



Spain – Malaga to Madrid

11 days

Tour Description

From the famous coastline of the Costa del Sol to the snowcapped peaks of the Sierra Nevada, Spain is a land of stunning contrasts. The country's history is entwined with the Moorish culture whose influence can be particularly felt in the cities of Cordoba and Granada through their architectural elements. Spain's passion radiates from its food and its flamenco style of dancing. This journey will ignite your passion for this Mediterranean land.

Highlights

- ❖ Explore Granada's extraordinary Alhambra palace
- ❖ Visit Ronda, one of Spain's renowned 'White Villages'
- ❖ Tour Cordoba's 10th century Mosque, now a Cathedral
- ❖ Carriage ride through the Plaza de Espana
- ❖ Experience a traditional flamenco show
- ❖ Explore the ancient walled city of Avila
- ❖ Guided tour of the world famous Prado Museum
- ❖ Visit to a Damascene Steel Workshop

Sample Tour Itinerary

Malaga – 3 nights

Day 1: Arrive Malaga

This morning we arrive in Malaga, Spain and transfer to our hotel in the heart of Marbella located on the spectacular Costa del Sol. The balance of the day will be yours to relax and unwind after your long flight.

Day 2:

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning and a free morning. This afternoon we will set out for Granada. The North African Muslims dwelled in southern Spain for almost 800 years, from their first conquest of Spanish soil (Gibraltar) AD 711 to their final expulsion from Granada in 1492. Two of Spain's most famous monuments, Córdoba's mosque and Granada's Alhambra palace, were the inspired creations of Moorish architects and craftsmen. We will be visiting the Alhambra palace, located on top of the hill Al-Sabika, on the left bank of the river Darro, to the west of the city of Granada and in front of the neighborhoods of the Albaicin and of the Alcazaba.

Day 3:

This morning we board our motor coach and travel to the Moorish city of Ronda. Because of the cliffs here, this was the last city to fall to the Crusaders, and visitors find escarpments, gorges and stunning views. Enjoy a sightseeing tour of this lovely Andalucía town of Celtic origin viewing the Cathedral, the Old Quarter, the oldest Bull Ring in Spain and the magnificent Tajo Gorge.



Cordoba – 3 nights

Day 4:

This morning we depart Marbella and travel north to Cordoba, a captivating city with many attractive monuments. Enjoy a panoramic tour of the city including a visit to the 10th century Mezquita (Mosque), now a Catholic Cathedral, which was converted when the Christians conquered Cordoba in 1236. Our scenic drive continues west to Seville.

Day 5:

This morning after breakfast we will explore the many treasures that Seville has to offer. We will visit the Barrio de Santa Cruz, the former Jewish Quarter, which is a labyrinth of old streets, overhung with beautiful baskets of flowers. As we continue on we will see the Cathedral with its famous Giraldi minaret. After our tour, why not relax and enjoy some of the local restaurants for fine traditional Andalusian food.

Day 6:

This morning enjoy a carriage ride through the park to the Plaza de Espana. The plaza is a massive half circle; the building which now contains government offices runs continuously along the outside of the half circle with a large fountain located in the center. This area starred in the Star Wars movie Attack of the Clones and depicted the royal Planet of Naboo. This afternoon is free for you to relax, explore or shop. This evening we will enjoy a 3 course dinner followed by a traditional flamenco show with live music and talented dancers.

Avila – 1 night

Day 7:

This morning after breakfast we will depart Seville bound for Avila, a city just northwest of Spain's capital city of Madrid. We will travel from Seville on the bullet train, taking just 2 ½ hours to get to Madrid where we will board a coach for a transfer to Avila. The ancient city of Avila, declared a "Heritage of Mankind", keeps the oldest and most complete walled environment within its 1.5 mile circular wall and has 90 semicircular towers dating back to the 11th century. Upon arrival we will enjoy a guided walking tour of this ancient city including the cathedral.

Madrid – 3 nights

Day 8:

This morning we depart Avila and travel to El Escorial where we will visit the El Escorial Monastery. Founded by Philip II in the 16th Century, it's the largest Spanish building of the Renaissance. Enjoy a guided tour of the King's Pantheon, Infants Pantheon, Capitular rooms and the Basilica. We continue our journey into Madrid, a strikingly modern city, which is home to the Museo del Prado, one of the world's most renowned museums. Upon arrival we will have a panoramic tour of the highlights of the city, before we check in to our hotel.

Day 9:

This morning we will enjoy a guided tour of the Prado Museum. Housed in an 18th century building that was constructed during the reign of Charles III, it is perhaps the best neo classical building in Madrid. Founded in 1819 as a museum of paintings it is now one of the best picture galleries in the world. The museum holds works of great masters such as Velazquez, Goya, the Greco, Murillo, Zurbaran, Rafael, Tiziano, The Bosco and Rubens.



Day 10:

After breakfast at the hotel, we will set out to explore Madrid. We will visit Puerta Del Sol; The Neptuno and Cibeles fountains, El Parque del Buen Retiro, designed in the 18th Century for Spanish nobility and the bull ring. We will also have entrance into Palacio de Oriente, with its 2800 rooms, 270 balconies and 44 stair cases; this opulent royal palace is still used for state occasions. In the afternoon we travel to Toledo, spectacularly situated on a granite hill surrounded by a loop of the Tagus River. We shall visit important sights such as the Moorish bridge, the 13th-century Gothic Cathedral, and the Church of Santo Tome with one of El Greco's most famous paintings. There will also be time to visit a Damascene Steel Workshop before returning to Madrid.

Day 11:

This morning we transfer to Madrid International Airport with ample time to check your luggage and board your flight back to the USA.

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodations: Malaga 3 nights, Cordoba 3 nights, Avila 1 night, Madrid 3 nights
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary