

## The Alhambra

### A guidebook page

The Alhambra in Granada dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Due to its strategic position overlooking the city, many believe it was first used as a military **fortress**.

However, in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the Alhambra became  
5 a royal residence with the arrival of the first king of the Nasrid dynasty, Muhammad ben Al-Hamar (Muhammad I, 1238-1273). This event marked the beginning of a glorious period for the Alhambra. During this time, the Watch Tower and the Keep were built.

10 Many of the constructions we can still see today were carried out by Yusuf I (1333-1354) and Muhammad V (1353-1391). These include the Patio of the Lions, the Justice Gate, the Baths, the Comares Room and the Hall of the Boat.

Most of the palace buildings open into a central  
15 **courtyard**. The newer buildings are connected to the palace buildings with **passages** and smaller rooms. The decoration of the Alhambra is heavily influenced by Moorish art, but has also changed throughout the years under different **rulers**. The use of calligraphy, images  
20 of vegetation and geometric patterns can be seen throughout the various buildings.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Alhambra was abandoned. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was rediscovered by European travellers and scholars. A process of **repair** and  
25 preservation began to restore the fortress to the condition in which we see it today. The Alhambra is now one of Spain's major tourist attractions.

#### KEY WORDS

**fortress** (n) fortaleza  
**courtyard** (n) patio  
**passages** (n) pasadizos  
**rulers** (n) gobernantes  
**repair** (n) reparación

**1 YOUR WORLD** What do you know about the Alhambra? Share your ideas in pairs.

**2** Read the text. Decide if the sentences are true or false.

- 1 Because of its location, the Alhambra was possibly a fortress.
- 2 Muhammad I was responsible for building most of the parts of the Alhambra that you can see today.
- 3 The style used to decorate the interior of the Alhambra did not vary over the years.
- 4 The Alhambra was renovated in the 1800s.

**3** Find the English for these words in the text.

- 1 figuras geométricas (n)
- 2 expertos, estudiosos (n)
- 3 conservación (n)
- 4 atracciones turísticas (n)

**4 GO ONLINE** Prepare a roleplay between a tourist who wants to visit the Alhambra and someone who works in a tourist office. First, find out this information.

- cost of tickets
- how to buy tickets
- audio guide
- guided tours
- how long the visit lasts
- how to get there

Act out your roleplay for the class.

