

AYUNTAMIENTO DE BAÑOS DE MONTEMAYOR

(CÁCERES)

Registro de entidades: 01100247 CIF: P-1002500E

C/ Mayor, 78 C.P: 10750

Tfno. 927 48 80 12. Fax. 927 48 80 75

www.banosdemontemayor.es



SITUATION

Baños de Montemayor is located in the north of Extremadura between the boundaries of the provinces of Cáceres and Salamanca, within the geographical area called The Ambroz Valle, along which the former N-630 "Vía de la Plata" runs and goes through the centre of the locality, making access extremely easy from any point of the peninsula.

Baños geography is uneven since it is surrounded by mountains ranging from 850 to 1,200 metres high with plentiful chestnut woods and other local species, its privileged situation, at the heart of the Ambroz Valley, makes it possible for Baños to have a mild climate in summer as well as in winter, enabling the travellers to enjoy their stay in any season of the year.

One of the main characteristics is the abundance of water, finding a lot of springs and fountains both in the inner city and its surroundings.

WHAT TO SEE

THE PARISH TEMPLE OF SANTA MARÍA DE LA ASUNCIÓN (THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY): built between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; externally the most outstanding is its tower built in ashlar, of a square plan which turns into a rhomboidal one from the second section, ornamented with scales and heraldic motifs. There is also a remarkable cornice finishing off the tower. It is made up of four smithy pyramids from which two arches start and cross in the centre. The northern façade is worth watching. It opens in a semi-circular arch, flanked by pilasters on which there is a platform with marble relief of the Marian emblem (a vase with irises) and vases on both sides. A group of medallions dedicated to Saint Peter and Saint Paul finish off the platform along with a relief representing the Assumption of the Virgin. Inside the most remarkable is an altarpiece in baroque classicistic style made by the sculptor Diego de Salcedo in 1642, along with an organ with a baroque box from the eighteenth century. It was declared Historical Artistic Monument in 1982.

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THE TEMPLE OF SANTA CATALINA: built in stonework of granite and ashlar set with lime. The headboard is flat and the bell tower adjoined has a rectangular plan. The southern door is a simple moulding semi-circular arch framed by an alfiz; on both sides the Duke of Béjar coat of arms can be seen. The building dates from the fifteenth century.

Inside it houses an altarpiece of Renaissance design (sixteenth century) where Christ's life episodes and Santa Catalina's martyrdom are depicted. Nowadays it is the Municipal Auditorium, and in it is possible to see a collection of ancient photos called "Miradas de Baños"

ROMAN BATHS AND THE OLD SPA (ROMAN THERMAE): preserved inside the Old Spa, it is a circular plan space, eight metres in diameter covered by a semicircular vault with zenithal lighting. Four niches with oval-shaped baths in granite and a museum with several objects from Roman times linked to the thermae are also preserved. The history of the Spa dates back to the Roman Conquest (first century B.C.) as the archaeological findings and the ruins of the thermae preserved give evidence.

During Muslim occupation and the Middle Ages, the use of the baths is lost as such, although, needless to say, the population keeps on making use of the thermal water that springs from the fountains.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century and through correspondence between the doctors Flores Rengifo and Limón there is proof again of the thermal water of Baños de Montemayor, therefore publishing ordinances about its use in 1628 and D.Juan de Porras y Atienza (the Bishop of Coria) ordered the construction of a building, the designs of which are currently preserved. In the eighteenth century the Bishop Laso became interested in the thermal waters of Baños de Montemayor ordering an extension of the building along with the construction and improvement of bridges and access to the population. The definite boost was given to the Spa in 1817 when its first director is appointed, D.Francisco Martínez, and in 1833 when the Spa becomes property of the inhabitants of the village, who create

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" the Protection Committee of the Institution ", which will promote successive extensions and alterations of considerable importance, the most remarkable being the one done at the end of the nineteenth century by the architect Santiago Madrigal Rodríguez of Modernist style. Finally, in 1995, the building is restored, constructing opposite it another spa considered one of the most advanced and modern of Europe, having nowadays a wide range of therapeutical as well as relax and beauty treatments and with a wide range of hygiene and aesthetics products elaborated with the thermal waters themselves.