



The Aqueduct of Segovia

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The only reason I decided to visit Segovia when I was in Spain about two and a half years ago was its 2-millennia-old aqueduct.

Segovia is a small town about 80 km north of Madrid, the capital of Spain. My friends and I went there by bus, a journey that took 1 hour and 15 minutes. The luxurious bus was extremely comfortable and the driver was courteous, punctual and law-abiding.

I actually went to Segovia without realising that it had much more to offer than just the aqueduct. I had not done my homework well. Segovia deserves a 2-day visit, but we had only allocated half a day for it.

The stunning Roman aqueduct is the most photographed sight in Segovia. Constructed entirely of granite blocks without the use of a grain of cement or mortar, the aqueduct is over 800m long and is supported by 166 arches and 120 pillars. At its highest point it towers some 30m above the Plaza del Azoguejo. No one knows exactly when it was built, but it was probably around the end of the first century BC under either Emperor Domitian or Trajan. It no longer functions as an elevated channel carrying water from the Rio Frio to the city. In recent years traffic vibration

and pollution have been threatening to undermine the entire structure.

Guarding the entrance to the city, the Roman aqueduct is the most visible and breathtaking landmark of Segovia. Within the old city walls, a labyrinth of alleys weave among ancient churches, quaint little shops and squares, making a walking tour of the city an extremely pleasant experience.

We were very lucky indeed to be in Segovia just in time to witness a very colourful procession in the Plaza Mayor next to the Cathedral. It was a procession to celebrate the 530th anniversary of Queen Isabella proclamation in 1474. ■

