

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Highlights of Andalucia (QAH 2017)



TRIPDURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Simply
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation Grade: Simple

Trip Code: QAH

Trip Highlights - Highlights of Andalucia

- ✓ Granada - Visit the Alhambra and Generalife, examples of classic Moorish architecture and gardens
- ✓ Cordoba - Visit the splendid Islamic monument of the Mezquita
- ✓ Castano del Robledo - Stay in a traditional village house in the Sierra de Arcena
- ✓ Sierra de Arcena - Walks over wooded hillsides and through rural whitewashed villages
- ✓ Seville - Beautiful Andalucian city, home of the stunning UNESCO World Heritage palace of the Alcazar

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 4 nights Simple Hotel
1 night Standard Hotel
2 nights Simple Guesthouse

Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Malaga Airport

End Point: Trip ends: Seville

Transport: Train, Public Bus, Taxi

Countries: Spain

Highlights of Andalucia

Andalucia is blessed with a wealth of culture, history, mountain scenery and sunshine. On this trip we visit the highlight cities of Granada, Seville and Cordoba along with a couple of nights off the beaten track in a typical Andalucian village. We include visits to the stunning Alhambra Palace and Cordoba Mezquita, two jewels of Moorish architecture from the golden era of Al-Andalus. You have the chance to stretch your legs on two walks through rolling, verdant landscape (graded easy to moderate).

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: Simply

If your idea of adventure travel is to experience everyday local life in a country then try one of our Simply Explore tours. These grassroots adventures are flexible, affordable and fun

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.



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

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

DAY 1 Join trip at Malaga Airport; public transport to Granada

Arriving at Malaga Airport today we travel the short distance into the city by train. From here we then board a public bus for the 128 kilometre drive to Granada. The journey should take us around two hours, getting us into the famous Andalucian city later this afternoon. Located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Granada is a historical gem that is blessed with a stunning fusion of Spanish and Muslim art and architecture including the Alhambra Palace, the Generalife and the city's grand 16th century cathedral. For the next two nights we will be staying in a small friendly hotel in the quieter El Realejo neighbourhood of Granada. Our hotel is in a characteristic Granada house with antique furnishings, a small garden and roof terrace. Most bedrooms are en suite although some do have shared facilities. Rooms are cosy, simply decorated and don't have a television, but there's so much to see in the city that you're unlikely to miss having one. It's around 20 minutes' walk from the Alhambra and 10 minutes' walk from the city centre or there's a bus

stop just a few meters away. A short stroll from the hotel is Plaza Campo del Principe with a number of good restaurants and bars where you can sample the local tapas and wine.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Visit the Alhambra and afternoon orientation walk of Granada

One of the highlights of our journey is our visit this morning to Granada's iconic Alhambra Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that occupies a small plateau in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. Built in the 13th century by Mohammed libn Nasr, the founder of the Nasrid dynasty, the palace is considered one of the finest examples of Moorish architecture outside the Arab world. We also include an orientation tour of the city this afternoon, taking in some of the city's main points of interest including the Albaicin, Granada's historic and atmospheric old Moorish quarter.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Bus to Cordoba; visit to Mezquita and orientation tour of Cordoba

After a free morning in the city we take a taxi to the bus station to catch the midday bus on to the city of Cordoba, the once great capital of the Islamic caliphate of al-Andalus. Like Granada, Cordoba hides a wealth of treasures amongst its rambling back streets and this afternoon we have chance to visit its great mosque, the Mezquita-Cathedral. Another of Spain's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, this extraordinary building represents a unique blend of faiths, housing two oratories and a stunning hypostyle hall that contains 856 columns of jasper, onyx, marble and granite. Tonight we will be staying in a small hotel in the historical centre of Cordoba. It's very close to the Plaza del Potro and the Fine Art Museum and only around 5 minutes' walk to the Mezquita. Bedrooms are en suite with air-conditioning and a television.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Travel to Castano del Robledo in the Sierra Aracena National Park

Travelling by train and bus today we head deep into the countryside of rural Andalucia, heading for the small village of Castano de Robledo, close to the Portuguese border. Our destination lies in the heart of the Sierra Aracena National Park, surrounded by a landscape of cork trees and forests of oak and sweet chestnut. Castano is a captivating collection of narrow cobbled streets and whitewashed houses that exhibit the typical 'serrano' architecture of the area. Our guesthouse for the next two nights is within this tiny village. It is filled with rustic character and rural charm and is the perfect base for exploring on foot. You can relax after a day walking, in its courtyard and garden, on the terrace or in the comfortable upstairs lounge filled with books. All the bedrooms are different and have their own character. Most are en suite but some have shared bathrooms and they don't have televisions.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Circular walk through rural Andalucia to the white village of Alajar

After breakfast this morning we walk to the picturesque 'pueblo blanco' (white village) of Alajar, famed for the imposing 17th century shrine of Arias Montano that occupies a rocky promontory high above the village. We return to Castano on foot (total walking distance 12 kilometres). This afternoon you may wish to take a bus on to the town of Aracena, home to the famous 'Gruta de las Maravillas' (Cave of Wonders), set amidst one of the most spectacular cave systems in the country. If time allows there may be chance to pay a visit to the caves (optional).

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Walk to Galaroza in the scenic Valle de Murtiga; bus to Seville

Lying to the northwest of Seville, the Sierra de Aracena is a remote western outlier of the extensive Sierra Morena and the quiet, easy paced, way of life here remains definitively Andalucian. The wooded hillsides support a smattering of tiny whitewashed villages, with rural economies still reliant on the production of quality cured hams, chestnuts and cork. We have a chance to enjoy more of this rural idyll today, with a walk to the nearby village of Galaroza, in the beautifully scenic Valle de Murtiga (walking distance approximately 6.5 kilometres). Later in the afternoon we catch the bus to Seville. Our bags will be transported separately to the bus stop in Galaroza.

For the next two nights 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 meters 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 and they don't have televisions.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Orientation walk of Seville; chance to visit the Alcazar

The Andalucian capital can trace its ancestry back over two thousand years. It is now home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites and is one of the three largest Old Towns in Europe (Venice and Genoa being the other two). Today is free offering a chance to take in the delights of the Alcazar and the city's immense Gothic Cathedral. You may also want to take a walk through the city, taking in its beautiful 'Mudejar' architecture (a mixture of Christian and Moorish styles) Or perhaps even enjoy the views from the top of the Giralda Tower.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Trip ends in Seville

Trip ends after breakfast. If you are staying on you may wish to explore the city further, perhaps visit on of Seville's many museums.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

On this trip you are able to choose to purchase a single room (please see the dates and prices for the applicable single supplement price). However, this option is only available for you to have a single room on days 1-3 and 6-7 of this holiday. On days 4-5 we're not able to offer single rooms, as the guesthouse we use only has enough rooms to accommodate all the passengers on a full group on a twin share basis.

For the majority of nights on this trip we use simple accommodation, so there won't be hairdryers or tea/coffee making facilities in the bedrooms and some won't have a television, although the views are so stunning and there's so much to see and do that you're unlikely to miss having one. The majority of bedrooms are en suite, but sometimes you may have shared bathroom facilities.

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

Granada - Royal Chapal €4.00; Cathedral - free; Baroque Monastery San Jeronimo €4.00; Madraza €2.00

Cordoba - Real Alcazar Free (€4.50 after 0930); Caliphal Baths Free (€2.50 after 0930); Torre de Calahorra €4.50

Castano del Robledo - Cave of Wonders € 8.50 with additional €10.00 for return transport

Seville - Cathedral and Giralda Tower €9.00; Real Alcazar €9.50; Plaza de Espana free; Bike Hire €8.00 for three hours; Flamenco show between €12.00 and €23.00 ; Pilates House €8.00 ; Archeological Museum €3.00; Navegation Pavillion/Schindler Tower €5.00; Archeological Museum €3.00; Saint George Castle Free; Schindler Tower €5.00

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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 for tipping drivers and site guides. In order to make things easier for you, your Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

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.

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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

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

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.

Equipment

During the summer months we recommend you bring a sunhat and sunscreen as temperatures can be very high. A torch is generally useful to travel with.

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: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage 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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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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