

# EXPLORE!



## Moorish Spain to Marrakech

13 days

Morocco, Spain - Trip code RMO

## Moorish Spain to Marrakech

Discover the Moorish architecture of Granada and Cordoba, the picturesque Andalusian Hill Villages and explore the Imperial Cities of Morocco, including Rabat, Fes and Marrakech. From our carriage windows we watch as the architecture changes from whitewashed Spanish villages to the characteristic minarets and medinas of Morocco. Along the way we sample traditional Andalusian tapas and the best of Moroccan cuisine.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Granada** - The magnificent Alhambra Palace, one of the finest examples of Moorish architecture.
- ★ **Cordoba** - The Unesco World Heritage old town and the remarkable Mezquita.
- ★ **Ronda** - One of the original 'Pueblos Blancos' and El Tajo Gorge.
- ★ **Fes** - The atmospheric medina also known as 'Mecca of the West'.
- ★ **Marrakech** - The vibrant souks of the 'Red City' and the iconic Djema-el Fna Square.

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Standard

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

**TRIP PACE:****Moderate**

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

**GROUP SIZE:****12 - 18**

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 in Malaga

Our tour starts today in Malaga. Depending on the schedule of your flights you may want to spend some time exploring the city independently, before joining your group and Tour Leader.



**Accommodation: Hotel Sur** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - To Cordoba; discover the old town and explore the remarkable Mezquita

Today we transfer to Cordoba (by train or bus, depending on availability). Standing on the banks of the Guadalquivir river, Cordoba was one of the most sophisticated 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. 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 and Cordoba synagogue dates back to the 14th century. This afternoon we visit the renowned Mosque (Mezquita), an extraordinary and unique building where history has superimposed two faiths and erected two oratories on the one site (local guide optional). The early massive structure dates back to the 8th century, its roof supported by a forest of 850 coloured columns. Its jewel is the gleaming and superbly decorated Mihrab, which has survived in its original state. In the evening we suggest you take in some traditional flamenco music and dancing (optional).



**Accommodation: Hostal Santa Ana** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Explore Granada including the old Moorish Quarter

Today we transfer to Granada by public bus and spend the afternoon exploring the city on foot, discovering the main points of interest including the Albaicin, the old Moorish quarter where many Islamic traditions are retained, giving the city its characteristic look of white walls and narrow streets. From the highest point are spectacular views across to the Alhambra and Generalife with the Sierra Nevada as a backdrop. When dusk falls, we suggest a stroll around the old Moorish Quarter to see its illuminated patios.



**Accommodation: Hotel Los Angeles** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Take a guided tour of the magnificent Alhambra Palace; afternoon train to Ronda

The major highlight of our day is the guided visit of the magnificent palace of the Alhambra. In 1239 Muhammad al-Ahmar, founder of the Nasrid dynasty and Sultan of Granada, began work on this, the finest example of Moorish architecture outside the Arab world. The fabulous decoration in stucco, both inside and outside the buildings, reveals the purest expression of a sophisticated civilisation just before its decline. We also visit the Generalife, one of the most beautiful landscaped gardens in the world, which surrounds the summer residence of the Caliphs. Later this afternoon we will catch a train to Ronda.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Visit the picturesque Andalucian 'pueblo blancos' (white villages) of Zahara La Sierra and Grazalema

We spend the day exploring the beautiful rolling landscapes west of Ronda by bus. Arriving at the fortified Moorish hill village of Zahara is like stepping back in time. Its whitewashed terraces are dominated by an impressive Moorish tower and a Baroque church lies at the heart of the village. We also plan to visit Grazalema, nestled beneath the limestone peak of San Cristobal. We return to

Ronda and spend an afternoon in one of southern Spain's most attractive towns. Ronda is one of the original pueblos blancos (white towns). There will be time to wander the streets and marvel at the El Tajo gorge and visit the oldest bullring in Spain.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Travel by train through rolling countryside; take a ferry to Tangier and visit the medina

We travel the attractive Andalucia Express route south from Ronda towards the coast through rolling countryside via the painted villages of San Roque, Castellar de la Frontera and Gaucin. On arrival at Algeciras, we transfer to the ferry port where we will say goodbye to our first local guide and catch an early afternoon ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tangier in Morocco. Here we will meet our Moroccan guide and we immediately immerse ourselves in the vibrancy and heady atmosphere of a Moroccan medina - a network of market squares and backstreets - with a guided walking tour. The contrast between the calm streets and squares of Ronda and the more energetic atmosphere of Tangier is quite incredible.



**Accommodation: Tanjan Flandria** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - To Fes, the cultural capital of Morocco

A journey by train takes us from Tangier to Fes, the cultural capital of Morocco. Its colourful history is full of wars, murders, intrigue and cloak-and-dagger politics. Fes has also played an important part in Moroccan trade, culture, religion and politics as well as having been the seat of learning and science. The old and new towns are adjacent but totally separate entities. Panoramic views of Fes El Bali (the old city), seen from the North Borj (tower), are very useful to help you orientate yourself for when you are in the narrow alleyways. Fes also has quite an active nightlife, centred around Avenues Hassan II and Mohammed V. We enjoy two nights here to take in all the city has to offer.



**Accommodation: Hotel Zahrat al Jabal** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

## DAY 8 - Guided walking tour of Fes through its souks and tanneries; chance to visit Roman Volubilis

This morning we take a guided walking tour of the Medina. We will explore the souks in the backstreets and wander through the craft areas, past the spice stalls, through the brass and copperware areas and look in on the tanners. Beautiful buildings include the Sanctuary of Moulay Idriss 2nd, the Kairaouine Mosque and the Al Andalus Mosque (viewed from the outside only). Craftwork made and sold in Fes medina is considered to be some of the best in Morocco. In the afternoon you have a chance to visit ancient Volubilis. The optional trip takes us into the hills and to the ancient site of Volubilis - the capital of the Roman province Mauritania Tingitana. The detailed mosaics here are still intact and the site gives a good idea of the layout of provincial settlements. If time allows we will stop off at the viewpoint overlooking the Holy City of Moulay Idriss. Named after Morocco's most revered saint and creator of the Arab dynasty, it is a great place of pilgrimage. We then return to Fes.



**Accommodation: Hotel Zahrat al Jabal** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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## DAY 9 - Train to Rabat; city tour through the highlights of the atmospheric capital city

We catch the morning train to the modern capital, Rabat for a sightseeing tour. Although it was only established as the capital in 1912 by the French, Rabat's history stretches back to a settlement in the 8th century BC. We take a guided tour around the Hassan Tower and the Mausoleum of Mohammed V. We wander through the Kasbah des Oudaias, originally a fortified town now with a distinctly Andalusian influence. This afternoon there is an optional visit to the historical Chellah dating back to the 8th century BC. Once a prosperous Roman town and transformed by the Merinids into a cemetery, the Chellah is a fascinating and atmospheric place to visit.



**Accommodation: Hotel Bouregreg** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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## DAY 10 - Train to Marrakech via Casablanca; chance to visit the famous King Hassan II Mosque

This morning we will take a train to Casablanca to visit the famous King Hassan II Mosque (optional entry), possibly the biggest religious monument for Muslims after Mecca. Finished in 1993, this magnificent building is covered in decorative zellij tiles and has

beautiful cedar wood carvings - proof that the ancient crafts are still very much alive. This afternoon we will continue our journey by train to Marrakech, the spiritual heart of Morocco.



**Accommodation: Moroccan House** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Walking tour of Marrakech through colourful souks and the iconic Djemaa el-Fnaa Square

Marrakech is a feast for the senses. Like many North African towns, Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (or modern French built city) and the Medina (the old city). It has always been a meeting place for the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the South and the colourful souks perfectly illustrate this fact. This morning a local guide will take us for a walking tour of the old city. Taking a closer look at the maze of narrow streets filled with the sounds, colours and smells of the exotic and an opportunity to visit the Ben Youssef Medersa. The afternoon is left free for you to further explore the city. Well worth visiting are the Saadian Tomb, the Dar Si Said Palace (now Museum of Moroccan Art), the Menara Gardens or the Majorelle Gardens including the Museum of Islamic Art a short taxi ride away. No visit to the city of Marrakech is complete without a visit to the celebrated Djemaa el-Fnaa Square and a spectacle not to be missed at dusk are the many street performers presenting a scene straight out of the pages of Arabian Nights.



**Accommodation: Moroccan House** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Free time in Marrakech; chance to join a day trip to the High Atlas


For a complete change of scenery, you may choose to go on an optional visit to a nearby High Atlas village today. The High Atlas is North Africa's greatest mountain range. Populated by Berber tribesmen, it has always been an area culturally removed from the rest of Morocco, a barrier between the northern plains and the pre-Sahara. Alternatively you may choose to stay and extend your exploration of Marrakech.




**Accommodation: Moroccan House** (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 13 - Tour ends Marrakech

The tour ends today in Marrakech after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may wish to spend some additional time exploring the souks and buying the last souvenirs.

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 12



## Transport

Bus  
Taxi  
Train



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader



## Accommodation

12 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### Morocco

#### Climate

The climate is both Mediterranean and Atlantic. The dry, hot season is from May to October when summer temperatures can reach 38°C and above (if sight seeing is included we will do our best to avoid the heat of the day during this period). Temperatures may drop significantly at times during the night as the day's heat rapidly diminishes. From December to January snow can be expected on mountain passes and it can be wet. In winter, day temperatures will probably be around 18-25°C, dropping to perhaps 0-5°C.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Islam

#### Language

Arabic, Berber, French.

### 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

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion



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.

Casablanca - Hassan II Mosque €12pp

Rabat - Chellah €1pp

Fes - Half day visit to Volubilis by bus, with specialist guide including entry approx €25pp (depending on group size).

Marrakech - Full day excursion (from Marrakech) to village in Atlas Mountains, with Berber lunch approx €40pp.

### Clothing

Summer: Clothing should be lightweight. However, a sweater or fleece is also advisable for the evenings, as temperatures can drop sharply. Lightweight, wind/water proof clothing is advisable.

Winter: Warm days but much thicker clothing is essential for potentially cold days and nights (Nov-Apr). A waterproof and windproof jacket is strongly recommended during the winter period. Please note that the High Atlas mountains can be cold and windy all year round.

### Footwear

Trainers or lightweight walking shoes with a good tread are ideal for exploring cities on foot, plus sandals for relaxing. If you intend on visiting the Atlas Mountains, we recommend walking boots with good ankle support.

### 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 advise you pack light as porters can't always be guaranteed at train station or hotels and you will need to lift your luggage up to storage racks on the train. Luggage with wheels or a rucksack is most suitable for train travel.

### Equipment

Personal water bottle and torch.

### Tipping

#### Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

#### Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. 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. Accordingly, you should allow approx 25 Euros for tips for the guides, drivers and other local staff. In Spain tipping is discretionary.

### Country Information

## Morocco

## 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**

£6.00 - 8.00

**Dinner price**

£8.00 - 12.00

**Beer price**

£2.5

**Water price**

£0.6

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

US Dollars, Sterling and Euros are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take a mixture of cash and credit cards. Scottish bank notes and Australian dollar travellers cheques and cash are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

**Where To Exchange**

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are available in main towns/cities, though can be unreliable.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Not all places.

**Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

## 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**

£8.00 - 12.00

**Dinner price**

£16.00 - 20.00

**Beer price**

£1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

**Water price**

£1.4

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Euros

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

**Where To Exchange**

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

**ATM Availability**

In cities and most major towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

**Travellers Cheques**

Not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Taxi, Train

## Essential Information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

**Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### 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.

Morocco: 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](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 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, 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.

## Morocco

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. 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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## 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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