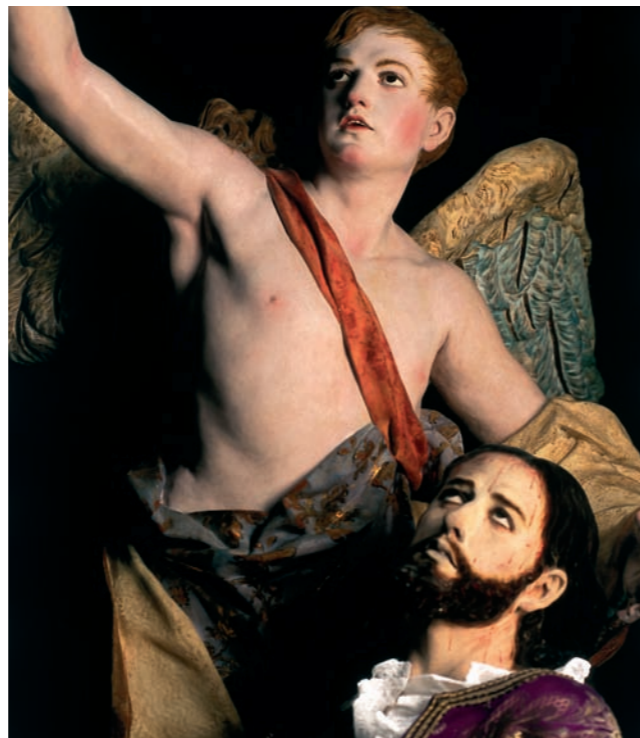




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THE SALZILLO MUSEUM, THE HIGH POINT OF BEAUTIFUL BAROQUE SCULPTURE

Next to the popular Plaza de San Agustín is the Salzillo Museum, located in the temple of Nuestro Padre Jesús, which opened its doors in 1941. It is a building with external signs of the modernist style, but with a façade and temple from the end of the seventeenth century. Inside, it offers the sculptural splendour of the Baroque, with the sculptures of Francisco Salzillo – traditionally known as ‘pasos’ – which form part of Murcia’s religious procession on the morning of Good Friday. These are ‘La Cena’, ‘La Oración del Huerto’, ‘El Prendimiento’, ‘Los Azotes’, ‘La Caída’, ‘La Verónica’, ‘San Juan’, and ‘La Dolorosa’, property of the Brotherhood of Our Father Jesus of Nazareth, and they encapsulate in the highest degree the beauty and artistry of Spanish Baroque sculpture. Along with the brilliant sculptor’s preparatory studies in clay, we can also contemplate the delicacy and uniqueness of more than five hundred small images which make up Salzillo’s depiction of the Nativity.



MURCIA is a city of the purest Baroque grandeur, with abundant testimony to the fact, principally in the fields of architecture and sculpture, and the indelible clues that the passage of time cannot erase. The Cathedral of Santa María, the Episcopal Palace, numerous parish churches, chapels, temples and convents, and the sculptures of a master of Baroque devotional imagery of the standing of Francisco Salzillo, mark its history with the unmistakable signs of what the historians named the Golden Age of Murcia.

Tourist Information Office
 Plaza Cardenal Belluga. Edificio Ayuntamiento.
 30004 Murcia. Spain
 e-mail: informacion.turismo@ayto-murcia.es
 Tel.: 968 358 749 • Fax: 968 358 748

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BAROQUE MURCIA

BAROQUE GRANDEUR OF THE CATHEDRAL FAÇADE

Murcia Cathedral is a temple of great solemnity and a variety of architectural styles, having been begun around the middle of the fourteenth century. Its tower 98 metres high, was started in 1519, and was finished in 1793. But it is the main façade that is the most authentically baroque feature of the Cathedral, considered to be a real international masterpiece. It was begun in 1736, following the design of the engineer Sebastián Ferriñan, although it was Jaime Bort who would take charge of transforming the façade into a colossal, and true altar, in honour of Saint Mary, with the help of the architect Pedro Fernández. Divided into three vertical sections on two horizontal levels, it has three great doors: of Forgiveness, of San Ginés, and of the Bishop. It has many images of the saints connected with the Diocese of Cartagena. The construction of the façade, finished in 1754, cost 1,878,633 reales, seven hundred thousand more than Jaime Bort had calculated.



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3 CONVENT OF THE ANAS

Although having origins in the fifteenth century, the present Convent of the Anas, of the Dominican Order, was built in the eighteenth, following the plans of Brother Antonio de San José and Toribio Martínez de la Vega. It has retablos from the earlier temple and stands out for the plasterwork of its capitals, made in 1738 by José Ganga Ripoll.



4 PARISH CHURCH OF SAN NICOLÁS

Existing as a parish in the thirteenth century, the present church of San Nicolás was begun in 1736, thanks to the donations of the doctor, Diego Mateo Zapata, who also financed the main altar. Work finished in 1743. Of the most refined baroque style, its façade was made by Joseph Pérez, and brings to mind the central section of the Cathedral façade.



5 PARISH CHURCH OF CARMEN

Constructed on the former hermitage of San Benito - the name by which the area was known - the parish church of Carmen, with a façade dominated by its impressive towers, was begun in 1721. Because of financial difficulties, it was not consecrated until 1769 by the bishop Diego de Rojas. The alms of the confessor Juan Palmeros enabled its completion.



6 PARISH CHURCH OF SANTA EULALIA

Set in one of the most typical districts, the parish church of Santa Eulalia is an example of eighteenth century Levantine Baroque style. Pablo Sistori painted the main altarpiece and the retablos of the transept. Work began in 1753, and were concluded the 21st of June, 1766, thanks to a generous donation from bishop Rubín Celis.



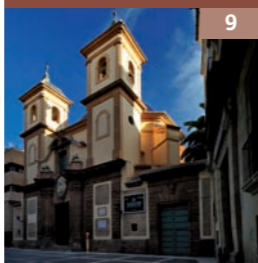
7 PARISH CHURCH OF SAN PEDRO

With a Renaissance style façade tending towards the Baroque, created by Diego de Erqueta, the Parish Church of San Pedro stands next to the popular Plaza de las Flores. It is an example of religious architecture from the 'Golden Age of Murcia'. Its interior, rebuilt since 1732, has just one nave, and side chapels with semi-circular arches.



8 CONVENT OF VERÓNICAS

Of the former convent of Verónicas, there remains the temple of the Saviour, from the eighteenth century, presently in use as an exhibition space. The façade is a splendid example of Murcian Baroque. Next to the temple are the valuable preserved remains of the old Arab walls, and the market known as the Mercado de Verónicas, a beautiful modernist building from the early twentieth century.



9 TEMPLE OF SAN JUAN DE DIOS

The Temple of San Juan de Dios offers a singular elliptical central space, surrounded by six chapels. Planned by the architect Martín Solera, it was built in the middle of the eighteenth century as part of the former hospital, and conserves rich decorations by Pablo Sistori. It currently displays a variety of museum pieces, with religious sculptures by Murcian artists.



10 TEMPLE OF MERCED

The Temple of the Convent of la Merced was built from 1705 on. The Baroque façade, the work of José Balaguer, was begun in 1711. Used as a warehouse and silk factory after the Confiscations of church property by Mendizábal, its beautiful cloister currently belongs to the University of Murcia, and the temple was donated, after the Civil War, to the Franciscans.



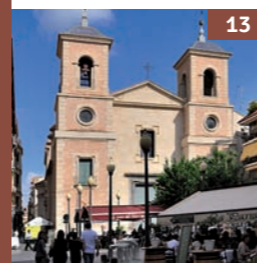
11 CHURCH OF SANTO DOMINGO

The Church of Santo Domingo is one of Murcia's emblematic buildings, thanks to the unique character of its two façades. One looks towards the Plaza de Romea. The other, facing onto the Plaza de Santo Domingo, entirely of brick, is an example of urban representation. Built in a Baroque style between 1722 and 1745, it also features Renaissance elements.



12 PARISH CHURCH OF SAN MIGUEL

The Parish Church of San Miguel is an exquisite example of Murcian Baroque, as can be seen especially in its interior, with a large altarpiece, which provides a setting for Salzillo's sculpture. Its construction began in 1691 and finished in 1712. The tower fell down in 1864 due to leaks from the nearby Aljufia water-channel. In 1879, the repairs were completed.



13 PARISH CHURCH OF ST. J. BAUTISTA

Built between 1750 and 1777, in the Parish Church of Saint John the Baptist, located in a typical city-centre district, we see the meeting of Murcian Baroque with the early signs of Neoclassicism. It has a façade framed by identical twin towers, and is attributed to Ventura Rodríguez. Inside, it boasts Ramón Nereguer's baldachin, with the image of Saint John the Baptist by Antonio Dupar.



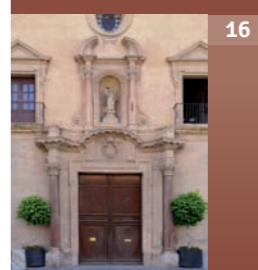
14 CONVENT OF SANTA CLARA

Because it started out as the residence of Arab and Christian kings, the Monastery of Santa Clara la Real contains within its walls a wealth of archaeology, and attractive works for the Baroque period, like its temple, in which are preserved retablos with sculptures by Salzillo. Of note here also is the delicate decoration of the transept, in a Baroque-Rococo style.



15 CONVENT OF THE AGUSTINAS

The image of Saint Augustine, which occupies the central retablo of the temple of the Agustinas, is one of Salzillo's best sculptures. The building is considered one of the best examples of Murcian Baroque. Building started early in the eighteenth century and ended the 13th of October 1729. Conserved in the interior is a rich heritage of art works.



16 PARISH CHURCH OF S. ANDRÉS

The Church of San Andrés, a place of worship of the Virgen de la Arrixaca, former Patron Saint of Murcia, was begun the 28th of August, 1748. The façade dates from 1762. At the time of the Confiscations of Church property, it became a coal depot, until 1851, when it was acquired by the bishop Mariano Barrio, and re-opened for worship.



17 MONASTERY JERÓNIMOS

The Monastery of the Jerónimos, popularly known as the El Escorial of Murcia, is a project of Fray Antonio de San José, and was blessed the first of February 1738. A structure of imposing size, its temple, fully in Baroque style, is profusely and richly adorned. It is now the seat of the Universidad Católica.



18 HERMITAGE OF PILAR

The Hermitage of Pilar is a small chapel which embodies a great religious tradition. In 1680, the corregidor (regional Governor) Pueyo ordered its construction after a shooting incident where a criminal's bullet hit the medal of the Virgen del Pilar that he was carrying, and he emerged unscathed. According to the foundation stone which is preserved, it was inaugurated on the 27th of December 1684.

