



# VILLANUEVA DE LA CAÑADA

at a glance



Ayuntamiento de  
Villanueva de la Cañada



## PRESENTATION

Villanueva de la Cañada is a young, cosmopolitan town, where people have a great quality of life. It is an ideal municipality to live in, with top-quality services and a great number of educational, cultural and sports equipment. In the last few years, it has become a model in the health field after having promoted healthy lifestyle among its inhabitants. It has become part of the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Network.

Its magnificent natural environment, the architectural design of its municipal buildings and two of the most important free-time activity facilities in the region: the Aquopolis water park and La Dehesa Golf Club, highlight among its tourist attractions. Villanueva de la Cañada is home to the European Space Agency's Astronomy Science Centre, where an important number of foreign scientists work. This publication aims to make the town known to anyone who decides to come and live here or anyone who wants to visit.

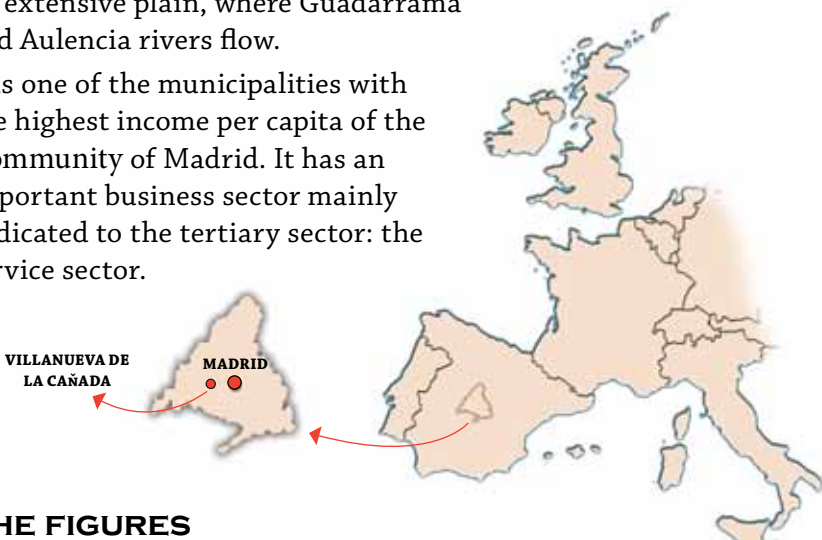


**Welcome to  
Villanueva de la Cañada, a  
place in the heart of Spain**



Villanueva de la Cañada is a municipality located in the north-west of the Comunidad de Madrid with a young population of 20,000 inhabitants. Apart from the town centre, Villafranca del Castillo, La Mocha Chica, La Raya del Palancar and Guadamonte urbanizations are also part of Villanueva de la Cañada. The Guadarrama River's Middle Course Regional Park takes up a third of the municipal district's area, situated over an extensive plain, where Guadarrama and Aulencia rivers flow.

It is one of the municipalities with the highest income per capita of the Community of Madrid. It has an important business sector mainly dedicated to the tertiary sector: the service sector.



## THE FIGURES

**Area:** 34,30 km<sup>2</sup> • **Altitude:** 655 m.

**Distance to Madrid city centre:** 30 kms.

## UNIVERSITY TOWN

People of Villanueva de la Cañada are offered an excellent educational system: public, private and subsidised schools, from nursery to university. The educational network includes six nursery schools, eight schools, which offer pre-school, primary, secondary and baccalaureate education (bilingual and trilingual), and two universities. The establishment of Alfonso X el Sabio University, in 1994, and of Camilo José Cela University, in 2000, has turned Villanueva de la Cañada into a “university campus” with 20,000 students. The majority of them come from other regions of Spain and other countries, which has encouraged an unprecedented intercultural exchange and an important economic development.



Besides, every year, the Town Hall grants scholarships to an important number of young people from the municipality so they can study at Alfonso X el Sabio University, which has its campus on municipal grounds by virtue of an agreement between both institutions. Its aim is to offer the young people who are registered in the municipality the possibility to study their university degree in their own town without any cost for their families.



## HEALTHY TOWN

Promoting a healthy lifestyle among its inhabitants with regular physical activity as well as a balanced diet, is one of the town's main objectives. In order to do so, the Town Hall has provided the town with sports facilities and infrastructures where any sport can be practised. On the other hand, Villanueva de la Cañada is a town at the forefront of the fight against childhood obesity (Thao and Strategy NAOS programmes). It also promotes "active ageing" through the Observatorio de la Salud del Mayor (the Old people's health Observatory) and it takes part in initiatives aimed to prevent cardiovascular illnesses in adults, such as Fifty-Fifty programme lead by the prestigious cardiologist Valentín Fuster.

Villanueva de la Cañada is part of VI Phase of the European Network of Healthy Cities of the World's Health Organisation (WHO). It is also a member of the Red Española de Ciudades Saludables de la Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (Healthy Spanish Cities Network of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Regions), of the Red Municipal de Salud de la Comunidad de Madrid (Health Municipal Network of the Community of Madrid) and of the Red de Observatorios Nutricionales (Nutritional Observatory Network).

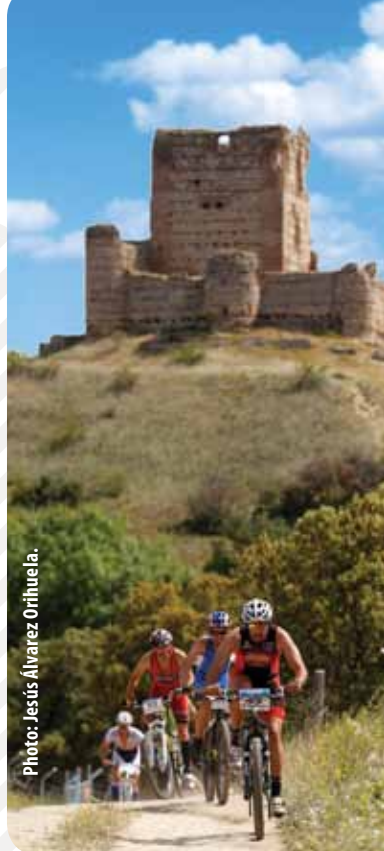


Photo: Jesús Álvarez Orribuela.



A photograph of a person walking away from the camera on a paved path that stretches into the distance. The path is lined with large, leafy trees, creating a canopy effect. The person is wearing a long, orange-brown coat and is using a walking stick. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the path. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

## TOWN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT



The horizontal urban development, with big green areas, and the important natural surroundings are two of its most remarkable features. The Guadarrama River's Middle Course Regional Park stretches over 1,132 hectares of the municipal district. This natural space –legally named Regional Park in 1999 and is protected since 1987 by the Town Hall- holds areas with great ecological significance due to its flora (oak woods, groves and banks) and fauna (imperial eagle, wild cat, black stork, etc.). It also holds a medieval historic enclave: the Aulencia Castle, also known as Villafranca del Castillo Castle. Moreover, there are more

than 500,000 square metres of green areas. Approximately 315,000 hold urban parks -with playgrounds for children, young and old people- and 190,000 hold the biggest urban park in the municipality, El Pinar, planted with *Pinus Pinna* (stone pine). The Villafranca meadow, which is more than two kilometres in length, harbours a great variety of trees and two ponds, and La Baltasara park can be highlighted. The latter park has a small botanical garden with more than fifty kinds of trees, such as ginko biloba and gigantic sequoia. It also has a water lily pond lined by willow trees and bamboos, where a geyser raises.





## UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE

The town was razed after the Spanish Civil War and in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas (Devastated Regions General Management) rebuilt it. The Plaza de España, where Santiago Apóstol church and the Town Hall building are located, and the small neighbouring white houses were rebuilt at that time. All this gives Villanueva de la Cañada a whole air of austerity, typical of the Spanish Castilian steppe.

In the last few decades, the Town Hall has equipped the town

with the facilities which stand out thanks to their architectural design. We can find luminous buildings, with floors which have different geometric shapes, where modern building techniques have been used and in which methods from another time have been recreated with great skill.

Renowned architects and new talents of the Spanish architecture have designed award-winning projects for Villanueva de la Cañada which are greatly valued here and abroad.





Some examples are La Despernada Cultural Centre, which is an architectural work of the prestigious architect Juan Navarro Baldeweg; F. Lázaro Carreter Public Library and the Public Indoor Swimming Pool, architectural works of the Churtichaga & Quadra-

Salcedo architecture studio; the Local Police and Civil Defence Building, designed by Picado-De Blas architecture studio; or the public protection houses located in La Rioja avenue, designed by Aranguren y Gallegos architecture studio.

## TOURISM

Apart from its particular architecture and its natural surroundings, Villanueva de la Cañada has one of the biggest water parks in Europe: Aquópolis. More than 300,000 people visit it every summer. La Dehesa golf club is another attraction in Villanueva de la Cañada. Its course, designed by the champion Manuel Piñero, has 18 holes and par 72. Both leisure and free-time facilities are located in municipal grounds and they are the result of public and private collaborations.

The great food variety in the town has become one of the tourist attractions in the last few years. In Villanueva de la Cañada there are several restaurants where different kinds of cuisine can be found: innovative, creative, traditional, Spanish and

cuisine from different parts of the world. Moreover, the two universities located in the town have gastronomy professorships, in which the Town Hall collaborates, such as Cátedra Ferran Adrià de Cultura Gastronómica y Ciencias de la Alimentación professorship of Camilo José Cela University and Cátedra de la Real Academia de Gastronomía professorship of Alfonso X el Sabio University.



## CULTURE AND SPORTS

La Despernada Cultural Centre and F. Lázaro Carreter Public Library are the centre of the cultural activity of the town. The first one holds shows for people of all ages throughout the year: theatre, exhibitions, dance, concerts... The English, Arts and Music and Dance Municipal Schools have their lessons in this centre.

The library has more than 26,000 volumes in bibliographic and audiovisual format. Anyone can enter free of charge to enjoy culture, literature, education and leisure reading. It has different reading rooms, both for adults and children, and it organizes many reading promotion activities: storytellers, bibliographic exhibitions, etc.





Other centres are El Castillo Civic Centre, which also shows scenic arts performances, and El Molino Civic Centre, where elderly people meet and where the Social Services department has its offices. In the sport field, the town has Santiago Apóstol Sport Centre, where the summer swimming pool, the football pitch, tennis and paddle courts, the indoor sport centre and the indoor swimming pool can be found. The indoor

swimming pool is formed by three bathing areas, one specifically designed for diving, turning it into the first swimming pool of its kind in the Comunidad de Madrid.

Other important sport centres in the town are San Isidro Sport Centre, more than have a dozen outdoor sports complexes, a Skate Park, outdoor fitness circuit, a cycling track with more than twelve kilometers which can be enjoyed by bike or on foot.





## **A WINDOW TOWARDS SPACE**

Villanueva de la Cañada is an example for astronomers around the world. In 1978, the European Space Agency started a Satellite Tracking Station which in 2004, became Planetary and Astronomy Science Centre, called ESAC. Here hundreds of thousands of very important data for the scientific community worldwide are compiled, filed and distributed.

