

# EXPLORE!

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BEST SELLER

## Highlights of Andalucia

SPAIN - TRIP CODE QAH

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

Andalucia is blessed with a wealth of culture, history, mountain scenery and plenty of sunshine. On this trip visit Granada, Seville and Cordoba along with spending a couple of nights off the beaten track in a traditional posada in a charming little village.

- **Cordoba** - Discover the Moorish architecture from the golden era of Al-Andalus at the Mezquita
- **Sierra de Arcena** - Walk through the verdant rolling landscape to see the white villages
- **Seville** - Explore this characterful city and the stunning UNESCO-Listed Alcazar Palace



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 7



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Public Bus  
Taxi  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
2 nights simple  
guesthouse  
4 nights simple  
hotel  
1 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Full on



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Granada

Arrive in Granada. 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 those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7.30pm and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Granada at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Federico Garcia Lorca Granada Airport (GRX), which is about 30 minutes' drive.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to visit the Royal Chapel, go inside the cathedral or visit the San Jeronimo Monastery.

For the next two nights, we will be staying at Hostal La Ninfa in the quieter and historic El Realejo neighbourhood. Our hotel is in a characteristic Granada house, which has free Wi-Fi available. Bedrooms are en suite, cosy and simply decorated. They have a safe, television and hairdryer. It's around 10 minutes' walk from the Alhambra and from the city centre. Just beside the hotel is the Plaza Campo del Principe where you can find a number of good restaurants and bars to perhaps sample tapas and wine in this evening.

On this highlights trip we have packed in as many of the sights as we can, but there is very little free time in Granada, so if you wish to discover more on your own then we would recommend extending your stay for a night or two.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hostal La Ninfa (or similar)

  
Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Explore Granada on foot and have the chance to visit the spectacular Alhambra**

This morning your welcome meeting will take place at 8am and following this our Leader will take us on an orientation walk of the city taking in the main points of interest including the Albaicin; Granada's historic and atmospheric old Moorish quarter.

This afternoon has been left free for you to explore Granada at your own pace. One of the highlights is undoubtedly the magnificent palace of the Alhambra and it is certainly possible to spend all day enjoying your time here. 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.

You might also choose to spend time in the Generalife, which is one of the most beautiful landscaped gardens in the world, surrounding the summer residence of the Caliphs.

Please note that the visit to the Alhambra Palace is optional because it can no longer be guaranteed that group tickets can be secured to visit the palace. It is much simpler for you to book your own individual entrance tickets online for the Alhambra Palace. Bookings for this open at 90 days prior and you will need to book your ticket in advance on the website rather than waiting to when you are on tour. You can book your entrance ticket for 2pm onwards today. Further details can be found in the Optional Activities section of the Trip Notes.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hostal La Ninfa (or similar)

  
Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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

After a couple of hours free in the city this morning 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 at the Hostal Maestre, which is 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. There is free Wi-Fi and most rooms are set around typical Andalusian garden patios. Bedrooms are en suite with air-conditioning and a television.



#### ACCOMMODATION:

Hostal Maestre (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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

We have up until about 1.30pm today free to explore Cordoba before travelling by train and bus deep into the countryside of rural Andalucia to 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.

We will stay in the Posada del Castano guesthouse for the next two nights in this tiny village. It's owned by our tour leader and is filled with rustic character and rural charm; making it the perfect base for exploring neighbouring countryside 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.

On our 9 May 2020 departure during our time in Cordoba, the Festival of the Patios in Cordoba is taking place. This is a competition run by the Town Council whereby participants open up their flower-filled interior courtyards to the public for a period of a couple of weeks, so this is something you are able to see during your free time this morning.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Posada del Castano (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Guesthouse**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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### **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 visit 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)



**Grade: Simple Guesthouse**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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### **DAY 6 - Walk to Galaroza in the Valley of the Ribera de Jabugo; discover 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 Valley of the Ribera de Jabugo (walking distance is 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.

On arrival in Seville our tour leader will take us on a walk to help us get our bearings, so we know how to get to all the main places that you may like to explore more of tomorrow during your free time. We'll see the Jewish Quarter, Plaza Santa Cruz, Park of the Discoveries and much more.

For the next two nights we will be staying at Hostal Sierpes; 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 Real 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 and they don't have televisions.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 7 - Free day with the chance to visit the Real 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 for you to perhaps choose to visit the Real Alcazar and the city's immense Gothic Cathedral. The queues for these two attractions can be long, so we'd recommend booking these online before you travel. Please see the optional excursion information on the Trip Notes for further information about this.

Alternatively you might want to just take a walk through the city, taking in its beautiful Mudejar architecture (a mixture of Christian and Moorish styles).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hostal Sierpes (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Seville

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Seville.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Seville at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Seville Airport (SVQ), which is about 30 minutes' drive.

On this highlights trip we have packed in as many of the sights as we can, but there is only one free day in Seville and there are many museums that you may like to visit, so if you wish to discover more on your own, then we would recommend extending your stay by a night or two.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Spain

##### 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	Plugs	Religion
+1	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic

##### Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

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### Budgeting and packing

#### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may



depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Granada - Alhambra Palace from €14 per person:

Only limited tickets are made available for sale on arrival each day, however this will likely involve long queues. We recommend purchasing a ticket in advance via the website. Tickets go on sale 90 days prior to the visit. At the time of booking your ticket to the Alhambra, a time will be allocated for entry to Nasrid Palace and 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 2pm on day two to allow time to get to the palace following your city tour. For further details please visit [www.alhambra.org/eng](http://www.alhambra.org/eng).

There are a number of ticket types available through the office website - <https://tickets.alhambra-patronato.es/en/tickets-alhambra-general>.

'Alhambra General' tickets start from €14 per person and will allow unguided access to the Alcazaba, Nasrid Palace and Generalife. Many visitors spend a few hours here, so please allow plenty of time to explore and book your entrance time accordingly.

If you would prefer a guided visit, these are operated in English on a daily basis at specific times but may not coincide with our scheduled itinerary. Further details and times can be found here and tickets start at €69 per person - <https://www.alhambradegranada.org/en/info/guidedtours.asp>

Tours of the Alhambra Palace run from 8am to 5pm and normally last for around three hours. From our hotel the Alhambra Palace is 20 minutes' walk each way.

The Royal Chapel €4 per person entrance

Cathedral free entrance

The Baroque Monastery San Jeronimo €4 per person entrance

Cordoba:

On the morning of day four you might choose to visit:

Real Alcazar €4.50 per person entrance after 9.30am

Caliphal Baths €2.50 per person entrance after 9.30am

Torre de Calahorra entrance €4.50 per person

Aracena:

On the afternoon of day five it's possible to visit the Gruta de las Maravillas (Cave of Wonders); entrance is €8.50 per person with an additional €10 for return transport.

Seville:

You have the whole of day seven free. The most popular attractions in the city are the Cathedral and the Real Alcazar. The queues at both these monuments can be long and so we would recommend booking online before you travel. You should allow at least one hour to visit the Cathedral and Giralda Tower and three hours to visit the Real Alcazar and gardens. Both monuments offer discounts for seniors on their websites and opening times are all clearly stated on here too.



There are three tours offered on the Cathedral website: <https://www.catedraldesevilla.es/cultural-visit/>

- 1) The main tour option is the Cathedral and Giralda Tower along with the Church of El Salvador (the Divine Saviour), which is about 300m walk away, for €9 per person.
- 2) All the above in option one plus a 90 minute guided tour of Gothic rooftop for €15 per person.
- 3) Entrance to the Church of El Salvador only is €4 per person. It's normally possible to do this option on the day with limited queuing and without needing to pre-book entry online.

The Real Alcazar website is: <https://realalcazarsevilla.sacatuentrada.es/>

Standard entrance is €12.50 per person or with an audio-guide included for an additional €6. For another €4.50 on top of this you can also access the Royal Apartments.

Other places of interest and activities include:

Plaza de Espana, free entrance

Bike hire, €8 for three hours

Flamenco show, between €12 and €23 per person

Pilates House, €8 entrance per person

Archaeological Museum, €3 per person entrance

Navigation Pavilion Schindler Tower, €5 per person entrance

Saint George Castle, free entrance

## **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. We use public transport for the majority of this tour, so it is essential that you are able to carry your bag on and off of the trains and buses.

## **Equipment**

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

## **Tipping**

## Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## Local crew

Although 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 approximately £15 of local currency 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.

## Spain

### 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.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price
£8.00 - 12.00	£16.00 - 20.00	£1.50 - 3.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)
<b>Water price</b>		
£1.4		

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euros	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 Information

Public Bus, Taxi, Train

## Accommodation notes

The accommodation listed above and as described in the day by day trip itinerary are the ones most frequently used for this trip, however on some departures alternative accommodation of a similar standard may be used and the facilities and décor may differ from the details shown here.

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 one to three and six to seven of this holiday. On days four and five 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 and 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.

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## Essential Information

### Government Travel Safety 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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 be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an

additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## **Included activities**

This highlights trip is perfect for first time visitors to Andalucia that are looking to see as much as possible in just one week off work. It combines a taste of the culture and character of the main cities with time spent exploring the countryside on foot. This is an authentic trip where we use simple and rustic accommodation throughout including a village guesthouse owned by our tour leader. Most days we'll be up early and not back until late as we'll make the most of soaking up our surroundings and dining later in the evening like the locals do; once the temperatures have cooled and the restaurants and bars come to life. We also use local buses, trains and taxis to get around. The public transport used is normally very efficient and comfortable, but it's essential that you can carry your own bags on and off of it. The countryside walks we do on two days are graded as Easy to Moderate and take an average of three hours each day.

Vegetarian food is quite widely available in most restaurants in Andalucia, however it may not always be apparent from the menu as most restaurants are happy to offer alternative dishes when asked, and this is something our tour leader can assist you with. If you do have any dietary requirements then we would always encourage you to inform us of this at the time of booking your trip. Menu choices are more limited during our stay in the village on days four and five, as there are only two restaurants that open especially for us and so the menu is agreed with them in advance and your tour leader will discuss the options with you couple of days before you arrive here to make sure what's being served is suitable for everyone.

## **Ability to swim**

No

## **Spain**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest

requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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### Additional Information



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## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**