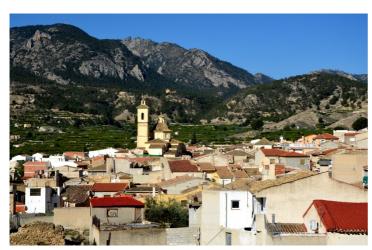


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Meet Ricote!

You are in Ricote, one of the most interesting towns in the Region of Murcia which makes yourself feel like at home. The first historical facts about us date back to the 9th century when our castle was built.



The orchard that surrounds the municipality began to be cultivated from the 10th century. Nowadays this orchard is one of the best studied irrigated areas of Islamic origin in Spain. Around there you can visit the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Huertas which was the primitive mosque, the ethnographic complex of the mills, the alleys generated by the high walls that surround many of the plots and also the old layout of the irrigation ditches, although they have been modernized.

The old town of Ricote stretches out at the foot of a mountain called Algezar which still preserves the 18th-century façade of the Hoyos

house, an old manor house owned by one of the main families of this century. The parish church of San Sebastián, built between 1737 and 1742, is a magnificent architectural work of the Murcian Baroque architecture. It keeps inside the image of San Sebastián, patron saint of Ricote, which was made in the early sixteenth century, the image of San Joaquín and the little Virgin, two pieces from the school of Francisco Salzillo; the image of San José by Francisco Salzillo; the baptismal font from the former parish church, dated 1683 and last but not least, the organ, built in 1743 by José Messeguer, which is the oldest in the Region of Murcia. Next to the parish church we find the house of the encomienda, a 16th century palace which was the headquarters of the Institution, owner of the territory from the end of the 13th century to the 19th century. In front of the house of the encomienda it is the palace of the Llamas family who were its administrator for many years. It was built in 1702 and much of the building has been preserved. We can highlight its imperial staircase, many paintings decorating the pendentives of the central dome and the chapel of the palace. On the outside, the façade and the decorated grille dress its windows.

Ricote is more than just monuments because it has preserved its historic centre. For instance Santiago or San Sebastián Streets retain their old flavor, San Pedro Square (where the original church was after the conversion of the Moors in 1501) or Santiago Square, where the chapel was located in and which was used by the few Christians who lived in the castle at the end of the 15th.

Beyond the mountains it is our countryside, a large area cultivated with cereals, vines, olives or almonds. It is fragmented into different districts and where you can taste our rich cuisine as well as Ricote wine, one of our greatest attractions.

The Ricote countryside has routes that you can take on foot or by bicycle and which will allow you to get to know it more closely. In this brochure we encourage you to make one of them: the route of the hermitages. If you decide to try this trip, you will be able to know our the three routes, small and charming places of worship that are worth visiting not only for the buildings, but also for the places where they are located.

If you really want to get to know Ricote, you have to stay and sleep here, stroll through its streets in the moonlight, get lost in the labyrinth that forms the upper part of the village, at the foot of Mount Algezar and contemplate it from the viewpoint of the Manaor to finally sleep in a village with more than 1,300 years of history.

The Ricote countryside and its hermitages

Hermitage of the Virgen del Oro

It is located in the Rambla de Charrara area, the largest of the three existing hermitages and oriented from southeast to northwest. Of this robust and typical rural construction, the façade is notable for its flared,



two glazed windows framed on both sides. The complex is crowned by a single belfry with a double span from which bells hanging.

Attached to the set, on the left side, a tower stands out.

Inside it there is a church with three naves and beautiful polychrome columns. The wooden coffered ceiling is very well restored.

The saint image is the famous Virgen del oro and she presides over the inside. Probably the name "Oro" (i.e. gold), which is used to name the Virgin as well as the environment in which she lives, has its origin in the Hebrew root "or", which means "mount".

The devotion to the Virgen del Oro extends throughout the region, being the patron saint of the neighbouring town of Abarán, where there is a Marian sanctuary under the same title.

In this hermitage a pilgrimage is celebrated on August 15th, the day of the Assumption of Mary.

Hermitage of San Sebastián

It is located in the Ermita area, next to the MU-B15 road. Placed at a crossroads, it faces north-south. It is the smallest of the three hermitages and is built in two volumes, a single nave with a rectangular floor



plan and a semicircular apse that forms the main altar. Inside you can see the dome of the first section. In the apse, above the whitewashed ceiling, the wooden beams stand out. The entire complex has recently been restored.

Inside it, an image of Mary Help of Christians is venerated.

The cult of Saint Sebastian is very old. Being invoked against the plague and the enemies of religion, is also called the Christian Apollo since he is one of the most reproduced saints. Saint Sebastian, patron saint of Ricote, is celebrated on 20 January.

Hermitage of San José

It is located in La Bermeja. Placed on a small hill, it offers terrific views over the countryside and the



Ricote mountains. Its orientation is east-west and it was built on a rectangular floor plan. Its interior forms a large hall divided into two sections by an arcade of three openings. In its main façade you can see the central access span and a small window over it, all crowned by a belfry.

The contrast between the white look and the intricate wooden coffered ceiling is striking. Two steps lead to the main altar where there is a small niche presided over by the image of St. Joseph with the Child Jesus.

Because of the celebration of San José on19th March, a pilgrimage around the area takes place.

Brief description of the main interesting places in Ricote Town

Hermitage of Santiago (disappeared) (Point 1 of the monumental plan)



The first news we have is found in the visiting books of the Order of St. James, dated in 1495.

We are told that it was small but well arranged, on one side it had an altar and paper altarpieces with some images of the Virgin Mary. The altar had for the Eucharistic service a couple of tablecloths, a tin chalice without a paten, a paper box to keep the hosts and a few other elements for the service. From 1515 onwards, a deterioration began to be detected which would be unstoppable. This temple had no income for its maintenance and only depended on alms for it. In 1526 the building was no longer inspected by the

Santiago visitors due to its poor state of conservation.

House of Hoyos (18th Century) (Point 2 of the monumental plan)



Los Hoyos was one of the oldest noble families in the town. They lived in this house until the early 20th century. Only a beautiful façade remains of the original building that gave access to the poorly named house of the Holy Inquisition, not because it was an establishment of this institution but because some of the members of the Hoyos family were relatives or members of that court.

The noble coat of arms of the family stands out occupying a simple façade from the early 18th century. In this same street, titled Santiago, there

are many houses of the nobility of this century, some of them with rich grilles of the previous century.

Churches of San Pedro and the oven of the Encomienda (disappeared) (Point 3 of the monumental map)



After the conversion of the Mudejars, the Moorish period began, and so did its churches erected throughout the Valley. The Ricote church was dedicated to Saint Peter and it was in the current square of that name, where it was built.

In 1511 the old church was demolished and its space was dedicated to a cemetery, which allows us to locate the old and new church of San Pedro. In the old one, no burials were made inside but the space was reused as a

cemetery; in the new one, neighbours were buried. Human remains have recently appeared next to the kiosk. The type of furnace was known as a "horno de poya". Furnaces of this type still exist in Ricote.

Ricote Castle (9th century) (Visible from point 4 of the monumental plan)



Ricote Castle is located in the Sierra del Salitre, 442 meters above sea level. It is located on the right bank of the Sorbente Strait, a small canyon opened by the Segura River.

The fortress was divided into two distinct spaces. A first defensive enclosure, called albacara, continued to be used as a place of refuge for the population during unstable periods and was repaired by all the residents of the nearby towns (Abarán, Blanca, Ricote, Ojós, Ulea and Asnete-Villanueva). On the other hand, the fortress with its keep stood on the

highest part.

The fortress of Ricote fell into disuse after the elimination of the Granada border in 1492.

Llamas' Palace (18th Century) (Point 10 of the monumental plan)



Built in 1702 by Francisco de Llamas Abenza in a sober baroque style, it is a building of French influence. The façade is framed by solid stone ashlars in which you can see the movement of the pilasters of the doorway, which is supported by two pillars that uphold the balcony and the frieze that houses the family's coat of arms. On the outside, the rich and beautifully carved grilles of the period stand out, ennobling the entire building. The entrance hall has a Baroque column that presides over the entire room and in which the heraldic coat of arms of the Llamas family is carved. The interior of the mansion revolves around a beautiful imperial staircase whose wooden railing is composed of bars representing Solomonic columns, under a dome

supported by pendentives and decorated with Moorish paintings.

Palace of La Encomienda (15th century) (Point 9 of the monumental plan)



Ricote together with Abarán, Blanca, Ojós, Villanueva and Ulea, became part of the Order of Santiago at the end of the 13th century and belonged to this institution until the military orders were dissolved in the mid-19th century. This territory constituted the so-called Ricote Valley encomienda.

The first news in which this building is described is found during the visit of the Order of Santiago in 1495. The original house had a courtyard around which there were arcades, a structure that has been partially preserved.

It is a building that has reached us with a layout that allows us to follow its description in the literature. Its description about how it was like in 1495 is from the indicated courtyard, similar to the present one, since on the right hand side it is a hall and on the left hand side a staircase, and at the end of it there is another hall that gives

access to other rooms, which in the sixteenth century were kitchen, stable and service chamber. The description of this house shows a complex structure with numerous rooms located on different levels and connected by a large number of stairs.

Church of San Sebastián (18th century) (Point 11 of the monumental plan)



On January 20th 1737 the primitive church of San Sebastián was located in the same place where the current parish church stands today. It was unable to accommodate the large number of faithful who attended the Mass of the patron saint, a fact that together with the state of deterioration contributed to the council's decision to build the current church.

The repairs to be carried out amounted to 10,356 "reales" (i.e. the currency of that date). It was a very large amount that solved the problem of the architectural state of the building but not that of the space, and they decided to build a new one. The new building would have "one hundred and

thirty-one palms long and ninety palms wide, with its transept, major chapel and chapels that correspond to it. From the masonry factory, the cover is made of ashlar and the rest of canvas". The total price of the new construction was 30,000 "reales". The Santiago order contributed with 10,356 "reales", the amount needed to invest for the repair, and the rest was paid by Ricote population.

Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de las Huertas - Old mosque (Located in the orchard)

The Hermitage of Nuestra Señora de las Huertas was a mosque during the Mudejar period, that is to say before the conversion of the Muslim population to Christianity (1501). In the inspections of the Order of



Santiago in 1495 and 1498, it was mentioned next to a vineyard owned by the encomienda and was described, on the last date, as "vna casa que solia ser mosquita". Its ruins, where you can see a horseshoe arch of Andalusian tradition, show the example of one of the mosques where the important Sufi movement was transmitted during the Andalusian period.

During the visit in 1511, the church was also referred to as "Santa María de las Huertas", adding to its description that it had "vna torrezilla de cal y canto para campanario", which must have been the previous minaret of

the mosque. The mismanagement of his butler, who in 1536 fled Ricote with the alms collected for the repair, would lead the building to ruin, since it was not cited in the visit of 1549.

Monument to the Moorish expelled in 1613 (Point 8 of the monumental plan)



Ricote was the last place in Spain from which the Moorish were expelled in 1613. The expulsion process took place during the following year and half of the population was affected. The remains of the hermitage, the street map of Ricote, the hydraulic system and most of the surnames with which they were nominated after the conversion of 1501 are still used in Ricote.

The monument was placed in 2013 at the moment of the commemoration for the 400^{th} anniversary of the expulsion.

Pillar and oil mill of the Order of Santiago (Point 6 of the monumental plan)



The Ricote oil mill is described in the visit of 1495. It had two but the oldest was located next to the Algezar spring. That spring to which the document refers is known in Ricote as "El Pilar", which is placed outside the town, and the oil mill was located in front of it, whose remains could be seen until few years ago.

This oil mill had three naves and it was made of one stone. In 1495 it was "well groomed and with all the necessary utensils".

Opposite to the oil mill it is the pillar or trough that the Order of Santiago which was built in 1511 to take advantage of the spring that continues to flow today. Its water is not potable but it has been used for centuries to cover domestic needs and to prepare agricultural products, such as olives for consumption.

