

SPAIN

Granada to Seville

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **Barcelona Pre-Tour Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.



Overview

From legendary Granada to vibrant Seville, this walking journey explores the best of southern Spain; the most beautiful whitewashed villages and spectacular mountain ranges. You begin in the royal city of Granada, the last jewel in the Moorish crown, where you walk the massive fortifications of the oldest part, the Alcazaba, the Alhambra royal palaces, and the extraordinarily engineered gardens of the Generalife. You then move to the pastoral land of the Torcal de Antequera Nature Reserve and the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park. Here you walk along mountainsides terraced with olive groves and interspersed with lush valleys. You revel in the beauty of the rocky landscapes clad with ancient firs and wander through cork forests watered by gently meandering streams. These areas are as beautiful and fertile today as they were 500 years ago and the classic *pueblos blancos* (white villages) have largely preserved their traditional lifestyle and culture. At night you relax in the tranquil countryside near La Joya, the serene village of Grazalesma, and Ronda—one of southern Spain's most beautiful towns, perched dramatically on both sides of a deep gorge. The tour culminates in the passionate city of Seville, home to flamenco dancing, tapas, and bullfighting.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Alhambra guided visit; 3-4 hours, easy. Transfer to La Joya-Antequera

This morning you enter the extraordinary world of the Alhambra—a magnificent ensemble of palaces and fortresses that once housed the Moorish rulers of Granada. The tour of the Alhambra is led by a local expert guide and provides a detailed overview of this overwhelmingly beautiful site. The visit comprises all of the most fascinating monuments, including the Nasrid Palaces, the Alcazaba (or fortress), as well as the exquisite Palacio del Generalife gardens. The sultan’s summer palace—known as the Generalife or “the architect’s gardens” if literally translated from Arabic—is the oldest example of Moorish gardens in Spain. Even if you explored the site on your own prior to the tour, you discover intriguing new facets of each of the ancient buildings and gardens, all the while relishing spectacular views over the rest of the city.

Lunch at a local restaurant may include a refreshing starter of shrimp gazpacho paired with the region’s white wine. By mid-afternoon, you depart Granada for the two-hour transfer to the small village of La Joya and your home for two nights—a charming boutique hotel peacefully located on the outskirts of the village. From its rural hillside setting, there are splendid views over the Guadalhorce Valley and the Málaga countryside with the Mediterranean coast in

the distance. There is time to unpack and settle in before gathering again for a welcome aperitif of *jerez* (sherry) or *vino dulce de Málaga* (sweet wine from Málaga) on the hotel's outdoor terrace. A delicious dinner of Mediterranean specialties follows in your hotel's warm wood-beamed restaurant.



Hotel Fuente del Sol, La Joya

Beautifully situated in tranquil surroundings, our exclusive rural hotel boasts splendid views of the coastal mountains toward Málaga, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and exceptional dining.

DAY 2

Hotel Fuente del Sol to Antequera; 8.5 miles, moderate, 1,200-ft. elevation gain, 2,000-ft. elevation loss. Torcal de Antequera; 1.5 miles, easy to moderate

Following a hearty buffet breakfast, you depart the hotel on foot for the town of Antequera, home to numerous churches, chapels, and Neolithic and Bronze Age dolmens (burial chambers built with huge slabs of rock), as well as a profusion of Roman, Islamic, and Spanish architectural gems. Your route passes isolated *cortijos* (traditional Andalucian farmhouses) as it skirts the Cerro del Águila (Eagle Hill). At the Cortijo del Robledillo (Oak Tree Farm), you continue along a *cordel*, a drover's road used by shepherds travelling with their flocks of sheep and goats since time immemorial. A steady, yet gradual ascent ensues, leading to the pass at Escalerueta. Rewarded with spectacular views over the distinctive limestone massif landscape of the Torcal, you begin a steep descent towards the foot of the pass. Reaching Antequera, you enjoy a well-deserved lunch in a local tapas bar—supplemented by an assortment of delicacies provided by your guides. After lunch, a short bus ride takes you into the heart of the Torcal de Antequera, a maze of surreal karstic rock outcrops dating from the Jurassic period. The area supports a variety of orchids, wild roses, mountain goats, and griffon vultures. After an hour's walk around the Torcal (keep an eye out for fossils!), a 30-minute transfer returns you to your hotel. Dinner, once again on site, may feature a traditional dish of grilled wild boar or roasted sea bass with vegetables freshly picked from the hotel's garden.

Hotel Fuente del Sol, La Joya



DAY 3

Peñon Grande Circuit, 5-6 miles, moderate, 1700-ft gain and loss or Llano Endrinal Circuit, 3.5 miles, easy to moderate, 1000-ft gain and loss

After breakfast, a transfer of approximately 3 hours brings you from La Joya to your next hotel in Grazalema, where you check your bags before

embarking on a short guided tour of this charming village. Following a tasty tapas lunch in a spot popular with the locals, you set off through the village to undertake a renowned local walk—the classic circuit of the Peñon Grande, the towering massif that dominates the skyline to the west of Grazalema. Starting from the front door of your hotel and moving through the quiet, pretty back streets, you emerge at the high end of the village. You continue through stands of pine and oak trees and eventually reach a more open area, still gaining height, with beautiful views to the twin peaks of the Simancón and Reloj away to your left, as you skirt the east face of the Peñon Grande. The Llanos del Endrinal are a surprising and rare feature of the landscape here, a high flat area, and were cultivated until well into the 20th century; local farmers planted legumes and cereals and protected their crops by building the stone enclosure around it. However, the area is no longer cultivated and the remaining stone wall now serves to keep grazing animals in rather than out.

You reach the high point of your walk at the Puerto de las Presillas (Presillas Pass) and from here descend to the Puerto del Boyar, before picking up and following the nascent Río Guadalete down and back to Grazalema where you have time to meander through the streets of this charming and well-maintained mountain village. One of the typical *pueblos blancos* (white towns) of Andalucía, Grazalema is characterized by its whitewashed walls and either red- or brown-tiled roofs. The town achieved its greatest prosperity from the 17th century onwards based on the weaving industry using wool supplied from local sheep. High-quality woolen goods are still produced and sold in Grazalema.

Your hotel is located in the heart of this whitewashed village, and in the evening you walk a short distance to a local restaurant and enjoy rustic mountain cooking including various offers of game depending on the season.

Puerta de la Villa, Grazalema

Perfectly situated in the charming village of Grazalema, this hotel offers simple accommodations, a small plunge pool, and direct access to spectacular walks.

DAY 4

Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park; 9.5 miles, moderate to challenging, 1,700-ft. elevation gain, 3,600-ft. elevation loss



After a hearty breakfast and a short transfer, you embark on a spectacular walk today through the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park. A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, this park is one of Spain's most ecologically important areas and home to the griffon vulture, deer, roebuck, and the imperial and royal eagles. The walk leads to the village of Benamahoma and begins above the town of Grazalema. Starting with an hour's steep and steady climb to a dramatic ridge at 4,000 feet in the Sierra de las Cumbres, you then skirt the north face of the Sierra del Pinar (clad with the dark green Spanish fir—a rare relic from the last ice age, surviving in significant numbers only in pockets of southwest Andalusia and Morocco).

Lunch is a picnic, offering an assortment of cheeses, sausages, and dried meats. Reenergized, you set off on the long descent to Benamahoma—an enchanting village whose streets are lined with orange trees, exuding the scent of their blossoms for much of the year. (In the event of local access restrictions or for guests seeking a shorter option, the walk may be an out and back rather than a circuit.) Dinner this evening is yours to enjoy on your own at one of the lively restaurants in the village square.

Puerta de la Villa, Grazalema



DAY 5

Grazalema to Montejaque; 4.5 miles, easy, 150-ft. elevation gain, 400-ft. elevation loss or 6.5 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain, 800-ft. elevation loss. Transfer to Ronda

After breakfast, you set off on foot for a varied walk towards the village of

Montejaque. Following an initial descent down a medieval cobbled causeway, the trail then rises to the Puerto de los Alamillos (Poplar Pass). Once through the pass, you find yourself walking briefly through picture-perfect farmland unchanged over the centuries, before dropping again to follow the gentle meanders of the Gadaures River through open cork oak forest. En route, your guides lay out another delicious picnic lunch.

This afternoon, a 40-minute transfer brings you to the day's final destination, Ronda, another of Andalucía's *pueblos blancos* and the most dramatically situated. Meaning "surrounded by mountains," Ronda is ringed by the Serranía de Ronda mountain range and perched on cliffs overlooking the spectacular 350-foot-deep Guadalevin River Gorge, known as El Tajo. Your parador hotel occupies the site of the former town hall and is ideally located at the edge of this gorge next to Ronda's famous Puente Nuevo, or "new bridge," a breathtaking setting that you will relish. There is time to settle in before strolling to dinner at a nearby restaurant for another Andalusian feast matched by the magnificent views over the gorge.

Parador de Ronda, Ronda

Built in the 18th century, the Parador is ideally located in the center of the city next to the emblematic Puente Nuevo. The spacious rooms boast beautiful views and colorful interiors.

DAY 6

Walking tour of Ronda; 2-3 hours, easy. Free afternoon in Ronda. Transfer to Seville

Following the previous days' invigorating full-day hikes in the open countryside, the next part of the tour offers a more relaxed pace, highlighting the region's historical and cultural gems. This morning, a guided walking tour takes you

across the arched Puente Nuevo, built in the 18th century, which connects the old Moorish quarter of the city, La Ciudad, with the newer section, El Mercadillo. Entering the central Casco Antiguo (old quarter), packed with churches, palaces, and the remains of mosques and other reminders of Spain's glorious Moorish past, you proceed to the main square and the city's original mosque, now the ornate parish church of Santa Maria La Mayor. Following a visit to the Casa Don Bosco or the Palacio Mondragon, a 14th-century palace with internal courtyards, fountains, a cliff-top garden, and the city museum, you proceed past two of the old town's bridges—the Puente Viejo (Old Bridge) of 1616 and the Moorish Puente de San Miguel—before reaching the 13th- and 14th-century Arab baths just outside the old city walls. Looping back toward the Puente Nuevo, you conclude your tour at Ronda's elegant Plaza de Toros, one of the oldest and most revered bullrings in Spain.

You then have free time for the rest of the morning, followed by lunch on your own. A two-hour transfer brings you to your elegant accommodation in a converted 18th-century palace in the heart of Seville. Your sojourn in Andalucia culminates with a final evening in this seductive city where the legendary Don Juan began conquering the hearts of women across Europe. A celebratory meal, perhaps a colorful Spanish seafood paella, served at a lively restaurant, is rounded off by an intimate flamenco performance.

Vincci La Rabida, Seville

Located in an old quarter of Seville, this beautifully restored 18th-century palace boasts outstanding views of the Giralda and Cathedral. A lovely property with comfortable rooms situated around a central patio and with a roof top terrace.

DAY 7

Seville city tour; 3 miles easy. Departure from Seville

Located on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, Seville is one of the most important historical and cultural cities in Europe. Your exploration of this fascinating city begins after breakfast with a visit to the Alcazar (royal palace)—founded in the 10th century by Abd Al Rahman III and converted most notably by Peter the Cruel for use as his palace. The fortress displays varied architectural styles from Islamic to Neoclassical and features multiple delightful gardens, fountains, and pavilions. You then continue with a stroll through the narrow streets of the Barrio de Santa Cruz, once the city's Jewish neighborhood. This historic quarter with its beautiful houses, flowered balconies, richly decorated façades and hidden patios is a treat to explore. The tour concludes early

afternoon (before lunch) with a visit to the city's monumental Cathedral after which you are free to continue your exploration of this fascinating city or to depart at your leisure for your next destination.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Fontecruz Granada Hotel, Granada, Spain, 9:00 a.m.

Gran Vía de Colon, 20
Granada, Spain
Tel 011 34 958 217 810
recepcion@fontecruzgranada.com

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Hotel Fuente del Sol

La Joya-Antequera, Spain
Tel 011 34 951 23 98 23
Email info@hotelfuentedelsol.com
hotelfuentedelsol.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 3 & 4

Hotel Puerta de la Villa

Grazalema, Spain
Tel 011 34 956 13 23 76
Email info@grazhotel.com
hotelpuertadelavilla.com
Hair dryers and laundry service available. Wireless Internet unavailable.

NIGHT 5

Parador de Ronda

Ronda, Spain
Tel 011 34 952 87 75 00
Email ronda@parador.es
parador.es/en/parador-de-ronda
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 6

Vincci La Rabida

Seville, Spain
Tel 011 34 954 50 12 80
Email larabida@vincchoteles.com
vinccilarabidahotel.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Vincci La Rabida, Seville, Spain, 2:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International

Email mail@oncallinternational.com

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.945.0103

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATES (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

May 15-21, 2016

June 5-11, 2016

September 18-24, 2016

October 2-8, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY

\$4,598 (Single+\$698)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions **for our scheduled group departures**, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

PRIVATE TOUR-ONLY PRICE FROM

6–9 guests \$4,798 (Single+\$698)

10+ guests: \$4,598 (Single+\$698)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from April 1 through October 15.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Fontecruz Granada Hotel, Granada, Spain, 9:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Vincci La Rabida, Seville, Spain, 2:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate to challenging, with three days of easy city walking, including a free afternoon. All other days include an average of 8 to 10 miles (6 to 7 hours) of hiking with significant ascents (up to 2,500 feet) and descents (up to 3,600 feet), and steep sections at times. The terrain is uneven with rocks and roots, and trails are exposed to the elements; it is therefore essential to carry plenty of water and to wear sun protection and waterproof hiking boots. The highest elevation on tour

is 4,500 feet. The itinerary combines leisurely days for exploring southern Spain's cultural highlights—the cities of Granada, Ronda, and Seville—with four back-to-back full days of hiking in the Andalucian countryside.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch and one dinner; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Fontecruz Granada Hotel, Granada, Spain, 9:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for easy city walking.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Granada Airport (GRX), Granada.

aena.es

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

Direct flights from the U.S. to Granada or Seville are not available; however, multiple major airlines offer flights to these cities with a connection in a major European city. You may choose to fly directly from the U.S. to Madrid for example, and then arrange a domestic flight from Madrid to Granada with Iberia (iberia.com). From the Granada Airport, we suggest you take a taxi for the 9-mile journey to the Fontecruz Granada Hotel, our meeting point for the tour. A taxi costs approximately 30 euros and takes about 20 minutes, depending on traffic. Taxis may be found outside the arrival terminal.

Some guests may choose to fly into Málaga (AGP), on the southern coast of Spain (no direct flights from the U.S.). From the Málaga Airport, you may take a taxi to the central bus station (*estación de autobuses*), where buses for Granada depart every hour until 11:00 p.m. The journey takes 2 hours. If you arrive after 10:00 p.m., it may be too late to catch a bus, so we suggest taking a taxi. The journey is more direct (1½ hours) and costs approximately 125 euros.

You may also arrive to Granada by train. Approximate travel times for train travel to Granada from various cities are as follows: from Seville: 3 hours; from Madrid: 4½ hours; from Barcelona: 11 hours.

For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please visit the website of RENFE (Spanish Rail) at renfe.es/ingles/ or contact Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website at raileurope.com.

We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. We suggest comparing the round trip point-to-point fare with that of a Spanish Rail Pass (the pass may be less expensive and have greater value). From the Granada train station, a taxi to the meeting-point hotel costs approximately 10 to 15 euros and takes about 15 minutes.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Fontecruz Granada Hotel, our meeting point hotel. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly. Rates vary according to room type and season, but start at about 165 euros (per double room), including taxes and breakfast.

Fontecruz Granada Hotel

Gran Vía de Colon, 20
Granada, Spain
Tel 011 34 958 217 810
repcion@fontecruzgranada.com

A five-star property boasting a spa, stylish rooms, and an attic bar with wrap-around views of the Alhambra, the Fontecruz is a luxurious retreat in the center of Granada. Ideally located in the city's Old Town, just steps away from central plazas and the legendary Moorish neighborhood, it offers Wi-fi, room service, and unobstructed views of the near-by cathedral.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Vincci La Rabida, Seville, Spain, 2:00 p.m.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

San Pablo Airport, Seville (SVQ)
aena.es

LEAVING SEVILLE

On the last day of the tour, you may depart at your leisure following the city tour, which returns you to the Hotel Vincci La Rabida at 2:00 p.m. A taxi to the airport takes 15 minutes and costs approximately 40 euros. Your guide(s) or the hotel staff can assist you in making arrangements for transportation to the airport or the train station. Approximate travel times for train travel from Seville to various cities are as follows: to Granada: 3 hours; to Madrid: 2½ hours; to Barcelona: 5½ hours. For further rail information, please refer to the Getting to the Meeting Point section.

POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay an additional night in Seville at the Vincci La Rabida. Please contact the hotel directly for reservations.

Vincci La Rabida

Seville, Spain

Tel 011 34 954 50 12 80

Email larabida@vincchoteles.com

vincclarabidahotel.com

Room rates vary according to type and season: from 235 euros (per double room), including taxes and breakfast.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

Spain at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.



Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

CURRENCY

Spain uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards).

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company

for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

Spain is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Spain country code: +34

Cell phone coverage throughout Spain is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Spain is Spanish.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn

some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Spain. Plugs have two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

One of Europe's warmest and sunniest countries, Spain has a predominantly warm Mediterranean climate, with dry summers and pleasant temperature ranges in spring and fall. Spain does have a variety of climates and zones because of its considerable geographical diversity. In Catalonia, the combination of Mediterranean and slightly mountainous climate results in temperatures from the low 60s to mid-80s (and 90s midday in August and September). In southern Spain's Andalucia, spring and fall are dry and sunny, with temperatures ranging from the 60s to the 80s.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK



Thoroughly Mediterranean, the foundation of Spanish cuisine is olive oil, garlic, and local and seasonal produce, meat, and fish. Spanish food varies by region, in the same way that there is great variety in Spain's geography and climate; however, some dishes can be found throughout the country—a range of *tapas* (more on the next page), paella, gazpacho, excellent cured ham, chorizo, meatballs, salads, good bread, fresh fruit, cheeses, and for dessert, flan (vanilla custard). Surrounded as Spain is on three sides by water, seafood dishes are plentiful throughout, including shrimp with garlic, calamari, octopus, porgy, or monkfish, all with regional variations.

Equally steeped in Mediterranean culture, wine has been produced in Spain since the time of the Romans, and the country is third in European wine production after France and Italy. Grown almost throughout Spain (except near Santiago de Compostela), quality red and white wines can be found in all regions, with the

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

majority from the central Castilla-La Mancha region, with Catalonia second. A crisp and bubbly before-dinner drink is the Catalonia's sparkling wine, *cava*, named after the cellars in which it is produced.

Travel Tip

¿Tapas?

Tapas, or *pinxtos* as they are known in the Basque country, are perhaps Spain's most well-known culinary export, with tapas bars and restaurants popping up worldwide. Part of Spanish life, they can be eaten with a drink as appetizers before a meal, or as a meal in themselves. There is even a verb in the Spanish language—*tapear*—meaning to eat tapas! These small savory dishes can be as simple as a plate of olives, slices of Manchego cheese, or chorizo, to prepared dishes such as grilled eggplant in tomato vinaigrette or slices of *tortilla española* (a dense potato and onion omelet). In Catalonia, a favorite is *Pan Catalán* or in Catalan, *pa amb tomàquet*, lightly toasted bread with chopped tomatoes and drizzled with olive oil.

Here are a few others Spanish favorites

Patatas bravas: spicy potatoes with a hot sauce.

Croquetas: a range of small fried croquettes that can be stuffed with Serrano ham, salt cod, hard-boiled egg, cheese, or vegetables.

Champiñones al ajillo: mushrooms, dripping with olive oil, garlic and dry Spanish sherry.

Morcilla frita: bite-size pieces of spicy blood sausage flavored with garlic and oregano.

LIFE IN SPAIN

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m.; most department stores and some supermarkets are open all day, every day of the week, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.



Banks are open from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday (except from June to September when they are closed on Saturday).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and dinner is served from 8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Tipping

Tipping in restaurants and bars is included in the total bill, but it is customary to leave an additional 5 to 10 percent of the total. Taxi drivers also receive 5 to 10

percent of the total, or you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change. For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Spanish tourist board official sites

spain.info

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Spanish public holidays: spain.info/en_US/informacion-practica/consejos-viaje/consejos-practicos/horarios-festivos/. Visit the Spanish tourist board's website, navigating to spain.info/en_US/que-quieres/agenda/ for a list of festivals and events, and an event finder.



TRAVEL IN SPAIN

Airlines

The Spanish Airports and Aerial Navigation website, www.aena.es, has information on all airports and domestic flights. The Spanish national airline is Iberia, iberia.com.

Trains

Renfe: renfe.com, the national railway company, has an extensive network, including high-speed routes (AVE) from Madrid.

Raileurope: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

Other local transportation

In addition to rail and airline networks, Spain also has many regional bus lines that can be found at: movelia.es. Most major car rental agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). For more information go to spain.info, and click on "Practical information" then "Transport."

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 6-10 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Fleece or wool hat and gloves

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of 2 liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks. (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit (for hotel swimming pools)
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes