



Alhambra

Alhambra or “Red Castle” is one of the most glorious structures from the period of Al-Andalus, otherwise known as Muslim Spain. The fortress was built by the Moorish Nasrid dynasty around the 13th century A.D. and stands perched on top of Al-Sabika hill overlooking the city of Granada. At the base of the hill runs the Darro River which separates the palaces of Alhambra from the residential quarter of Albaicin. Along with the Generalife gardens, Alhambra and Albaicin are part of medieval Granada and represent some of the finest examples of medieval Islamic architecture in Europe.

The Moors were Arabs from northern Africa who first invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711 A.D. They conquered most of Spain and Portugal and ruled the area they named Al-Andalus for 800 years until they were finally pushed out of the region at the end of the 15th century. During their rule, the Moors built some of the most magnificent structures in Spain, a lot of which have successfully withstood the test of time and can still be visited today. One of the best preserved of those structures is the Alhambra fort.

The palace city covers more than 26 acres of land, has 30 towers, and over a mile of defensive walls, all of which can be divided into three parts. The first is the Medina where the court officials resided and worked. The second is the Alcazaba which was a military area designated to the guards and their families. This is the oldest part of the fort, believed to have been built even before the Moors arrived on the peninsula in the 8th century. The third area is the palace complex that contained the ruling family’s private quarters. Besides these three main parts, the fort includes other famous structures such as the Justice Gate, the Baths, the Comares Room, the Hall of the Boat, and the Patio of the Lions.

The construction of this enormous structure began with Sultan Muhammad I in the 13th century and ended with Muhammad XII in 1492 when King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile took back Granada from the Moors and unified Spain. With the change of ownership, Alhambra became the home of the new Christian royal family. Buildings like the Queen’s Dressing Room and the Emperor’s Chambers were added to the complex. The mosque was transformed into a church and part of the original palace was destroyed to accommodate the famous Charles V Palace. The site was also damaged and several towers were destroyed by the French during the Peninsular War.

In spite of all this, Alhambra still stands on Al-Sabika as it did 500 years ago. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most visited sites in Spain attracting hundreds of tourists every day. Tickets are often sold out, especially during the summer months when the Generalife garden and Alhambra’s famous orange trees can be seen in all of their glory, so those keen on visiting are advised to book their tickets in advance. Don’t worry about missing out on any of the sites. The strict tour schedule prevents overcrowding and enables visitors to enjoy all the charms of Alhambra in peace.

Vocab Match

Name: _____

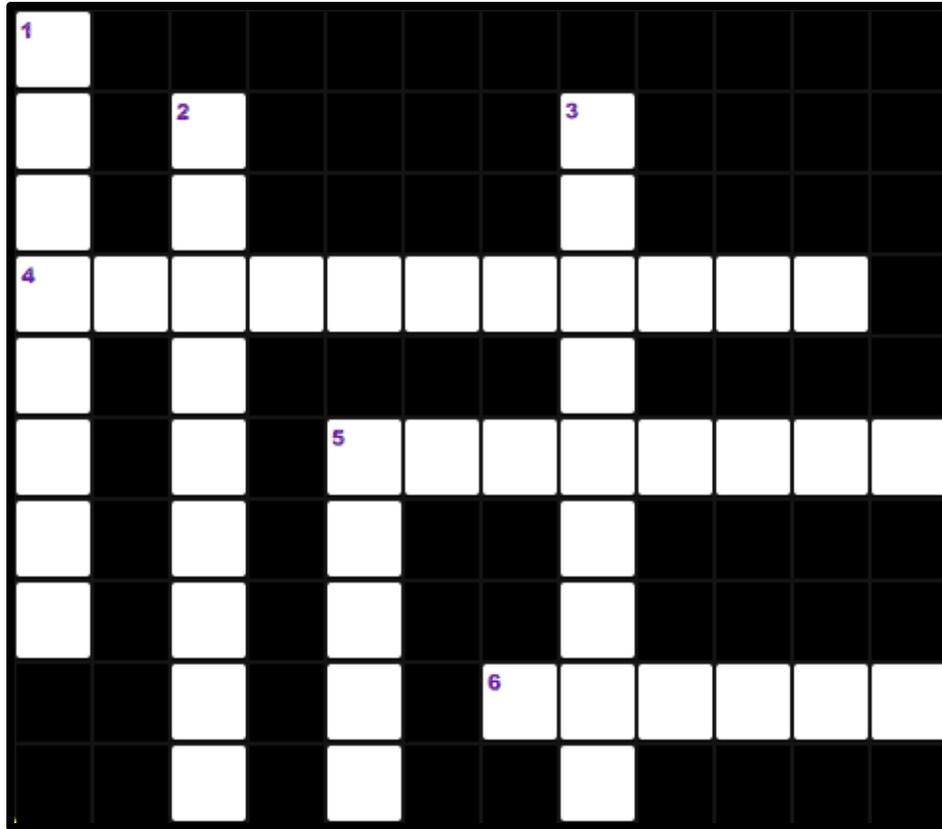
Word	Answer	Definition
1. perch	1. ____	a. verb- attack
2. residential	2. ____	b. verb- to maintain something in its original state; to keep it from being damaged
3. invade	3. ____	c. verb- to be located on high ground
4. withstand	4. ____	d. noun- the action of building something
5. preserve	5. ____	e. verb- to set apart for a specific purpose
6. designate	6. ____	f. verb- be interested in something
7. construction	7. ____	g. verb- to make room for something
8. enormous	8. ____	h. adjective- designed for people to live in
9. accommodate	9. ____	i. adjective- incredibly large
10. keen on	10. ____	j. verb- to resist; to remain undamaged

Discussion Topics

1. Has your country ever been ruled by another country? How has that impacted your country's culture?
2. If you could live in any time period, when would you like to live and why?
3. Have you ever visited a famous historical site?
4. What was your favorite game as a child? Have you ever built a blanket fort?
5. Talk about the best place you ever traveled to.

Name: _____

Alhambra



Hint!

ACROSS

- 4 adjective- designed for people to live in
- 5 verb- to maintain something in its original state; to keep it from being damaged
- 6 verb- attack

DOWN

- 1 adjective- incredibly large
- 2 verb- to set apart for a specific purpose
- 3 verb- to resist; to remain undamaged
- 5 verb- to be located on high ground

Name: _____

Quiz

1) What is the other name for Alhambra?

- a. Scarlet Castle b. Bloody Castle c. Pink Castle d. Red Castle

2) Where is Alhambra?

- a. in Granada b. in Mexico City c. in Madrid d. in Barcelona

3) What is Alhambra?

- a. a mosque b. a garden c. a fortress d. a prison

4) Who built Alhambra?

- a. the Moors b. the Visigoths c. the Franks d. the Spanish

5) How long did the Arabs rule Spain?

- a. 500 years b. 800 years c. 1500 years d. 1492 years

6) How many towers did Alhambra have?

- a. 20 b. 80 c. 15 d. 30

7) When did the construction of Alhambra begin?

- a. in the 13th century b. in the 8th century c. in the 15th century d. in the 9th century

8) When were the Moors defeated?

- a. in 1500 b. in 1088 c. in 1492 d. in 711

9) According to the article, which fruit is Alhambra famous for?

- a. apples b. oranges c. lemons d. pineapples

10) How is overcrowding of tourists managed in Alhambra today?

- a. by closing the site when there are too many people b. by asking people to leave c. by raising the ticket prices d. by the implementation of a strict schedule

Key

Matching	Quiz
1. c	1. d
2. h	2. a
3. a	3. c
4. j	4. a
5. b	5. b
6. e	6. d
7. d	7. a
8. i	8. c
9. g	9. b
10. f	10. d

PROJECT: Students present about their favorite childhood game.

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Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/landmarks/alhambra>,

<https://www.alhambraGranada.org/en/info/historicalintroduction.asp>,

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/spain/articles/the-history-of-the-alhambra-in-1-minute/>