

Planning the visit

Before the visit, Consoli talked about Tomelloso and its history. **ORIGIN: THE TOMELLOSO WELL** (1) Tomelloso was created in 1530 on the uncultivated land which was quite near to Socuéllamos, around an old well used by the shepherds as the place to water their cattles (the Tomilloso well), and next to the rests of an old village. This well, also, was located in an advantageous crossroad:

the confluence of a Conquense Cattle Track (2) branch and the path which went to Alhambra, and near to the Real Path of Carreteros which went from Valencia to Murcia. This is how Tomelloso was born, it was a formation of farmhouses (3) belonging to the neighbours of Socuéllamos, used to cultivate those new lands which soon would join farmhouses from the very near villages. The place where Tomelloso appeared belonged to the Military Order of Santiago and to its Command (4) of Socuéllamos. Tomelloso was under a feudal state, dependent on the most important Military Orders of the Iberian Peninsula, to which Tomelloso would be assigned until the suppression of these institutions in the 19th century. (1) WELL: pozo (2) CATTLE TRACK: cañada (3) FARMHOUSE: quintería (4) COMMAND: encomienda

TOMELLOSO, VILLAGE OF SOCUÉLLAMOS In 1565 the number of those first settlers increased due to new owners and day labourers attracted by the possibility of working. They were able to have their own city council, mayor and govern, but always under the authority of Socuéllamos. Few years later, in 1589, Tomelloso obtained its independence from Socuéllamos by the payment of a certain amount of "maravedís" (old Spanish coin) to the Crown. It became a village with the same rights as the rest of the villages under the Santiago's Order. Socuéllamos complained about that independence because it supposed less incomes, as well as the fact that great part of its municipal area was going to be given to Tomelloso as a village. After a complicated judicial process in the Exchequer Council, Tomelloso lost its independence in 1592, returning to be dependent on Socuéllamos and its laws. Tomelloso was a dependent village until the 18th century, in which the great growth of the population and the offences its inhabitants were put under by their neighbours in Socuéllamos, motivated a new request of exemption from the village, which was granted in 1758. However, differences as the municipal area adjudged to the new villa, as well as the compensatory payment to Socuéllamos, put off this independence until 1769, when the two villages reached an agreement which ended with more than 200 years of dependence on Socuéllamos.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOMELLOSO: THE CEREAL AND THE GRAPEVINE During the long time that passed from the loss of its first independence to its definitive exemption, Tomelloso is going to take advance from the decline of Socuéllamos and Argamasilla de Alba to increase its population. This is due to the serious problems of floods and deaths happened in Socuéllamos during the 17th century, as well as to the departure of important families from Argamasilla de Alba, who had promoted their initial growth. Those situations provoked that a great part of the population left these villages and moved to Tomelloso. Also during the 18th century, Tomelloso is going to suffer a change on its main economic source, which is to join its cereal crops. From the middle of the century, the grapevine is going to be introduced on its culture, little by little, till the last quarter of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th it is going to turn, practically, into a monoculture. One of the last things which caused the enormous expansion of the grapevine in Tomelloso and La Mancha, was the very awful grape vine blight called phylloxera, which affected the French vineyards in the second half of the 19th century. As the French vineyards were supported by the grapevines of La Mancha, it increased the incomes of this part of the country. The need of finding labour hands to cultivate the grapevine made that important human resources increased its population from the end of the 19th century and throughout the first third of the 20th century. Tomelloso reached in 1920 the number of 20,000 inhabitants and it obtained, after a previous request of its city council, the city title in 1927.

THE TAKE OFF OF THE SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRY The enormous wine production, and the terrible communication routes of the town, caused the development of a great number of distilleries which reduced the volume of the wine production and made easier its transport and commercialisation. These distilleries made Tomelloso to become the first world wide wine producer in the first half of the 20th century, the very same position which occupies nowadays. In the 50s, the field crisis and the progressive mechanization reduced the population of the city. The building of the Peñarroya's Marsh in 1959, in the headwaters of the Guadiana's River caused new cultures, impossible to cultivate because of the climate, to become more and more important, as it has happened with the melon. From the end of the 80s, the small and middle industry experienced a notable rise, but Tomelloso was in clear disadvantage with other similar towns in La Mancha when talking about the public services, such as transports, … Finally, with the arrival of the new century, Tomelloso experiences a new increase of its population which exceeds 35.000 inhabitants in few years. The immigration is causing this increase, mainly people from the East of European and Latin American people, who work in agricultural labours, the building industry, and hotel and catering business. Example of a distillery's chimney.