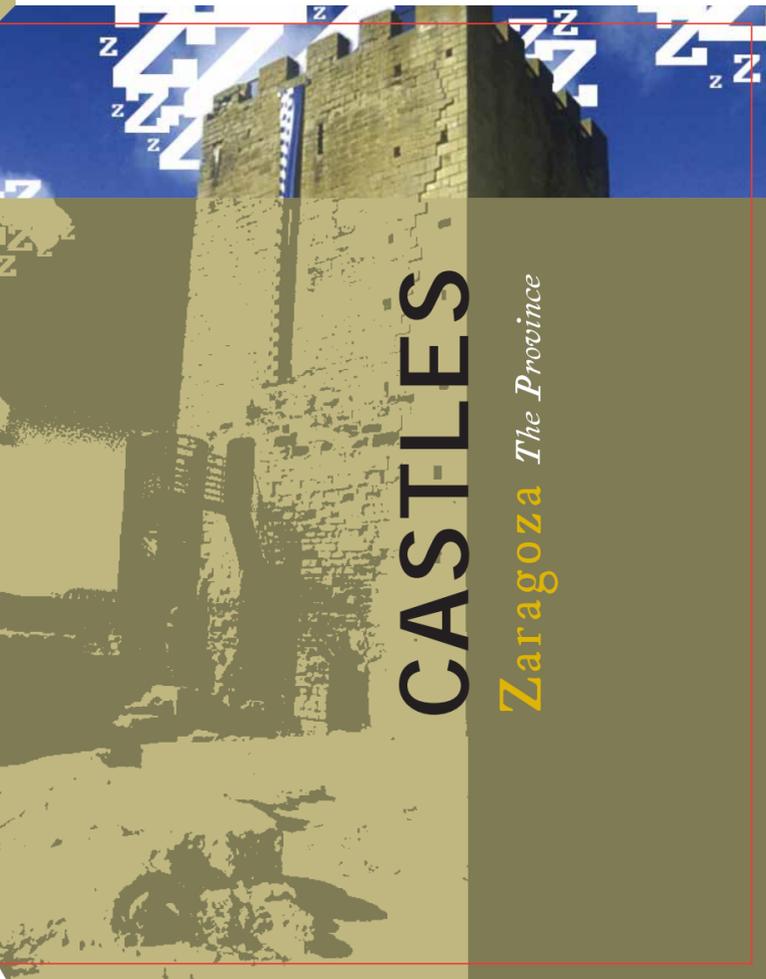


Patronato Provincial de Turismo
 Diputación de Zaragoza
 Pza. de España, 2
 50071 Zaragoza
 Tel. 00 34 976 212 032
 Fax 00 34 976 232 611
 E-mail: turismo@dpz.es
 http://zaragozaturismo.dpz.es



The Cinco Villas or Five Towns and the Alta Zaragoza - a provincial saddle that plays across the map by burying itself into the Pyrenees- are areas where some of the most beautiful castles are concentrated. This was a key territory to win over positions from the Islam and also a scenario of tension with the neighbouring Navarre.

The town of **Uncastillo** covers an area of 6,500 square metres and it probably dates back to Roman times. The 11th century homage tower houses an interesting museum and from the top it offers views over the Pre-Pyrenees; the Gothic palace was ordered to be built by Peter IV. Legendary echoes will tell us about a golden bull - or goat- which hides in the imaginary tunnels that connect the castle to the other end of the village.

The 13th century fortress in **Sadaba** looks like the typical fortress that we all used to imagine when we were little. It is well-proportioned, with seven towers that challenge the passing of time and has a curious curved door. With a Cistercian touch, it has just been restored. The elders of the village believe that this castle used to communicate with the Carmelite Convent outside the town, which has now disappeared. If this were the case the

chimeric passageways must have cross the Riguel river.

Sos del Rey Católico -the town where King Ferdinand was born in 1452- is a great natural fortress. The watchtower that crowns Peña Felicianana was erected in the most northern part in the 12th century. At a slightly later date, it was decided to erect a rampart around the perimeter of Sos, sealed by seven gateways-towers. The Palace of Sada -which perhaps occupied the ground of a second military complex- is an interpretation centre dedicated to the monarch.

The saying goes that at **Castiliscar** castle, the wailing of those executed can still be heard from time to time, echoes of the past, proclaiming their pains and sorrows. In the early Middle Ages, the Commander was the lord and master of everything.

At the foot of the mysterious Santo Domingo mountain range, more than three quarters of the municipal district of Biel is woodland.

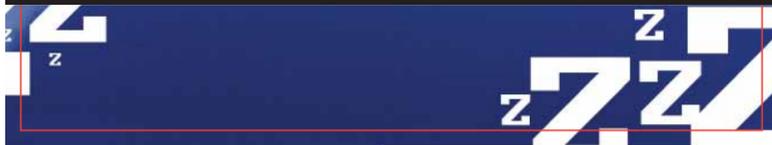
These woods look out onto the village, whose most outstanding element is a "dungeon" -type 11th century Romanesque tower. A closer look at it reminds us of the harshness of mediaeval times. **Sibirana, Luesia, Navardun...** are other names that can be added to the list of visits.

Sadaba

Biel



THE CINCO VILLAS and THE ALTA ZARAGOZA





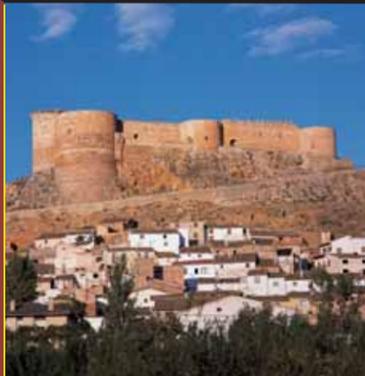
THE IBERIAN SYSTEM

Castles, military and signal towers, fortresses, crenellated abbeys, palaces with defences, ramparts, strong houses... more than 300 have been catalogued in the province of Zaragoza. The majority are between six hundred and eight hundred years old, although some have been standing for more than one thousand years.

Universal symbols of the Middle Ages, there may have been one every 50 square kilometres, according to calculations. The majority of the ones that can be sighted crowning hills and hillocks were erected between the year 1000 and 1500.

From north to south and from east to west, Zaragoza has a bit of everything: the landscapes of the Pre-Pyrenees, the riverbanks of the Ebro, the summits of the Moncayo, steppes and mountain ranges, infinite horizons, desert sections. That is why it has so many different castles. Made of stone or mud they adapted to the needs of the terrain in order to defend and consolidate positions, to control the territory and watch over the roads.

Strategic reasons and prestige justified their generous presence, which was so decisive in times of war and lords of the manor.



Mesones de Isuela

Almost four kilometres of ramparts that date back to Mediaeval times twist and turn to defend the Ciudad de los Corporales. In the 16th century the historian, Zurita, stressed that **Daroca** was a "very principal place", at the same time as the traveller, Cock, wrote in surprise: "There are as many towers surrounding the enclosure as days in the year". The Main Castle is of Moslem origin and the castle of San Cristobal has a pentagonal ground plan. The Low Door (15th c.) and the High Door (modified in the 17th c.) must not be missed. All the towers have suggestive names: White Eagle, Three Guitars, Knight of the Spur, Five Corners...

Around the year 716, the Moslems fortified an enclave on the hills of Ravelin and Reloj, which gave rise to Qal'at Ayyub. **Calatayud**. The remains of the construction of that castle are still preserved, with its long defensive walls dotted with towers that join it to the Torre Mocha castle, the Reloj castle



Tower Walls of Daroca

and Doña Martina castle. The original settlement grew and consolidated, finally forming a Hispano-Moslem fortified town of a size that was difficult to rival. In a hidden and mysterious room of Doña Martina castle a coffer of tears which time converted into diamonds awaits discovery.

The castle of **Mesones de Isuela** has a square ground plan, with six towers and a chapel with a Mudejar ceiling. 14th century ashlar stone was placed to surprise the attackers of olden times and the visitors of today. It is a fortress that appears to be impregnable.

In the castle where Papa Luna was born, in **Illueca**, a charming hotel has just been opened. The original building dates back to the 14th and 15th centuries, but important restoration work were carried out in the 17th c. Other proposals: the towers of Miedes and **Alhama de Aragón**, the fortresses of **Jarque**, **Berdejo**, **Arándiga**...



Trasmoz

Trasmoz has a magic castle, the place favoured by the most select Aragonese witches for their witches' sabbath. The first news of the construction dates back to the end of the 12th century. After that time and during the Middle Ages it became an important piece in the Christian defence of the Moncayo Somontano (the foothills of the mountain) and of its two most important towns: Tarazona and Borja. The homage tower still remains standing on the interior and there are remains of the enclosure that surrounded it.

The castle, which changed hands many times, was inhabited in 1267 by Blasco Perez, who decided to amass a fortune by making false coins. To avoid busybodies, a rumour was spread about the existence of phantasmagorical beings: this would be the origin



Walls in Grisel

of the copious legendary fortune of the fortress that Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer universalised when he wrote that a necromancer conjured the efforts of all the spirits to erect it in one single night.

Lovers of ruins can come to **Borja** to enjoy those of its castle. What remains today is of Islamic origin. "Zuleya" -which can be translated as "the sad hour" -is the name of a princess whom the stubbornness of an alchemist astrologist transformed into a statue of salt and who is still hidden somewhere with her jewels.

A visit to the Cistercian **Monastery of Veruela in the Moncayo** is a must. On our way to it and in the distance we will see the **Peñas de Herrera**, where two inhospitable defences were erected in the 12th century.

THE BAJO EBRO



Castle of Mequinenza

The Salamanca Tower was constructed in **Caspe** during the last Carlist War. It looks like a toy castle but it is really an optical telegraphy fort designed for the liberal defence of the Ebro line. It used to form part of a network of fifty small watchtowers that were only briefly used. Its ground plan is rather like a clover, and in fact, it has been very lucky because it is still in an excellent state of preservation. When it was built in 1876, stones from the neighbouring and depleted San Juan castle, where the sessions of Compromiso de Caspe (Caspe Agreement) were held in 1412, were re-utilised. The Compromiso Castle, as it was known, looks out onto the Guadalupe from a natural watchtower which was already used as defence in Islamic times.

It has not been verified, but the elders of the place say that under the castle of **Maella**, which looks down upon the lands of the neighbouring Catalonia, underground labyrinths twist and turn. Smaller, but well-rehabilitated, is the castle of **Nonaspe**, which already existed in the 12th century and which now houses the town council.

Leaving behind the Bajo Aragón, the gateway to the Bajo Cinca, the Gothic castle of **Mequinenza** dominates an extensive area where the waters of the Cinca, Segre and Ebro rivers take on an important role. Napoleon's troops managed to conquer it and that is why the name of the city is written on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.



Castle of Salamanca, Caspe

Turism Offices

Oficina de turismo de Calatayud
Pza. Del Fuerte,
50300 Calatayud
Telf. 976.88.63.22
oficinaturismo@calatayuddigital.net

Oficina de turismo de Daroca
Pza. España,4
50360 Daroca
Telf. 976.80.01.29
darocaturismo@dpz.es

Oficina de turismo de Tarazona
Pza San Francisco, 1
50500 Tarazona
Telf. 976.64.0074 y 976.19.90.76
turismo@tarazona.org
www.tarazona.org

Monasterio de Veruela
Paseo de Veruela
50580 Vera del Moncayo
Telf. 976.64.90.25
monasteriodeveruela@dpz.es

Oficina municipal de turismo de Borja
Pza. España, 1
50540 Borja
Telf 976.85.20.01
Fax 976.86.72.15
soniaviamonte@aytodeborja.org
Apertura: lunes a sábado de 8-15h

Oficina de turismo de Caspe
Casa-Palacio Barberán.
Pza. España, 1
50700 Caspe
Telf. 976.636.533
turismo@caspe.es
www.caspe.es