



ACADEMY  
TRAVEL

TAILORED  
SMALL GROUP  
JOURNEYS

# THE MOORS IN SPAIN

MADRID, CORDOBA, SEVILLE & GRANADA

*Alhambra, Granada*

## OVERVIEW

Spain's remarkable history makes it a compelling destination for travellers, and few stories capture the imagination as much as those of Al-Andalus, the Moorish kingdom that once covered the Iberian Peninsula.

Arriving from the Maghreb in the 8th century, the Moors established a presence in southern Spain which was to expand and contract over the coming centuries. Al-Andalus was the centre of their kingdom and the cities of Cordoba, Seville, and Granada its crown jewels – places of culture and learning filled with extraordinary palaces, gardens, and mosques.

Led by Dr Jeni Ryde, this 14-day tour takes us from Madrid to Toledo then down through modern day Andalusia, looking at a region which flourished economically and intellectually under the Moors and, following the conquest in 1492, gradually found a way to preserve and integrate elements of this outstanding period in history into its art, architecture, and culture.

As well as the great cities of Al-Andalus, we experience the broad sweep of the fertile plains and rugged mountains which once formed a frontier between the armies of the Moors and Christians, dotted with the characteristic white hilltop villages of the region which still retain vestiges of their Moorish past.



## TOUR LEADER

**Dr Jeni Ryde** is a linguist and art history specialist with over 15 years experience leading tours to Spain. Jeni speaks fluent Spanish.

## TOUR DATES

**October 8-21, 2024**

## TOUR PRICE

**\$11,720** per person, twin share

**\$2,320** single supplement

## TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

## GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

## ITINERARY

Madrid (2 nights), Seville (4 nights), Córdoba (3 nights), Granada (4 nights)

## INCLUSIONS

**13** nights' accommodation in centrally located 4-star hotels. All breakfasts, 1 lunch, 5 dinners and a wine tasting. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Tuesday 8 October, at the H10 Puerta de Alcalá, Madrid.

The tour ends after breakfast on Monday 21 October, at the Villa Oniria, Granada.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D and WT for Wine Tasting.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

### Alhambra of Granada

A superb example of traditional Moorish architecture, the serene 13th-century palace of the Nasrid sultans with its beautiful gardens and waterways is set against the stunning backdrop of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

### Mezquita of Córdoba

Supported by a forest of palm-like columns, the mezquita is one of the most important monuments of the Western Islamic world, creating an atmosphere of quiet reverence in a city which was an important seat of learning.

### Seville's Real Alcázar

Dating from the 14th century, decorated with exquisite tiles and a carved wooden ceiling, the Alcázar is a superb example of Seville's striking Mudéjar architecture, combining Christian and Moorish influences.

### Toledo and the Convivencia

Spectacularly perched on a rocky promontory, the medieval heart of Toledo reflects the time of the Convivencia, a period of co-existence between Moors, Christians, and Jews.

### Hilltop towns of Andalusia

The hilltop location of Andalusia's lovely Pueblos Blancos hints strongly at their role as the gateway at La Frontera, the frontier between Moorish and Christian Spain.

### Tuesday 8 October

#### Arrival

Following individual travel arrangements to Madrid or the Pre-Tour Extension (details listed at back of itinerary), we meet tour leader Dr Jeni Ryde and tour manager Elena Ortega in the hotel early this evening. After an introductory talk from Jeni on the Moors in Spain we head out for dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Madrid (D)

### Wednesday 9 October

#### Toledo

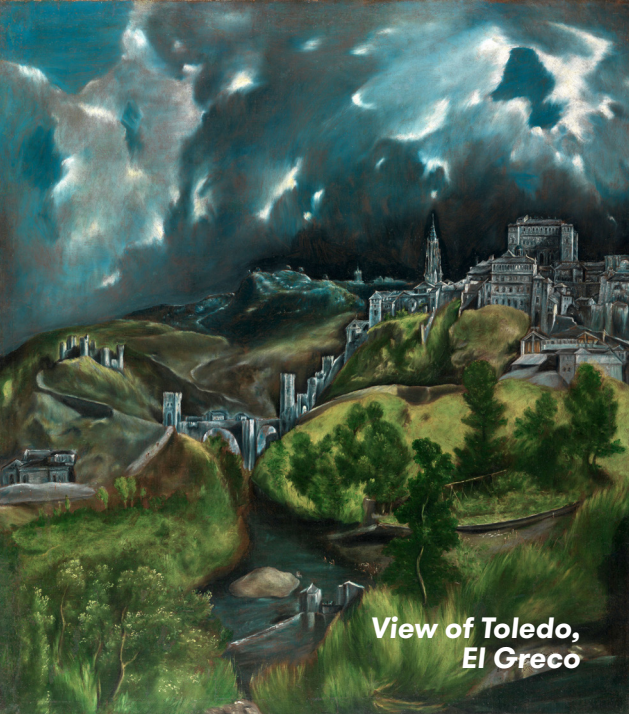
We travel the short distance from Madrid to the beautiful city of Toledo today. One of Spain's oldest cities, Toledo occupies a rugged promontory above the Tagus River which once gave it strategic advantage and now offers exceptional views across the surrounding landscape. The city is a fusion of Moorish, Christian and Jewish influences and our visit includes the 10th-century Mesquita del Cristo de la Luz, a small but beautifully preserved mosque and the Sinagoga del Transito with its Islamic inspired architecture. In the 14th-century Iglesia di Santo Tomé, which incorporates elements of the former mosque on which it was built, we will see El Greco's monumental masterpiece, *The Burial of the Count Orgaz*, dedicated to the church's benefactor. There is time to explore this lovely and accessible city before we return to Madrid. Overnight Madrid (B)

### Thursday 10 October

#### Madrid

Madrid's excellent archaeological museum is our first destination this morning where our visit will focus on archaeological and ethnographic finds from the Iberian Peninsula. After a break for lunch, we collect our bags and, in the early afternoon, join the fast train to Seville. Arriving in Seville we check in to our hotel and there is time to relax before we meet for a talk followed by dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Seville (B, D)





**View of Toledo,  
El Greco**



**Real Alcázar, Seville**



**Plaza de España, Seville**

## **Friday 11 October**

### **Seville**

Seville is the quintessential Andalusian city, and we begin our visit this morning at the magnificent cathedral, the largest gothic church in the world. Work commenced on the cathedral in 1402 and was completed in just over a century – a monumental achievement given its size and splendour. Our guided tour includes the Chancel, Royal Chapel and the treasury, where we can see works by Goya and Murillo. Little remains of the original 12th-century mosque on the site apart from the lovely Patio de los Naranjos – the traditional ablutions area for the mosque – and the 12th-century Giralda, a beautiful 98-metre-high minaret which offers excellent views from the top. We also visit the Torre del Oro, the 12th-century “tower of gold” which was part of the Moorish city wall and controlled shipping on the Guadalquivir. After a break for lunch, we visit the stunning Real Alcázar. Dating from the 14th century and built in pure Mudéjar style, the Alcázar is still used as a residence when the Royal family visit Seville. Our tour includes the beautiful gardens which adjoin the complex. This evening we attend a performance of flamenco with drinks to follow at the intimate Casa de la Memoria. Overnight Seville (B)

## **Saturday 12 October**

### **Jerez de la Frontera**

Today we take a coach to Jerez de la Frontera, a town which once sat on the border between Moorish and Christian regions on the Iberian Peninsula and gave its name to the superb, fortified wine produced here. We begin our visit at a local winery or bodega, where we sample the famous Jerez or sherry, a smooth tipple which has little in common with its English namesake, before making our way to the town centre. Here we tour the Alcázar, an 11th-century fortress which retains many of its original Islamic architectural elements including a mosque and baths. We then continue to Vejer, one of the stunning white hilltop villages of the region, perched above the Barbate River. We'll enjoy lunch at a panoramic terraced restaurant with time to wander the cobbled streets of the town before returning to Seville in the late afternoon. Overnight Seville (B, L)

## **Sunday 13 October**

### **Mudéjar Sevilla**

Following the Reconquista, when the Christians took the Iberian Peninsula back from the Moors, they often chose to occupy rather than destroy the existing Moorish structures which so complemented the climate and landscape. Adapting them to their use or building new structures which combined the Moorish and the Gothic, this new style of architecture was called Mudéjar, after the less than complimentary name given to Moors who





Córdoba



Mosque-Cathedral  
of Córdoba



Alcázar, Córdoba

had remained in Spain following the reconquest. While the Real Alcázar is one of the most important examples of this style, this morning our relaxed walking tour takes us past more of Seville's fine Mudéjar buildings. We also visit the Museo de Bellas Artes, a fine art museum which holds an excellent collection from the golden age of Sevillian painting. After a break for lunch, we continue to the Casa de Pilatos, a palatial residence still belonging to one of Spain's aristocratic families, where our guided tour takes us through this beautifully preserved 16th-century building which combines Gothic, Mudéjar and Italian Renaissance features. Returning to our hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Seville (B)

#### **Monday 14 October** **Basilippo & Carmona**

We depart Seville today and join our coach for Córdoba, stopping en route at Basilippo, a family-owned producer of fine virgin olive oil where we enjoy a short tour and tasting before continuing on to Carmona. We'll explore this small, picturesque town overlooking the Corbones River and climb the imposing Puerta de Sevilla, a fortified Roman gateway with Carthaginian and Moorish elements, for a wonderful view of the surrounding area. After a break for lunch, we rejoin our coach and continue to Córdoba. There is time to relax before we head out for dinner at Ermita de la Candelaria, a beautifully restored former 15th-century monastery which now offers an exceptional regional menu using locally sourced products. Overnight Córdoba (B, D)

#### **Tuesday 15 October** **Córdoba**

Once the largest city in Roman Spain, Córdoba's period of greatest glory was under the caliphate of the Moors and its beautiful mezquita, or mosque, constructed around 780 CE on the ruins of an old Visigothic church, dates from this period. Our guided walking tour takes us through the mosque itself as well as the surrounding areas in Córdoba's historic centre. After a break for lunch, we visit the 14th-century Alcázar, an imposing fortress whose external appearance belies its more welcoming interior and beautiful, terraced gardens before continuing to the synagogue, one of only three in Spain to survive the Jewish expulsion of 1492 and one of the best preserved in Spain. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Córdoba. (B)

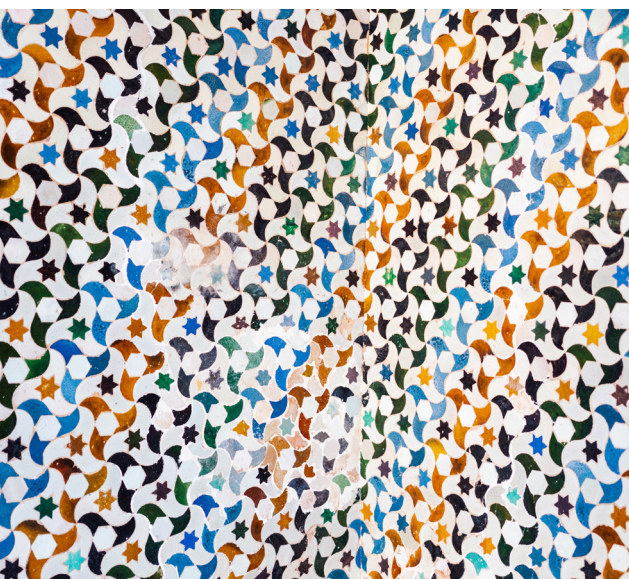
#### **Wednesday 16 October** **Medina Azahara**

This morning we head northwest of the city to Medina Azahara, the site of a once sumptuous palatine city built by caliph Abd al-Rahman III in the 10th century. At its peak the site extended over three terraces, and in addition to





Alhambra, Granada



View over  
Granada

the palace buildings included a zoo, an aviary, numerous baths, and a weapons factory. Sacked by Berber invaders in 1010 and then abandoned, excavations only began on the site in 1910. Today we can see parts of the palace and mosque and a section of reconstructed gardens, and visit the world-class and award-winning museum. Returning to Córdoba the afternoon is at leisure and you may like to visit the plant-filled patios of the Palacio Viana, or simply explore the city. We meet back at the hotel in the early evening for a talk and your tour leader and manager will have suggestions for activities this evening. Overnight Córdoba (B)

#### **Thursday 17 October**

##### **Antequera**

Departing Córdoba this morning we travel to Granada via the town of Antequera at the foot of the dramatic Sierra de El Torcal. While much of the town's late Gothic and Baroque architecture reflects its time of greatest success from the 16th -18th centuries, we start much earlier with a visit to the Menga, Viera, and El Romeral dolmens – astonishing megalithic burial chambers dating back 6,000 years to the Neolithic and Bronze age. We also visit the imposing Alcazaba, a 14th-century Moorish fortress which dominates the town from its hilltop position, ideal for repelling repeated attacks from Spanish troops before the Reconquista. After a break for lunch, we rejoin our coach and continue to Granada where there is time to relax before we meet for a talk early this evening followed by a light dinner in our hotel. Overnight Granada (B, D)

#### **Friday 18 October**

##### **Alhambra**

The jewel in Granada's crown is indisputably its beautiful Alhambra, the palace fortress of the Nasrid sultans, rulers of the last Spanish Moorish kingdoms. Our tour today takes us through the serene 14th-century Palacios Nazaríes as well as the later Renaissance palace, built within the citadel for Charles V. We also visit the Alcazaba, the earliest part of the fortress around which the Palacio was built, before making our way to the Generalife, the summer palace of the Sultans with its series of patios, enclosed gardens, and waterways. In the afternoon we'll explore the Cathedral and Royal Chapel, a monumental complex built in flamboyant late Gothic style containing the mausoleums of the early Catholic monarchs. We round off the day with a wine tasting with tapas at the stylish Gar Anat Hotel. Overnight Granada (B, WT)

#### **Saturday 19 October**

##### **Granada**

This morning our relaxed walking tour takes us through the Albaicín, one of the oldest districts in Granada and the place to which the Moors remaining in Granada retreated



## HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location. All hotels are a comfortable four-star standard.

### **Madrid, H10 Puerta de Alcalá**

(2 nights)

[www.h10hotels.com](http://www.h10hotels.com)

### **Seville, Hotel Vincci La Rábida**

(4 nights)

[www.vinccilarabida.com](http://www.vinccilarabida.com)

### **Cordoba, Hotel NH Amistad**

(3 nights)

[www.nh-hotels.com](http://www.nh-hotels.com)

### **Granada, Villa Oniria**

(4 nights)

[www.villaoniria.com](http://www.villaoniria.com)

## WEATHER

Autumn is an excellent time to travel in Spain with moderate temperatures, ranging from about 10°C to 24°C. This is a big country so expect considerable variation in the weather pattern, with mountainous Granada and the city of Madrid high on the plains being cool, but Seville and Córdoba hopefully having warm sunny days. There is generally some rainfall in October so please bring wet weather gear.

## FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

### **Grade Two**

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at an easy to regular pace
- keep up with the group at all times
- negotiate challenging archaeological sites, which are often uneven and unstable
- negotiate stairs and bridges
- stand for one to two hours in galleries and museums at a time

after the Reconquista. It is now a beguiling mix of narrow cobbled streets, courtyards, restaurants, and small shops and remains Spain's largest and most characteristic surviving Moorish barrio, or neighbourhood. We visit El Bañuelo, the well-preserved 11th-century Arab hammam or baths, one of the few that survived demolition by the conquering Christians who questioned the morality of public bathing, as well as the Aljibe del Rey, an enormous cistern which furnished water to the Moorish city. The afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore and enjoy this fascinating city. Overnight Granada (B)

### **Sunday 20 October**

#### **Vega de Granada**

Today's excursion takes us to the countryside just outside of the city, an area that was once the frontier between the Moorish kingdom and Christian territory. Here the fertile vega, or plain, contrasts with villages perched dramatically on rocky crags, many with Mudéjar churches or ruined fortifications attesting to their defensive past. Returning to Granada there is time to relax and freshen up before we meet for our farewell dinner in one of the city's fine restaurants. Overnight Granada (B, D)

### **Monday 21 October**

#### **Departure**

The tour ends this morning after breakfast. Please consult your individual travel documents for your ongoing journey. (B)



## ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Lucy Yeates** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

[lucy@academytravel.com.au](mailto:lucy@academytravel.com.au)

 [info@academytravel.com.au](mailto:info@academytravel.com.au)

 [academytravel.com.au](http://academytravel.com.au)





# ACADEMY TRAVEL

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JOURNEYS

# MADRID

## PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

El Escorial

### OVERVIEW

Madrid is home to some of Europe's finest art galleries and has a captivating history. Castile was at the centre of the discovery of the New World and the vast wealth that flooded back from the colonies instigated monumental palatial projects and a thriving arts scene. This former Islamic military outpost became the centre of a fearless Spanish Empire that straddled the Atlantic.

Led by artist Elena Ortega, a Madrid resident, our time in the capital concentrates on the city's Golden Age and wealth of art, with extended walking tours and guided visits of palaces, museums and galleries, including the famed Golden Art Triangle – the superlative Prado, with its treasures of Spanish and European art dating from the 12th to the early 20th centuries; the vast private collection of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, once the second largest private collection in the world, and the Reina Sofía Art Centre, home to Picasso's *Guernica*.

A day trip to Felipe II's austere Monastery Palace El Escorial and the sophisticated hill city of Segovia offers further insight into the history and cultural wealth of Spain. Accommodation is in the comfortable four-star H10 Puerta de Alcalá, allowing a seamless transition into the main tour program.



### TOUR LEADER

**Elena Ortega** is Spanish born, living between Australia and Spain since 1992. She has a passion for Fine Arts and European history, with a Bachelor of Arts from Sydney University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the National Art School.

### EXTENSION DATES

**October 5-8, 2024**

### EXTENSION PRICE

**\$2,870** per person, twin share  
**\$590** single supplement

### GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

### ITINERARY

Madrid (3 nights)

### INCLUSIONS

**3** nights' accommodation in a centrally located 4-star hotel. All breakfasts and 1 dinner. Services of an expert tour leader throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.

### HOTEL

The **H10 Puerta de Alcalá** is located near El Retiro Park, in Madrid's exclusive Salamanca district, which houses the best boutiques of the city. The hotel features an impressive rooftop terrace and bar, with plunge pool and panoramic views of the city.





## EXTENSION ITINERARY

Included meals are indicated with B and D.

### **Saturday 5 October** **Modern Spanish Art**

We meet our tour leader Elena Ortega in the hotel this afternoon before making our way to the Museo Reina Sofía, whose exceptional collection of modern Spanish art includes works by Juan Gris, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí and Pablo Picasso. A highlight here is Picasso's *Guernica*, painted in response to atrocities committed during the Spanish Civil War. On our way back to the hotel, we take a stroll around the nearby El Retiro Park, a favourite place for Madrileños to relax. The park dates from the 16th century and was once owned by the Royal family. We finish the day with tapas and drinks near our hotel. Overnight Madrid (D)

### **Sunday 6 October** **Escorial & Segovia**

This morning we head out of Madrid to the Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial. Commissioned by Phillip II to commemorate the defeat of the French at St Quentin, this vast structure of over 4,000 rooms was both monastery and austere royal residence. Our tour takes us through the monastery, royal apartments, basilica and library as well as the mausoleum, the final resting place of almost all Spanish monarchs since Charles V was interred in 1558. After a break for lunch, we then make our way to Segovia, beautifully sited on a rocky ridge above the Castilian plain with an impressive Roman aqueduct at its heart. We enjoy a walking tour of the centre before making our way up to the cathedral and past the extraordinary Alcázar, a beautiful turreted fantasy which reputedly inspired Walt Disney. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Madrid (B)

### **Monday 7 October** **Prado & Madrid de los Austrias**

Our day begins at the Museo Nacional del Prado, one of the world's foremost collections of Old Master paintings. The Spanish Habsburg and Bourbon monarchs had acquired an exceptional collection of art over the centuries, and their collections became the core of the new public museum in 1819. The Prado has many iconic masterpieces by artists such as Velasquez, Goya and El Greco and we enjoy a guided tour of key works in the collection, followed by time to explore the museum independently. Following a break for lunch in the Prado café, we then embark on an extended walking tour of Habsburg Madrid (El Madrid de los Austrias), taking in the main squares, the vast Royal Palace, the Almudena Cathedral and the Market of San Miguel, a food lover's delight. The evening is set aside for a performance of Flamenco in a celebrated and intimate 'Tablao'. Whilst the dance originated in Andalusia, the finest performers come to Madrid to advance their careers. Overnight Madrid (B)

### **Tuesday 8 October** **Thyssen & Sorolla Museums**

The morning is devoted to the last part of the Art Triangle, as we visit the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, an exceptional private collection with over 800 works dating from the 13th century to the present day. Partially acquired by the state in 1993 from Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza (and the deal is continually renegotiated), the collection includes magnificent works by Raphael, Titian, the Impressionists and many other artists. Following a break for lunch, we then make our way to the glamorous former home and studio of Joaquín Sorolla – one of Spain's most celebrated painters, best known for his sun-dappled images of frolicking children and fashionable ladies enjoying the seaside. Sorolla lived well, and our tour of the house museum and gardens open a window into that vanished world. Returning to the hotel in the late afternoon, our main tour program commences with an introductory talk by Dr Jeni Ryde. (B)