

# The Muslim West | The Co-existence of Three Cultures

## The three religions

The spread of Islam through the Mediterranean did not mean the creation of a uniform religious society or the expulsion of native inhabitants. Indeed, Christians and Jews were permitted to maintain their religious beliefs on the condition that they paid a levy. Economic activity, especially trade, and cultural exchanges helped to bring different individuals and communities together. Thus followers of the three monotheistic religions, known in the Qur'an the 'people of the book' (ahl al-kitab), coexisted in the towns and villages of the Muslim West promoting mutual material and intellectual enrichment.



**Name:**  
Sidi Brahim Mosque

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 6th century / AD 13th century Ziyaniid

**Details:**  
Tlemcen, Algeria

**Justification:**  
Churches and synagogues can be found alongside the sacred buildings of Islam throughout the Muslim West.

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**Name:**  
Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Rocha

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 2nd–7th / AD 8th–13th centuries Islamic period

**Details:**  
Porches, Lagoa, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Churches and synagogues can be found alongside the sacred buildings of Islam throughout the Muslim West.

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**Name:**  
Synagogue of Santa Maria la Blanca

**Dynasty:**  
First half of the 13th century. Renaissance additions between 1550 and 1556  
Mudéjar

**Details:**  
Toledo, Spain

**Justification:**  
Churches and synagogues can be found alongside the sacred buildings of Islam throughout the Muslim West.

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