



# La Encomienda

Municipal Archeological  
Museum of Calasparra



MUSEO  
ARQUEOLOGICO

ENCOMIENDA

Casa de Oficio / 96

## The Building

The building of La Encomienda is located in a mediaeval area of great interest, next to the so-called Plaza de la Constitución. After the XVc. demographic increase, this area holds essential buildings such as: Lonja, Town Hall, Contraste de la Seda, and space for new market facilities.

This building shows the civil architecture of the XVIIIc. in Calasparra. It was a grain store of the Order Of San Juan of Jerusalem and it was built between 1730 and 1731 by the master builder Diego Gutierrez, as it can be seen in the Visit Book of 1736.

The use of brick as a construction material shows the Mudejar influence in the south and southeast of the country and gives the building a very singular aspect. The absence of decoration and balconies accentuates the severity of the elevation giving the building a balanced and utilitarian aspect in contrast with the rich and decorative style of the first decades of the XVIII c. in Spain.

The building is divided into two levels.

In the ground floor the structure of the building is supported by a course of semicircular arches. The first floor presents a timber roof.

La Encomienda was restored in 1986. Due to this the present appearance of the interior is different to its original aspect.





## Pre-history

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The township of Calasparra has been inhabited from the Lower Paleolithic Period.

The main archaeological site is in a place called Los Almadenes, by the river Segura, where evidences of a lithium industry were found. Unfortunately, due to its descontextualization, establishing a chronology becomes a serious problem.

Likewise there is a station of cave paintings (Abrigo del Pozo) with very schematic paintings, which was declared of Cultural Interest Heritage by the ministry according to the Law of Historical Heritage and World Heritage by the Unesco.

## Neolithic

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After the Paleolithic predatory economy disappearance, we find the first signs of evolution of a producing society which is based in agriculture and cattle raising and inhabits permanent small settlements in the open air.

Polished stone handaxes, stone mills for grain and flint sickles are some of the tools which show us the way they worked.

## Eneolithic

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The first metallurgical works date from the III Millenium, during the Calcolithic Period.

In the II Millenium they discover the bronze alloy and the defensive structures start to improve, as in La Presa I and La Presa II settlements. Later on, the Argaric Culture will impose new burial customs (stone and pithoi slabs).

Sites such as El Castillico, Cerro de la Virgen and la Mulata belong to this period.



## Iberian Culture

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(VII-I c. B.C.) In this period iron metallurgy consolidates. Likewise the commercial and cultural exchanges intensify all over the Mediterranean Sea. The fabric commerce must be very important, as it is proved by the numerous loom weights found in archaeological sites. Warriors' social status was remarkable in society. Very important examples of armament are conserved in the Museum.

## Roman Period

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The nearby spot of Gilico, where sites are located in areas such as Cortijo de los Panes o Cortijo de los Baños, is a via which joins Calasparra to Cehegín and eventually leads into the late Roman settlement of Begastri. Many archaeological remains of the Roman Period have been found there as, for instance, a grave full of items of native tradition very well conserved.

## Islamic Period

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The archaeological excavation carried out en Villa Vieja provides insight into the way of life of the rural farmhouses during the Andalusí Period. It is placed by the right side of river Segura, 2 km. away from Calasparra, and occupies an extension of 5.500 m<sup>2</sup>. Villa Vieja was inhabited for a prolonged period of time, since the XI c. until it was abandoned after the Mudejar rebellion was put down between 1264 and 1266.

The Museum holds all the cultural material found in this site, both in its exhibition room and in its collection.



*Field of Villa Vieja*





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