

EXPLORE!

Moorish Andalusia

14 days

Spain - Trip code SP



Moorish Andalusia

A perennial Explore favourite that combines Andalusia's highlight cities with scenic walks in places of outstanding beauty. We spend several days enjoying the wild mountains of Cazorla, Ronda and Grazalema. Included walks are graded easy to moderate. Of course, no visit to Andalusia would be complete without seeing the beguiling Moorish architecture, patios and gardens of Granada, Cordoba and Seville.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Seville** - The expansive royal palace of the Alcazar
- ★ **Cordoba** - The remarkable arcaded hall of the unusual mosque-cathedral of Mezquita
- ★ **Cazorla** - Authentic mountain town full of character
- ★ **Grazalema Park** - Picturesque limestone peaks surrounding the 'Pueblo Blanco'

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

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 in Seville

Arrive in Seville and check-in at the hotel. The Andalusian 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). Your time is free to make your first impressions of this lively city. 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 metres from the cathedral and the Alcazar. The hotel has a restaurant serving traditional tapas and Andalusian cuisine. The bedrooms are set around a pretty courtyard filled with wood carvings and traditional ceramics. Rooms are en suite with air-conditioning, but they don't have hairdryers, tea/coffee making facilities or a television, although there's so much to do so close to our hotel that you're unlikely to miss having one.



Accommodation: Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Orientation walk in Seville and visit to Alcazar

This morning we take a walk through the city, taking in its beautiful 'Mudejar' architecture (a mixture of Christian and Moorish styles), culminating in a visit to the Alcazar. This afternoon has then been left free, offering a chance to visit the city's immense Gothic Cathedral, and perhaps even enjoy the views from the top of the Giralda Tower.



Accommodation: Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available

DAY 3 - Train to Cordoba; visit to Mezquita Mosque and Juderia

Today we take the train to Cordoba. Standing on the banks of the Guadalquivir river, Cordoba was one of the most brilliant Moorish cities and is for many, the most beautiful city in Spain. The Arabs established themselves in Cordoba as early as 719 AD, and before that the Romans had left their own mark here. The Roman philosopher Seneca (who was compelled to commit suicide by Nero) was born here. Cordoba has a wealth of treasures locked away in its back streets with secluded patios tucked behind delicate iron grills. The medieval synagogues in Cordoba and Toledo are the only two which remain in Spain today, Cordoba synagogue dates back to the 14th century. This afternoon we visit the renowned Mosque (Mezquita), an extraordinary and unique building where history has superimposed two faiths and erected two oratories on the one site (local guide optional). The early massive structure dates back to the 8th century, its roof supported by a forest of 850 coloured columns. Its jewel is the gleaming and superbly decorated Mihrab, which has survived in its original state. In the evening we suggest you take in some traditional flamenco music and dancing (optional).



Accommodation: Hostal Santa Ana (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Free day in Cordoba with the option to watch a Flamenco show

This afternoon you will have time to explore the city at your own pace.



Accommodation: Hostal Santa Ana (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Visit ancient Ubeda en route to the mountain town of Cazorla

This morning we drive by bus to the ancient town of Ubeda, set amid myriad olive groves on the borders of Andalucia and La Mancha (memories of Don Quixote!). Its fine cathedral, seignorial mansions and other edifices in golden stone give an idea of the reconstruction after its recapture from the Moors. We continue to Cazorla, an attractive mountain town nestling in a spectacular natural amphitheatre, overlooked by two Moorish castles. The steep, winding streets, whitewashed houses and balconied windows of its old quarter are full of character. An afternoon orientation walk immediately puts us in touch with the 'real' Spain.



Accommodation: Villa Turistica (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - El Chorro gorge walk to try and spot vultures

Those interested in a full day walk (6 to 7 hours approximately) can join our Explore Leader on El Chorro walk. This involves an initial 2 to 3 hours climb before continuing into the spectacular gorge of El Chorro where we can stop for a picnic and marvel at the aerial gymnastics of the local avian population. Our return route provides excellent views over the surrounding countryside. The dark olive groves and (in season) the crimson splashes of poppies against the scorched earth appear as an impressionist painting. Finally we descend the valley back to Cazorla.



Accommodation: Villa Turistica (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Drive to Granada with a walking tour on arrival

In the morning we travel by charter bus to the famous Andalusian city of Granada. The Arabic name 'Al Andalus' was given to the part of Spain under Islamic control for some 800 years. We include an afternoon orientation walk around the city which indicates the main points of interest including the Albaicin, the old Moorish quarter where many Islamic traditions are retained, giving the city its characteristic look of white walls and narrow streets. From the highest point are spectacular views across to the Alhambra and Generalife with the Sierra Nevada as a backdrop. When dusk falls, we suggest a stroll around the old Moorish Quarter to see its illuminated patios.



Accommodation: Hotel Los Angeles (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Visit Alhambra Palace and the beautiful gardens of Generalife

A major highlight of our trip is our guided visit of the magnificent palace of the Alhambra. In 1239 Muhammad al-Ahmar, founder of the Nasrid dynasty and Sultan of Granada, began work on this, the finest example of Moorish architecture outside the Arab world. The fabulous decoration in stucco, both inside and outside the buildings, reveals the purest expression of a sophisticated civilisation just before its decline. We also visit the Generalife, one of the most beautiful landscaped gardens in the world, which surrounds the summer residence of the Caliphs. It is possible to spend all day enjoying the Alhambra and Generalife, and those who wish to, may stay on after our visit.



Accommodation: Hotel Los Angeles (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Train to the 'white town' of Ronda with a tour on arrival

After a free morning in Granda we travel to Ronda by train. On arrival in Ronda we transfer to our hotel and enjoy an afternoon in one of southern Spain's most attractive towns. Ronda is one of the original 'pueblos blancos' (white towns). There will be time to wander the streets and marvel at the El Tajo gorge and visit the oldest bullring in Spain.



Accommodation: Hotel Polo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Free day in Ronda to perhaps enjoy walks in El Tajo Gorge

Today is left free, you may choose to spend more time exploring Ronda itself or going off for walks in the nearby countryside. A walk down into the gorge and strolling along the bottom of the rocks where the old town is built on gives you a very different vantage point of the town.



Accommodation: Hotel Polo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Free morning in Ronda before taking the bus to Grazalema

After a free morning in Ronda we will transfer to Grazalema, a delightful white village nestled beneath the limestone peak of San Cristobal, Grazalema is famous for hand-woven blankets first introduced during Moorish times and they are still made here on big old wooden looms. The village is a perfect base for walking. The Grazalema Parque Natural is one of the most stunning and ecologically important parks in Spain. The park is a micro-climate with the highest average rain fall in Spain and contains an ancient forest of Holm Oak and Montpellier Maple. You may get the opportunity to see buzzards and eagles soar high above, while mountain goats graze the mountain slopes. Those wishing to relax can ramble around the cobblestone backstreets whilst others might choose to go off for a walk into the hills.



Accommodation: Casa de las Piedras (Garcia) (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Free day to relax or enjoy a walk in the surrounding hills

Grazalema by many is viewed as the archetypal Sierra town, and its peaceful beauty is in perfect accord with its surroundings. Spending time in this village gives us the opportunity to try different walks through the rolling countryside and to nearby villages such as Benaocaz (4 to 5 hours). Spending time soaking up the atmosphere in the village square will give you a real taste of rural Spain and makes a fitting end to the walking part of our trip.



Accommodation: Casa de las Piedras (Garcia) (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Return to Seville

Today we head back to Seville for our final evening.



Accommodation: Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Seville

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



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13



Transport

Bus
Public Bus
Taxi
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

3 nights simple hotel
10 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

Cordoba - Flamenco show €20.00; Local guide for Mezquita and Juderia €120.00 per group. Granada - Tapas evening €25.00; Cathedral €5.00; Royal Chapel €4.00. Grazalema - Transport to start and from end of walks €5.00. Seville - Bicycle tour of the city €25.00 (3 hours); Casa de Pilatos €6.00; Giralda Cathedral €9.00; Parque Maria Luisa (free entry)

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 luggage and a daypack. We recommend a soft kit bag rather than a hard suitcase as we use a variety of public transport and taxis on this tour. A daypack is essential for walking in the Cazorla/Grazalema regions. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage - 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 water bottle and a torch is essential. Walking poles recommended.

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 recognized 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 Euros for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the 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

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi, Train

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.