EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Walking in the Sierra Aracena (SLA 2017)

WALK & TREK

TRIPDURATI
8
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation Grade: Simple
Tour Type: Centre Based
Trek Grade: Easy to Moderate
Trip Code: SLA

Trip Highlights - Walking in the Sierra Aracena

- ✓ Castano del Robledo - Stay in a converted traditional village house in the untouched Sierra de Aracena
- ✓ Aracena National Park - Walk through the lovely countryside of this UNESCO Biosphere
- ✓ Cerro San Cristobal - Hike to the summit of the second highest peak in the Sierras
- ✓ Local cuisine - Sample the famous Jabugo serrano ham, and local cheese and wine
- ✓ Seville - Opportunity to visit this fascinating city

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	7 nights Simple Guesthouse
Included Meals:	7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Seville Airport
End Point:	Trip ends: Seville Airport
Transport:	Bus, Taxi
Countries:	Spain

Walking In The Sierra Aracena

Explore the trails of Spain's unspoilt UNESCO Heritage Reserve Sierra de Aracena on this relaxed walking trip through rural Andalucia. The pretty 'white village' of Castano de Robledo is set amid a verdant and rolling landscape of hills and forests of cork, oak and chestnut trees. From our traditional village house we take scenic village to village walks along ancient drover routes, and hike up Cerro San Cristobal for spectacular views over the surrounding area. We also learn about the local food and sample the delicious regional cuisine.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Simple

No-frills accommodation which includes berths on sleeper trains, rooms in village houses, boat cabins, campsites, huts and simple family-run lodges, guesthouses and hotels. Sleeping arrangements are simple and amenities are adequate, sometimes with en suite facilities and occasionally communal.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Trek Grade: Easy to Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organization throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Seville Airport. Drive to Castano de Robledo

Our tour begins at Seville's international airport. Transferring to a private bus we then drive deep into rural Andalucia, towards the small village of Castaño de Robledo, close to the Portuguese border. Our destination is a converted guesthouse in the heart of the Sierra Aracena National Park. Surrounded by a verdant landscape of cork trees and forests of oak and sweet chestnut, this will be our base for the week, amongst the scenic grandeur of Andalucia's second largest natural park.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Hike to Pena de Arias Montano and El Calabacino

A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the Sierra de Aracena encompasses one of the largest areas of protected forest in Europe. After breakfast this morning we head out along an ancient cobbled trail that takes us through chestnut groves towards the picturesque white village of Alájar. The views look out towards the historical mines of Rio Tinto and at Peña de Arias Montano we find the remains of an imposing 17th century hermitage, built on a high promontory above Alájar. Continuing on to the village of El Calabacino, we then complete the circuit back to Castaño de Robledo. Walking time: Four and a half hours. Distance 11 kilometres.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Walk along river to Jabugo, famous for it's serrano ham

Setting out from Castaño del Robledo we descend through chestnut groves and the beautiful Ribera de Jabugo valley to cross the Múrtiga river and then ascend to the famous ham village of Jabugo. Jabugo's 'Protected Designation of Origin' status reflects the universally acknowledged premier quality of its cured hams. We'll learn about the essential factors that contrive to make this Spain's foremost national delicacy - the local Iberian Black pig, the acorns from the native Holm oaks and the time-honoured curing tradition that today sees the village play host to literally millions of hams hanging in vast curing sheds. We'll visit one such shed to learn about the salting and curing process and, of course, we'll have ample opportunity to try the acclaimed finished product. In the afternoon we return to Castaño on foot through a landscape of wooded hillsides and valleys. Walking time: Four hours. Distance: 11.3 kilometres

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Hike up Cerro San Cristobal. Visit local winery

Today's high level walk takes us to the historic village of Almonaster La Real. Climbing out of the bowl of hills that surround Castaño, we head along a ridge and past pens of prized Iberian black pigs towards the peak of Cerro San Cristobal (907m). Crossing the second highest mountain in the Sierra's, we then head down towards the charming village of Almonaster, with its exquisite 9th century hilltop mosque. En route we visit Porrejona Vineyard before returning to Castaño by minibus. Walking time: Three and a half hours: Five hours. Distance 9.5 kilometres.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Free day; option to visit nearby Seville

Depending on our interests there are a choice of activities available today. From nearby Fuenteheridos the public buses provide a regular service to Seville, providing an ideal opportunity to pay a day trip to the Andalucían capital. Other options include horse riding, mountain bike hire or a trip out to the Rio Tinto mines to visit the museum and the mine workings. You could also return to Aracena to revisit the castle and the caves. Alternatively there are a number of short walks around Castaño that take in the broad vistas of the Sierra de Aracena's beautiful landscapes.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Circular walk via cheese farm to Aracena.

A twenty five minute drive this morning brings us to the isolated Monte Robledo farm situated in the Holm oak groves north of Aracena. For generations the Rodriguez family have continued the time-honoured tradition of making cheese from their own free range goats. We'll help hand-milk the goats, see the fabrication and curing facilities and learn about the processes involved. We'll also participate in a workshop making our own cheese and trying a few of the different varieties produced on the farm (accompanied, of course, by a glass or two of local wine). Late in the morning we'll begin our walk to Aracena via the tiny village of Carboneras where

we can stop for lunch. The final part of the walk follows the fertile valley of the "Fuente del Rey" and once in Aracena we'll have time to explore the town, visit the famous "Cave of Wonders" and have dinner before returning to Castano by bus. Walking time: Three hours. Distance 9 kilometres.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Walk via farmland and steep gorge back to Fuenteheridos

After breakfast this morning we drive the short distance to Fuenteheridos, to begin our final day's walk. We begin by crossing an open rural landscape of farms, orchards and meadows, known collectively as Valdelama, before following an undulating trail that eventually leads down to the pretty village of Cortelazor. From here we complete a seven kilometre circuit that takes us across the steep 'Arroyo de Guijarro' gorge and along an old drovers trail down to the river, where we have a chance to relax before heading back up to Cortelazor to meet our waiting bus. Walking time: Five hours. Distance 13 kilometres.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Tour ends Seville Airport

Driving back to Seville today our journey ends back at the city's international airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Located on a narrow cobbled street in the mountain village of Castano del Robledo, Posada del Castano was originally a large traditional Andalucian village house. Lovingly converted into a simple guesthouse the building retains many of its original features including rustic terracotta floor tiles and chestnut roof beams. The house remains cool in summer and cosy in winter thanks to the thick outer walls, whilst the terrace and courtyard serve as perfect outdoor space to enjoy the sunshine. Facilities include an upstairs small lounge complete with comfortable seating, books and games, and a balcony offering views of the red-tiled roof tops of the village set against the lush green hills beyond. A continental breakfast is served in the largest room of the house, with large antique wooden doors opening out onto a covered terrace overlooking the courtyard below and garden beyond. The courtyard features a shaded cushioned bench and a table, whilst the garden has a lawn bordered with flowers amongst the cherry, plum and persimmon trees. The guesthouse offers eight rooms, of which seven have en-suite bathrooms. Rooms are accessed either through the courtyard, the terrace or the upstairs lounge and all have their own unique character. All feature wooden furniture, terracotta tiled floors and roof beams in line with the rest of the house.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

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.

Spain

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water £: 1.40

Other Sightseeing & 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.

Optional Excursions

Activities & Excursions in Aracena
Aracena - Taxi to Aracena €40 (up to 7 in taxi)
Entrance fees to caves: €8.50pp (€6.50 for over 65yrs)
Half day horse riding: €50pp
Rio Tinto Mines €17pp plus transport €80 (up to 7 in taxi).

Activities & Excursions in Seville
Seville - Day trip by public bus: €9 return bus fare.
Also allow approx. €20 for various local transport to restaurants, for optional walks and for entrance fees in Seville.
Mountain bike hire €19/day pp incl helmet

Horse Riding - approx. €50pp

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely 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 €10-15 for tipping.

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.

Foreign Exchange

Spain

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.

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.

Joining your Trip

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 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 on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

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, 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 please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

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.

Important Information

Travel 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. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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 follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety
We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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.

Visa 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.

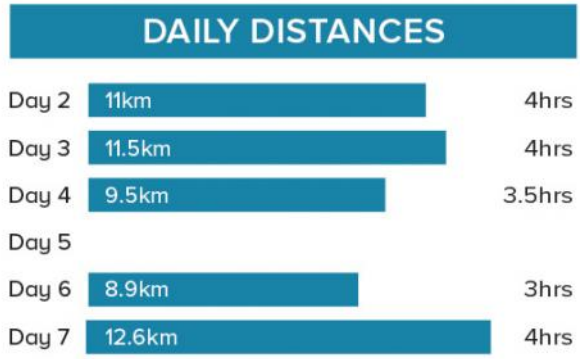
If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip



Trekking Details

On this walking holiday we walk on 5 days for between 4 to 6 hours each day. We have graded this trek as easy to moderate. The maximum ascent in any one day is 400m.

Climate

Spain

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.

Clothing

Andalucia is generally mild, though the Sierras are subject to some rain. Waterproofs for the rare shower are recommended. Lightweight cotton clothing is advised from June to September. Outside these months a warm sweater or fleece, plus a waterproof/ windproof outer garment is recommended. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Equipment

During the summer months we recommend you bring a sunhat and sunscreen as temperatures can be high.

Footwear

Walking or trail boots are essential, plus comfortable trainers. Sandals are useful in summer.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of luggage and a daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage – so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spain

Population: 46,030,109

Size of Country: 504,782 sq km

Major Language: Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spain

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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