



CHURCHES

THE PARISH CHURCH OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA ASUNCIÓN

The church was founded at the beginning of the 16th century: its design was gothic and mudéjar –combining Christian and Moorish styles– with pointed arches on octagonal pillars, topped by a mudéjar roof. It was remodelled in the 17th century by Jerónimo Sánchez de Rueda, and the decoration of the baroque vault can still be seen. The principal chapel boasts a hemispherical roof with renaissance flourishes. Also from this era is the door onto the *Plaza Santa Ana*, with its plateresque, or heavily ornamented style, attributed to Martín de Bolívar. The wrought ironwork of the main door, which can be seen in the street *Calle Abad Palomino*, dates from 1575, and the belltower from 1541. The altarpiece –the work of an unknown artist– is formed by five levels of fine carvings and paintings, the latter by Pedro de Raxis and Ginés López.

The sacristy of *La Asunción*

The sacristy, a masterpiece of the late baroque period, was created between 1772 and 1784 by Francisco Javier Pedrajas, and has been a National Monument since 1932. The chapel is circumscribed by an octagonal aisle, above which is a large and ornate gallery, culminating in a superb segmented dome. This stands out above all its local architectural rivals because of its beauty and elegance, with its eight large windows showering light over the innumerable mouldings and carvings which decorate this magnificent piece of architecture.

CHURCH OF LA AURORA

This church grew from the 15th century chapel of *San Nicasio*, the patron saint of Priego, which itself was built on the site of a mosque after the region returned to Christian rule. It was completely rebuilt in the mid-18th century by Juan de Dios Santaella: the former chapel was demolished, and a new, larger, church was built in the baroque style. It has a single nave with a “half orange” shaped dome and exuberant baroque decoration spilling over the vaulting and around the windows. The carving of the Virgin of *la Aurora* dates from 1706.

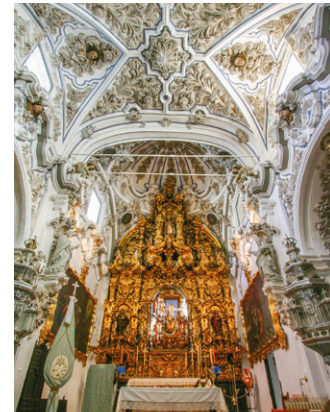
The altarpiece is of particular interest: this is also attributed to Santaella, and is a fine example of his craft. The main doorway is rich in polychrome marble: its two levels are supported first by Corinthian columns, then twin spiral pillars which frame the niche housing a figure of the Virgin.

CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO

The church began as a monastery in the early 16th century, under the auspices of the Marquis of Priego, and dedicated to St. Stephen. The Franciscan order took the project over a short while later, and completed it in the mid- 16th century. The church was rebuilt in the 18th century by Jerónimo Sánchez de Rueda, and later Juan de Dios Santaella; of the original building only the central part remains, and some gothic vaulting with renaissance decoration next to the sacristy. The chapel of *Jesús Nazareno* is outstanding: it was built in 1731, of hexagonal design and decorated with gilded plasterwork. Its central niche houses the fine and greatly revered carving of *Jesús Nazareno* by Pablo de Rojas. The equally striking carving of the *Jesús en la Columna* is the work of Alonso de Mena. The church’s exterior, with its mighty stucco-clad wall dates from the 18th century, and the main doorway is carved from black and white marble; flanked by Corinthian columns.



Sacristy of *La Asunción*



Innere der Kirche *La Aurora*



Innere der Kirche *San Francisco*



Parish church of *La Asunción*

CHURCH OF LAS ANGIUSTIAS

The church was built in 1773, probably by Juan de Dios Santaella, to house the icon of the Virgin of *Las Angustias* which hitherto had been worshipped in another chapel. It has a single nave in two parts, with a cross-vaulted roof supported by arches, and is crowned by a segmented cupola which rests on a decorative cornice. In the main niche, we can see the sculptural ensemble of *Las Angustias*, with the figure of Christ carved by the school of José de Mora. The plaster figures of Saint Joseph and the Virgin, by the Granadan artist Risueño, are particularly charming. From the outside we can appreciate the size of the cupola, and the church's facade in the style of an altarpiece.

CHURCH OF LAS MERCEDES

This was built in 1780, and attributed to Francisco Javier Pedrajas. It is of unusual design, as the traditional cross-shaped nave is cut short at its head, leaving only two sections, topped by cross vaulting, one of which is occupied by the choir. The whole of the central part is dominated by an impressive segmented cupola, and the rococo decorative plasterwork is laid out in a geometric fashion, allowing empty spaces to create a feeling of delicacy and harmony.

CHURCH OF EL CARMEN

The church was built in the 18th century on the site of a former chapel by Remigio del Mármol, with a concept of a simple nave and a segmented cupola. Inside, it is worth noting the main altarpiece, attributed to Juan de Dios Santaella, and the Sacristy, with its rectangular design, Corinthian columns, and its ornate cornice. The decoration leans towards baroque, although there are signs of early neoclassical, which is expressed to the full in the church's magnificent facade.

CHURCH OF SAN PEDRO

This church was built out of the former chapel of *San Pedro* (Saint Peter), and was completed in 1690. It stood beside a monastery, on the site where the town market can be found today. It is designed in the shape of a cross; its hemispherical vaulted roof is lined with windows at its base, and the central part of the nave is topped by "half orange" shaped arches on decorative corner plinths. Here can be seen the first examples of the busy style typical of the baroque plasterwork of Priego. A series of building reforms were carried out in the 18th century, which gave the church the baroque aspect which we see today. This was when carvings and decorations were added to the keystones of the arches, and the chapel was built which houses a beautiful polychrome carving of the Virgin by José de Mora.

THE CHURCH AND HOSPITAL OF SAN JUAN DE DIOS

This hospital and its church were founded in 1637 by Juan de Herrera, and dedicated to Saint Onufrius. In 1696, the church was demolished, and a new one was commissioned by the architect Francisco Hurtado Izquierdo. It was built in two phases – the first at the end of the 17th century, and the second at the beginning of the 18th century. The main body of the church is divided by pillars leading up to a moulded cornice, finally focussing on a "half orange" dome with radial supports, a precursor of the segmented cupolas which came later. The altarpiece is the work of Francisco José Guerrero in 1768. Outside, the facade, which remains unfinished, dates from the end of the 18th century, as does the belltower.

THE CHAPEL OF THE CALVARIO

This small church dominates a natural vantage point over Priego, from where can be seen a panorama of mountains, villages and olive groves which make up the countryside. The church dates from 1700, but it was rebuilt in 1939. It is surrounded by stone crosses and is a place of pilgrimage every Good Friday, where the whole town gathers to receive the blessing of *Jesús Nazareno*.

THE CHAPEL OF BELÉN

The Chapel of *Belén* is an example of popular religious architecture: it has a doorway from the 17th century, and was rebuilt in the 18th century. Inside can be seen a niche with the Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph, and there are a number of interesting paintings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.



Las Mercedes–interior view



Church of El Carmen–facade



San Juan de Dios–interior view



Our Lady of Las Angustias



Chapel of the Virgin, San Pedro