



The poet's bedroom during his stay in Segovia. "White inn, traveller's cell with my own shadow"



View from Calle Real (above Canaleja Lookout), where Machado used to walk on his way from his boarding house to the high school where he worked as a teacher.

## SEGOVIA AND MACHADO

The ways of commemorating Machado in his House Museum are many. One of the most prominent is organized by the **Real Academia de Historia y Arte de San Quirce** on **22 February**, the date when Machado died. Every year poems are read in front of the poet's bust in homage to him.

This museum also plays host to the poetry recitation festival **Festival de Narradores Orales 'La poesía también cuenta'**. In this festival the audience can enjoy poetry recited by contemporary authors.

Segovia City Hall's Department of Tourism has organized a programme of events (**Actividades de la Casa Museo Antonio Machado**) that pays tribute to the poet, making both his works and his links to this city, widely accessible.

Segovia, as one of the group of cities related to Machado's life (Red de Ciudades Machadianas), is working alongside Baeza, Collioure (France), Rocafort, Seville and Soria, on the promotion of tourism connected to Machado's life and influence.



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# ANTONIO MACHADO'S ROUTE



VIA **SEGOVIA** ILUMINA EL CIELO



*As people from my village say  
The Roman Aqueduct  
Is as strong and as firm  
As our love is, my lassie's and mine!  
New Songs (Nuevas Canciones), 1924.*

Antonio Machado arrived in Segovia on 25 November 1919 to work as a French teacher for a technical, general secondary school (*Instituto General y Técnico, now IES Mariano Quintanilla*). He soon established connections with the local intellectuals. The poet joined this group with a view to founding Segovia Popular University (*Universidad Popular Segoviana*), which proved to be a pioneering influence in Spanish education. At this university he taught the subjects of French and Literary Readings, and it was here where he was named Honorary Principal in 1927.

At the time, the local press celebrated the occasion in various newspapers:

*«Yesterday, the dynamic and refined poet Antonio Machado arrived in our municipality with the purpose of taking possession of his professorship as French Chair at our General Secondary School. In beautiful verse, Antonio Machado knows how to resonate the greatness of Castile, a region with which he is ardently in love. Let us present him our warmest greetings. We earnestly wish that he find his stay in this old Castilian town delightful and inspirational as new outlet for his poetry genius», «El Adelantado de Segovia», local newspaper, Thursday, 27 November, 1919.*

*«Antonio Machado, Castile's poet, is coming back to Castile. (...) He is coming back today, coming to Segovia to teach French at our secondary school. And here, like in that other city, he will surely pour into his cadenced, austere verses, the deepest emotions that this sister city, this fraternal field will inspire to in the Castilian soul of this Andalusian poet. Our most affectionate and cordial greetings to our dearest poet», «La tierra de Segovia», local newspaper, 27 November, 1919.*

The same newspaper publishes another column on 2 December. The words are by journalist M. Álvarez Cerón... *«Señor don Antonio Machado (...) We all wish that you settle in our land and decide that it be your long-term lodgings. We too wish that your soul penetrates and takes hold of Segovia's heart. (...) Objects and people alike hope for an extraordinary destiny through which you, as an artist and a poet, can find a rhyme for both. Please be favourable to us. Segovia has great expectations, señor don Antonio Machado...»*

Soria, marked by Leonor's death, would become a part of Machado's past. And so would Baeza. In Segovia Machado felt closer to Madrid and would commute there by train using, the cheapest third class ticket. The trip took three hours. His stay in Segovia has not been documented well and yet, these were some of his most fruitful and productive years, during which he co-wrote plays for the stage with his brother Manuel. Works as important as La Duquesa de Benamejí (*Duchess of Benajamí*), Las Adelfas (The Oleander) and La Lola se va a los puertos (*Lola Goes off to Sea*), which has been adapted into a feature film on more than one occasion. This phase coincides, in fact, with his weekends spent in Madrid, since it is in the capital city where all these plays would be shown to great acclaim.

At first, our poet stayed at a hotel, but, needing more affordable accommodation, he opted to follow his friend José Tudela's advice. José had been working as a clerk since March 1919 in Segovia and took it to his heart to help Machado in his search. Finally the place was decided upon doña Luisa Torrego's house, a humble boarding house similar to those in which Machado had been lodging in Soria and Baeza. He was to lodge in this place during his whole stay in Segovia.

## ANTONIO MACHADO'S HOUSE MUSEUM

No. 5 Desamparados Street was the address of this boarding house, and Machado lived there between 1919 and 1932.

The house still overflows with memorabilia from the poet's stay; photographs of him and his family, paintings dedicated to him by various artists, a small library with all his works in both Spanish and other language editions, as well as audio-visuals and objects as curious as train tickets, letters written to Guiomar, his "goddess", photographs of him with his students from Segovia and some press articles that mention him.

By far the most important room in this house is his bedroom, with his bed, the table where he always wrote and the oil heater that helped keep the room warm in the sometimes cruel Segovian winters.

His time spent in Segovia was a very creative period. In this house Machado wrote the majority of his stage plays. It was here that he created two of the most important characters in his plays: Juan de Mairena and Abel Martín, and it was also here that he met his muse, Guiomar. He would then go to Madrid at weekends and meet up with her.

San Quirce's Academy of History and Art at first rented the room used by our poet. Later on, the Academy purchased the whole building converting it into what is known today as Machado's House Museum.



## SEGOVIA'S "UNIVERSIDAD POPULAR"

During the final months of 1919 a group of intellectuals from Segovia, joined by Antonio Machado, created the Popular University of Segovia (Universidad Popular Segoviana).

Its founders intended to bring culture closer to ordinary people. Among the teachers of the Universidad Popular were José Rodao, writer and professor at the Teacher Training College, Segundo Gila, doctor, Antonio Machado, poet and teacher at the Secondary School, Javier Cabello, architect, and Mariano Quintanilla, lawyer and graduate in Philosophy and Arts. They were accompanied by lecturers such as Daniel Zuloaga, Blas Zambrano, Luis Carretero Nieva, Manuel García Morente and Eugenio D'Ors.

In 1927, after some years without a permanent site, the chance to purchase the former Romanesque church of San Quirce, by then a haystack and warehouse, came up. This purchase gave the university its own site while at the same time, saving San Quirce's church, which seemed destined to fall into ruin.

A book circulating library was created and every founder donated books to it. Antonio Machado contributed with some fifty books from his personal collection. The collection moved from one village to another with the circulating library. Part of it is preserved in Antonio Machado's House Museum.

The founders also paid educational visits (Misiones Pedagógicas) to villages and small towns with reproductions of paintings which they displayed from the town hall balconies. They would sometimes project films, for which they brought a phonograph and sound equipment. They would record songs and rhymes that are still with us today.

Photographs of all these activities, and even the old phonograph, can be seen in Antonio Machado's House Museum.

San Quirce's Royal Academy of History and Art (Real Academia de Historia y Arte de San Quirce) still has a permanent active cultural exhibition on display.

The Academy has been associated with the national cultural institution Instituto de España since 1966, and in June 1997 it was awarded the title of Royal by the Spanish King. The Academy maintains its relationship with Segovian culture by counselling, giving information and organizing exhibitions, lecture series, courses, and so on.



*The Segovian sculptor Emiliano Barral cast a bust of the poet and in exchange Machado dedicated a poem to him which the poem can be read on one of the walls of his House Museum.*

*\* In fact, it is a copy of the original, in Burgos, made by his brother Pedro.*

## ANTONIO MACHADO'S ROUTE

It is possible to take a tour of Machado's daily route through the city during his stay in Segovia, visiting the most emblematic places and following the itinerary he took every day from the boarding house where he stayed to the school where he taught. This is a charming walk that allows visitors to get to know the poet a little better and re-creates the atmosphere of the place as it was all those years ago.

The visit begins at Día Sanz Square (Plaza de Día Sanz) [1], where Machado's workplace was located. We walk along the Roman aqueduct to reach Canaleja's lookout [2], with spectacular views of the mountains. We then visit the medieval house known as Casa de los Picos [3], from whose courtyard Machado presented his first lecture in Segovia. Next, we go up the street to recall places that were important for the poet. These (such as the Hotel Comercio [4] or Café de la Unión [5], where he would hold his talks and debates) have now disappeared to make way for new buildings. Entering the main square (Plaza Mayor), we discover other places that recount our poet's story, like Café Juan Bravo [6]. Finally we go down to Escuderos Street where we find the House Museum [7], which were his lodgings throughout the entire time he spent in this city. On entering this old boarding house, once owned by Doña Luisa Torrego, we can sense the charm the whole place exudes that reflects the times which Antonio Machado lived. If you would like to book this and/or other visits, please do so in advance. Our telephone no.: +34 921 46 67 21.

**For more information please contact:**

### **Central de Reservas (Booking Office)**

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### **Empresa Municipal de Turismo de Segovia (Municipal Tourist Company in Segovia)**

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**If you need any information on visits to Machado's House Museum please contact:**

### **Antonio Machado's House Museum (Casa Museo de Antonio Machado)**

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 Casa Museo Antonio Machado

