



1. THE CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY CHRIST OF AGONY

TOURIST ROUTE THROUGH SOUTHERN VILLAGES - EL FORN D'ALCEDO



GENERAL MAP OF THE ROUTE



LOCATION OF THE TOURIST ATTRACTION



HISTORY

In the 19th century, there was already a chapel here dedicated to the Christ of Agony, serving the residents of El Forn d'Alcedo who lived scattered in farmhouses and barracas (traditional Valencian huts) in this agricultural area, as well as in some houses along the extension of Carrera de Malilla (now Calle Guadalquivir) and the Forn d'Alcedo road.

As the chapel became too small for the growing population, the construction of the current church was commissioned in 1914 to architect Javier Goerlich. Built in neo-Gothic style, it is also dedicated to the Holy Christ of Agony. Inaugurated in 1915, the church is declared a Local Heritage Site (**photos 1 and 2**).

The interior of the temple consists of a single nave covered with pointed barrel vault and eight sections, separated by pointed arches on composite pilasters with floral-decorated capitals (**photo 5**).

On the sides, there are neo-Gothic wooden altars with religious paintings in lunettes, the work of a local artist, depicting scenes related to each saint. Above the altar dedicated to Saint Joseph, the painting depicts the death of Saint Joseph with Mary and Jesus. Above the altar of the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation is represented.

The sanctuary is framed by two neo-Gothic pulpits attached to the walls. The main altar houses a niche with an image of the Holy Christ of Agony (**photo 6**). Flanking it are Saint Raymond Nonnatus and Saint Matilda, in honor of Raymond and Matilda, the couple who funded the expenses for the main altarpiece and paintings. Also present are the images of Saint Anthony of Padua and the Sacred Heart.

The church's exterior view is also magnificent, facing a garden and an active agricultural area. Adjacent to the north wall of the church is a "cebera" (onion drying hut), another typical structure of Valencian agriculture, made of wood in this case, used for proper onion storage (**photos 3 and 4**). *Ceberas* were always placed facing the north wind (*tramontana*) and against a building to allow fresh air to circulate through them, as seen here. This cebera follows the "barraca" typology, with a gabled roof similar to that of a traditional Valencian hut.

The church is the epicenter of the patron saint festivities honoring the Christ of Agony, celebrated the last week of July. Popular meals and dinners, performances, parades, masses, "mascletà" (daytime fireworks), "*enramà de la murta*" (decorating with myrtle), processions, and fireworks display constitute its traditional program of events.

Continuing through the Church Square towards the Forn d'Alcedo road, we encounter a modern fountain, situated where a natural spring once supplied water to the population. People used to gather here with pitchers to fetch water, serving as a meeting place for neighbours to socialize.

Along the Forn d'Alcedo road, there is an old bread and pastry oven that gives its name to the village -forn, oven in valencian- (though its original historical location was nearby) (**photo 7**). Originally known in medieval times as Benimassot (as recorded in documents like the *Llibre del Repartiment* in the 13th century), by the mid-18th century, two of the area's most important farmhouses were owned by Francisco de Alcedo y Capetillo, a Biscayan knight of the Order of Charles III. He likely built the oven that would eventually give the settlement its name in the 19th century.

These farmhouses owned by "the Alcedos" were Borreña, next to the chapel that is now the church, and Alqueria Nova, likely located where the "Casa de la Marquesa" stands today at 25 Guadalquivir Street (**photo 8**), formerly owned by the Marquesa de Castillo Arnedo and later bequeathed to a maid who cared for her during her lifetime.

During our tour, we can also enjoy other examples of traditional Valencian architecture.

INFORMACIÓN GENERAL

Address: Pl. Iglesia de El Forn d'Alcedo, 12.

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday, 19 to 20 h

Sundays and holidays, 12 to 13:15 h.

ACCESIBILITY

Parking: There are several PMR (persons with reduced mobility) parking spaces nearby, with the closest ones being on Camino Alabau and Plaza Río Segura.





PHOTOS 1 and 2. The Church of the Holy Christ of Agony in El Forn d'Alcedo



PHOTOS 3 and 4. View of the church from Guadalquivir Street. Onion drying hut (cebera) on its north facade. Landscape of cultivated fields.





PHOTO 5. Inside of the church. <https://valenciaarenaycal.blogspot.com>





PHOTO 6. Image of the Christ of Agony. <https://valenciaarenaycal.blogspot.com>



PHOTO 7. The oven (Forn) that gives its name to the town



PHOTO 8. The Marquesa's House