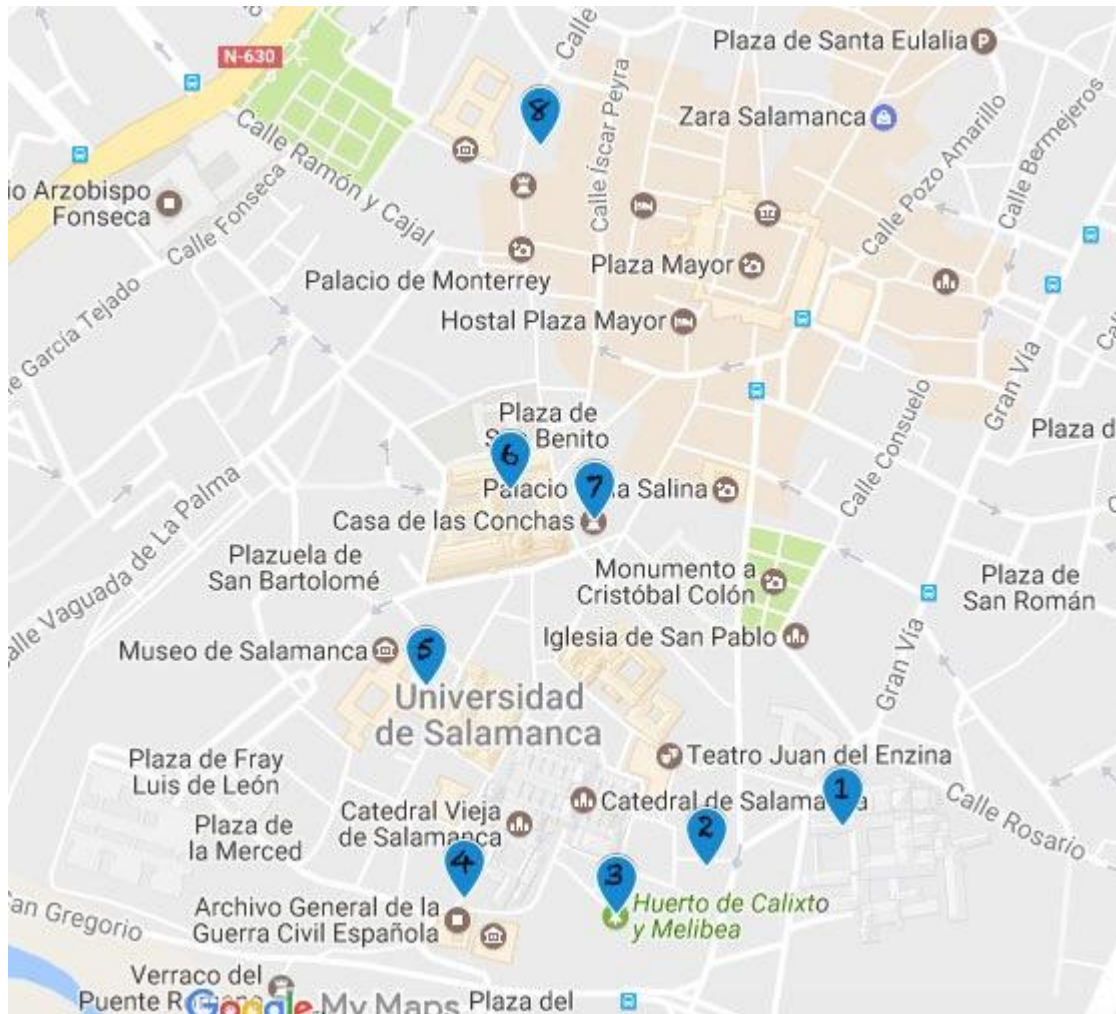


## Tales inside the history of Salamanca



1. The Convent of San Esteban – A tale of Christopher Columbus and brother Francisco de Vitoria
2. The Cave of Salamanca – A tale of witchcraft
3. The Garden of Calisto and Melibeia – A tale of love
4. Tentenecio Street – A tale of bravery or a miracle
5. Patio de escuelas – The tale of the frog and the ‘famous’ professors along the time
6. The Catholic University Pontificia – A tale of a beautiful building
7. The Shell House – A tale of a hidden treasure
8. The House of the Dead – A tale of love and revenge

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WALK:

### *Tales inside the history of Salamanca*

Welcome to the walk of this morning.

In this walk you will hear some TALES. What is the meaning of *tale*? Another word for tale is story or narrative and if you look it up in a dictionary it says: *a narrative that relates the details of some real or imaginary event, incident, or case; story*. Salamanca is a city full of tales. Stories that happened, but perhaps after years the tale is told in a different way or some facts have changed. Hopefully, after this walk you will all feel that you know a little bit more about some interesting places in this city.

Now, about the activities that take place during this walk:

First of all, I am handing out different WORDS all grouped in a colour. When we stop to hear at an interesting sight during our walk, I will tell you the colour of the tale. The children that have a word on a piece of paper with that colour, need to tell us the word and I will explain what it means to the story that I will tell.

Secondly, I will give you all a piece of paper with 8 numbers on it and a pencil. With every tale I tell, I will give you a LETTER. When we arrive to the end of the walk, you need to form a word with the letters given.

Now, let's begin our walk.

## **1. THE CONVENT OF SAN ESTEBAN:**

### *The tale of Christopher Columbus and Brother Francisco de Vitoria*

The actual building as we see it today started its construction in 1524 and the building works finished in 1610. That is nearly 100 years of building work.

The importance of this convent which belongs to the ORDEN OF THE DOMINICOS, we can find in its dedication to knowledge and education. It has been since the beginning a centre of education and the teaching of Theology (studies of God and the bible) at the University of Salamanca.

One of the most important things we can tell about this convent is the visit of Christopher Columbus, in the winter of 1486. He stayed in the convent (when it was still smaller than what it is now because it was not finished yet!) and he spoke to important and intelligent people who studied geography. Columbus wanted to speak and convince geographers of his voyage to sail to the west in order to reach Asia.

One of the people he spoke to was brother (fray) DIEGO DE DEZA. He was an important prior in the order of the Dominicans who taught Theology at the University of Salamanca. More importantly, he was the private teacher of Prince Juan, son of the Catholic Kings. He believed in Columbus and his voyage, and spoke to the kings about him. Thanks to this man Columbus finally got the money from the Catholic Kings to travel and like this he discovered what we now know is America. Columbus travelled 4 times to this new continent. (It was with the help from this convent that the discovery of America was made and that makes it so interesting)

In this convent there is a room called Salla de Colon (The room of Columbus). This is the room where Christopher Columbus explained his ideas about sailing west (which was not the normal route to Asia)

Let me tell you all an interesting fact about this room. The floor of this room has pictures on it, we call them mosaics. They are shapes like flowers and so on. These pictures are not laid with stones but with parts of

cow bones. You stand of bones in this room. This room has recently been cleaned and restored recently.

Another important religious figure in the Dominico order was brother FRANCISCO DE VITORIA. His statue is just in front of the Convent of San Esteban. He was born in 1483 in Burgos. He was one of the founders of the *School of Salamanca*, a school of thought in different fields like Theology, Economy and law. The main idea was the development of the Human Rights, the idea that all people have the same rights no matter where you were born or what colour you are. His ideas are still very much alive in International law. He was a very popular professor at the university. When he could not walk anymore, when he was very old, his students would carry him into the University to teach. There is a school named after him in the centre of Salamanca.



## 2. THE CAVE OF SALAMANCA:

### *A tale of witchcraft*

Can anyone tell me the name of the school of Harry Potter?

That is right: Hogwarts, a school where witches and wizards learn to do magic. Well, interestingly enough, the city of Salamanca also has a connection with witchcraft. The most famous tale took place in this cave. Imagine that on top of the place where we are standing now, there was a church. This church was called San Cipriano or San Cebrián. This room used to be the sacristy, which is the room where the clothes of the priest and other religious people were hung. The legend or tale is about 7 students who received lessons in magic by the devil himself for 7 years. To pay for these lessons, one of the students had to give his soul (life) to the devil. The student that was chosen was called *SIR ENRIQUE OF ARAGON, MARQUIS* of Villena. But he was clever and he used the magic he had learned from the devil to escape. He hid in a clay pot during the night and ran away in the morning when the doors of the church opened. The devil tried to catch him but could only catch his shadow. The tale continues to say that the *MARQUIS* of Villena, who escaped, still moves around the streets of Salamanca but without his shadow.

The tale of the *CAVE of SALAMANCA* is famous. It was mentioned in literature of Miguel Cervantes called "La Cueva de Salamanca" and even in a poem of Sir Walter Scott "The Ride of Melorse".

### 3. THE GARDEN OF CALISTO AND MELIBEA

#### *A tale of love*

Here we stand in the Garden of Calisto and Melibea. Does anyone know the book that was written in Spanish with these characters in it? The book is called "The Celestine" (or La Celestina). It is book was published in 1499 and written by FERNANDO DE ROJAS. This story has a little bit in common with Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare in around 1591 – so after the story of Calisto and Melibea. Can anyone tell me what happens in Romeo and Juliet?

Well, in that story there were 2 young people who belonged to 2 families that did not like each other. In other words, they were rivals. Romeo could not go out with Juliet but still they wanted to see one another. The end is tragic and both Romeo and Juliet die.

In the story of this garden, Calisto falls in love with Melibea who he meets in a garden for the first time. A garden like the one we are standing in. Melibea is not interested in Calisto, so with the help of a woman called Celestina. To get this woman's help, Calisto has to pay a lot of money. After the third meeting at night with Melibea, Calisto is tired and when he goes home he falls off a ladder while climbing down a wall. He gets killed. Melibea, who is now very much in love with Calisto tells the whole story to her father and then she jumps from the top of her house and dies too, like in the story with Romeo and Juliet.

Why is this park named after these 2 people in the story? Well, Fernando de Rojas studied in the University of Salamanca. It was written around the same time as when Columbus discovered America.

So, now we know the story of Calisto and Melibea which took place in a garden like this. I think it could be fun to read out some quotes, but in English, so I took them from Romeo and Juliet, but they are very suitable to the story by Fernando de Rojas. I have 4 quotes; let's see if I can have some volunteers to read them out loud:

*“What's in a name? That which we call a **rose**  
by any other name would smell as sweet.”*  
— **William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet**

*“Don't waste your love on somebody, who doesn't value it.”*  
— **William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet**

*“Go wisely and slowly. Those who rush **stumble and fall.**”*  
— **William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet**

*“So with a kiss I die”*  
— **William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet**



#### 4. TENTENECIO STREET. SAINT JOHN DE SAHAGÚN

*A tale of bravery or a miracle*

Saint John de Sahagún (1419 – 1479) was a Spanish friar and priest. He was a leading preacher regarding social behaviour of his day. He has been declared a saint by the Catholic Church. He is, together with Virgen of the Vega, patron and protector of the city of Salamanca. He got this honour because of everything he did for the city in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One of the greatest things he did was to end a fight between 2 noble families that did not like each other.

However, in Salamanca we remember 2 miracles by this Saint more than anything:

One was in *POZO AMARILLO*. Can someone tell me about this miracle? A little boy had fallen in a well with the danger of drowning because he couldn't get to the top or surface. Saint John de Sahagún took the belt of his habit (the dress that religious brothers wear) and he lowered it into the well, so the little boy could hold onto it. He made the water rise and like this the boy was able to get out of the well. We still have the street Pozo Amarillo to remember this miracle.

The second miracle was in this street, where we are standing now. Does anyone know the miracle I am talking about? The tale tells us about a BULL that had escaped and was terrorizing the streets of Salamanca. A bull that runs free is and can be very dangerous. Here, where we are standing now, a little boy was playing when the bull appeared. Saint John was there too and saw the boy and the bull. He put his hand in the air and shouted: *STOP (TENTE) FOOL (NECIO)* and the bull stopped and the Saint had saved the little boy. The street is called *TENTENECIO* but in English what would the name be of this street? The "*STOPFOOL*" street?



## 5. PATIO DE ESCUELAS MENORES

*The tale of the frog and 'famous' professors along the time*

Now we are standing in one of the most important squares in the history of the University of Salamanca. The Escuela Menores of the University of Salamanca used to be the place where the studies up to Bachiller were taught. The construction of this building started in 1428. Behind us, in the corner through the arched doors lies the Patio de Escuelas, where in one of the rooms is the famous SKY OF SALAMANCA, a mural painting by Fernando Gallego which shows astronomy and astrology combined.

In front of us we see the door of the University building. This door was finished in 1553. On it we see many different things but one of the most famous icons on it is the FROG. Can you see the frog? Really, the frog has become more and more famous with time and people say that the person in a group who finds the frog first will be very lucky and if you are a student at this University you will have to find the frog so you can pass your exams.



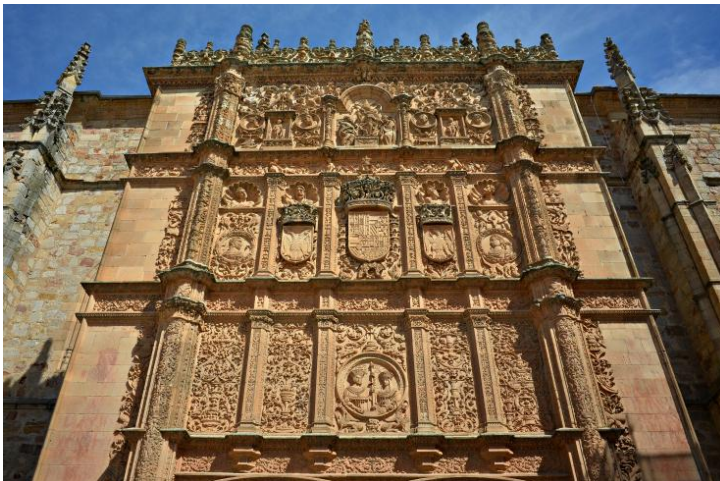
And here we stand next to the statue of FRAY LUIS DE LEON. What is his tale? He was born in Leon in 1527 or 1528. He entered the University of Salamanca at the age of 14 soon after he became a religious brother. He studied Theology and became a very important professor in the University. In this time all the books and studies were in Latin, a language that many people could not read. While at the University, he translated classical and biblical literature from Latin into

Spanish. He first started doing this for his cousin who could not read Latin. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church did not think work of God should be translated and they put him in PRISON for 5 years. When he returned to the University, he started his lesson with the following words: “ So, as I said yesterday.....” to forget about the time he had been in prison. The classroom he used to teach in is still here like it was when he was teaching there.

Another very important person was Miguel UNAMUNO, who was a rector of Salamanca and had his home where now the museum is. He lived much later than Fray Luis de Leon. He wrote many different types of books and poems. He became a Greek professor and ended his professional life as Rector of the University. In the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera he had to live away from Salamanca, because his ideas were not wanted so his life was in danger. He lived on the island of Fuerteventura. His house there is also a museum, like the one here in Salamanca. He died in 1936.

He always had a ‘complaint’ about people searching for the frog on the door. He would say:

*“It’s not the fact that they see the frog, but the fact that they don’t see anything else BUT the frog”.*



## 6. THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY PONTIFICIA

### *A tale of a beautiful building*

Here we stand next to the building also known as the CLERECÍA, now part of the private Catholic University 'Pontificia'. The building was constructed between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. The big towers that we see if we look up were actually designed according to a model they wanted to use in what is now Plaza Mayor, where the clock is and the town hall. But these towers are very heavy and the construction in the Plaza Mayor was not strong enough to hold them there. In 1940 the University 'Pontificia' was created under Pope Pio XII and this building became its main building in Salamanca. What is very interesting to one day with your family is climb up the "Scala Coeli" (150 steps approximately) which is the tower of the Clerecia and offers great views of the city!



## 7. THE SHELL HOUSE

### *A tale of a hidden treasure*

Turning from the Clerecia to The Shell House (Casa de las Conchas), which was built between the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup>. At first it was a little palace, built by a family called Maldonado. There is a tale about the shells that says they are a symbol of love for Juana de Pimentel, the wife of the builder. She has shells in her family weapon. But more fun are the legends and tales about the shells. One tells about the jewels of the family that are hidden under one of the shells. If you want to find the jewels, you have to pay a lot of money. If you choose a shell and do not find the jewels, you will lose your money. However, if you choose the correct shell, you will get your money back and the jewels too.



## 8. THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

*A tale of love and revenge*

One of the most mysterious buildings in the centre of Salamanca is no doubt the *House of the Dead*, where we are standing now. Look up at the front of the building and see if you can see the skulls under the windows. Many people say that the building got its name from those skulls or simply from the street that was known as Street of the Dead. But the legends and tales that surround this building are more black than that.

They say that dead bodies of 2 people (a man and a woman) from rival families were found here when their romance came to a bitter end in this house, similar to the story of Calisto and Melibea or Romeo and Juliet.

However, the best known tale or legend is that of don Diego and Mencía who lived in this place. Don Diego was an arrogant knight from Salamanca. He was a soldier and a poet at the same time. He had courted many ladies and had made quite a few enemies in other men. But destiny saw that Don Diego fell in love with Mencía, a beautiful young woman who had just come out of a convent. She was shy and sweet at the same time. After they got married, it is said that when Don Diego had to go to battle, Mencía invited other men to the house. She had as many as 3 lovers. Don Diego discovered her cheating and he wanted REVENGE on the 3 men and on his wife. So he designed a plan. He invented the story that he was going hunting, and left the house. However, he was waiting for the first lover to arrive, and when this one arrived, he killed him. A few nights later, he did the same with the second lover. Some time went by before lover number 3 came to the house. It was a rainy night and when he knocked on the door, Don Diego pushed him into the street and told him to defend himself. The man died through the sword of Don Diego, but he himself was also badly hurt. He stumbled into the house, where Mencía begged him for forgiveness. Don Diego tried to kill her with his sword but was too weak for that. Instead he took her throat and killed her. The next day

their bodies were found, Don Diego's hands still around the neck of Mencía.

