





GUIDE

Holy Week in Tomelloso

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Experience Holy Week in Tomelloso

Discover the essence of Holy Week in Tomelloso

Tomelloso, known as the "Inn of Wine and Culture", is transformed during Holy Week to offer visitors a unique experience steeped in art, culture, tradition and deep devotion. This religious festival is one of the most representative symbols of processions in Spain, and in Tomelloso it is experienced with intensity.

Here, Holy Week is not just a celebration, but a living manifestation of the Faith and cultural legacy of a town with a rich history. During these days, the streets are filled with solemnity and respect, the air is permeated with the aroma of incense and wax, and the sound of bugles and drums sets the pace for a tradition which has endured for centuries. The town and its brotherhoods come together to create an atmosphere of fervour and contemplation captivating both residents and visitors who are curious about these celebrations.

Beyond the liturgical acts and impressive processions, Holy Week in Tomelloso is an opportunity to connect with the roots of Faith, camaraderie and sacrifice characterising its protagonists, the costaleros (float bearers), and all the people who make this tradition possible. It is a journey for the soul and the senses, an invitation to be part of a community which lives its Faith with fervour and commitment.

Get ready to witness moments filled with emotion, centuries-old images parading at a harmonious, leisurely pace, and a town opening to share its most intimate heritage. Holy Week in Tomelloso is undoubtedly an unmissable event for those seeking an authentic and memorable experience.





Key Moments and Emblematic Processions

Holy Week in Tomelloso unfolds through a cultural and religious programme reflecting the true essence of this festival. Although it formally begins on Palm Sunday, preliminary activities such as the inter-parish Stations of the Cross and the opening speeches herald the arrival of this momentous week.



Palm Sunday is a day of great colour and joy with the procession of "La Borriquilla" or **"Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem"**. Children, dressed in white tunics and Hebrew scarves, play a leading role, leading the way among palm leaves and olive branches. It is a massive parade that dazzles with its solemnity.

The Holy Thursday procession in Tomelloso, known as the "Prayer and Trial of Christ" procession, is one of the most solemn and visually beautiful moments of Holy Week. It stages scenes from the Passion: Jesus praying in the Garden, Our Lady of Sorrows, Jesus before Pilate (carried on the shoulders of bearers to the rhythm of music) and Our Lady of Hope.



Good Friday in Tomelloso is the most intense day of Holy Week, with four processions chronologically retracing the Passion of Christ: **The Presentation,** known as the "dawn procession", with Christ of Medinaceli as the only image, stands out for its atmosphere of absolute contemplation and silence. **"Way of Calvary"** is one of the most complex and extensive, narrating the Passion step by step through the city centre. Images: Baby Jesus, Crowning with Thorns, The Flagellation, Poor Jesus, Mary and St. John, Jesus Carrying the Cross, Jesus of Forgiveness and Our Lady of Sorrows. In the evening, the procession of the **"Burial of Christ"** takes place, notable for its solemnity and contemplation. The images of Christ of Mercy, The Crucifixion, Christ of Calvary, The Pietà in the Descent, Holy Sepulchre and Our Lady of Solitude are carried in procession. Without a doubt, it is a beautiful sight which remains in the memory of those who watch this procession and which reflects the last moments of Jesus' life. The processions end with the most unique of all, the "Procession of Silence". A deafening silence broken only by the sound of chains scraping against the asphalt at three in the morning. At that hour, a drum marks the departure of hundreds of penitents, whose sole purpose is to perform a Penitential Station in silence, prayer and anonymity, all of them carrying a wooden cross and, in some cases, dragging heavy chains. And in the middle of the brotherhood, the Great Expiatory Cross of the People.

Holy Saturday is a day of "silence" and reflection. The day concludes with the Easter Vigil and the Eucharist of the Resurrection, preparing the spirit for the big day.



Finally, Holy Week culminates on **Easter Sunday** with the traditional Procession of the Encounter. After the Easter Vigil, the images of the Virgin of the Dawn and Christ in his Divine Mercy, on two different routes, as they depart from distant parishes, are transferred to their meeting point, where the Easter Proclamation and the emotional singing of the Hallelujah take place, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ.



The Faces and Heart of Holy Week: Costaleros and Traditions

Behind every step which advances in Tomelloso, there is a great human effort and a deep sense of community.



The Costaleros:

Strength, Faith and Sacrifice The figure of the costalero is fundamental to Holy Week in Tomelloso, being one of its most representative symbols. Its name comes from the "costal", a piece of thick cloth formerly used to carry heavy goods, a practice transferred to religious processions in the 16th century. Initially, they were salaried workers, but over time, especially in the 20th century, they evolved into "costaleros de fe" (bearers of Faith), volunteers who perform this arduous task out of devotion.

Essential Attire

The "costal" is a vital tool. It is a thick piece of fabric, usually made of esparto grass or cotton, which fits over the head and protects the neck and shoulders, distributing the weight evenly. Complementing this, the sash helps protect the back and abdominal muscles, reducing the risk of injury.



The Weight of Commitment:

The floats they carry can weigh tons, some exceeding 2,000 kilos. In Tomelloso, the throne of Cristo de la Misericordia, for example, can weigh up to 1,500 kilos. To move them, the costaleros organise themselves into groups on "trabajaderas" (horizontal wooden or metal bars), with between 30 and 60 men per float.
"The Work" Under the Float: One of the most remarkable curiosities is that the costaleros walk in total darkness under the float, with no direct visibility of the outside. They are guided solely by the precise orders of the foreman, such as "alzá" (lift the float) or "pararse" (stop). This teamwork and coordination are crucial for the smooth progress of the procession.



Resistance and Devotion:

Carrying a float is a physically demanding task. The bearers walk long distances, sometimes for over 8 hours without rest, bearing the immense weight. Despite the fatigue, many describe this experience as an act of sacrifice alleviated by the fervour and Faith they feel when carrying the religious images. The march of the costaleros (float bearers) is a distinctive element, with styles varying, although in Tomelloso a harmonious and leisurely pace is sought to reflect the solemnity of the occasion.

The Faces and Heart of Holy Week: Costaleros and Traditions

Camaraderie and Brotherhood:



Beyond devotion, the costaleros value the strong bond and sense of brotherhood and solidarity formed among them, sharing effort, sacrifice and overcoming challenges.

The Role of the Foreman.

The foreman is the leader of the costaleros (float bearers). His leadership and experience are vital in guiding the men under the float, giving orders and coordinating their movements with precision. He uses a hammer to strike a bell on the float to indicate when to start or stop walking.



Music and Other Events.

Holy Week in Tomelloso is also accompanied by music. Holy Week in Tomelloso is also accompanied by music. Local and regional bands, such as the Unión Musical Ciudad de Tomelloso, and wind ensembles participate with processional marches, some of which are known worldwide, such as the march "Jesús Pobre".

In addition to the processions, there are exhibitions of the heritage of the brotherhoods (robes, banners), photography and school drawing competitions, as well as conferences, theater, and presentations, which enrich the cultural and religious offerings of these days. These events enhance the festival and the deep feelings of thousands of residents and visitors.





Brotherhood Houses in Tomelloso

The Brotherhood Houses form part of the cultural heritage of Holy Week in Tomelloso. They are spaces where the brotherhoods safeguard and preserve their history—images, thrones, embroidery, banners, and furnishings—and where the daily life of the brotherhood is also lived. Some are open to visitors, allowing them to see up close the craftsmanship, devotion and attention to detail behind each brotherhood.
Among the Brotherhood Houses open to visitors (during Lent, Holy Week, May Cross celebrations, and by appointment throughout the year) are the Brotherhood House of Jesús de Medinaceli (Guadalajara Street, 14), the Brotherhood House of Nuestra Señora del Mayor Dolor, (Holy Thursday morning and May Cross) and the Brotherhood House of Jesús Pobre (C/ Méjico, 17).

BROTHERHOOD HOUSE-MUSEUM OF JESÚS DE MEDINACELI

The Brotherhood House – Museum of Jesús de Medinaceli, built in 2019 and located in a central area, is a key space for the life of the Brotherhood: a meeting point, organisation and conservation of its legacy. It also stands out for its museum-like character, as it allows visitors to learn about part of its history and heritage —artistic objects, pieces and details— in an environment designed to highlight and disseminate the tradition beyond the celebrations.



THE BROTHERHOOD

on 1 March 1952 and forms an essential part of Tomelloso's cultural and devotional heritage. Its history is linked to the recovery of the image under the patronage of Medinaceli (1949) and to decades of dedication and improvement of its belongings.

The image is made of wood and can be dressed, with articulated arms, and is notable for its finery: especially the velvet tunic with gold thread embroidery, together with the Trinitarian scapular and characteristic cords.

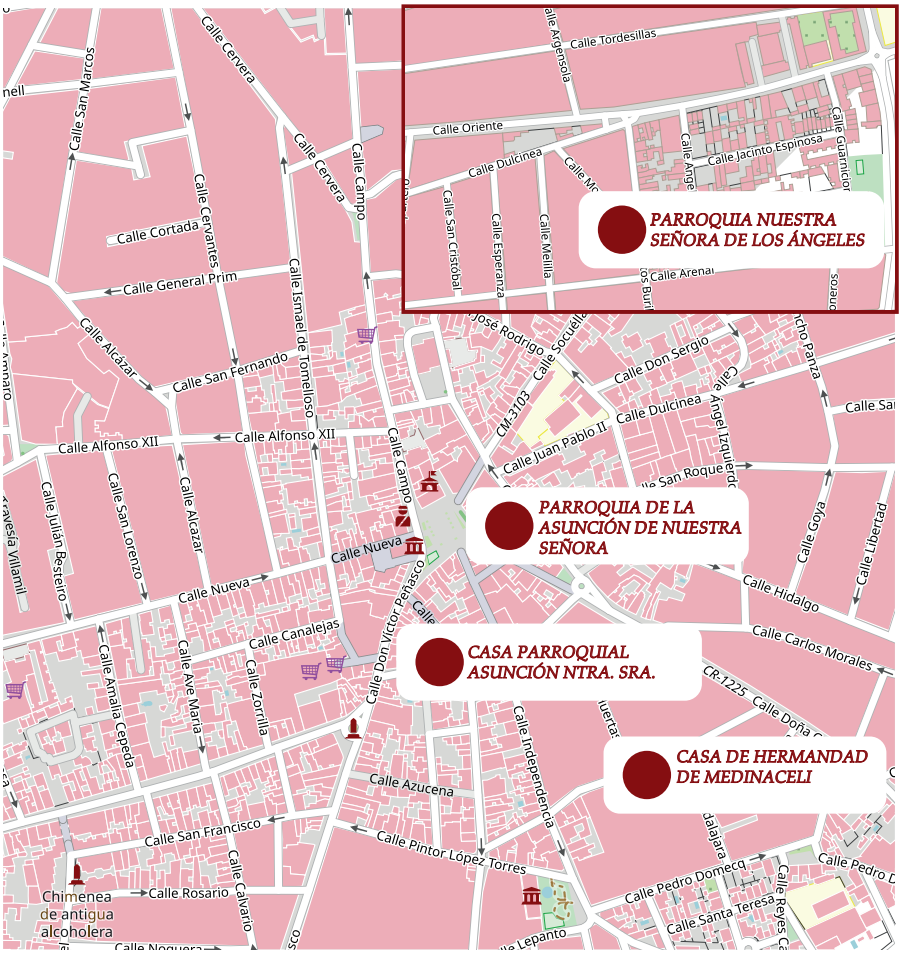


BROTHERHOOD HERITAGE

The Brotherhood preserves and displays a valuable collection of traditional pieces: gold embroidery, gold and silver work, cordwork, banners, scapulars, tunics, crowns and other brotherhood items, the result of craftsmanship and attention to detail.



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Municipal Tourist Office

Tuesday to Friday: 9:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.
Saturdays: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Sundays: 10:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Public holidays: 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m./Mondays: closed

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