Tour Code
ES2

ADVENTURESABROAD

SOUTHERN SPAIN

'Eternal Andalucia'

10 days

Created on: 8 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrive in Madrid

Welcome to Spain. We arrive in Madrid and transfer to our hotel.

Madrid sits at the centre of the peninsula on the Castilian plain, a cosmopolitan capital that is also a business hub, the seat of government and the Spanish Parliament, and the home of the Spanish Royal Family. Tomorrow we meet its art and history in earnest.

Overnight in Madrid.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Madrid & The Prado

Madrid reveals its imperial grandeur on a panoramic tour that ends at the Prado. On the way we pass Plaza Espana and the Cervantes Monument, honouring the author of Don Quixote, whose tale of impossible dreams pursued with noble determination has come to stand for the Spanish spirit.

The Prado opened in 1819 and holds the finest works collected by Spanish royalty, alongside Spanish paintings gathered from many sources over two centuries. Its Italian masterpieces reflect Spain's long ties to the Italian peninsula, but we concentrate on the Spanish masters who define the national artistic identity.

Velazquez's court portraits reveal the complexity of imperial Spain. Goya moves from royal commissions to haunting scenes of war, Ribera works in dramatic chiaroscuro, El Greco elongates his mystical figures and Zurbaran keeps his religious scenes contemplative.

After our guided tour we stroll up Gran Via into the old quarter and the capital's street life. The rest of the day is free for lunch and independent exploration, and our Tour Leader has recommendations for shopping, historic sites and galleries. The nearby Reina Sofia holds important modern art, including Picasso's Guernica, and the Museo Naval documents Spanish maritime history from the Armada onward.

Overnight in Madrid.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Madrid: Toledo Day Trip

Toledo sits on a rocky promontory almost encircled by the Tagus, and the geography explains the history. Romans fortified the rock, Visigothic kings made it their capital, Muslim rulers held it for nearly four centuries and Alfonso VI took it for Castile in 1085. Each era left buildings behind and none was fully erased by the next, so a synagogue, a cathedral and a masterpiece stand within a few streets of one another.

We begin at the Cathedral, started in 1226, a Gothic statement of Castilian ambition in soaring vaults and carved stonework. A short walk away, the Santa Maria la Blanca Synagogue was built by Toledo craftsmen in an Almohad-influenced Moorish style, its horseshoe arches a reminder that Jewish, Muslim and Christian builders drew on a shared repertoire.

The Church of Santo Tome holds El Greco's Burial of the Count of Orgaz, painted in the 1580s for this very church. The artist was born on Crete and trained in Venice and Rome before settling in Toledo, and the canvas carries that range: a sober Spanish funeral below, and above it elongated saints and angels that recall Byzantine icons.

The afternoon is ours after lunch. Toledo's lanes are steep and cobbled, so we take them slowly, with time for the shops, markets and hidden corners of the old town before we return to Madrid.

Overnight in Madrid.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Madrid - Train to Cordoba: City Tour

Spain's rail network carries us south across the Despenaperros Mountains, the dramatic pass between Castile and Andalusia, as the landscape shifts from central plateau to southern valleys. In Cordoba, a UNESCO World Heritage city, Roman, Visigothic, Islamic and Christian layers stand on the same ground.

We begin at the Roman Bridge and the Calahorra Tower, a fortified Islamic-era gatehouse that has guarded the Guadalquivir crossing for centuries. The centrepiece is the Mezquita-Catedral, the Great Mosque of Cordoba, among the oldest surviving buildings of Islamic Al-Andalus.

A Visigothic church stood here first. Then Abd al-Rahman I, an Umayyad prince who fled the overthrow of his dynasty in Damascus in 750, made Cordoba his western capital and began the mosque in the 780s. Its horseshoe arches in alternating red and white stone influenced Islamic architecture around the Mediterranean, and after the Christian conquest a cathedral was built inside it.

We visit the Alcazar built by Alfonso XI, with its mosaics and Roman sarcophagi, then stroll through the Jewish Quarter to its synagogue, one of the few surviving from medieval Iberia.

NOTE: Our meal plan includes breakfast and dinner, but depending on hotel location your Tour Leader may substitute lunch for dinner today, with advance notice.

Overnight in Cordoba.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Cordoba - Granada

We travel from Cordoba to Granada, set in the heart of Andalusia beneath the Sierra Nevada, whose snowcapped peaks make it Spain's most romantically placed city. Under the Nasrid dynasty Granada grew wealthy and refined and became the last Muslim stronghold in Iberia, until Ferdinand and Isabella took it in 1492 and completed the Reconquista. Its cobbled streets and plazas witnessed the end of Al-Andalus, and the city marked the 500th anniversary in 1992.

On arrival we visit the Royal Chapel, where the Tuscan sculptor Domenico Fancelli carved the marble tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella. Neither monarch lived to see the chapel finished, so both were first buried in the Friary of San Francisco within the Alhambra and moved here later, alongside Philip and Juana. They had hoped all their successors would lie here too, but El Escorial became the royal burial place instead.

Mountain backdrop, Moorish heritage and the flamenco traditions of its Roma community give Granada an atmosphere all its own.

Overnight in Granada.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Granada: The Alhambra

The Alhambra is Granada's supreme sight, a mighty fortress that shelters an astonishingly delicate palace begun in the 13th century by the Nasrid sultans of Spain's last Muslim kingdom. This "lace in stone", set among arabesque gardens and fountains, looks across the Old Quarter to Sacromonte, the hill of Roma cave dwellings whose flamenco echoes through Granada's evenings.

In the Court of Lions, the Hall of Ambassadors and the palace's other chambers, geometric patterns, muqarnas ceilings and Arabic calligraphy turn structure into meditation and blur the line between earthly and divine. The Alhambra expresses a Moorish idea of life itself: something glorious, ennobled by learning and enlivened by every earthly pleasure.

The adjoining Generalife Gardens show the Nasrids' skill with water. Channels, fountains and reflecting pools cool the air in Andalusia's summer heat, and these pleasure gardens gave the rulers a paradise on earth.

We finish with a stroll through the Albaicin, the old Moorish quarter, where narrow streets climb past traditional white houses. The rest of the day is free to explore.

Overnight in Granada.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Granada - Reserva Tauro - Ronda: Town Tour

Our route winds through the mountains of Malaga Province to Ronda, perched on a high plateau above gorges cut over millions of years.

On the way we visit Reserva Tauro, a 200 ha/500-acre breeding farm for bulls and horses, for an introduction to the Andalusian traditions that surround bulls. We learn the culture and history behind bullfighting, a controversial practice that remains part of Spanish heritage in certain regions, without attending a bullfight.

In Ronda's old town, Romans, Arabs and Christians each left their mark. Our walking tour includes the Casa Museo Don Bosco, devoted to Saint John Bosco, the 19th-century Italian priest known for his work in the education and welfare of young people.

Ronda's drama lies in its escarpments. The deep El Tajo gorge carries the Rio Guadalevin through the middle of town, and we suggest walking to the Puente Nuevo, the 18th-century bridge that spans the 100 m/328 ft chasm. From it the views run across the Serrania de Ronda mountains.

Overnight in Ronda.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Ronda - Pileta Caves - Olive Oil Tour - Sevilla

We leave Ronda for Sevilla by way of the Pileta Caves, where people painted the walls of these dark chambers over many thousands of years. The paintings run from the Paleolithic into the Neolithic, the oldest some 25,000 years old, in black, ochre and red. Most are abstract lines and patterns, alongside recognizable horses, goats and cattle and a rare giant fish. The chambers are natural, so we move through them slowly.

NOTE: The cave floor is wet stone with no handrails. Please consult your Tour Leader if you have any concern about footing.

We then follow the Route of the White Villages through the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, whitewashed towns with flower pots at every window, mountain views behind them and traces of Islamic and Christian heritage in their streets.

Our stop is an olive oil producer near Zahara de la Sierra. The groves grow on steep slopes that must be tended and harvested by hand, and the area's heavy rainfall helps give an oil that is fruity, sweet and gentle. We learn traditional production methods and taste both the oil and locally made wine, then sit down to a regional lunch of tapas, local cheeses, fruits and sweets. Vegetarians are well accommodated.

NOTE: Today's included lunch replaces dinner.

Overnight in Sevilla.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 9 Sevilla: City Tour

Sevilla, Spain's fourth-largest city, is the cultural heart of Andalusia, its streets lined with restored Moorish architecture, orange trees and

flower-filled patios, and the rhythm of castanets recalling its flamenco heritage.

We begin at the Cathedral, the world's largest Gothic cathedral, with its stained-glass windows, magnificent choir and many chapels. It rose where the city's great mosque once stood, and its bell tower, the Giralda, began as that mosque's Almohad minaret. Time permitting, we climb the Giralda for panoramic views across the city.

Next comes the Alcazar, a UNESCO World Heritage site and among Europe's oldest continuously used royal residences. Almohad, Mudejar and Renaissance builders each added to it, and its halls and gardens show Christian and Islamic artistic traditions joined so closely that the seams are hard to find.

Along the Guadalquivir we see the Maestranza Bullring, a symbol of Sevilla's bullfighting tradition, and the Torre del Oro, a 13th-century watchtower that once guarded the river approaches. For a contemporary note, we admire Eduardo Chillida's Monument to Tolerance, a sculpture of peace and understanding.

Overnight in Sevilla.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Depart

Our journey through Spain ends in Sevilla, where a Gothic cathedral and a former minaret share the same skyline. Depending on flight times, there may be a last chance to wander the orange-scented streets and flower-filled patios, or to look up at the Giralda once more, before we say farewell to our travelling companions and our Tour Leader.

Buen viaje! (Have a good journey!)

Depart.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast