

*Kids & Schools Tools*

## *The Alhambra, Granada, Spain*

The Alhambra is one of the 21 finalist candidates in the campaign to choose the New 7 Wonders of the World. The winners of this unique vote will be announced on July 7, 2007 – 07.07.07 and will become part of history. They will be recognized as monuments that have truly global meaning as part of our common cultural heritage. We can all be proud of the 21 finalists, since each of them is a unique monument that belongs to its particular culture and country in a very special way.

The Alhambra (Red Castle) (in Arabic الحمراء = Al Ĥamrā') is an ancient palace and fortress complex in Granada, in southern Spain (known as *Al-Andalus* when the fortress was constructed), on a hilly terrace on the south-eastern edge of the city. The complex, which covers an area of 13 hectares, is renowned for its stunning frescoes and interior detail. It is one of the best examples of Moorish architecture in the world and among Europe's most-visited tourist attractions.

The history of the Alhambra is connected closely to the geography of Granada. On a rocky hill that is difficult to access, on the banks of the River Darro, protected by mountains and surrounded by woods, among the oldest quarters in the city, the Alhambra rises up like a great, imposing castle. Originally designed as a military area, the Alhambra became the residence of royalty and of the court of Granada in the middle of the 13th century, after the establishment of the Nasrid Moorish kingdom and the construction of the first palace by the founder king Mohammed ibn Yusuf ben Nasr, better known as Alhamar. Throughout the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, the fortress became a citadel with high ramparts or walls and defensive towers, which enclose two main areas: 1) the military area or citadel, called the *alcazaba*, which contain the barracks of the royal guard and is built on an isolated piece of high land, and 2) the *medina* or court city, with the famous Nasrid Palaces and the remains of the houses of noblemen and other citizens who lived there. The Alhambra resembles many medieval Christian strongholds, since it includes a castle, a palace and a residential annex for subordinates. The Charles V Palace (built after the city was taken by the Catholic monarchs in 1492) is also in the *medina*. The complex of monuments also has an independent palace opposite the Alhambra, surrounded by orchards and gardens, which was where the kings relaxed: the *Generalife*.

The majority of the palace buildings are quadrangular, with all the rooms opening on to a central court. Everywhere, the exterior is left plain, in contrast with the inside of the palace, which is full of exquisite details on its marble pillars and arches, its ceilings with repetitive, geometrical ornamental bands, the painted tiles on the walls and the fragile transparency of its stucco decorations. The wind blows through the rooms and sunshine streams in—the whole effect is one of very airy lightness and grace. Blue, red, and a golden yellow, all now a little faded from time and exposure, are the colors used most.

**The Alhambra now represents Dignity & Dialog!**



If you want to find out more about the exciting campaign to name the New 7 Wonders of the World, please go to the New7Wonders website at [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com).

**07.07.07**

**Official Declaration of the New 7 Wonders of the World**

**... be part of the making of history!**

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