EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Highlights of Andalucia (QAH 2014)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOUR DURATION **8** DAYS

Tour Style: Simply
Tour Pace: Moderate
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Simple
Tour Code: QAH

Tour Highlights - Highlights of Andalucia

- ✓ Granada - Visit the Alhambra and Generalife, examples of classic Moorish architecture and gardens
- ✓ Córdoba - Visit the splendid Islamic monument of the Mezquita
- ✓ Castaño 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 Alcázar

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	2 nights Simple Hotel 5 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Malaga Airport
End Point:	Tour ends: Seville
Transport:	Bus, Train, Taxi
Countries:	Spain

Highlights of Andalucia

Andalucia is blessed with a wealth of culture, history, mountain scenery and sunshine. On this tour 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 guided 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.

Tour Comfort: Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, typically with en suite facilities.

Tour Style: Simply

Light on your pocket but not on adventure, these fun and flexible tours let you choose how much or little you spend on activities, sightseeing and food. Staying in simple accommodation, these tours are great value for money, using mainly public transport to get around; you are assured of a fun and authentic travel experience.

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 tour 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 organisation 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 Malaga Airport. Bus 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 Granda. 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.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 2 In Granada; Alhambra visit and afternoon orientation walk

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 Iibn 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 Rooms Available

DAY 3 Bus to Cordoba. Afternoon visit to Mezquita

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 Córdoba, the once great capital of the Islamic caliphate of al-Andalus. Like Granada, Córdoba hides a wealth of treasures amongst its rambling back streets and this afternoon we have chance to visit its great mosque, the Mezquita-Catedral. Another of Spain's 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 4 Castano del Robledo via Seville

Travelling by train and bus today we head deep into the countryside of rural Andalucia, heading for the small village of Castaño 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. Castaño is a captivating collection of narrow cobbled streets and whitewashed houses that exhibit the typical 'serrano' architecture of the area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 5 In Castano del Robledo: walk to Alajar

After breakfast this morning we walk to the picturesque 'pueblo blanco' (white village) of Alájar, 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' (Grotto of the Marvels), 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: **Standard Hotel**

DAY 6 Walk to Galaroza; 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 7 In Seville: morning orientation walk. Afternoon free

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). This morning we take a walk through the city, taking in its beautiful 'Mudejar' architecture (a mixture of Christian and Moorish styles). This afternoon has then been left free, offering a chance to take in the delights of the Alcazar and the city's immense Gothic Cathedral. Or perhaps even enjoy the views from the top of the Giralda Tower.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 8 Tour ends Seville

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

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

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

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

Seville - Cathedral € 12;Alcazar € 15
Cordoba - Flamenco show € 22; Arab baths and massage € 32; Additional Local guide for Mezquita and Juderia € 10-15

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour 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, 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: Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

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: Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Tour

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

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on **'Land Only'** arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate **'Joining Instructions'** for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

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 joining **any** of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

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.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. 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 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 Tour

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.

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 tour: 20kg

General Information

Food

The prices for meals and 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. 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 £: 8.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Drink

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 2.5

Water £: 1.40

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 & 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, elephant, 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.

Our commitment to the environment

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 and traditional, 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: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO_2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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 http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

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.

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 2013 and 31st December 2014.

Tour 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: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

These tour notes were printed on 14/03/2014 08:18:10