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Cultura



## SAINT FRANCIS'S CLOISTER

The gothic cloister of San Francisco in Ourense is one of the best preserved franciscan cloisters of the transition between romanesque and gothic styles in Galicia. They are remarkable in their sculpture and architecture. The cloister belonging to a period between 1325 and 1350 is the most ancient piece of the original convent. It is gothic in style on an irregular floor plan with three series of arcades with double columns on a stone base.

The rectangular floor plan of the cloister is defined by paired columns supporting 63 pointed arches with decoration on the spring, capitals and corbels. And 76 paired columns except the last four have quadrangular pillars.

The work of the capitals is beautiful with romanesque reminiscences and remarkable nailheads on the large bead moulding's arches.



The internal face of the arches –intra-dos- presents sculptures of the apostolate, such as Saint James and Saint Peter.

In the sculptural decoration of the capitals there are mixed with vegetal motifs (such as leaves from Galician trees), zoomorphic elements, real and imaginary animals (such dogs, lions and elephants), anthropomorphic forms and scenes from the old testament, hunting and war.

The idea constantly repeated in the cloister is the christians struggle against the sins (lust, pride, greed, envy...) portrayed through the scenes of hunting and fighting.

The work of the decorative diamond tops is very refined.

On the opposite side of the square is an arcade with five arches leading to the chapterhouse reconstructed in the 16th century. The entry is flanked by figures of the Virgin of the Assumption and Saint Michael.

In 1835 the remains of this cloister were turned into barracks until the army finally left in 1987.

The complex was declared a historic artistic monument in 1923.