

TOWN HALL TOUR GUIDE

Dating from 1586 and built in the former site of a Dominican convent, this building has been remodeled and expanded several times. The facade has an arcade with a beautiful double-column archway.

1 ENTRANCE HALL

The information desk can be found here. For any other administrative procedures, you should go to the offices located on 7, Concepción St.

In the Entrance Hall, you can see two ceramic tiles, one representing the Virgin of El Rocío (dressed as Queen of the Marshlands?) and another one on the wall of the staircase with the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

2. WAITING ROOM

In this room, you can wait to be received by the Mayor. Here you can see two pictures of two eminent people.

A mayor's baton is also displayed here. It was carried by King Juan Carlos I on his visit to El Rocío on 27th September, 1992, and by his son, Felipe VI on his visit to Almonte on 14th February 2020.

3. MAYOR'S OFFICE

This is a large office where the Mayor works together with her town councillors. As you can see there is a table for the meetings.

In this room we have two bronze sculptures, two oil paintings of eminent local citizens: This is Martin Villa (1804-1876) writer, humanist, and Rector of the University of Seville from 1845 to 1868. The painting dates from 1886, This is Sebastián Conde (17th-18th century) famed blacksmith and clockmaker, who lived in Seville and author, among other works of the Cruz de la Cerrajería in the Santa Cruz quarter in Sevilla, painting from 1882. Both by unknown artists.

Other ornamental elements are two beautiful ceramic flowerpot stands, composed of a column and a bowl/cup, by Pedro Navia, of the famous Sevillian ceramic factory

4. PROTOCOL HALL

Official receptions of authorities and illustrious characters are held here as well as formal receptions such as Constitution Day or civil wedding ceremonies. It is also used to give press conferences.

This room contains the old plenary table and the current heraldic shield of the City Hall. It is also a Gallery of Illustrious People of this town who stood out for their professional, human, social and political value, for example, Candelaria Coronel, who dedicated 35 years of his life to teaching girls from Almonte.

5. ARCADED COURTYARD AND STAIRS

Now we are in the courtyard. Its main function is to provide natural light. The rooms around are the offices of the councilors and the mayor. You can also access the upper floor from here.

The tiles are the work of the ceramist David de Beas and represent some traditional customs and festivals, and panoramic views of Almonte, El Rocío and Matalascañas. On the ground floor, we have the beacon tower of Matalascañas, the Hermitage of El Rocío and the procession of the Virgin of El Rocío in Almonte. In this tile the Virgin is dressed in a crown, the clothing is inspired by the queens of the Austrian court of the 16th and 17th centuries. On the stairs, you can see the images of the traditional horseback ring race at San Pedro fair and the Virgin in her coming to Almonte. In the transfers between El Rocío and Almonte every seven years, the virgin wears a travel suit inspired by those the ladies of the court used to wear on their trips, with a flower hat to protect their face from the sun. Upstairs you can see the traditional uses of Doñana: *la Saca de las Yeguas* ("The Gathering of the Mares" when the *yegüerizos* -local stockbreeders- drive the wild mare herds from the marshlands to Almonte every June), the work of the coal in charcoal furnaces, the collection of pinecones and also the aviary trees in Doñana (the famous "pajareras", centuries-old trees where wild birds nest).

The staircase is decorated with a selection of pennants with the heraldic shields of the first Christian settlers of Almonte.

6. PLENARY ROOM

The full council meets here once a month.

Here we have a collection of modern paintings by Jose Caballero and the Ecuadorian painter Oswaldo Guayasamin, from the pictorial funds of the town hall.

7. MEETING ROOM

All kinds of meetings are held here, apart from the meetings of the councilors and the Government Board.

Have a look at the wooden coffered ceiling in the Renaissance style, designed and directed by the local artist Don Juan Antonio Acosta Báñez. In the corners, you can see the heraldic shields of the town of Almonte, the city of Huelva, the Junta de Andalucía and the kingdom of Spain. The paintings on the walls are by the Ecuadorian painter Oswaldo Guayasamin.

8. TERRACE

From here you have an excellent view of the Virgen del Rocío Square, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Church and most of the town.

9. CONFERENCE HALL/ NOBLE ROOM

On the second floor, we can find this beautiful room. The ceiling and the iron lattices are the originals. This room has had different uses throughout history. It was an accommodation of the Spanish troops in different wars over the centuries. It has also been part of the old adjacent Dominican convent (and so it is known as the Nun's bay window - Mirador de las monjas) and more recently, archive and office of the town hall.

We hope you enjoyed the visit.