duke of Arcos in 1508 and 1512.



In total there are eight structures whose names are preserved: Molino de Arriba or Gorrino; Fábrica de San Pablo, de los Molina or de la Americana; Molino del Gordo; Molino del Madrileño; Molino del Bayo; Molino del Cancón; Molino de la Chica; and Molino de Gómez or de las Ánimas.

Their individual histories often reflect disputes between neighbours. The stories of this group of mills produce an interesting page in the history of Casares.

Of these mills, there are three within the area of La Utrera-Los Baños. One, Molino de las Ánimas, is inhabited and the other two (Molino de la Chica and Molino del Cancón) are in ruins.

The Molino de Arriba is the highest along the Albarrán stream. Its present appearance hardly respects the original, having largely been transformed. It still maintains its water channel and part of the old mill.

Both the Molino de la Chica and the Molino de Gómez have kept a good part of the features typically characteristic of the sixteenth century, with a double water intake that was used to move the grinding machinery.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - **Flour Mills**
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

The Salt Tower



Located on a promontory on the Casares coast between the River Manilva and the Camarate stream, is the Salt Tower, or Moor's Leap as it is also known.

It has two levels, and also unusually has a square floor plan, unlike the rest of the towers that we find along the coast. And, unlike them, the Salt Tower really did function as a watchtower.

The lower part of the Tower is wider than the upper, probably as an architectural solution to deal with the weight of the building, and both levels are roofed with an octagonal vault supported by squinches. Charles I ordered the construction of a door that could be raised and lowered which gave entrance to the monument, but this has not been preserved. This door gave protection to the terrace and open windows above and could be lowered in defence, this being the most vulnerable part of the building.

We know about the Tower from the sixteenth century onwards where it appears integrated into the official system of watch towers along the coastline.

The Salt Tower appears to be of Moorish construction: more specifically, according to its typology, from the time of the Nazrid Dynasty. It is certain that in 1575 it was still unfinished.

In 1567 it was mentioned as "... the castle in an area that the Duke of Arcos wanted to populate ..." in accordance with an order given by Charles I in 1528. The Duke also built some saltworks in the vicinity from which the Tower gets its name.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - **The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)**
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

Lacipo

The remains of Lacipo are about 4 kilometres from Casares, on a high promontory known as Cortijo Alechipe and overlooking the rivers Genal and Guadiaro from its west side.

Located in a very important enclave between the rich lands watered by these rivers and the route necessary for communication with the settlements up in the mountains, Lacipo was most probably founded by communities of the Turdetani people who lived there at the time, under the influence of the Phoenician-Punic world. In the third century BC it was reorganised to further the imperialist ambitions of Carthage for the strategic control of this sector of the peninsula.



As a city of the Turdetani, it would have had a temple or shrine dedicated to the sun god or the moon goddess, just as later during the times of the Romans there were two altars: one dedicated to Youth and other to Fortuna Augusta. Its importance in pre-Roman times is reflected in its name, themes of coins which would be minted in Roman times, and the Iberian carvings that have been found there.

In the Roman era, the historians Pliny the Elder and Pomponius Mela stated that Lacipo belonged to the Cadiz Juridical Covenant as a tributary city – evidence of its wealth at the time.

Lacipo became a true city under Roman rule, setting up its own mint following the Punic tradition from the 2nd century B.C., and strengthening in the area so that by the end of the first century AD it had acquired the same type of urban features as seen in towns in Italy such as a forum and city walls.

The families who lived here were related to the existing power groups in other major cities, like Carteia in the neighbouring locality of San Roque.

After a period of decline in the fourth and fifth centuries, the settlement repopulated in the sixth and seventh, with a Visigothic cemetery being established on top of the earlier remains from the classical period.

In 1975 and 76 Lacipo was the subject of archaeological excavations which brought to light items, now held in the Archaeological Museum of Malaga, which have allowed us to understand this settlement in greater depth together with its important role in the historical development of the territory.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - **Lacipo**
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis



Hermitage of the Virgin del Rosario del Campo

The Hermitage of the Virgin del Rosario del Campo is located between the river Genal and the river Guadiaro. In May people from Casares make a pilgrimage there accompanying the Virgin but in winter when the Genal rises, the Hermitage is sometimes cut off.



Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - **Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo**
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis

Bridge of the Albarrada

This bridge of mediaeval origin (Moorish period) is known popularly as the “Bridge of the Albarrá”. It is possible that it replaced a more rudimentary and simple one constructed during the Roman period.

Archaeological studies show that there used to be a Roman road connecting the city of Lacipo with the mines of the Sierra Bermeja. It was built to transport minerals from the mines to the Roman city, where it met another road to take it down to the waterside.

It seems that this road passed over a bridge in the exact spot where the Bridge of the Albarrá now stands, this bridge having been constructed after the settlement of the current old town.

The former bridge, of which nothing has been preserved, would have been more rudimentary but would have served, as the present one does, to protect the river bed of the Albarrá. We know that up to very recent times there existed a very important stretch of this Roman road. In 1983 it was considered to be the best preserved stretch of Roman road in the province of Málaga, but sadly today it has not been reserved.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - Flour Mills
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - **Bridge of the Albarrada**
 - Via Crucis

Vía Crucis (Way of the Cross)

This represents an ancient religious tradition which brought to life the Way of the Cross in recollection of the most important moments of Christ's journey to Calvary. Each one of those moments of the Passion of Christ, 14 or sometimes 15, were indicated by a pillar or station of penitence where the devout would gather to pray. Of the original number, there remain six stations on a hill to the north of the town and one in Calle Copera.

Places of Interest

- In the town
 - The Castle
 - The Church of the Incarnation
 - Church of San Sebastián
 - Birthplace of Blas Infante
 - Fountain of Charles III
 - Blas Infante Cultural Centre
- In the Casares area
 - Roman baths: Baños de la Hedionda
 - Bridge-aqueduct to the Roman baths
 - **Flour Mills**
 - The Salt Tower (Torre de la Sal)
 - Lacipo
 - Hermitage of the Virgen del Rosario del Campo
 - Bridge of the Albarrada
 - Vía Crucis