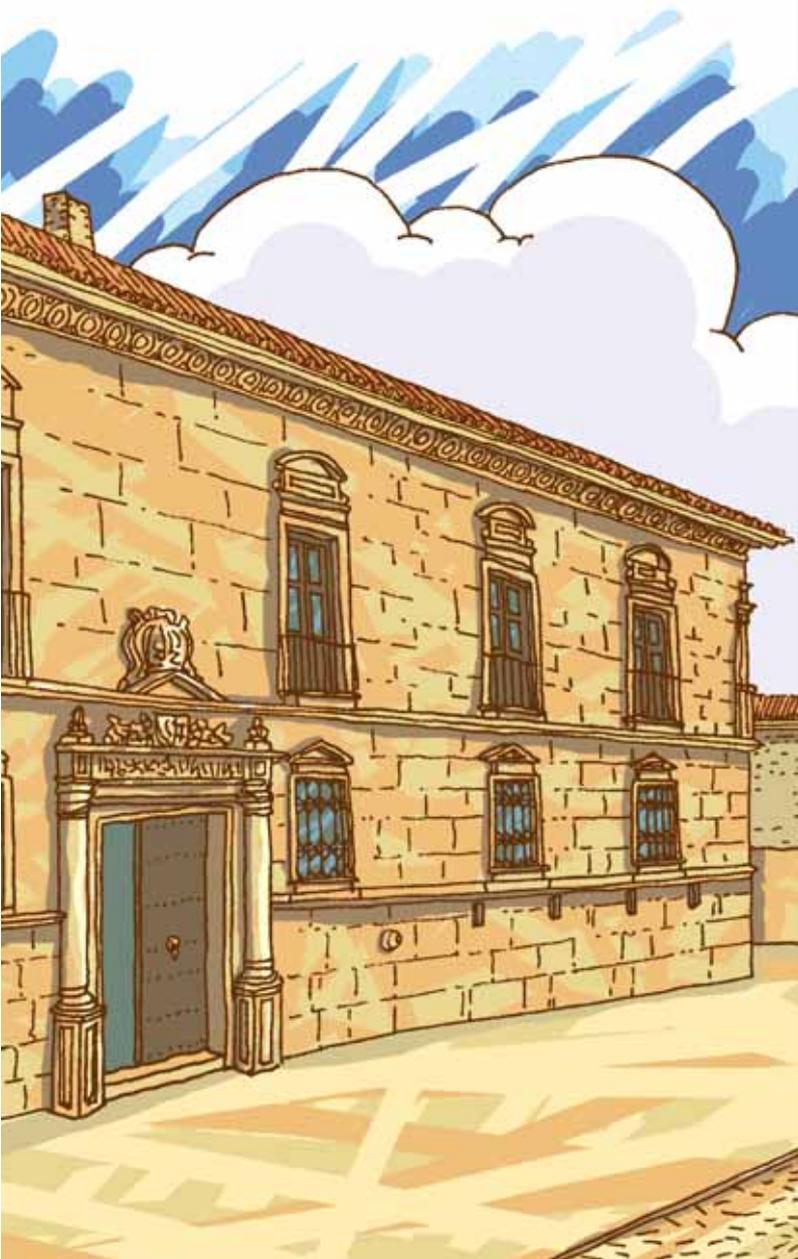



ÚBEDA
 AND ITS PARADOR



THROUGH THE HILLS OF THE RENAISSANCE

*“Fields, fields, fields
among the olive trees
the white farms
and black ilex
half-way between
Úbeda and Baeza.”*

Antonio Machado

Úbeda is the Renaissance. Even a traveler crossing the city for the first time on the way to the Parador will get this impression – fleeting though it may be, yet still correct. And so it is, and so it appears as a carefully created and exuberant life-sized setting which leads visitors to relive this distant, yet not-so-distant, past.

There have been other Úbedas: Moorish and Jewish Ubédas, Roman, Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Visigoth Ubédas. Historians, who at times betray some small bit of indulgence, talk of the first Úbeda of remote times. These times are shrouded in myth and legend, populated by Noah’s grandchildren, who, according to some, laid many of the first foundations throughout these lands. It is unfortunate that archeologists have not been able to find any evidence of these ancient settlers. Nor have they found many remains of the Roman or Visigothic presence.

In any case, it was to be the Arabs who would first, and best, begin to write the history of this surprising town, starting in the 8th century.

The Moors brought their customs and knowledge: of astronomy, medicine, geometry, music, and a thousand other refinements. *“There are also certain dancers in Úbeda who are famous for the intensity of their talent and art...”* wrote Al-Hakam of Ubedí, a learned Muslim. During this period of its history, Úbeda both suffered and enjoyed many comings and goings, conquests and re-conquests, from the arrival of the Moors until the Christians finally – but never definitively – drove them out.

This only happened when the valiant and holy King Fernando III finally achieved his goal in the early 13th century, after his predecessors, Kings Alfonso VI, VII and VIII, had failed.

It was about this time that the popular saying which says that one is walking *“the hills of Úbeda”* when caught going off on a tangent was first heard.

Legend has it that King Alfonso VI, who sought to besiege and conquer the town, waited long at its gates for El Cid to come with reinforcements. Don Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar finally arrived after having *“wandered, lost and disorientated, through these lands.”*

When he arrived at the camp, the King asked, filled with reproach, *“Where have you come from now, Don Rodrigo?”*

To this El Cid replied courageously and without hesitation, *“From the hills of Úbeda, my Liege...”*

The Catholic Monarchs came here fresh from their conquest of Granada to instill order and unity under the new empire. In

particular, the Queen came to remind the town that “*Moors and Jews must live in their own quarters, separate from Christians.*”

It was 1484, and Queen Isabel stayed for several days at Santa Clara Convent, which can still be visited by modern-day travelers.

During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, Úbeda boasted an audience hall, a public granary to store wheat, and a fruit storage area.

Above all, this period most favored the birth of Úbeda’s Renaissance splendor, still so exceptionally and exquisitely present in the town.

It was from that time, especially during

the reigns of Carlos V and Felipe II, that Úbeda was flooded with the numerous palaces, homes of the nobility and many other important and unique buildings, most of which the visitor will no doubt have the opportunity to admire.

In those days, Úbeda was a model more of urban planning than architecture. It was a unique showcase for Renaissance taste and fashion, and the first tendency towards refinement. This was a time when esthetics was yet another branch of a common tree, sharing its space with other sciences, arts, and a variety of subjects, including music, medicine, mathematics, literature, and more.



HOLY AND BLESSED ÚBEDA

*“Y tu Baeza Beata
Úbeda Santa Bendita
Este deseo no me quita
del torontés que me mata”...*
Jorge Manrique

Úbeda was always a fortified town, set apart from the rest by the whims of geography, but set ahead by the decisions of history. Here was born – with greater gusto and most palpable results – the Renaissance of imperial Spain. Here laws, rules and tastes were conceived. Úbeda knew and experienced modernity when it was still at the experimental stage, perhaps no more than a craze.

Today’s guest at the Parador needs not resort to fantasy. It is easy to witness – to contemplate and feel – the lives, prophesies, miracles, and other supposed heresies that would end up giving way to what we now know as modern life. Resign yourself: the modern age was born in places such as this.

The Úbeda we see today was developed following the fashions with which 15th-century developers defined the ideal town. According to these stipulations, this town should have an overall uniformity, in which churches and palaces, markets and schools, not prisons, could exist side by side, not necessarily together. Artisans would live in one area and laborers in another. There would be Moors and Jews, and perhaps Gypsies, too, all together, but each in their place, in different areas. This was co-existence, but also differentiation.

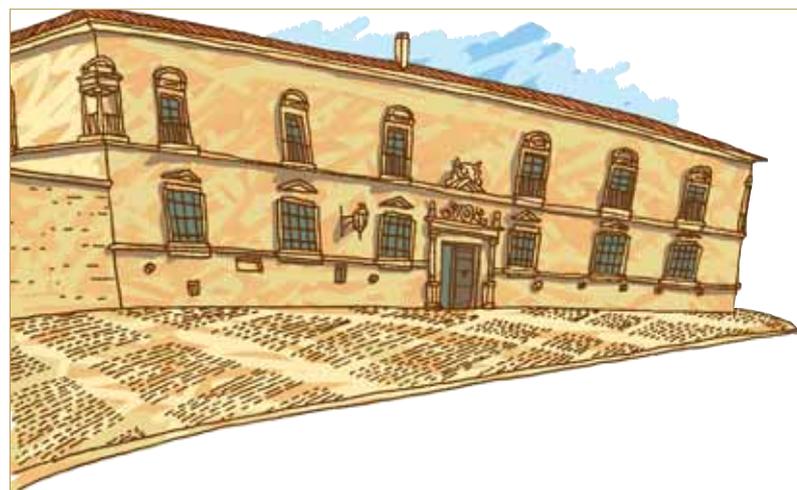
From the Parador and its immediate surroundings, the visitor can see the surprising transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age.

Many towns, including Úbeda, experienced a change in the way time was kept. The rhythms which marked the parts of the day had previously been governed by the hours of daylight, and above all, by the prayer times observed in Úbeda’s many convents and monasteries.

So the religious timetable – Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline – was permanently translated by certain devices called “clocks,” machines that were already starting to become necessary to measure “work” time rather than “prayer” time.

By the end of the 15th century, the bells of Europe’s main towns (including Úbeda, among many others) called the congregation not only to prayer, but also to work.

All this and much more is there for the visitor to investigate and experience, by accident or design, merely by stepping through the door



of the Parador. Let us not forget that for several centuries the Parador buildings were the palace and residence of Don Fernando Ortega Salido, Dean of Malaga and First Chaplain of Salvador Chapel, better known in these parts as “Dean Ortega.”

The building which today houses the Parador was first built in the 16th century, although it was extensively renovated a century later. The palace was converted into a Parador in 1930.

At the time of its inauguration, as reporter wrote that “the Parador del Condestable Dávalos, located in a 16th-century palace, is situated in a square where all the buildings, some palaces, and some churches, all carry the same ancestry and artistic value. However, this Parador is perhaps the most sumptuous and best of them all.”

Even in 1930, before the influx of tourists had become a flood, the Parador already boasted “central heating in all the rooms, and bathrooms with hot and cold running water...”



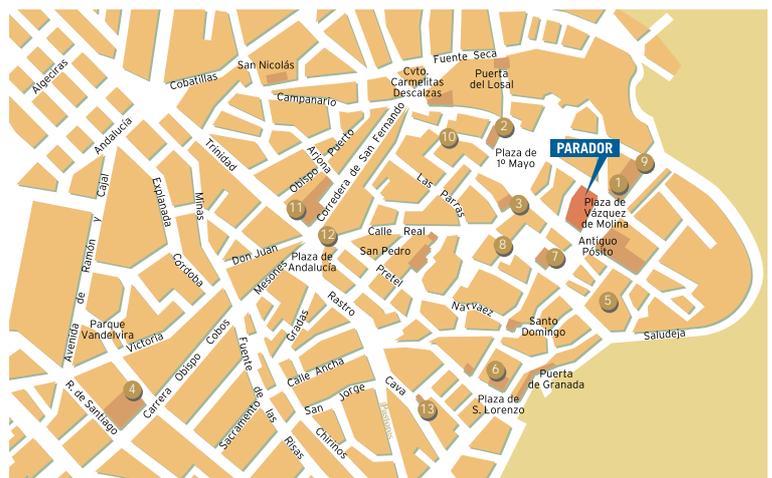
In those days, the Parador del Condestable charged 35 pesetas a night for “complete and full board.” Breakfast cost three pesetas and lunch anything up to seven, it was eight pesetas for the main meal, three for a bath and two for the garage...

In spite of many difficult times, Úbeda has survived its history well. It has sometimes rebelled against a lack of understanding (such as during the Comuneros Revolt and even earlier, during the Reconquest), or by choice. At the very end of the 19th century, the town decided to construct a tram line as a response to the government’s persistent refusal to build a branch railway line that would link Linares to Almeria via Úbeda.

Úbeda and its people have always walked their own hills.

THROUGH RENAISSANCE STREETS FILLED WITH HANDICRAFTS

1. **Salvador Chapel.** Designed by Diego de Siloé, built by Vandelvira.
2. **Church of San Pablo.** Gothic-Plateresque church, formerly a mosque.
3. **Old Town Hall.**
4. **Santiago Hospital.** Known as the “El Escorial of Andalusia.”
5. **Santa María de los Reales Alcázares.** Gothic cloister.
6. **Torres House.** Plateresque façade.
7. **Palace of the Cadenas family.** Built by Vandelvira.
8. **Palace of Vela de los Cobos.** Mid-16th-century.
9. **Honrados Viejos de Salvador Hospital.** 16th-century.
10. **Mudejar House.** Archeology section of the Museum of Úbeda.
11. **Church of la Trinidad.** Baroque style.
12. **Clock tower.** 16th-century.
13. **La Cava Walls.** Remains of the town walls.



INGENUITY AT THE TABLE

With Bread, Oil, Garlic, and Much More

Nobody in these lands boasts that the food is exquisite, or excellent, or even unique. Nobody boasts (or needs to) of having secret recipes or exclusive dishes...

The “*honest and loyal*” inhabitants of Úbeda have good reason not to boast of an exclusive cuisine.

However, the diner will soon realize that this modesty is misplaced.

It is true, as the locals point out, that their cuisine is “*basically bread, oil, some game, a little fish, something from the vegetable garden and whatever we can do with it...*”

And this is indeed the basis of Úbeda’s cuisine. Appetizers and dishes that, without shame or pretense, are offered in any type of restaurant, just as soon as a glass of the young, but excellent, local wine is ordered.

However you look at it, Úbeda’s cuisine is governed by its geography and by the peoples who have passed through the region, some deciding to stay.

This area, unlike others nearby, has had to use a little more imagination when working with its not very abundant natural resources: flour; wheat; oil; some vegetables; and a little game: partridge, thrush and perhaps some other; a few fish from a nearby river... and little else.

In spite of all this, the food in the Úbeda area is an unexpected surprise for the visitor:

The Parador offers a carefully prepared range of medieval dishes, some Christian, some Moorish, and many a mixture of both, as well as many others.

Among them are typical dishes from Úbeda, including:

BRIEF FORAYS INTO A LONG HISTORY

■ **Úbeda, Baeza, Canena** (28 kilometers)

Baeza: Already an important site in Roman times, when it was called “*Blastia*.” The Arabs made it the capital of an extensive area. Conquered by King Fernando III, the Holy, in 1227. Its golden age came during the 16th and 17th centuries, like Úbeda’s Renaissance. The town’s two main landmarks are **Santa María Square** and **Los Leones Square**.

Grañones, a wheat-based stew.

Many different types of **Escabeche**, or **Marinades**.

Asparagus Dressed with Vinegar, or **Wild Artichokes**

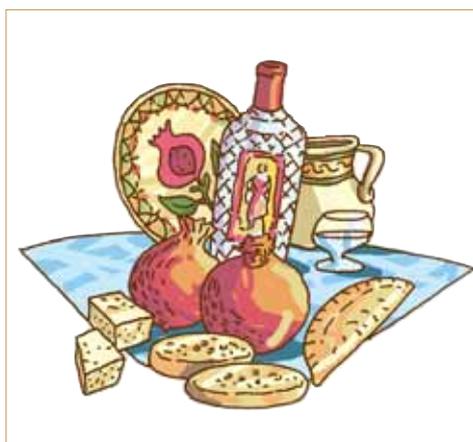
prepared in a number of the delicious ways known to the locals.

When traveling through the Loma area, the visitor may be lucky enough to stop at a country estate or farmhouse and sample **Chard Stalks in Vinegar** or **Farmhouse-style Partridge** cooked in the traditional way (wrapped in clay and cooked over a fire, feathers, intestines and all). There are numerous other dishes which are customarily served in Úbeda and this Parador, such as the famous **Andrajos** (rabbit stew with strips of dumpling); **Gazpacho**, both the traditional tomato-based soup and the almond and garlic variety (commonly known as *ajoblanco* – white garlic). There is **Pavo de Huerta** (a dish of squash and chorizo sausage), **Salmorejo** (a thick cold tomato soup similar to gazpacho), **Spinach and Asparagus in a Garlic-pepper Sauce**, **Green Peppers Stuffed with Partridge**, **Partridge Salad**, sautéed **Morcilla** blood sausage filling made without intestines and eaten hot. This sausage is usually accompanied by bread rolls flavored with paprika, known as **Ochíos**.

If you are lucky enough to visit at Easter time, you will have the opportunity to try the traditional **Hornazos**. This is an oil-based bread in the form of a roll or a braided loaf, baked around a whole egg in its shell inside.

There are excellent desserts: **Borrachuelos** (sweet fried pastry balls), **Papajotes** (fried sugar-coated pastry), **Empanadillas** (sweet pasties), **Tocinillo** caramel custard, **Buttery Cakes**, and **Gachas** (hasty pudding with aniseed). And, in season, there is a tasty **Pomegranate Salad with Anise**.

A lovely accompaniment is an excellent wine from **Torreperogil**, which is produced in limited quantities, virtually all of which is reserved for visitors.



Canena: The town is dominated by the impressive mass of its castle/palace, which belonged to the Order of Calatrava. Subsequently, in the 16th century, it was taken over by Don Francisco de los Cobos, who renovated it. It is today a National Monument. Iberian and Roman remains can be seen in **Cástulo**, near **Linares**.

■ **Úbeda, Jimena, Bedmar, Cuadros, Úbeda** (80 kilometers)

Jimena: A picturesque village located on the side of Mount Aznaitín. It has an interesting 17th-century parish church with some Gothic features. Only one of the fortified towers of the Moorish castle remains, in the center of the village. The **Canava Sanctuary** and **La Granja Cave** are nearby. The latter is a National Monument and has some interesting paintings from the Neolithic period

Bedmar: A stronghold of the kingdom of Granada. Part of the **Moorish Castle** remains, as well as the town walls and a gate that was rebuilt in the 16th century. The locally-venerated **Cuadros Sanctuary**, which has a large following, is to be found in a picturesque valley some four kilometers from Bedmar. It is located at the foot of an interesting 10th century Arab fortified tower.

■ **Úbeda, Sabiote, Villacarrillo, Iznatoraf, Úbeda** (82 kilometers)

Sabiote: An evocative spot with an important **Moorish Castle** restored in the Renaissance style during the 16th century. The **Church of San Pedro**, with its beautiful Plateresque façade, is nearby. The medieval **Albaicín Quarter** has a special charm. Large sections of the town walls remain with some of the gates, such as **Chiringote, Santos, Pelotero**, and **San Bartolomé**. The **Convent of the Discalced Carmelites** has a cloister dating to the end of the 16th century.

Villacarrillo: Interesting parish church.

Iznatoraf: Located on an extremely remote mountain at an altitude of 1,032 meters, this is one of the most

attractive spots in the province, especially its spectacular views. The parish church has an interesting collection of vestments, chalices, and monstrances. The choir and the chests of drawers in the sacristy are very valuable pieces.

■ **Úbeda, Toya, Quesada, Cazorla, La Iruela, Úbeda** (128 kilometers)

Toya: Seven kilometers from **Peal de Becerro**. Perfectly preserved underground Iberian burial chamber.

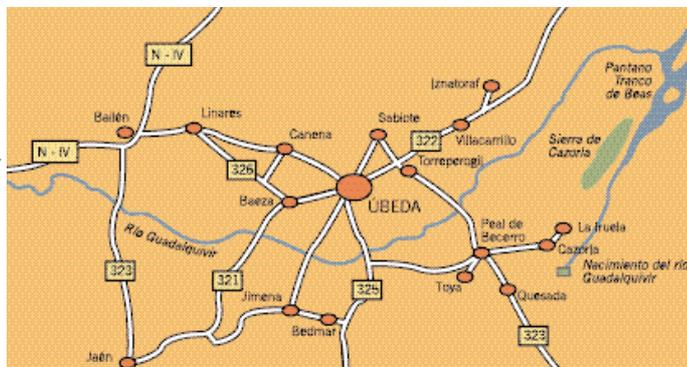
Quesada: The **Rafael Zabaleta Museum** has a large collection of the artist's work. The **Renaissance-style Church, Town Hall** with its neo-classical façade, and a number of houses with heraldic shields sit amidst the town's many white houses. 7 kilometers from Quesada on the road to Cazorla we come to **Bruñel**, with the remains of a Roman villa.

Cazorla: Area of historic and artistic importance. This is one of the most surprising towns in Spain. It is located in a very rugged mountainous area and contains two castles. **Yedra**, or the **Lower Castle**, built by Archbishop Carrillo, has been preserved intact. The ruins of the **Upper Castle**, Arab in origin, are located on the top of the same hill.

The most interesting feature of the town is **Santa María Square**, with its Renaissance fountain and the ruins of the **Church of Santa María**, designed by Vandelvira.

La Iruela: Located two kilometers from Cazorla. There are remains of a **Castle of the Knights Templar** with crenellated towers and walls.

The road out of La Iruela leads up to the **Las Palomas Pass** in the heart of the mountains.



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