

ROYAL PALACE OF OLITE

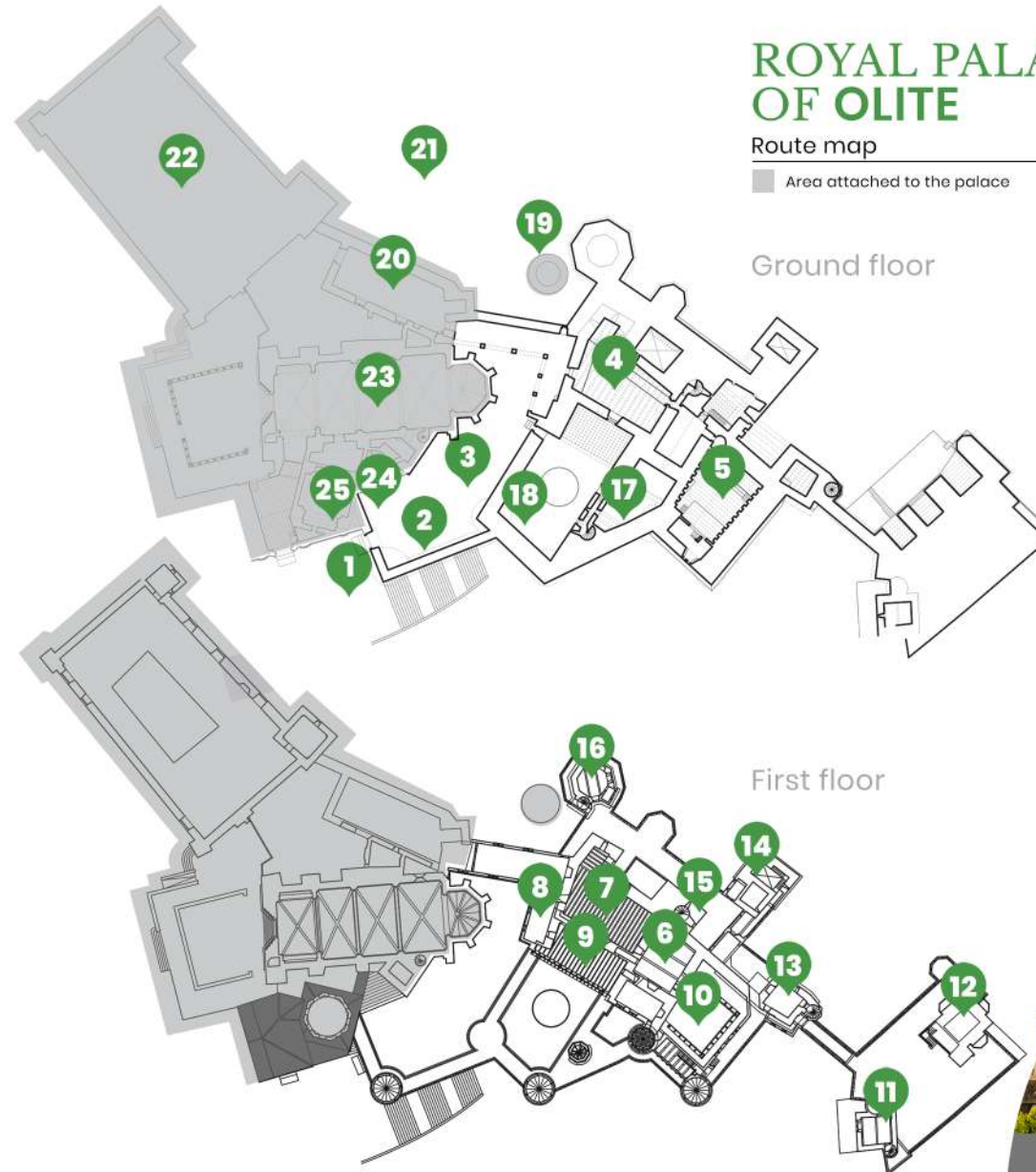
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ROYAL PALACE OF OLITE

Route map

■ Area attached to the palace



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If you would like to get in touch, please send an email to:
info@palaciorealolite.com

Welcome to the Royal Palace of Olite, a symbol of the most splendid and peaceful period in the kingdom of Navarre.

There are three buildings that make up this monumental complex: the **Old Palace**, today a Parador national tourism hotel, the **Chapel of Saint George** which is currently in ruins, and the **New Palace**, the area of the complex that is open to visitors.

The New Palace was built between 1402 and 1424 at the behest of King Carlos III the Noble of Navarre, and his wife, Eleanor of Castile, as the previous palace had become too small for them. Its architecture shows clear influence from France, the king's native country and the origin of the d'Evreux dynasty to which he belonged. Its interior design demonstrates an obvious influence from the Mudejar art of Castile, where the queen came from.

The architectural complex began to deteriorate in 1512 after the conquest of Navarre by the Crown of Castile. It then became the eventual residence of viceroys, governors and noblemen.

During the War of Independence in 1813, the palace, one of the most luxurious in Europe at the time, suffered a devastating fire, which was deliberately started to prevent French troops from using it as a fort. The palace was left in ruins. Its current appearance is a consequence of the reconstruction which began at the beginning of the 20th century.

View our programme of activities at:
www.palaciorealolite.com

Activities for schools:

Explore the history, nature and important events of the palace on a tour which includes a workshop for students of all educational levels. Select your visit and get ready to take a journey through the history of this royal residence, adapted to the needs, content and competency of each educational level.

Other activities:

Visits for families, thematic tours, specialised events...

Experiences:

Gastronomy, concerts, exhibitions...

Organisation of special events:

An unrivalled setting for holding congresses, conferences, presentations, celebrations, gala dinners and other events.



OLD GARDEN

The palace had an irrigation system that ensured the garden could be filled with orange and lemon trees, as well as other interior and exterior gardens with flowers and plants brought from all over the world.

The crack seen in the wall is the mark left by the lead pipes that transported the water.

The courtyard is located next to the Church of Santa María, from where the imposing apse and the start of the bell tower can be seen.



EXCAVATIONS ROOM

During the time of Carlos II, who was Carlos III's father, a tower was built here from which the New Palace would emerge, supported by the town wall, of which a cube-shaped inlet and some arrow slits have been preserved. A pillar, a column and part of a wall are also visible.



ARCHES ROOM

This room was built to support the queen's small garden, located just above it, and this is why its arch bands are arranged so close to each other. The room was gloomy and unsanitary because it had no windows and rainwater leaked in, so its only use was for architectural purposes. It was used as a prison on just one occasion in 1495, when the Count of Lerín, Louis of Beaumont, raided the town, locked up the residents of Olite and demanded a ransom for their release.

SPIRAL STAIRCASE

The spiral staircase allows access to the noble floor of the palace. In the first section you can see the signatures that the stonemasons left carved into its walls.



QUEEN'S CHAMBER

Eleanor spent long periods of time in her homeland, Castile. To persuade her to stay longer in Navarre, the king had this room and the palace furnished down to the minutest detail. The windows were decorated with stained glass. On the floor was brightly coloured glazed ceramic. The plinths were made of carved and varnished wood. On the upper part of the walls were paintings, glazed ceramic and plasterwork, and from there hung tapestries embroidered with gold threads. There were wooden coffered ceilings and paintings in golden hues. Angels and golden shields hung from it, which is why it was originally known as the Chamber of Angels.

In addition to being attractive and colourful, the Queen's Chamber had to be comfortable. To combat the cold, it had a fireplace, shutters, and thick rugs laid on reed mats for insulation.

The chamber was connected to the queen's hanging garden and to the King's Chamber, as well as a room for private use and another for the servants.



KING'S CHAMBER

The King's Chamber, with its large Gothic windows and wide fireplace, is the most important and spacious room in the palace. On its 120 m² of floor space, large public court events were held, such as receptions and large banquets.

It was also called the Chamber of Bows, because there was a large coffered ceiling made of gilt wood and carved with one of the emblems of Carlos III: the triple bow, or eternal bow, alluding to the Holy Trinity and the infinity of God the Creator.



PLASTERWORK CHAMBER

The royal family accessed their chambers through this room. It was the ideal place to impress visitors since it was originally decorated with plasterwork panels featuring borders and painted or gold motifs, made by Mudejar craftsmen. It is the only remaining original decoration in the entire Palace after the fire of 1813.





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KING'S GALLERY

From here, the king could admire the orange garden below him, as well as the Mulberry and Aviary Courtyards. Its Gothic arches, more typical of churches than of a civil building, are divided into two heights and feature plant motifs, such as vines and chestnut leaves, on their capitals. The arches at each end come from the refurbishment in the 20th century.

In the final years of Carlos III, the gallery's windows were covered with stained glass to keep out the cold and wind, and there was a coffered ceiling of gilt wood.

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QUEEN'S GALLERY

Built in 1418, this hanging garden was framed within a two-story cloister, sheltered from the cierzo wind from the north. There were rose bushes dotted all over, brought from Alexandria, and in each corner there was an orange tree. In the centre was a small pond with an octagonal fountain, surmounted by a brass horse and decorated with coloured ceramics. At the end of Carlos III's reign it was enclosed with stained glass windows.

The current cloister, completely restored, has one single height and 22 arches spread over three of the four sides of the garden.

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THE WATCHTOWER

This is the tower that has best preserved its original appearance. It was the highest in the palace until the extension of the Homage Tower in the reconstruction of the 20th century. It is notable for the stone cup that crowns the tower and for the large window with the symbol of the eternal loop or triple loop, which Carlos III adopted as a royal seal, and which he wanted to be seen from the town of Olite.

From here you could see the whole horizon and in particular the town of Ujué, close to the border with the kingdom of Aragon. This allowed any danger to be foreseen and any event to be reported.

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FOUR WINDS TOWER

So called because it is exposed to the four types of winds of the area, known as cierzo (strong, dry and cold from the north), bochorno (muggy and warm from the south), solano (from the east), and negro (the wind coming from Moncayo). It was also known as the Three Windows Tower. From here, the kings and noblemen could watch the festivals, tournaments, jousts, ball games and bullfights that were held on the large esplanade underneath.

In the vault of the tower there is the coat of arms of Navarra-Évreux, the lineage of Carlos III. The arches at the base were added in the 16th century to strengthen the tower.



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TOWER OF THE GATEWAY OF FENERO

It was built on the Gateway of Fenero, one of the four entrances to the town, which was very close to a meadow of feno, or hay or grass. Today it is the only entrance preserved from medieval times. A shield can be seen with the arms of Navarra-Évreux, the lineage of Carlos III.

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CISTERN TOWER

This was the central point of the palace's irrigation system. It is a hollow tower that was used as a cistern, and which was covered by a lead roof.

The water was brought from the Cidaacos river and arrived through varnished clay pipes to a tank located at the foot of the tower. Using a waterwheel, the water was made to rise to the inside of the cistern. From there, using gravity, it was distributed through three lead and brass pipes to water the plants in the gardens and give water to the animals.

On the ground, under a lid, the last remains of the preserved pipes can be seen.

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HOMAGE TOWER

This was the central body of the palace, and here the golden chambers were located, distributed between the noble floor and the upper floor, with the Cloakroom and the Queen's Ladies' Room. The terrace was covered with a roof and gallery.

During the restoration, it was decided that the tower should be made taller to give the palace more grandiosity, and it was built to reach its current height of 40 m. On the second floor there is an exhibition which allows visitors to learn about the reconstruction projects presented in 1924 as well as models, photographs and drawings that show the state of the palace before and after the refurbishment.

At the top of the tower, the flag of the Foral Community of Navarre flies.

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THREE CROWNS TOWER

The tower reveals three octagonal structures that gradually decrease in size, hence the name, Three Crowns Tower. Legend has it that Carlos III had it built as a playhouse for his children and that is why everything inside this tower is much smaller than in the rest of the palace, such as the rooms, fireplaces, stairs and circular passageways.

From there we can see three exterior spaces that cannot be visited: the Ice Well, the ruins of the Chapel of Saint George and the Old Palace.





AVIARY COURTYARD

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Animals were a symbol of power for monarchs. In the Aviary Courtyard, covered with a net, the king's birds lived freely. The marks of the nests and of the pipe that supplied the birds' water are still visible. In the nearby gardens there was also a small zoo with hawks and hunting dogs, and other animals such as lions, buffalo, wild boar, fallow deer, camels, a wolf, and an ostrich.

MULBERRY COURTYARD

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In the past it was known as the Grapefruit Garden for the citrus fruits that were grown there. To avoid the cold winter temperatures in Navarre, a system of awnings was installed to create a greenhouse effect. In the wall and the arches that surround the courtyard, the cracks through which the pipes passed can be identified.

Its current name is due to the mulberry tree that dominates the space, which is over 300 years old. It is a survivor of the devastating fire that in 1813 reduced the palace to ruins and of a lightning bolt that almost struck it down. It is listed as a Natural Monument.

ICE WELL

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This egg-shaped well was built around 1600 and was used until the beginning of the 20th century by the residents of Olite as a fridge, to store food, drinks and some medicines. Its depth of 8 metres allowed it to be used to store ice and snow in winter, and keep them frozen until summer, thanks to the straw and mud that worked as insulators. The current egg-shape is a reconstruction.

CHAPEL OF SAINT GEORGE

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Currently in ruins, it was the kings' private chapel. Muslim and Mudejar craftsmen participated in its construction and decoration. Beneath it, one of the Palace's cellars is preserved.

EXTERIOR GARDENS

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Two gardens stretched out from the palace. The king's garden was on the esplanade that was later taken up by the Convent of San Francisco's orchard. The queen's was to the right of this. Designed as recreational gardens, they had all kinds of fruit trees, exotic plants and medicinal plants, and featured sand paths which crossed the gardens.

OLD PALACE

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Currently a Parador hotel, this building is the original nucleus of the palace. It is Roman in origin and probably dates back to the 1st century AD. It was occupied by the Visigoths in the 7th century and reformed in the 13th century. After the fire in the 19th century, it was looted and only the outer walls and towers remain.

Thank you very much
for your visit!

We invite you to continue learning about the Network of
Tourist Centres in Navarre.



ROMAN CITY
OF ANDELOS



Ten kilometres from Puente de la Reina, in the municipality of Mendigorria, is the Roman city of Andelos. It is located on a high quaternary terrace. This city, that in the past enjoyed part of the prosperity of the Roman Empire, preserves the remains of its streets and houses, its shops, its baths and fountains, to offer a unique day out for visitors. In addition, in the **Archaeological Museum of Andelos** you can learn about their beliefs and traditions, which bring from the distant past the memory and history of a city that has bequeathed us an extraordinary civil engineering work in an excellent state of conservation: the water supply system of the city.

VILLA OF THE
MUSES OF ARELLANO



In the municipality of Arellano, near Estella, is the **Roman Villa**, where the reproduction of the impressive Roman mosaic of "The Muses" is located, the original of which can be visited in the National Archaeological Museum. As well as this, you will be able to see the villa's fumarium, a room in which the wine was artificially aged through heat and smoke, and the cella vinaria or wine cellar, which is remarkable for having preserved all its production components. Fifteen dolia are on display, which were jugs design to hold wine with an average capacity of 700 litres, and the stone altar, which details the combination of activities dedicated to wine production and religious celebrations.

WALLED ENCLOSURE
OF RADA



Twenty kilometres from Olite, towards Tudela, in the Ribera de Navarra, is this important **uninhabited medieval town**. A walk through its streets, through the remains of the houses, will take you back to the Middle Ages, to a time of invasions, wars and other dangers that lurked on the other side of the borders of the Kingdom of Navarre.

More information at: www.palaciorealolite.com

