

EXPLORE!



Highlights of Andalucia

8 days

Spain - Trip code QAH

Highlights of Andalucia

Andalucia is blessed with a wealth of culture, history, mountain scenery and sunshine. On this trip we visit the highlight cities of Granada, Seville and Cordoba along with a couple of nights off the beaten track in a typical Andalusian village. We include visits to the stunning Alhambra Palace and Cordoba Mezquita, two jewels of Moorish architecture from the golden era of Al-Andalus. You have the chance to stretch your legs on two walks through rolling, verdant landscape (graded easy to moderate).

Trip highlights

- ★ **Cordoba** - Visit the splendid Islamic monument of the Mezquita
- ★ **Castano del Robledo** - Stay in a traditional village house in the Sierra de Arcena
- ★ **Sierra de Arcena** - Walks over wooded hillsides and through rural whitewashed villages
- ★ **Seville** - Beautiful Andalusian city, home of the stunning UNESCO World Heritage palace of the Alcazar

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Full on**

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip at Malaga Airport; public transport to Granada

Arriving at Malaga Airport today we may take a direct bus from the airport terminal or we may travel the short distance into the city by train to take a bus from the main bus station. Either way the 128 kilometre drive to Granada should take us around two hours, getting us into the famous Andalucian city later this afternoon. Located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Granada is a historical gem that is blessed with a stunning fusion of Spanish and Muslim art and architecture including the Alhambra Palace, the Generalife and the city's grand 16th century cathedral. For the next two nights we will be staying in a small friendly hotel in the quieter El Realejo neighbourhood of Granada. Our hotel is in a characteristic Granada house with antique furnishings, a small garden and roof terrace. Most bedrooms are en suite although some do have shared facilities. Rooms are cosy, simply decorated and don't have a television, but there's so much to see in the city that you're unlikely to miss having one. It's around 20 minutes' walk from the Alhambra and 10 minutes' walk from the city centre or there's a bus stop just a few meters away. A short stroll from the hotel is Plaza Campo del Principe with a number of good restaurants and bars where you can sample the local tapas and wine.



Accommodation: Hostal Suecia (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Visit the Alhambra and afternoon orientation walk of Granada

One of the highlights of our journey is our visit this morning to Granada's iconic Alhambra Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that occupies a small plateau in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. Built in the 13th century by Mohammed I ibn Nasr, the founder of the Nasrid dynasty, the palace is considered one of the finest examples of Moorish architecture outside the Arab world. We also include an orientation tour of the city this afternoon, taking in some of the city's main points of interest including the Albaicin, Granada's historic and atmospheric old Moorish quarter.



Accommodation: Hostal Suecia (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Bus to Cordoba; visit to Mezquita and orientation tour of Cordoba

After a free morning in the city we take a taxi to the bus station to catch the midday bus on to the city of Cordoba, the once great capital of the Islamic caliphate of al-Andalus. Like Granada, Cordoba hides a wealth of treasures amongst its rambling back streets and this afternoon we have chance to visit its great mosque, the Mezquita-Cathedral. Another of Spain's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, this extraordinary building represents a unique blend of faiths, housing two oratories and a stunning hypostyle hall that contains 856 columns of jasper, onyx, marble and granite. Tonight we will be staying in a small hotel in the historical centre of Cordoba. It's very close to the Plaza del Potro and the Fine Art Museum and only around 5 minutes' walk to the Mezquita. Bedrooms are en suite with air-conditioning and a television.



Accommodation: Hostal Maestre (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Travel to Castano del Robledo in the Sierra Aracena National Park

Travelling by train and bus today we head deep into the countryside of rural Andalucia, heading for the small village of Castano de Robledo, close to the Portuguese border. Our destination lies in the heart of the Sierra Aracena National Park, surrounded by a landscape of cork trees and forests of oak and sweet chestnut. Castano is a captivating collection of narrow cobbled streets and whitewashed houses that exhibit the typical 'serrano' architecture of the area. Our guesthouse for the next two nights is within this tiny village. It is filled with rustic character and rural charm and is the perfect base for exploring on foot. You can relax after a day walking, in its courtyard and garden, on the terrace or in the comfortable upstairs lounge filled with books. All the bedrooms are different and have their own character. Most are en suite but some have shared bathrooms and they don't have televisions.



Accommodation: Posada del Castano (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Circular walk through rural Andalucia to the white village of Alajar

After breakfast this morning we walk to the picturesque 'pueblo blanco' (white village) of Alajar, famed for the imposing 17th century shrine of Arias Montano that occupies a rocky promontory high above the village. We return to Castano on foot (total walking distance 12 kilometres). This afternoon you may wish to take a bus on to the town of Aracena, home to the famous 'Gruta de las Maravillas' (Cave of Wonders), set amidst one of the most spectacular cave systems in the country. If time allows there may be chance to pay a visit to the caves (optional).



Accommodation: Posada del Castano (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse

DAY 6 - Walk to Galaroza in the scenic Valle de Murtiga; bus to Seville

Lying to the northwest of Seville, the Sierra de Aracena is a remote western outlier of the extensive Sierra Morena and the quiet, easy paced, way of life here remains definitively Andalucian. The wooded hillsides support a smattering of tiny whitewashed villages, with rural economies still reliant on the production of quality cured hams, chestnuts and cork. We have a chance to enjoy more of this rural idyll today, with a walk to the nearby village of Galaroza, in the beautifully scenic Valle de Murtiga (walking distance approximately 6.5 kilometres). Later in the afternoon we catch the bus to Seville. Our bags will be transported separately to the bus stop in Galaroza. For the next two nights we will be staying in a small hotel which is a converted old 17th century mansion in the Santa Cruz district of historical Seville. It's only around 150 meters from the cathedral and the Alcazar. The hotel has a restaurant serving traditional tapas and Andalucian cuisine. The bedrooms are set around a pretty courtyard filled with wood carvings and traditional ceramics. Rooms are en suite with air-conditioning and they don't have televisions.



Accommodation: Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Orientation walk of Seville; chance to visit the Alcazar

The Andalucian capital can trace its ancestry back over two thousand years. It is now home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites and is one of the three largest Old Towns in Europe (Venice and Genoa being the other two). Today is free offering a chance to take in the delights of the Alcazar and the city's immense Gothic Cathedral. You may also want to take a walk through the city, taking in its beautiful 'Mudejar' architecture (a mixture of Christian and Moorish styles) Or perhaps even enjoy the views from the top of the Giralda Tower.



Accommodation: Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Seville

Trip ends after breakfast. If you are staying on you may wish to explore the city further, perhaps visit on of Seville's many museums.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Public Bus
Taxi
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

2 nights simple guesthouse
4 nights simple hotel
1 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Spain Holidays & Tours

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Granada - Royal Chapal €4; Cathedral - free; Baroque Monastery San Jeronimo €4 Cordoba - Real Alcazar Free (€4.50 after 0930); Caliphal Baths Free (€2.50 after 0930); Torre de Calahorra €4.50 Aracena - Cave of Wonders € 8.50 with additional €10.00 for return transport Seville - Cathedral and Giralda Tower €9; Real Alcazar €9.50; Plaza de Espana free; Bike Hire €8.00 for three hours; Flamenco show between €12.00 and €23.00 ; Pilates House €8.00 ; Archaeological Museum €3.00; Navigation Pavillionchindler Tower €5.00; Saint George Castle Free.

Clothing

Outside of the summer months of June to September, Andalucia is generally mild, though the region of the Sierras (highlands) is subject to rain and if you intend to walk we strongly recommend you bring waterproofs. In addition during this time a warm sweater or fleece, is also recommended. Warm nightwear is advised as hotels are not well heated. Lightweight cotton clothing is advised from June to September.

Footwear

Walking boots or shoes are strongly recommended for the walks in the Sierras, ideally waterproof just in case, plus comfortable trainers for walking around towns. Sandals are useful in summer.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

During the summer months we recommend you bring a sunhat and sunscreen as temperatures can be very high. A torch is generally useful to travel with.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow € 10 for tipping drivers and site guides. In order to make things easier for you, your Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

Spain Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price

£1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euros

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Public Bus, Taxi, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On this trip you are able to choose to purchase a single room (please see the dates and prices for the applicable single supplement price). However, this option is only available for you to have a single room on days 1-3 and 6-7 of this holiday. On days 4-5 we're not able to offer single rooms, as the guesthouse we use only has enough rooms to accommodate all the passengers on a full group on a twin share basis. For the majority of nights on this trip we use simple accommodation, so there won't be hairdryers or tea/coffee making facilities in the bedrooms and some won't have a television, although the views are so stunning and there's so much to see and do that you're unlikely to miss having one. The majority of bedrooms are en suite, but sometimes you may have shared bathroom facilities.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel

health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
