



OPENING HOURS*

Open seven days a week
(except Christmas Day and New Year's Day).

Summer (16th June-15th September): from 10 to 20 pm.

Winter (1st November-28th February): from 11 am to 17.30 pm.

(Closed Monday except public holidays)

Spring-Autumn

(1st March-15th June and 16th September-31st October): from 10 am to 19 pm.

*Possible extensions, see the website: www.castillodeloarre.es

WARNING!

You are reminded that due to this being a mediaeval building, visiting the castle may pose some problems in the form of narrow paths, steep stairways, etc. You are asked to be sensible: certain places are not accessible to the elderly and children should be accompanied by an adult. Our staff are there to offer any help you may require.



Tel. +34 974 342 161
Fax + 34 974 382 639
www.castillodeloarre.es

THE HISTORY

Loarre Castle, a Cultural Heritage Site and National Monument since 1906, was built in the **11th century**. It is the most outstanding example of peninsular fortifications and the Romanesque building that has survived to date is in superb condition. It represents one of the best examples of military and civil architecture in Europe.



"The most important Romanesque fortress in Alto Aragón and Spain is the castle-abbey of Loarre". Ricardo del Arco

The discovery of Roman and Iberian coins in the vicinity of the castle has led to the belief that the castle was built on top of the ruins of the Roman site of "Calagurris Fibulariensis".

King Sancho III el Mayor de Navarra decided to build the castle in 1020, annexing it to his kingdom and turning it into the bastion of his defence against the Muslim powers. It is not until the reign of Sancho Ramírez, around the year 1071, that fortification work is begun, along with its current configuration, and a religious component is added, with the foundation of the monastery for the Augustinian friars.

Upon the death of Sancho Ramírez, his son Pedro I builds Montearagón, the principal house of the order



of St Augustine, thereby relieving Loarre of its monastic purpose, whereas the subsequent loss of its use as a line of defence would follow on as a result of such monarch advancing in his conquest of the region, with the castle reverting to the Crown of Aragon, which hands it over to lieutenants and officers of senior rank.

From the 12th century onwards Loarre begins to go into decline, albeit with the exception of occasional episodes in the history of the Aragonese Crown when it still intervenes. It ceases to be involved in the 15th century, and this has contributed to its original state being well preserved, turning it into an attractive setting for the cinema.

ITS TREASURES

The castle, an architectural work of art that has survived the passing of the years, is complemented by a large collection of sculptures and paintings, which are now kept in the Church of St Stephen in Loarre, which dates back to the 15th century.



The small chest of St Demetrius.
11th century.
The relics were originally in the crypt of the castle.



Image of the Virgin of the Castle. Romanesque carving.

Image of St Peter.
Carving bearing the name of the castle's Church of St Peter, which still has its original polychromatic scheme.

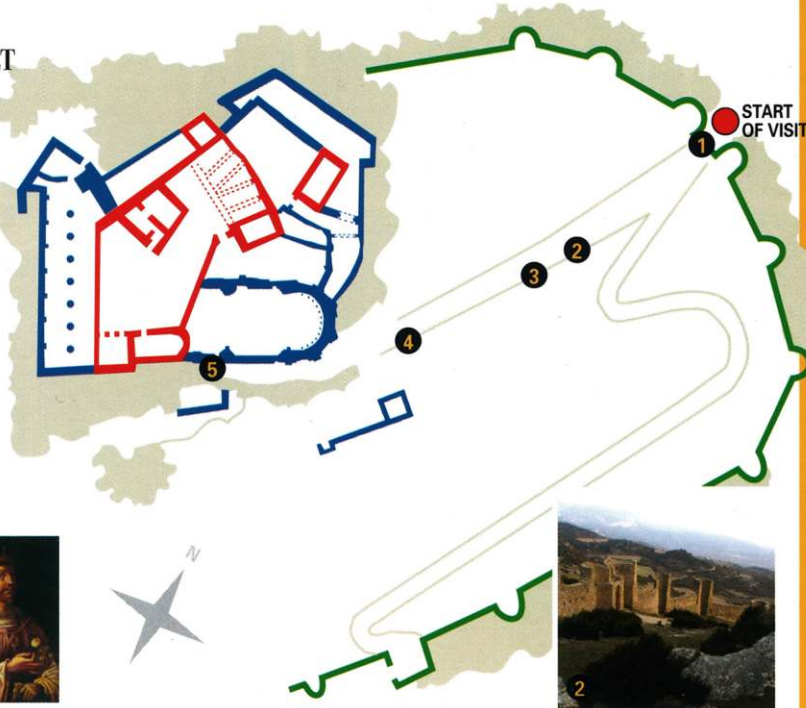


4 HOW IT WAS BUILT

1020-1035. Military fortress. The original castle was built by order of King **Sancho III el Mayor de Navarra**, which consisted of the royal quarters, the Chapel and the Queen's Tower (the old watchtower), the parade ground, the military and servants' quarters and the Keep (the old flanking tower).

1071. Monastery. An extension initiated by King **Sancho Ramirez**, to adapt it to the monastic needs of the Order of St Augustine, with its paradigmatic Church of St Peter.

1287. Walls. This is the date given for the construction of the walled enclosure.



A stroll round the inside of the castle, built 1,070 m above sea level, offers an attractive tour of the turrets and passageways leading up to the Queen's Balcony, from which there is a fantastic view overlooking Hoya de Huesca.

THE VISIT

1 The outer wall. Welcome. Dating back to the 13th century, completely surrounds the 10,000 sq. m site on the southern side, with the remainder of the castle being protected by the rock face on which it is perched. The 172-metre perimeter is studded with towers, which are all circular in shape except for one which is rectangular, with the entrance being located on a bend so as to guard against the entry of potential invaders.

2 The landscape. The castle sits at the entrance to the Pyrenees in the south, we saw the plain of La Hoya de Huesca and Zaragoza in the background and borders north mountains and Jaca.

3 Sancho Garcés III, Pamplona king's, orders in early the 11th of the original building Loarre Castle.

4 Phases of construction. See the silhouettes coloured at the level and placed in the Castle. On your left is the **flanking tower** from the end of the 11th century tower, whose mission was surveillance.

5 Gateway to the castle, a military-cum-religious building of Romanesque architecture.

6 Stairway leading into the castle, passing beneath a barrel vault and decorated with a chequered frieze in the style that is typical of Jaca. First unit on the left, the **guardhouse**, a room that offered shelter to the soldiers guarding the main gate.

7 St Quiteria's Crypt, a small chamber used for worship and burial, in which treasures were kept, with a narrow stairway leading to the Church.

8 Church of St Peter, the Royal Chapel, is of magnificent design. There is a square transept separating the nave and semicircular apse at the top, crowned by a large dome 26 metres above. The light enters through beautiful windows with fine columns. Attention is drawn to the decoration of the apse with its columns supported by pillars with fantastic shapes and vegetables and biblical scenes depicted on their capitals.

9 Halls crossing.

10 Monastery buildings, dating back to the beginning of the 11th century, originally the chambers of the ancient clerics, subsequently becoming the residence of the nobles.

11 Dungeons used as a pantry by the friars, and at a later date by the nobles as a prison.

12 Armoury, the place where weapons were stored when the castle was inhabited by the nobles.

13 Twin-arched windows. Overlooking the area where until the 16th century stood the village of Loarre at the foot of the Castle.

14 Sancho Ramirez, king of Aragon, orders at the end of the 11th century the expansion of the primitive Castle of Loarre, include the monastery.

15 Gateway to the ancient fortress, dating back to the beginning of the 11th century.

16 Parade ground. In the South, can visit the **Church of St Mary** (small chapel belonging to the castle before the monastery was attached), the **Queen's Balcony** and the **water tanks**, capable of collecting up to 80,000 litres of rainwater from the roofs.

17 Parade ground. In the northern zone, highlight the **western buildings**, the **North Tower** (of the original castle, destroyed) and the **kitchens**.

18 The Queen's Tower, with a beautiful set of twin-arched windows facing south to keep watch over and protect the entrance to the original fortress.

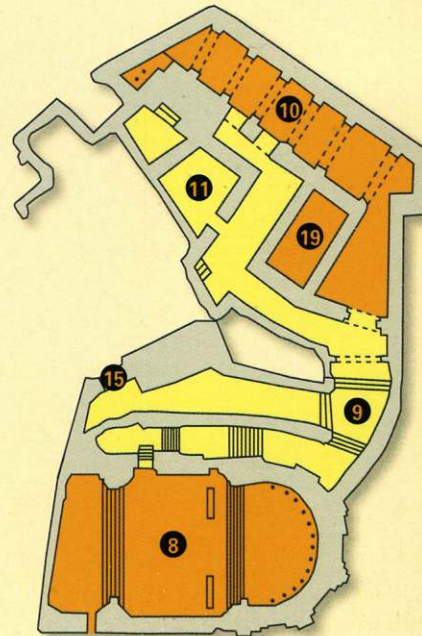
19 The Keep, the castle's tallest tower (22 m) and the most difficult to reach, with five floors; an ideal place to shelter, since the only way from the tower to the castle was via a drawbridge, which could be raised to isolate it in times of siege.

20 End of the visit.

THE CASTLE



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

