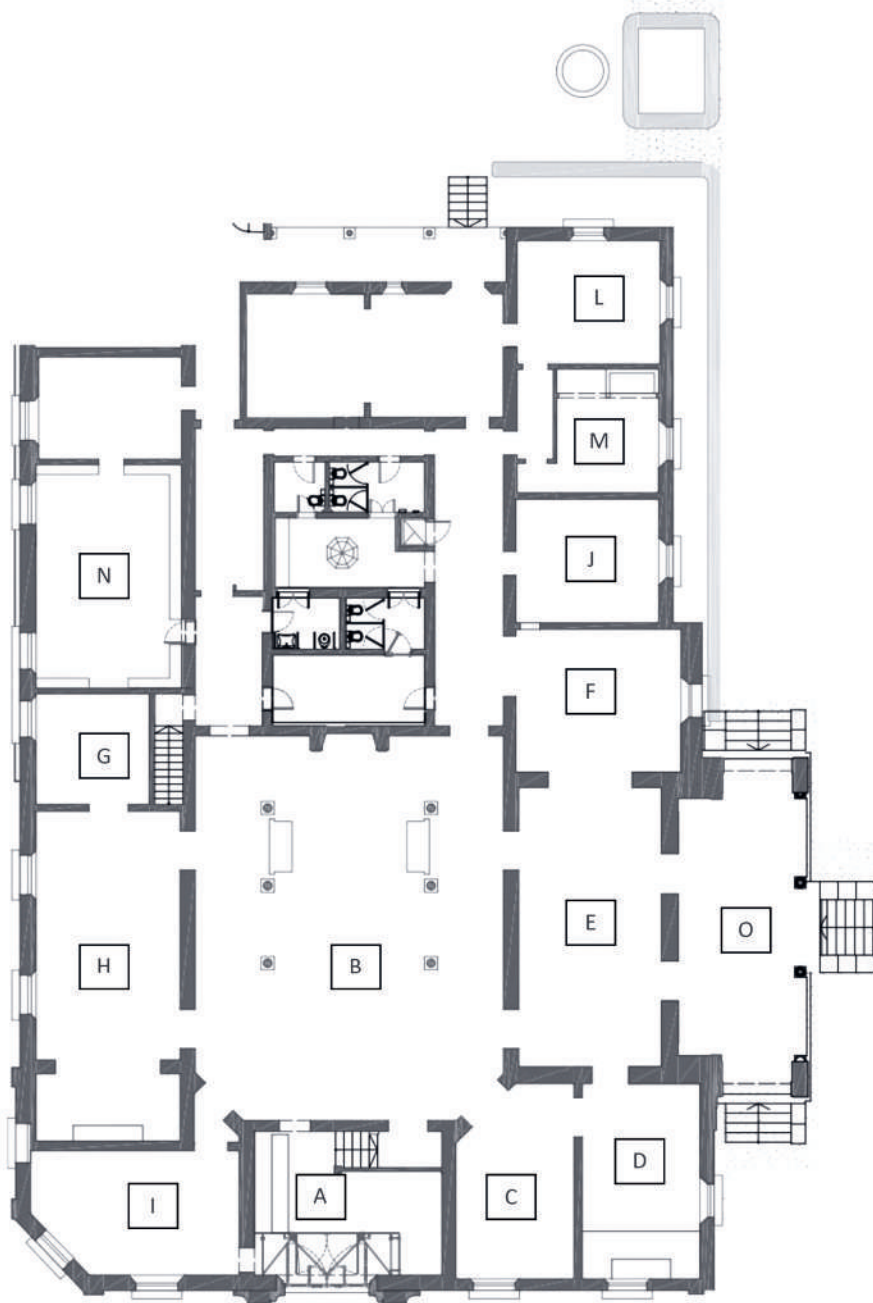




Museum of Spanish Art Enrique Larreta

Guide for tourist



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|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| A | Museum Reception [Juramento St.] | J | Sirio's Room |
| B | Central Patio | K | Josefina's Room |
| C | Blue Room | L | Bedroom |
| D | Oratory | M | Historic Bathroom |
| E | Red Room | N | Library |
| F | Desk | O | Pórtico / Exit to Andalusian Garden |
| G | Childhood of Christ | P | Exit to Patio del Naranjo / Andalusian Garden |
| H | Dining Room | | |
| I | Larreta's Room | | |

Enrique Larreta.

Writer, diplomat and collector



Born in Buenos Aires in 1873, Enrique Larreta concentrated many facets in his person. He was one of the most prominent representatives of literary Modernism in Latin America as a writer. Placed within the category of historical novel, *The Glory of Don Ramiro* [1908] would become the model of the genre in which Larreta, through the patient reconstruction of a distant era, revived events and characters from 16th century Spain. The work marked a milestone in Argentine culture, was translated into dozens of languages and placed its author at the level of the greatest of universal literature. As a diplomat, he served as Plenipotentiary Minister in France between 1910 and 1916. As a collector, his artistic heritage included paintings, sculptures, furniture, weapons, tapestries and ceramics, particularly from the 16th and 17th centuries. Formed in the years following 1910, the beginning of the collection coincided with the moment of its greatest literary splendor and with the ideological and aesthetic debates that arose around the Cultural Nationalism of the Centennial. Among its main features, this movement included a search for national roots and a spirit of vindication towards Spain.



The House Museum. A Spanish Renaissance palace

Enrique Larreta's residence, now a museum was built in 1886 by the architect Ernesto Bunge for his father in-law, Francisco Chas, so they could spend the summer here. In 1892 the country house was bought by Mercedes Castellanos de Anchorena, who later gave it to her daughter Josefina, married to the writer in 1900. Originally, the front of the house had an Italianate style and there was an open patio in the inside with a fountain in its center. In 1916, after a long stay in Europe, the building became the family's permanent residence and Larreta implemented a series of changes. The façade acquired a neocolonial imprint, with simple white walls and red tiles, the patio was roofed and the villa with fruit trees was transformed into a magnificent Andalusian garden. The modifications introduced by the writer on the primitive native mansion turned it into an environment that recreated the spirit of the Spanish Golden Age, a time of cultural splendor, which also coincided with the context of his most famous historical novel. In this scenery, Larreta arranged his art collection made up of works belonging to the Spanish Renaissance and Baroque.

The rooms of the house and the collection

The tour begins in the Central Patio and from there you can access the different rooms: the Blue Room, the Oratory, the Red Room, the Desk, the Dining Room, the Library and what were formerly the private rooms, now used for temporary exhibitions. The collection of Spanish art assembled by the writer was located in these spaces, formed mostly during the years he lived in France. Over the years, the original heritage was increased through acquisitions, donations and works from other museums, adding valuable works that were perfectly integrated with the initial collection.



Octagonal small table or *tahule*
Spain, 16th century
Inlaid wood, mother of pearl
and ivory.

Spain and its cultural diversity

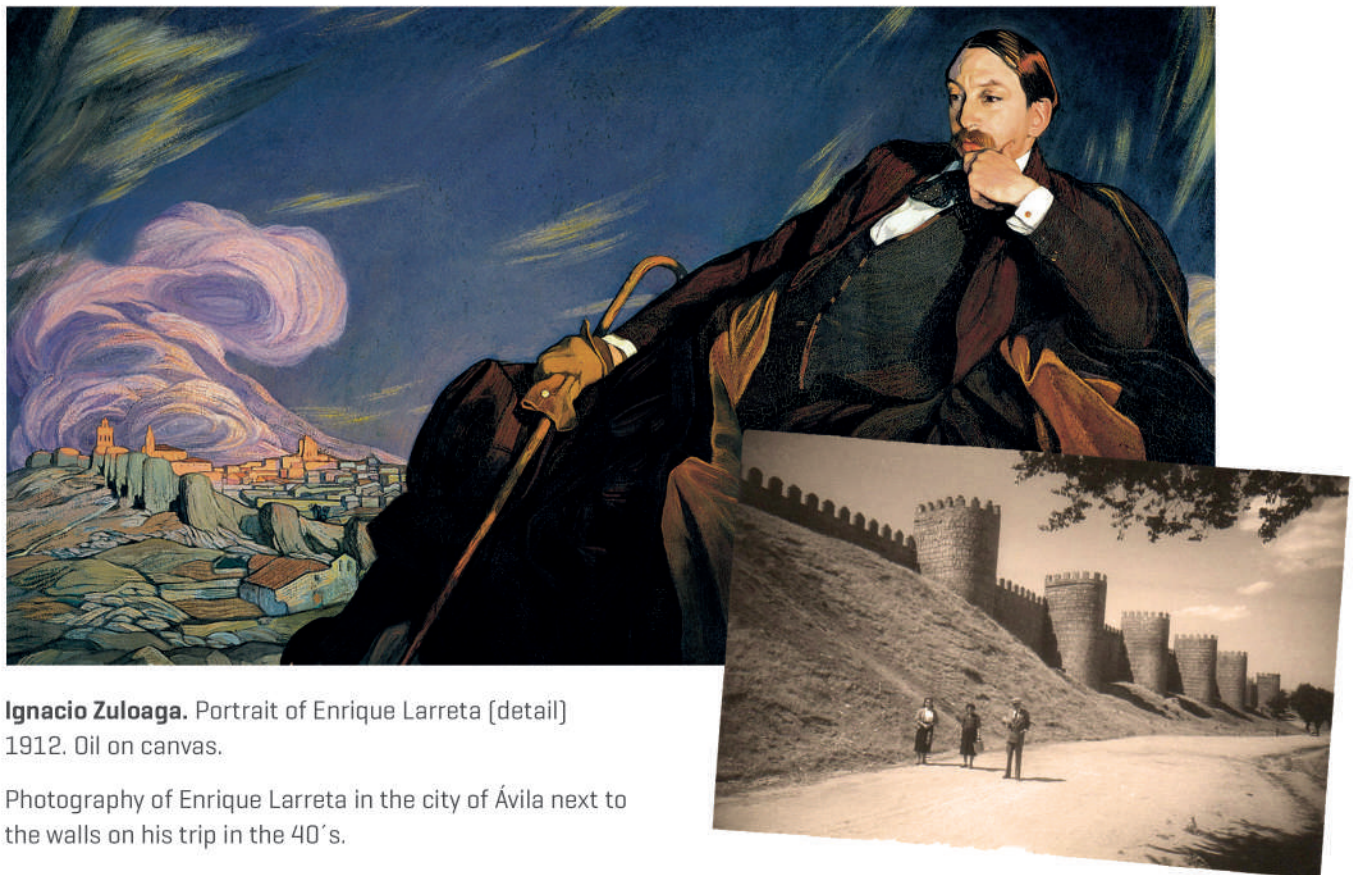
Larreta's intention to recreate an atmosphere of the Spanish Golden Age is mostly reflected in the Central Patio. This was a moment of splendor that emerged from three fundamental artistic contributions: the Muslim, the Flemish and the Italian. In this room, the writer set the space integrating different expressions that accounted for a cultural diversity in which Christians, Muslims and Jews, despite religious struggles, also had periods of relative harmony. The Mudejar imprint, marked by the influence of the Arab people in their eight-century coexistence in Spain, can be seen in the whitewashed walls, the plasterwork friezes or the tiled plinths. Another example of this relationship can be seen in the corner where a set of divans covered in ceramics, oriental rugs, braziers, well rims and small tables with Andalusian-inspired drawings share a space with clearly Castilian works such as the altarpiece panel of the Sacred family.

This diversity also integrates the theme of Latin America and the links that the Peninsula had with the continent, based on works such as the equestrian portrait of the Count of Lemos, Viceroy of Peru carrying a banner with the image of Santa Rosa de Lima.



The Receiving Room

The Blue Room, named for the silk damask that upholsters its walls, was the place that Larreta had designated to receive his visitors. The social life of the writer was very broad, over the years prominent names from the intellectual, artistic and political fields paraded here, not only from our country but also from America and Europe. Here is one of the most significant works in the collection: the Portrait of Enrique Larreta painted by the Spanish artist Ignacio de Zuloaga. In this painting, his figure appears next to the city of Ávila, the main setting of his novel *The Glory of Don Ramiro*. Taken in Paris in 1912, the date of the portrait coincided not only with one of the heydays of the Basque painter but also with that of the Argentine, who enjoyed great prestige in the literary and intellectual environment of the time.



Ignacio Zuloaga. Portrait of Enrique Larreta [detail]
1912. Oil on canvas.

Photography of Enrique Larreta in the city of Ávila next to the walls on his trip in the 40's.

The Oratory, spiritual haven

The oratory was a religious space, common in many residences belonging to the Argentine upper class at the beginning of the 20th century. The room is marked by the presence of one of the most important works in the collection: the Altarpiece in Honor of Saint Anne made in 1503 by the Maestro de Sinovas, a wonderful example of the late Gothic style that flourished in Spain at the time of The Catholic Kings. It comes from the church of *San Nicolás de Sinovas* in the province of Burgos and is one of the most complete altarpieces of medieval art of European origin found in Argentina. The atmosphere is completed with religious paintings and carvings.



Larreta's Writing Room

In the room where Enrique Larreta's desk was located, it is the place where the author of *La Gloria de Don Ramiro* used to carry out a large part of his literary work between 1918 and 1961. One of the most important works in this room is the Reliquary altarpiece with Solomonic columns, made of carved and gilded wood in the 17th century. During his life, Larreta located it behind the desk and its shelves were used to place books and small art objects.



Alberto Lagos, Bust of Enrique Larreta.
Buenos Aires. 1917
Bronze

Religion, art and power.

The educational function of images

The works in the Red Room belong to the Renaissance and Baroque and are a good example of the themes that were most widely disseminated during the 16th and 17th centuries, at which time Spain became a defender of Catholicism against Islam and the Protestant Reformation. From the Council of Trent [1545-1563] the art of the Counter-Reformation elaborated a religious propaganda plan through moving or exhorting images; the Church as the main client, knows its effectiveness in reaching the illiterate population. Another example of the pedagogical nature of the images can be seen in the space where the Altarpiece of the Childhood of Christ is located. Generally placed on the main altar of the church, the purpose of the altarpieces was to recount facts and miracles from the lives of the saints or narrate religious themes.



Unknown Artist, Scenes of the Pasion of Christ | Ecce Homo. Flagellation. Descent
Spain, second half 16th century. Polychrome and gilded wood

Court portraits, historical framework and daily life

The subtitle of Larreta's novel, *The Glory of Don Ramiro. A life in the time of Felipe II* placed the reader in the time of this monarch. Son of Carlos V and Isabel of Portugal, he was the second representative of the Habsburg family in Spain, which he ruled from 1556 until his death in 1598 in the Monastery of El Escorial. Some of the fundamental facts of this stage of Spanish history are reflected in the paintings located above the doors of what was the dining room of the Larreta family. It is a series of paintings that represent the Battles of Alejandro Farnesio against the Protestants in France. Another artistic genre is that of court portraits, represented here by the figures of the Archdukes of Austria, nephews of Felipe II. The furniture and objects that appear in this room with walls lined with silk damask and a checkerboard marble floor recreated the atmosphere of the nobility's gatherings and gave an account of the style chosen by Larreta for the spaces of his daily life: a stage of the Spanish Renaissance in the twentieth century.



The Andalusian garden

The magnificent Andalusian Garden was created by Larreta together with the reforms of his home with the intention of representing in it "a piece of the *Alhambra*". Within the Islamic tradition, the Hispano-Muslim garden symbolically represents paradise on earth. Leafy, irregular and with boxwood hedges that create a green maze, each of its paths allows a new discovery. The Fountain of the Toads, made of marble and covered with tiles, has a spout that generates a soft gurgle so that the water circulates forming small waves. The pleasant noise, the reflections of light and the surrounding vegetation create an intimate atmosphere that leads the viewer to contemplate the landscape with all their senses.

Among the exotic and native species are Magnolias, Medlar, *Ombú*, Wisteria, Cypress, Palm trees, *Palo Borracho*, orchids, roses and the inevitable orange tree that every Spanish garden must have.

