

EXPLORE!



Moorish Trails

8 days

Spain - Trip code SJ

Moorish Trails

From our small, traditional hotel in the village of Canillas de Albaida, we explore an ancient network of trails linking picturesque white-washed Moorish villages through an Andalusian landscape of vineyards, olive groves and mountains. We hike along parts of an old 'Silk Route' and have the opportunity to visit the spectacular Alhambra Palace in Granada. In the evenings we can sample some of the delicious local food and sweet wine.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Canillas De Albaida** - Stay in a 16th Century converted convent in this traditional Moorish village
- ★ **Rural Landscapes** - Walking through a rich profusion of natural diversity, Moorish villages and the unspoilt wilderness in the heart of Andalusia
- ★ **Competa** - Picturesque white-washed mountain village famous for its locally made wine and stunning views
- ★ **Cerro Verde** - Panoramic views from the 1346m summit
- ★ **Granada** - Option to visit the Alhambra and Generalife, examples of classic Moorish architecture and gardens

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.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

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 tour Malaga; transfer to Canillas de Albaida

Joining the tour at Malaga airport we transfer to Canillas de Albaida by minibus, a journey of about one hour, where there should be some time to freshen up and relax before a briefing this evening about the coming days ahead. Our base for the next few days is a picturesque village of white washed houses lying on the edge of the Sierra Tejeda Natural Park, in the shadow of the Atalaya and Verde Mountains. Moorish in origin (Albaida comes from the Arabic for white), its history dates back to the 13th century and the village today is an engaging collection of steep narrow streets that meander up the hillside and lead down to a traditional square. The shrine of Santa Ana dominates the village from its lofty promontory overlooking the surrounding landscapes of pine and oak trees. These vistas are home to eagles, mountain goats and wild boar and the terraced fields that circle the village are traditional reminders of the Moorish farmers who once worked these fertile lands. This rich mix of cultural styles is also reflected in the food of the region, where Moroccan and Spanish influences make for some delicious local delicacies, including fennel broth and almond and garlic soup. NOTE: Our main transfer from Malaga Airport to Canillas de Albaida will be at 16.00. Another transfer will be provided for guests arriving on our main flight (times will vary, usually early afternoon).



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)



Standard Hotel




Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walk to historic town of Competa, famous for it's wine

Our first day starts with a tour of the local village, your tour leader will point out to you some places of interest and also talk about the history of the village. After this we will start our walk to C6mpeta which is considered by some as the 'pearl of the Axarquia'. Offering some stunning views of the surrounding mountains and the Mediterranean, this lovely village is famous for its locally made wine and presents us with a picturesque setting of labyrinthine streets and whitewashed houses cluttered around the minaret of a 13th century tower. Built in the Baroque-Mudejar style, this dominating edifice towers above the village streets. In the surrounding countryside the Tejeda and Almijara ranges cover over 20,000 hectares, much of it protected and presenting us with a rich mix of scrubland, forest and terraced farming, making for some superb walking. After approximately four hours of walking we then reach the main plaza in C6mpeta. Here you will have an hour to relax, maybe over a tapas lunch in one of the many bars and restaurants in the village. After our break we follow an old mule track to Bodegas Almijara where we will have the opportunity to tour the winery and taste some of the local Muscatel wines (optional). After our visit we head back to Canillas for dinner and, doubtless, a well-earned glass of something refreshing. Total walking approx 11km, 5.5 hours, 250m ascent.



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Hike Camino de Marquis. Optional cookery demonstration

Taking a taxi this morning we head first for Puerto Collado. From here we follow a track that passes by the Casa de la Mina refuge before joining a steep windy track that takes us towards Gavalan passing the fire watchhut on route. Stopping for a picnic lunch, we then continue through the afternoon, back towards Canillas, skirting the top of Competa town on our way down. After a day of walking you may wish to watch a cookery demonstration and learn how to make paella. Total walking approx 14km, 5.5 hours, 600m ascent/ 600m descent.



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Walk to Moorish village of Salares

Descending out of Canillas on an old Roman path, we pass a Roman bridge and we continue along the banks of the Cajula stream, passing a landscape of avocado and citrus groves. Continuing uphill passing a few ruined farm houses we then follow a mule track up to the summit of Fogarate a hilltop lookout that lies in the shadow of the lofty peak of La Maroma. After taking in the fabulous views we continue along an easy dirt track that skirts the valley and takes us up towards a ruined inn, before we follow the valley along an irrigation canal to the old Moorish village of Salares. By 720AD the Moors controlled much of the Iberian Peninsula and their faith, art and architecture spread through much of southern Spain. This new part of the Islamic empire became known as al-Andalus and was at first ruled by the caliphate of Damascus, the powerful Umayyad caliphs. Over time these lands split into smaller Muslim enclaves, making them more vulnerable to the emerging Christian kingdoms to the north, which eventually culminated in the Christian re-conquest of the south in the 10th and 11th centuries. Much of this region has retained its Moorish character though and many of the villages still display the distinctive styling of Mudéjar architecture, a form developed specifically by the Muslims in these Christian areas and often presenting a rich fusion of Islamic and Gothic styles. The church of Santa Ana in Salares is a perfect example of this hybrid of styles, built on the site of an old mosque, but retaining the minaret as a church tower. After a wander through the steep, winding streets of this picturesque village and the option of lunch in Theo's simple but special bar we will return to Canillas by taxi. Anyone wishing to make the return journey by foot may do so (this will add an extra couple of hours and another 6km to your day ascent 350m). Total walking approx 8km, 4 hours. 350m ascent



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 5 - Free day; optional trips to Granada, Antequera or coast

Today has been designated as a rest day. There is the possibility of taking an optional trip to Granada today. Granada is one of the most famous cities in the region, a superb mix of Moorish elegance and Renaissance grandeur that includes the Albaicin, the old Moorish quarter whose white walls and narrow streets give the city its distinctive Arabic feel. A major highlight is the sumptuous Alhambra palace, built by Muhammad al-Ahmar, the founder of the Nasrid dynasty, in the 13th century and considered the finest example of Moorish architecture outside the Arab world. Its exquisite interiors and stucco exteriors evokes the elegance of a civilisation at the peak of its artistic and cultural epoch and the ceilings of its glorious throne room represent the seven heavens of the Muslim cosmos, creating a little piece of Arabic heaven here on earth. Another highlight worthy of mention is the Generalife, one of the most beautiful landscaped gardens in the world, which surrounds the summer residences of the Caliphs. Wandering up to the highest points of the city presents some stunning views out across these glorious testaments to Muslim craftsmanship. Another alternative today is the vibrant market town of Antequera, once a border fortress protecting Granada and today boasting a

delightful collection of Baroque churches, a 13th century castle and a massive series of burial chambers (dolmens) on the outskirts of the town that are believed to date back to around 2500BC. For those who would prefer something a little more scenic, the Mediterranean coast is not far away, presenting an ideal destination for a gentle exploration of Spain's beautiful southern coastline.



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Ascend Cerro Verde (1,346m); enjoy the panoramic views

Another taxi this morning takes us to La Fabrica la Luz, from where we begin our walk up the valley via the chestnut and cork woods of El Chaparral Farm. These remote and beautiful landscapes contain a rich wealth of fauna and flora, many of which are endemic to the sierras, particularly its raptors and mountain birds. Amongst these landscapes of boxwood and olive groves, yew and Mediterranean woodland, with luck we can get occasional glimpses of golden and Bonelli's eagles, peregrine falcons and golden orioles. These landscapes are also renowned for large numbers of indigenous mountain goats that only a century ago were on the verge of extinction. Climbing up through these idyllic rural settings we head towards the summit of Cerro Verde (1,346m), a peak similar in height to Ben Nevis, where we enjoy a picnic lunch on the summit, overlooking the panoramas and enjoying the fresh Andalusian air as we look out across the limestone landscapes. After lunch we move south towards Cerro Atalaya, a dramatically craggy peak that is a popular nesting site for birds and where, if we are lucky, we may spot some Bonelli eagles. Descending from the coll via a wide firebreak we are treated to views of the coast and, on a clear day, as far as Gibraltar. Our descent this afternoon brings us full circle back to La Fabrica, where we rendezvous with taxis once more for the return journey back to Canillas (if you wish to walk back to Canillas this is 3km extra). Total walking approx 12km, 5-6 hours, 750m ascent.



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Rest day; optional Caminito del Rey Walk

Today has been left free. You may choose to relax around the village, visit Granada or the coast, or enjoy a self guided walk in the area. For those looking for something a little more strenuous, you may consider a trip to Ardales (Malaga), to walk the famous 'Caminito del Rey' or Kings Path. This route is a walkway pinned along the steep walls of a narrow gorge in El Chorro, near Ardales. Construction of the path began in 1901 and took 4 years to complete. King Alfonso XIII crossed the walkway in 1921 for the inauguration of the dam, Conde del Guadalhorce and this is how it got its name. The walkway is 1m (3 feet) in width and rises over 100m (330ft) above the river below - not for the faint hearted! Another option would be a walk to the village of Sayalonga. This is a 4 hour walk along a wide ridge overlooking the three white washed villages of Canillas, Cómpeeta and Archez, then down through a valley of nispero trees before heading up to the main plaza in Sayalonga for a tapas lunch and return to the hotel by taxi.



Accommodation: Posada la Plaza (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Tour ends Malaga Airport

Our tour ends today at Malaga Airport. Passengers on our main flight to London will be transferred back to the airport in time for their return flight. A separate transfer for other flights and land only clients will arrive to Malaga Airport for 09.00. Please note that

this transfer may be unescorted. (See Joining Instructions for details).

IOY Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



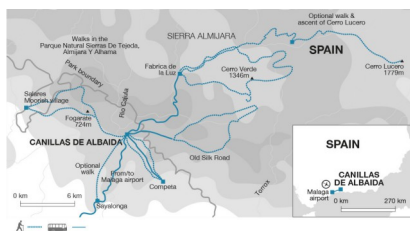
Optional Walks

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks are included on four days for between 4 to 5.5 hours each day. Further walking is possible on both free days. We have graded this trek as moderate. The optional ascent of El Lucero (1769m) is classed as strenuous.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 1



Transport

Minibus
Taxi



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

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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

Alhambra Palace Visit - Only 2000 tickets are made available for sale on the day, however this will likely involve long queues. Tickets can be purchased in advance either via the internet, www.alhambra-tickets.es or by telephone (+34 934923750). Tickets go on sale 3 months prior to the visit. It takes approx 2hrs to drive to Granada. At the time of booking your ticket to the Alhambra, a time will be allocated for entry to Nasrid Palace. By using the telephone booking line, you are able to indicate a preferred time. In addition, entry to Nasrid Palace is strictly monitored and you will not be able to enter outside the allocated time. We therefore recommend booking tickets for entry after 11.00 to allow time to get to Granada. Your tour leader will assist with organising taxis. For further details please visit www.alhambra.org/eng Competa - Wine tasting €8 Canillas - Taxi to Granada €160 return; Nerja and caves €80 (all prices are per taxi for up to 4 people one way, unless stated otherwise); Cooking demonstration - no fee. Caminito del Rey walk - €16pp entrance fee, €24pp for return transport.

Clothing

Lightweight cotton clothing is best in June and September. Full rainwear may be needed at any time of year, but especially after the start of September, and a warm fleece/light jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights at the beginning and end of the season. Don't forget a swimming costume.

Footwear

Walking or trail boots with good ankle support are essential, plus comfortable trainers/shoes for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

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

Equipment

High factor suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses, sun hat, a torch and a water bottle. You may find walking poles useful if you have them.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour 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. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

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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

Minibus, Taxi

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.

Posada La Plaza in Canillas de Albaida is a family run hotel, located in the centre of a small community that provides a wonderful opportunity to experience village life. The building itself dates back to the 16th Century. It was used as a convent and a family home before being converted into a small hotel in 2004. The rooms are a blend of Moorish architecture, local craftsmanship and traditional decoration, which gives each room a very unique, individual and authentic Spanish character. All rooms are fully air conditioned. Please note that the bedrooms vary in size. The hotel has a small indoor salon with tea and coffee making facilities, and also a roof terrace with sun loungers. The hotel owner, Gustavo Romero, his family and staff also suggest you come and try their restaurant, which is renowned locally for its quality food and service, with Mediterranean and regional food with Arabic influences. There is now a small Spa available to guests at an additional charge. Please note any bills at the hotel can be run on a tab and paid by credit or debit card.

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.

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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.
