Alcántara Bridge

The **Alcántara Bridge** (also known as **Trajan's Bridge at Alcantara**) is a [Roman stone arch bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_bridge) built over the [Tagus River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagus) at [Alcántara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alc%C3%A1ntara" \o "Alcántara), in [Extremadura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremadura), [Spain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain), between 104 and 106 AD by an order of the [Roman emperor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_emperor) [Trajan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trajan) in 98.

## **Construction**

The bridge's construction occurred in the [ancient Roman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Roman) province of [Lusitania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lusitania). In Ancient Rome, the costs of building and repairing bridges, known as *opus pontis* ("bridge work"), were the responsibility of multiple [local municipalities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipium). Their shared costs prove Roman bridges belonged to the region overall, and not to any one town (or two, if on a border). The Alcántara Bridge was built at the expense of 12 local municipalities in Lusitania. The names were added on an inscription on the archway over the central [pier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pier).

## **History**

The Alcántara Bridge has suffered even more damage from war than from the elements over the years. The [Moors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moors) destroyed one of the smallest arches in 1214 although this was rebuilt centuries later, in 1543, with stone taken from the original quarries. The second arch on the northwest side was then later destroyed in 1760 by the [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) to stop the [Portuguese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) advancing and was repaired in 1762 by [Charles III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_III_of_Spain), only to be blown up again in 1809 by [Wellington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Wellesley,_1st_Duke_of_Wellington)'s forces attempting to stop the [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France). Temporary repairs were made in 1819, but much of the bridge was destroyed yet again in 1836 by the [Carlists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlists" \o "Carlists). The bridge was rebuilt in 1860 using [mortared](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mortar_(masonry)) masonry. And following completion of the [José María de Oriol Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alc%C3%A1ntara_Dam), which allowed for the draining of the Tagus riverbed, the main pillars were completely repaired in 1969.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Puente_de_Alc%C3%A1ntara_tomada_desde_la_muralla_de_Alc%C3%A1ntara.JPG)

The bridge originally measured 190 m in length, which is today reduced to 181.7 m. The clear spans of the six arches from the right to the left riverside are 13.6, 23.4, 28.8, 27.4, 21.9 and 13.8 m.

