

# EXPLORE!

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## Moorish Andalucia

SPAIN - TRIP CODE SP

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

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This two-week trip to Andalucia 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: 9



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour Leader  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Public Bus  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
9 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 Malaga

Arrive in Malaga, one of the main port cities in Andalucia. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Malaga at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Málaga-Costa del Sol Airport (AGP), which is around 25 minutes' drive from our hotel. The Tour Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for a welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. Should you miss the meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day there is plenty to see in the attractive downtown of Malaga, much of which is pedestrianised. The Picasso museum is worth a visit, the collection represents his entire life's work and is housed in the 16th-century Buenavista Palace.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Zenit (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: NONE**

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## **DAY 2 - Take a train to the 'white town' of Ronda. Visit the bullring and take in views of the gorge**

After breakfast we'll check out of our hotel and travel (2 hours) to Ronda by train. The historic town of Ronda is often described as one of Spain's most attractive and it is dramatically perched high above El Tajo gorge. The bridge that spans the gorge often features in photos and separates the 15th century new town from its old town with Moorish roots.

After checking in to our hotel we will spend the afternoon exploring Ronda on foot before making our way down into the gorge for dramatic views from below. In your free time you may like to visit the Arabic baths or the bull ring. Ronda played a key role in the development of modern bullfighting and it's bullring is Spain's oldest and most beautiful.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Polo (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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## **DAY 3 - Hike between white villages in Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park**

Today we explore the rugged and beautiful limestone scenery of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park on a rewarding hike. We first travel by bus to the pretty mountain village of Grazalema, picturesquely nestled in the foothills of the Sierra del Pinar Mountains and overlooked by Penon Grande peak.

Our walking route takes us through holm oak and Spanish fir forests with typical Mediterranean vegetation passing occasional 'cortijos' or traditional ranches. Keep an eye out for griffon vultures as Europe's largest colony nest in the park. We ascend to Puerto Boyar pass before making our way down hill to Benaocaz - another authentic Andalusian white-washed village with Moorish past and Roman origins. After a refreshing drink we travel back to Ronda.

The walk is approximately 12 km with about 500 metres ascent and 550 m descent, and will take around five to six hours to complete. If you prefer not to walk you can spend the day at leisure in Ronda.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Polo (or similar)

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Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 4 - Travel to Seville and discover the city on foot**

Leaving Ronda this morning we'll travel by public bus to Seville, arriving in the late morning. The capital of Andalusia is one of Spain's finest and most beautiful cities, built on the wealth of New World trade and plunder.

We'll spend the afternoon walking through the city, exploring the former Jewish Quarter, and following winding narrow backstreets leading to Mudéjar palaces (a blend of Christian and Moorish styles) and baroque churches culminating in a visit to the Alcazar. The stunning Alcázar Palace, Giralda tower and ramparts remind us of the Almohad dynasty of Moorish rule that ended when the city was reconquered by the Christians in 1248.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Baco (or similar)

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Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 5 - Free day to explore Seville**

Today is free for you to explore Seville at your own pace. You might like to visit the city's impressive Gothic Cathedral, one of the largest in the world. Its bell tower was once the minaret of the Almohad great mosque, so impressive that the Christians incorporated it into their building. They topped it off with a weather vein statue called the Giralda and we recommend a walk up the ramps to the top for superb views over Seville. Other attractions include the General Archive of the Indies, Plaza de San Francisco, Casa Pilatos or Maria Luisa park.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Baco (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 6 - Travel to Cordoba by train and visit the Mesquita Mosque

Today we take the train to Cordoba. Standing on the banks of the Guadalquivir river, Córdoba was the first of Spain's three most important Moorish cities and was established in 719AD. It was the most enlightened of the Moorish period with one of Europe's leading universities and libraries of the time. The Romans had also left their mark here, best seen in the vast bridge that still spans the Guadalquivir. 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 14th century synagogue is one of only two left standing in Spain, with the other in Toledo.

This afternoon we visit the renowned Mosque (Mezquita), an extraordinary and unique building (there is the option to hire a local guide). Instead of destroying the original mosque after the Christians conquered Cordoba, the Catholic king decided to build a Cathedral within it. 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.

This evening there is the chance to take in some traditional flamenco music and dancing.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Maestre (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 7 - Morning free in Cordoba. Afternoon public bus to Granada

After a free morning in Cordoba for further exploration we take a public 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. After checking into our hotel we will spend the afternoon walking around the city, discovering the main highlights 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

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## DAY 8 - Visit the Alhambra Palace including the Nasrid Palaces

This morning we have included a guided visit to the remarkable Alhambra Palace and Generalife gardens. 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.

The Generalife - the summer residence of the Caliphs and surrounding gardens - are considered among the most beautiful landscaped gardens in the world.

Tickets to visit the Alhambra are limited, as such we'll keep our time in Granada flexible and organise sightseeing around our Alhambra visit.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Los Angeles (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 9 - Free morning in Granada. Take the public bus to Malaga**

This morning is kept free to explore Granada at your own pace. In the afternoon we board a public bus (2 hours) and return to Malaga. Time permitting before our final group dinner you may like to visit the Alcazar Moorish palace or Gibralfaro castle that overlooks Malaga.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Zenit (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 10 - Trip ends in Malaga**

Our trip ends this morning after breakfast. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Malaga 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 Málaga-Costa del Sol Airport (AGP), which is around 25 minutes' drive.





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### 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

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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.

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](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.

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.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>
£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

<b>Local currency</b>	<b>Recommended Currency For Exchange</b>
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.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi, Train

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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, 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](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 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.

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### Additional Information



# Reviews

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AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS