



Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela is the most outstanding building of Romanesque art in Spain. It is also the final destination of all the Ways of St. James, which, during centuries, have brought Christendom's pilgrims to the apostle's tomb. And that is not all; it is the starting point for the construction of Santiago de Compostela, which arose with the vocation of becoming a Holy City and a World Heritage City.

Today, after a thousand years of experience lived at the pace of Compostela's extraordinary history, the Cathedral is now a 10,000-square-metre complex capable of rewarding, with its powerful spirituality and beauty, all the world's visitors.

Eng

CATHEDRAL OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Brief History

According to tradition, a hermit called Paio discovered the apostle James' tomb in the year 814, hidden in the forests of Libredón. King Alfonso II ordered a small church to be built alongside the Roman temple that was found. As the news spread around Europe, numerous believers set out on a pilgrimage to see the relics. King Alfonso III commissioned the construction of a larger church, which was consecrated in the year 899. A settlement arose around the church, giving rise to the present-day city.

In the year 997, Almanzor attacked the city, raiding the church and taking the cathedral bells and doors as booty. Bishop Pedro de Mezonzo, who managed to escape along with the relics, rebuilt the church.

The tomb's fame continued growing and the new church once again proved insufficient to hold the numerous pilgrims. In 1075, construction works began on the basilica that exists today: in Romanesque style, with a Latin-cross ground plan and towers that can be seen from far off. Between 1168 and 1188, Maestro Mateo overcame the site's difference in ground level and finished his masterpiece, the "Pórtico de la Gloria." In 1211, the Cathedral was finally consecrated.

In the following centuries, improvements continued to be made to the basilica, such as the Royal Pantheon in 1238, the Gothic cloister and defensive towers. In the middle of the Renaissance, Bishop Alonso III Fonseca ordered the present-day cloister to be built; some chapels were renovated and altarpieces, sculptures and pulpits were added.

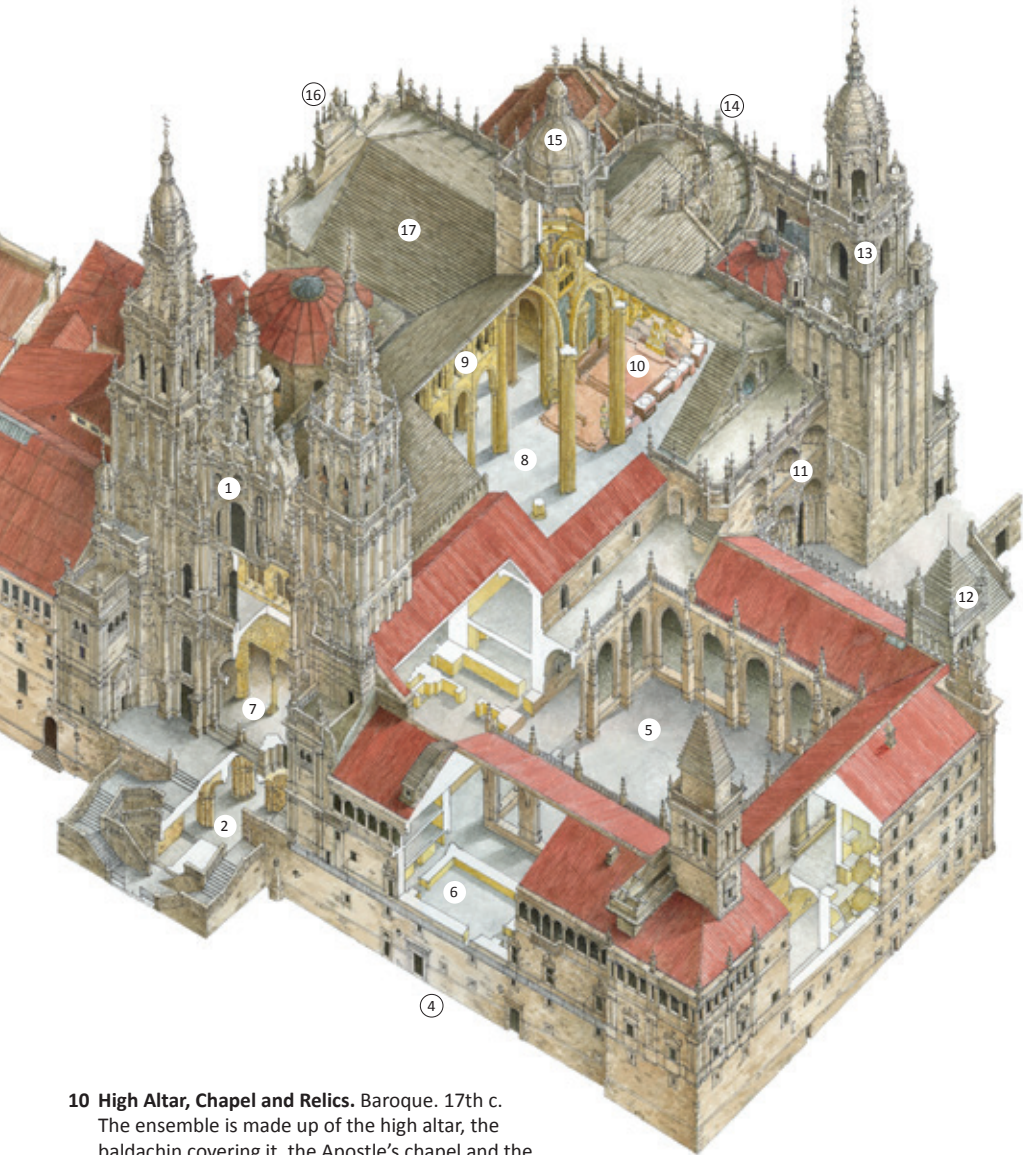
In the 17th and 18th centuries, the cathedral, and the city along with it, was transformed into a Baroque gem. The four cathedral squares took shape and Domingo de Andrade erected the clock tower, designed the new Holy Door and worked on the High Altar. Fernando de Casas finished the magnificent west façade, giving Plaza del Obradoiro its present-day appearance.

In the late 20th century, the cathedral saw an increase in the number of pilgrimages. The 1993 Holy Year brought 100,000 pilgrims to Compostela on foot, by bike or on horseback; this figure increased to 180,000 in the 2004 Holy Year. Currently, the cathedral of Santiago receives more than 300 thousand pilgrims and about 3 million visitors every year.



General View

- 1 **Obradoiro Façade.** Baroque. 18th c.
- 2 **Crypt.** Romanesque. 12th c.
- 3 **Xelmírez Palace.** Romanesque-Gothic. 12th c. and later. The Archbishop's see features a magnificent medieval palace that can be visited.
- 4 **Cathedral's cloister façade.** Renaissance. 16th-17th centuries.
- 5 **Cloister.** Gothic-Renaissance. 16th-17th c. Can only be visited with a museum ticket.
- 6 **Cathedral museum.** The tour around the cloister and its rooms highlights the history of the cathedral and city by means of exhibitions of great value.
- 7 **"Pórtico de la Gloria."** Romanesque. 12th. The masterpiece of Romanesque sculpture relates the Story of Salvation with more than 200 masterly figures by the architect Mateo. A must.
- 8 **Main nave.** Romanesque. 12th c. 94 m long. It is covered by a 24 m-high barrel vault.
- 9 **Gallery.** Romanesque. 12th-13th c. The gallery runs all along the top of the church. In the Middle Ages, there were private chapels and many pilgrims spent the night here.



10 High Altar, Chapel and Relics. Baroque. 17th c.
The ensemble is made up of the high altar, the baldachin covering it, the Apostle's chapel and the lower crypt housing the holy relics.

11 Platerías façade. Romanesque. 12th c. The oldest of the existing façades symbolises Redemption with scenes from Jesus' life.

12 Cloister towers. 17th c. Pyramidal or stepped towers such as "Torre de la Vela" and "Torre del Tesoro."

13 Clock Tower. 14th-16th c. It is called Berenguela after Archbishop Berenguel de Landoira, who erected it in the 14th c. Its medieval base still exists. In 1680, the architect Domingo de Andrade raised it to a height of 73 metres. It houses the cathedral's largest bell, which weighs 6,433 kilos.

14 East façade. Baroque. 18th c. The Holy Door faces Plaza da Quintana and is only opened in Holy Years.

15 Transept dome. Baroque. 17th c. In the interior, it reaches a height of 32 m.

16 Azabachería (Acibechería) Façade. Neoclassical. 18th c. Bordering the Way of St. James and facing the Monastery of San Martiño Pinario, it used to be the site of artisans that worked jet stone.

17 Rooftops. The Cathedral's stepped granite rooftops, 30 m above Plaza del Obradoiro; they can be visited by entering Xelmírez Palace.

Obradoiro Façade

This extraordinary granite curtain is the climax of Galicia's baroque art. Architects such as Peña de Toro or Domingo de Andrade worked on it; however, starting in 1738, its great promoter was Fernando de Casas y Novoa, who died without seeing it finished in 1750. It is the cathedral's most photographed front and faces the heart of the city, Plaza del Obradoiro. The square and façade are called after the workshops ("obradoiros" in the Galician language) of the stonemasons that carved these stones during almost a century.

- 1 **Double stairway.** Renaissance, 1616. Designed by Ginés Martínez.
- 2 **Entrance to crypt.** 12th-13th centuries. Romanesque. Dedicated to James Alphaeus, it was built by Maestro Mateo to support the "Pórtico de la Gloria" and overcome the 12-metre difference in ground level between the sanctuary and foot of the cathedral.
- 3 **Vestibule leading to the interior.**
- 4 **Figures featured in long balcony:** St. Susana, the city's co-patron saint, and St. John the Evangelist; St. Barbara and James Alphaeus (the Less).
- 5 **Mirror façade.** Baroque. 17th-18th c. Erected in front of the "Pórtico de la Gloria," it forms a triptych or altarpiece dedicated to the Apostle. In it two rows of giant columns border the "mirror," the largest glass window before the Industrial Revolution, which conserves the holes of the previous rose window. The ensemble is characterised by contrasting volumes and decorative richness, which includes geometric sheets, curved elements, volutes, cylinders, shields and shells.
- 6 **Zebedee and Mary Salome,** the parents of the apostles James and John.
- 7 **Atanasio and Teodoro,** disciples of James and bearers of his relics as far as Galicia.
- 8 **Urn of St. James,** crowned by the star that guided the hermit Paio to the tomb.
- 9 **St. James the Pilgrim.** Baroque. Set in position in 1750 to crown the great façade, it features a hat, cape and staff. Spanish monarchs are at his feet.
- 10 **Crosses of St. James,** both a cross and flowery sword.
- 11 **Original structure of the towers.** They belonged to the original Romanesque façade and were towers of unequal height.
- 12 **Belfry.** Baroque. 17th-18th c. The towers' 74-metre height was reached in 1747, when the architect Casas y Novoa, continuing with the remodelling undertaken by Peña de Toro in 1670, added the elegant baroque tops of ascending sections, decorated with balustrades, pinnacles and spheres.
- 13 **"Torre de la Carraca,"** built by Domingo de Andrade as the other tower's twin. Its name comes from the wooden instrument that it houses, used to call the faithful to mass during Holy Week.



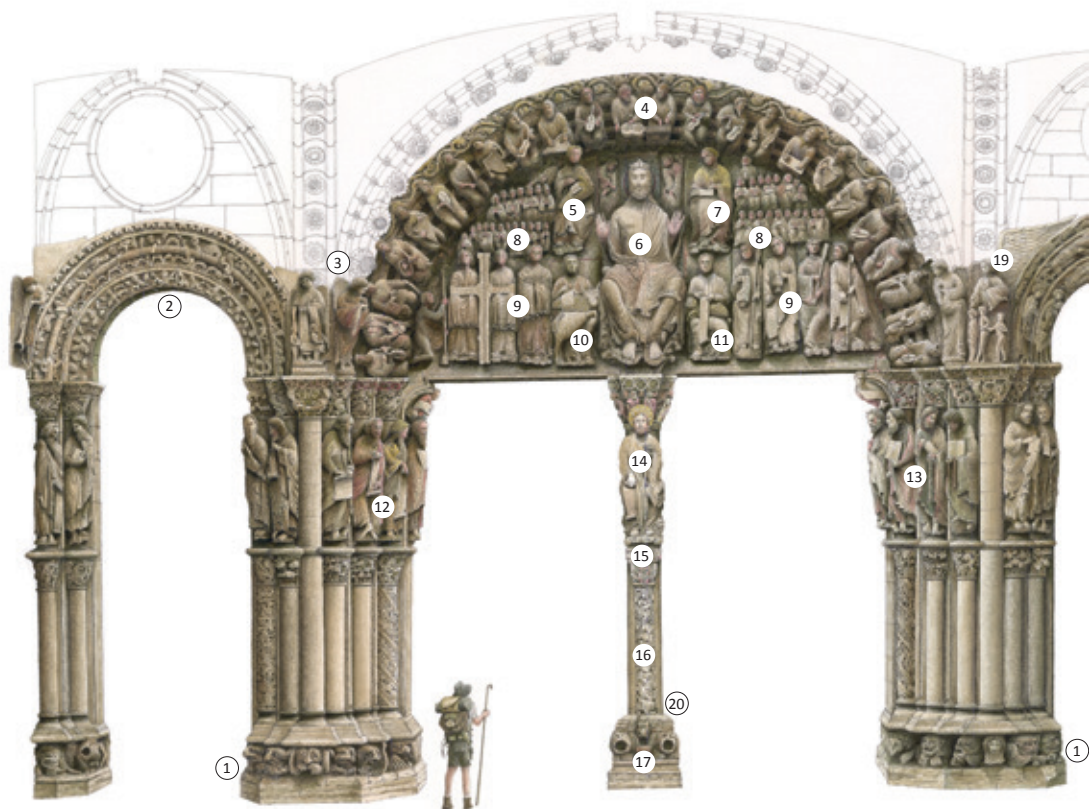
Interior Tour

- 1 **Chapel of the Saviour or Chapel of the King of France.** Romanesque. The starting point of the cathedral's construction in 1075. Granite altarpiece by Juan de Álava: 16th c.
- 2 **Chapel of St. Mary the White or of Los España.** 13th c. Gothic. Baroque renovations.
- 3 **Chapel of St. John the Evangelist or of St. Susan.** Romanesque, altered in 16th- 17th c.
- 4 **Chapel of Santa Fe or of St. Bartholomew.** Romanesque with plateresque motifs.
- 5 **Chapel of the Conception or of Prima.** 16th c. Burial place of Domingo de Andrade. Altarpiece by Simón Rodríguez.
- 6 **Chapel of La Corticela.** Pre-Romanesque church. 9th c. Altered by Maestro Mateo in the 13th c. Although joined to the cathedral in the 16th c., it is still considered an independent parish "for pilgrims, foreigners and Basques."
- 7 **Chapel of the Holy Spirit.** Gothic. 13th c. Pantheon of the Moscoso family.
- 8 **Tombstone of Teodomiro,** bishop of Iria when the Apostle's tomb was discovered (9th c.).
- 9 **Communion Chapel.** Neoclassical: Miguel Ferro Caaveiro, 18th c. Exhibits the Blessed Sacrament.

- 10 **Chapel of Christ of Burgos.** Baroque: Melchor de Velasco, 17th c.
- 11 **"Pórtico de la Gloria."** Transitional Romanesque: Maestro Mateo, 12th-13th c.
- 12 **Royal Pantheon.** Tombs: Fernando II, Alfonso IX, Raymond of Burgundy, Doña Berenguela, Juana de Castro.
- 13 **Entrance to Cathedral Museum.** Founded in 1930, it highlights the extraordinary history of the Apostle's sanctuary. A single ticket provides access to the cloister and its rooms, the Chapel of Relics, Royal Pantheon and Treasury. The upper floors feature the Library, where the "Botafumeiro" censer is exhibited; the Chapterhouse and the important tapestry collection with cartoons by Goya and Rubens in the long balcony.
- 14 **Organs** by Miguel de Romay and Antonio Alfonsín. 18th c. In perfect working order.
- 15 **Gothic-Renaissance cloister:** Juan de Álava and Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, 16th c. Star-shaped vault and plateresque cresting. Houses the museum's collections.
- 16 **Pre-Romanesque font.** According to tradition, Almanzor's horse drank from it (with fatal results) during the assault on the basilica in the year 997.
- 17 **High Altar.** Baroque ensemble. Rococo baldachin: Vega y Verdugo and Domingo de Andrade, 17th c. Silver altarpiece: 17th c. Statute of St. James that is embraced by pilgrims: 13th c. Below the altar, Roman crypt (1st c.) and tomb of the Apostle and his two disciples: 19th-century silver chest.
- 18 **Chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar or of Monroy.** 18th c. Altarpiece by Miguel de Romay. Archbishop Monroy's tomb. Beautiful Jacobean ornamentation.
- 19 **Chapel of Mondragón or of La Piedad or of the Holy Cross.** Altarpiece: 16th c.



- 20 **Chapel of La Azucena or of St. Peter or of Doña Mencía de Andrade or of El Magistral.** Romanesque. Altarpiece: Fernando de Casas, 18th c.
- 21 **Holy Door.** 16th c. Only opened in Holy Years. Bronze door by Suso León (2004).



“Pórtico de la Gloria”

1168 - 1188. Maestro Mateo

The “Pórtico de la Gloria” is the masterpiece of Romanesque sculpture, with more than 200 brilliantly made figures. This prodigy of medieval iconography makes up a theological message that medieval believers could easily decipher. However, today we can only theorise about its meaning. Researchers believe that it represents the story of Man’s Salvation and Christ’s Resurrection after the Apocalypse. The central arch would depict Glory, presided by the Resurrected Jesus; the left arch, the people of Israel, and the right one the Final Judgment. What is certain is that the left half is devoted to the Old Testament and the right to the New Testament, with St. James in the centre to welcome pilgrims into the House of God.

Before being covered by the Baroque Obradoiro curtain, the “Pórtico” appeared on the cathedral’s west side and completed the iconographic programme of the other two façades, the Azabachería entrance (north) and the Platerías entrance (south), which represented the Fall into Sin and Redemption respectively.

Main images:

- 1 Base** with human and animal figures. They could represent the forces of evil or ancient idols conquered by the Church.
- 2 Jewish people**, Limbo of the Righteous or Old Testament. Includes Jesus, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon, as well as Old Testament kings and patriarchs.
- 3 Angels** lead the Righteous, represented by children, from Limbo to Glory.
- 4 Central arch.** The 24 elders of the Apocalypse tuning their instruments.
- 5 The evangelist St. John** with his symbol, the eagle.
- 6 Pantocrator:** Resurrected Jesus, surrounded by the Four Evangelists.
- 7 St. Matthew** with the angel and an abacus.
- 8 The Righteous.**
- 9 Angels** with the attributes of Christ’s Passion: column, cross, crown of thorns, nails and spear, Pilate’s sentence and jug of war, whip and INRI sign.
- 10 The evangelist St. Luke** with his symbol, the winged bull.



- 11 The evangelist St. Mark with his symbol, the lion.
- 12 Old Testament prophets. From left to right, Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah and Moses. Daniel's smile is famous, unique in the Middle Ages.
- 13 New Testament apostles. From left to right, Peter, Paul, James and John, also smiling.
- 14 Seated St. James, with a pilgrim's staff.
- 15 Capital of Jesus' divine nature: the Trinity.
- 16 Column representing Jesus' genealogy in the so-called **Tree of Jesse**. The marble shows the handprints of thousands of pilgrims.
- 17 Mythical hero, commonly identified with **Hercules** overcoming two lions.
- 18 Possible representation of the **Final Judgment**. In the upper archivolt, Jesus, and in the lower one, the archangel St. Michael. On the right, sinners seized by demons (with allegories of sins), and on the left, the Righteous, protected by angels.
- 19 The **Righteous** taken to Paradise by angels.
- 20 Behind the mullion, **Maestro Mateo**, the "Pórtico's" creator, kneeling in front of the altar.

The "Botafumeiro"

The "Botafumeiro" is a giant censer, used since the Middle Ages to purify the air in a cathedral that was full of crowds. Today it continues to marvel those present when, after communion, it begins its amazing pendular swing facing the high altar, rising up to almost touch the transept vault.

Eight men are required to set it in motion; these so-called "tiraboleiros" bring it out of the Library. It weighs around 60 kg. After tying it with three large knots to a rope, they pump the censer by pulling with strength and precision. In this way, in only a minute and a half, and a total of 17 cycles, the "Botafumeiro" reaches a speed of 68 kilometres per hour and forms an angle of 82 degrees with the vertical, tracing a 65-metre amplitude arc along the transept.

Brief History

The "Botafumeiro" appears in the *Codex Calixtinus*, mentioned as Turibulum Magnum. In the 12th century it was hung from a series of wooden beams crossing the dome. The presentday mechanism, based on movement by pulleys, was designed during the Renaissance by the master Celma.

In the 15th c., King Louis XI of France financed the manufacture of a silver censer, but it was removed by the Napoleonic troops camped in the cathedral cloister. Today, there are two censers, which are kept in the Chapter Library: the oldest, from 1851, is made of silver-plated brass and is 160 cm high. The second is a silver replica of the aforementioned one, being a gift from the Acting Officers to the Cathedral in 1971.



Visiting the Cathedral

Open: every day, all year long.

Admission: free

Opening hours: www.catedraldesantiago.es

Obtaining the Jubilee

Thanks to the grace of the Jubilee granted to Santiago Cathedral in 1122 by Pope Calixtus II, believers visiting the cathedral during Holy Year may obtain plenary absolution. Compostela Holy Years are those in which July 25 (St. James' Day) falls on a Sunday. This is the case every 6, 5, 6 and 11 years.

Seeing the "botafumeiro" censer

The "Botafumeiro" censer functions according to a calendar of liturgical services. Apart from these dates, it has to be requested in advance and requires making an offering to the Cathedral. It is managed by the Canon serving as Pilgrimage Representative.

Check calendar: www.catedraldesantiago.es

Museum of the Cathedral

Cathedral rooftops

Archeological Excavations

Pórtico de la Gloria

Visits, opening hours and prices:

www.catedraldesantiago.es

Sacristy of Santiago Cathedral

Tel: (+34) 981 583 548

Archive-Library

Tel: (+34) 981 575 609

Santiago Cathedral Foundation

Rúa do Vilar, 1

15705 Santiago de Compostela

Tel: (+34) 981 569 327

www.catedraldesantiago.es

Pilgrims Office

Rúa Carretas, 33

15705 Santiago de Compostela

Tel: (+ 34) 981 568 846

www.oficinadelperegrino.com

More information at

www.santiagoturismo.com

