

The first records of the Jewish population in Segovia date back to the 13th Century. Initially, the Jews lived all over the city, since there were no laws restricting them to live in a certain part of the town. However, there was always an area of the city where the Jewish population were more concentrated, although this was entirely voluntary.

In the 13th and 14th Century, Segovia housed a significant Jewish population whose presence did not cause tensions or social or religious conflicts. A peaceful co-habitation was enjoyed and, in fact, the Jews in Segovia did not suffer the persecution they underwent in many other cities in 1391. The Jewish community of Segovia was comprised of both well-to-do families and those of more humble means. A minority worked principally in commerce and finance with the rest in artisan trades; they were never known to have worked on the land or raised cattle.

At the start of the 15th Century, the situation took a radical turn. The Jews of Segovia were accused of trying to desecrate a sacred form inside the Sinagoga Mayor [Main Synagogue]. While it cannot be verified whether this event really took place, the immediate consequence was the confiscation of the Synagogue. This delicate situation was aggravated by the decision of Juan II's tutors to promulgate the Ayllón laws, forcing the Jews to live in a specific part of the city, which could be considered the first Jewish Quarter in the modern-day Plaza de la Merced [La Merced Square].

Despite this unfavourable situation, the Hebrew population of Segovia recovered remarkably and, little by little, began to settle outside the limits which had been imposed.

During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, the situation changed once again. After they held court in Toledo in 1480, the Monarchs decided to proceed with the definitive segregation of the Jewish population throughout all their kingdoms. In the case of Segovia, this second Jewish Quarter was enclosed by eight gates plus two others within the City Wall, which were used for the same purpose (Puerta de San Andrés y Puerta del Sol [San Andrés Gate and Gate of the Sun]). After the expulsion decree in 1492, dictated by the Catholic Monarchs, the Jewish Quarter became known as Barrio Nuevo [New District].

The layout of the Jewish Quarter in Segovia remains practically intact. In recent years, from 2005 to 2009, owing to the ARCH project ("Área de Rehabilitación del Casco Histórico" [Restoration Area of the Historic Quarter]), a complete restoration of the Jewish Quarter has been carried out, resulting in the substantial improvement of the historical buildings in this area. A stroll through the Jewish Quarter of Segovia does not fail to impress and, to top it off, there is a broad range of cultural events throughout the year which can be enjoyed in this part of the

city: guided visits, conferences, concerts, cinema, workshops, Sephardic cuisine tastings, book launches...

The Jewish Quarter is situated in the south of the walled city, in the area comprising the Plaza del Corpus Christi [Corpus Christi Square] and the Canonjías [Canonry]. The main thoroughfare is the old Calle Mayor [Main Street], known today as Judería Vieja [Old Jewish Quarter]. In 1492, after the expulsion, the Jewish Quarter became known as Barrionuevo [New District]. The significance of the Hebrew quarter can be deduced simply from the fact that it housed five synagogues, as well as several Rabbinic schools and some Hebrew butcher's shops.