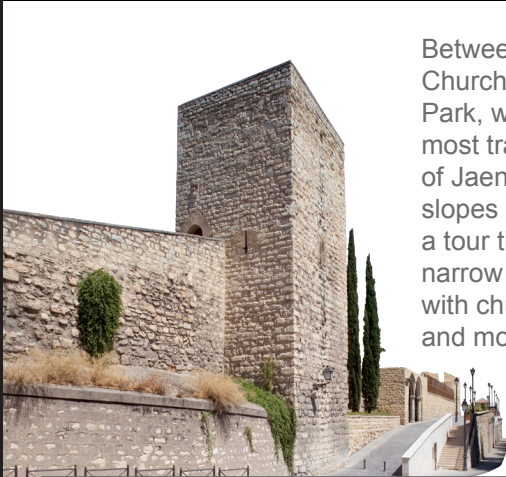




**JAÉN, STEP BY STEP**  
**FROM LA MERCED TO THE SEMINARY**

**Of way to the first  
 neighborhoods**



Between *La Merced* Church and the Seminary Park, we find one of the most traditional quarters of Jaen, lain on the hill slopes of the Castle. It is a tour that goes through narrow and windy streets with churches, convents and modern parks.



In this itinerary stands out the renaissance complex of *La Merced* Square and its steep and narrow streets, that discover its medieval course. This tour, enriched by palaces and convents, goes through the *Carrera de Jesús* and the Seminary and Park with the same name, to reach one of the accesses to the zigzag road that leads us to *Santa Catalina* Castle.

*La Merced* Church has its origins in 1580, in an old convent inhabited by priests of the order of *La Merced*, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its oldest part is the cloister. The temple, dated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is of a basilical plan with three naves and one baroque façade, which harbours a niche with the image of the Virgin of *La Merced*. The church was restored in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In front of *La Merced* Church, we can see the Captain Quesada Palace, known as Mr. Fernando de Quesada y Ulloa, knight in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its structure has been changed manifold times, although it still conserves the linteled front. In its balconies we can appreciate remains of medallions and heraldic emblems. Today it is occupied by the Urban Office of the County Council. The renaissance complex of the Square of *La Merced* is completed with the New Fountain, which has two niches with more spouts. It has three shields: one Spanish, another of Jaen and the third unidentified.

Strolling along the narrow streets of *La Merced* quarter, we reach the street named *Carrera de Jesús*, which starts from the monumental Saint Mary Square. In this street, formerly known as Ball Game Street, which connects the surroundings of the Cathedral with the high areas of the city, there are some outstanding noble buildings



and mansions and remains of the medieval city wall, as the Portillo de *San Sebastian* and *Los Dolores* Arch, where the cylindrical towers are still standing .

The Convent of *San José de los Padres Carmelitas Descalzos* was founded in 1588, and at the end of that century the brotherhood was established, fraternity known by the locals as The Granfather, highly venerated in the city. The image of *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* was worshipped in a chapel of this Convent, *Camarin de Jesús*, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was moved to the Cathedral, because of the *desamortización* period. The image will be back to the *Camarin de Jesús*, once the restoring work finishes, celebrating the procession at dawn on Good Friday in the Easter of 2010.

*Santa Teresa* Monastery, founded in 1615, is also located in the *Carrera de Jesús*. It has a magnificent main altarpiece, where we can see paintings of Sebastián Martínez and Ambrosio de Valois. It was the first monastery dedicated to *Santa Teresa* and its relevance is improved because it conserves one of the copies of the Manuscript of *Cantico Espiritual*, by *San Juan de la Cruz*. It is currently famous because of the delicious pastry elaborated by the nuns community.

The Tower of the Count of Torralba, built in masonry, evoke the past of a walled city. Among palaces and noble houses in the *Carrera de Jesús*, the one that belonged to the count-duke stands out, a traditional building distinguished by its arcade courtyard. This mansion will be occupied by the Social Works Office of the Bank of Jaen.

Jaen Seminary culminates this monumental tour. The Diocesan Seminary, after many attempts, was finally founded at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the bishop Victoriano Guisasola who gave impetus to this founding, and was finished while Manuel Basulto was bishop of Jaen. The trees and vegetation of the park next to it are also green lungs of the city. From its paths we can gaze at the Cathedral and the old city which descends down to *Llana* Street and the quarter of *la Alcantarilla*. Strolling along Villares road, we see on one side *La Glorieta* quarter and the street leads us to *Jabalruz* gardens, which surround the romantic spa, currently under restoration.

