

Cordoba

Cordoba is about two hours by car from Cortijo las Rosas and was founded by the Romans and due to its strategic importance as the highest navigable point of the Guadalquivir River, it became a port city of great importance, used for shipping Spanish olive oil, wine and wheat back to Ancient Rome.

The Romans built the mighty bridge crossing the river, now called "El Puente Romano" which is still in use today. Cordoba's hour of greatest glory was when it became the capital of the Moorish kingdom of El-Andalus, and this was when work began on the Great Mosque, or "Mezquita" which – after several centuries of additions and enlargements – became one of the largest in all of Islam.

After the Christians retook the city in 1236, the new rulers of the city were so awed by its beauty that they left it standing, building their cathedral in the midst of its rows of arches and columns, and creating the extraordinary church-mosque we see today.

As well as the unique mosque-cathedral, Cordoba's treasures include the Alcazar, or Fortress, built by the Christians in 1328; the Calahorra Fort, originally built by the Arabs, which guards the Roman Bridge, on the far side of the river from the Mezquita, and the ancient Jewish Synagogue, now a museum. Cordoba's medieval quarter, once the home of the Jewish community, is called "La Judería" (The Jewry) which is a labyrinth of winding, narrow streets, shady flower-filled courtyards and picturesque squares such as La Plaza del Potro. In early May, homeowners proudly festoon their patios with flowers to compete for the city's "most beautiful courtyard" contest.