

EXPLORE!

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Moorish Andalusia

SPAIN - TRIP CODE SP

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

This two-week trip to Andalusia combines the charming Moorish architecture of Granada, Cordoba, Ronda and Seville with scenic walks in the wild mountains of Cazorla. See white washed villages, olive groves and deep gorges where vultures may be spotted soaring above.

- **Cordoba** - Discover the Moorish architecture from the golden era of Al-Andalus at the Mezquita
- **Grazalema Parque Natural** - Walk beneath the limestone peaks and be on the lookout for wildlife
- **Seville** - Explore this characterful city and the stunning UNESCO-Listed Alcazar Palace



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 13



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Public Bus
Taxi
Train



ACCOMMODATION
13 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



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 Seville

Arrive in Seville. The Andalucian capital can trace its ancestry back over two thousand years. It is now home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites and one of the three largest old towns in Europe (Venice and Genoa being the other two).

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting 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 Seville at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Seville Airport (SVQ), which is about 30 minutes' drive. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to stretch your legs with a walk in the Parque de María Luisa, where you can see the Plaza de Espana which was created for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929 and has impressive architecture, picturesque fountains and even miniature canals crossed with venetian style bridges.

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 Andalucian 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 and 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:
Hotel Baco (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable 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:
Hotel Baco (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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 Maestre (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable 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 Maestre (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable 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:
Hotel Villa Turistica de Cazorla (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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 trip 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:
Hotel Villa Turistica de Cazorla (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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 Andalucian 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)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Free day; chance to visit the Alhambra Palace

Today 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 after 3pm on day seven or at any time today or on day nine before 9am. Further details can be found in the Optional Activities section of the Trip Notes.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Los Angeles (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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

After a free morning in Granada we travel to Antequera by public bus and then catch our train from here to Ronda. 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)



Grade: Comfortable 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)



Grade: Comfortable 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)



Grade: Comfortable 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 though 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)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Return to Seville

Today we head back to Seville for our final evening.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Baco (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - 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.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and 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

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.

Cordoba - Flamenco show €20; local guide for Mezquita and Juderia €120 per group.

Granada - Tapas evening €30; cathedral entrance €5; Royal Chapel entrance €4.

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 either 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 on day seven after 3pm, any time on day eight, or on day nine before 9am to allow time to get to the palace. For further details please visit 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.

Grazalema - Transport to start and from end of walks approximately €5.

Seville - Bicycle tour of the city €25 (three hours); Casa de Pilatos entrance €6; Giralda Cathedral entrance €9; Parque Maria Luisa is 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

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)

Water price
£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, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi, Train

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, Commonwealth & Development 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 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 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.

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.

Additional Information



Reviews



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EXPLORE LEADERS**



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