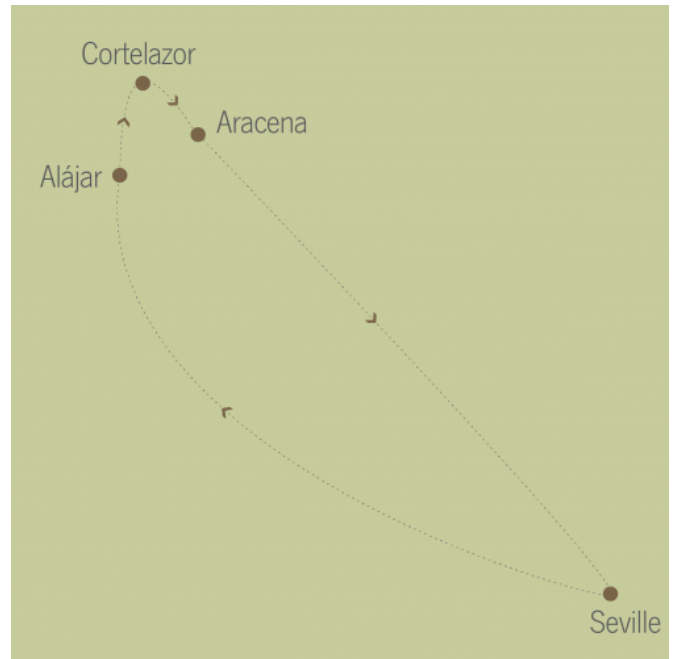


## Spain: Andalusia & Seville

### Tour-Only Itinerary

Rooting for acorns under the cork oaks outside Linares, the region's famous black pigs look downright blissful. Watching them from the trailside on your walking tour of Seville and Andalusia, you feel just as contented. Walking through the Sierra de Aracena's pastoral mountainscapes has slowed you down to a simpler pace, and taught you a thing or two about Andalusian culture. Life here in Spain's spiritual heartland is all about embracing the moment—whether it's the flamboyant dancing, clapping, singing, and strumming of a Sevilla flamenco trio or the languid lifestyle of Aracena's stone villages. As you walk into Linares, locals still chat by the communal wash trough and linger over wine and tapas by the town's tiny ex-bullring. Time to join them for a glass of fino, and a plate of that famous Iberian ham.



### Highlights

- Stroll through the cork-oak forests of Aracena and Cortelazor, in rural regions completely overlooked by the tourist crowds of Andalusia's major cities.
- Visit a family-run *finca* that specializes in rearing native Ibérico pigs, and chat with the owner to learn how Spain's renowned *jamón ibérico* is made.
- Make time for flamenco and tapas in the one-of-a-kind city of Seville, whose Moorish influences and cobblestone streets delight.
- Stay at a traditional *finca* farmhouse that has been beautifully renovated, and whose owner welcomes you with authentic family-style meals served in the kitchen.

## On all Self-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



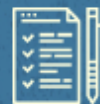
A local representative available 24/7.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Detailed maps & route notes featuring turn-by-turn directions and places of interest.



Experts to handle all the details, including moving your luggage between hotels while you're out exploring.



Scheduled taxi transfers to bring you to and from each day's walks.



Access to a Self-Guided Flight Concierge—ask our knowledgeable team to find flights that sync with your planned trip.



Delicious meals—many are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 6 to 9 miles per day. There are daily ascents and descents, with elevation gains and losses up to 1,650 feet. The walks are on a variety of terrain, from cobble streets to ancient Roman stone roads, old mule paths, packed-earth or gravel single tracks, and country roads. Footing in places includes loose stones and may require attention. Immersed in the scenery of the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche nature park—a combination of hills and valley, some forested, some covered with open pasture interspersed with cork and oak trees—you walk between ancient villages of whitewashed houses presided over by Moorish castles and forts, mosques, and Renaissance churches. You encounter friendly Andalusians who keep

local culture and festivals vibrant. Exuberant Seville, with its three UNESCO World Heritage sites, is the tour starting and ending point. Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

## DAY 1

### **Your Spain: Andalusia & Seville tour begins**

Upon arrival in Seville, you check into your boutique hotel, located in the historical center. One of Europe's most authentic urban cores, Seville contains three UNESCO World Heritage sites—the Alcázar palace complex, the Cathedral, and the General Archive of the Indies. For dinner, you can venture out nearby to some of the country's best tapas bars.

**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2

### **Travel to the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park. Tasting and visit an authentic producer of Ibérico ham. Travel to Aracena. Orientation meeting and town exploration**

Today you depart Seville and drive north to the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park, a protected range of hills stretching in an arc north of Seville. In this bucolic landscape, oak and cork forest alternate with valleys, ancient villages, and Moorish forts and castles. In the village of Corteconcepción, you join your local Representative for an interpretive visit to a small, family-run *finca*. This farm specializes in rearing Ibérico pigs—the famous black pigs that are the source of the most exclusive hams in the world. You tour the extensive grounds, learning about the flora and the fascinating *dehesa* ecosystem along with its associated farming process. Afterward, you enjoy a tasting of the *finca*'s mouth-watering hams. Following your visit, you are transported to your home for two nights in the region's capital, Aracena, a town of 8,000 inhabitants. The ruins of a 12th-century Moorish fortress stand over Aracena, which was, in large part, destroyed by Napoleon's army in 1812. The entire town center has been declared "of Cultural Interest" for its many historical buildings and monuments, lovely squares, museums, and churches.

Following an orientation meeting, your local Representative guides you on a short exploration of Aracena before stopping for a tapas lunch. If you wish, there is time to visit the stunning cave system of the Gruta de las Maravillas (at your own expense) before strolling out to explore the many plazas of Aracena. Here, you'll find ample cafés and restaurants to choose from for an evening drink and dinner.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Convento, Aracena

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, (and Ibérico Ham Tasting)

## DAY 3

### Corteconcepción loop

*7.7 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain and loss*

This introductory walk takes you out to the pretty village of Corteconcepción, passing farms, gurgling streams, olive groves, and hillsides where you can see the famous Ibérico pigs roaming freely. There is plenty of time for a casual lunch in the village before walking back to Aracena this afternoon, following a different path, giving you a new appreciation for this diverse landscape. This evening, enjoy dinner in town featuring an avant-garde tasting menu created by celebrated chef, Javier Fuster (based on availability).

**Accommodation:** Hotel Convento, Aracena

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 4

### Aracena to Cortelazor

*7.7 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and 1,050-ft. elevation loss*

You depart Aracena this morning and are provided with a packed lunch before venturing out into the countryside of chestnut groves and small farms. The last part of your walk is on ancient cobbled pathways—part of the medieval network of paths across Spain known as the Caminos Reales or “royal roads.” Your destination, surrounded by cork and chestnut forests, is Cortelazor. This charming village of just 300 inhabitants dates back to Roman times. You may wish to enjoy a drink at one of the bars in the main square, all serving tapas-style food, as you watch a bit of local life—as throughout Andalusia, the residents are friendly and welcoming. In the center of Cortelazor, you'll also find a shop, a 16th-century

church, and a small crafts museum. For dinner in this authentic *pueblo*, you walk with your host to one of the village bars for a simple but tasty meal.

**Accommodation:** La Flamenca Inn, Cortelazor

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5

### Cortelazor loop

*8.6 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 1,650-ft. elevation gain and loss*

Today, a loop walk takes you out through some of the prettiest and most remote parts of the hills. The mixed forest and pastureland, as well as the cultivated woodlands of the *dehesa*, are typical of southern Spain and Portugal. You walk through forests and along fertile river valleys between small villages stopping along the way for a picnic lunch in the shade of a chestnut tree looking out over the forested mountains. The European Charter has recognized Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche nature park for Sustainable Tourism. Located in the foothills of the broader Sierra Morena, this park boasts more than 600 miles of trails as well as archaeological traces pre-dating the Romans. The area teems with birdlife, including birds of prey such as black vultures and golden, short-toed, and Bonelli's eagles. Almost every village church is topped with a stork's nest, and the endangered black stork is found here. Wandering past streams, sightings of heron and egrets are also common. This evening, enjoy dinner once again in the village.

**Accommodation:** La Flamenca Inn, Cortelazor

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6

### Cortelazor to Alájar

*7.8 miles, easy to moderate, 1,300-ft. elevation gain and 1,000-ft. elevation loss*

Today's walk takes you first through oak forests to the pretty village of Fuentehéridos. Passing through *dehesa*, you see farmers working both the land and the trees—producing honey, picking mushrooms, and gathering chestnuts while also harvesting cork and bringing the animals to graze on acorns. In

Fuenteheridos you can rest in the picturesque square and have a drink or snack at one of the many bars and restaurants. From here your path takes you uphill to cross the Sierra through one of the most bountiful chestnut forests of the region. Once at the top, views extend south over the village of Alájar—today's destination—and surrounding mountains and, on a clear day, all the way to the sea. A narrow, wooded path leads you to the doorstep of your lovely hotel set high in the hills above the village. You can relax with a drink on the terrace or enjoy a dip in the pool before dinner in the welcoming dining room.

**Accommodation:** Finca La Fronda, Alájar

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7

### Alájar loop

*6.8 miles, moderate, 1,300-ft. elevation gain and loss*

This morning starts with a delicious breakfast before you set off down the hill and into the village of Alájar. As you continue walking, look down to see the cobbled “doormats” in front of the traditional whitewashed houses, a feature unique to this village. The route then continues through the semi-abandoned hamlet of Los Madroñeros and into the beautiful forested countryside leading to Linares de la Sierra. In the village, you may encounter locals still gathering at the communal *lavandería* to wash their clothes. In contrast, it is also the location of one of the best modern restaurants in the region, making it a perfect stop for lunch (based upon availability). This afternoon, you walk uphill for a short distance before emerging into the grounds surrounding your hotel, or perhaps you'll decide to celebrate the week's accomplishments with a visit to the local hammam and take a taxi back instead (not included).

**Accommodation:** Finca La Fronda, Alájar

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8

### Your Spain: Andalusia & Seville tour concludes

After breakfast at your inn, you depart by private car from Alájar to Seville (1.5 hours).

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## What's Included

### Tour Only

Boutique accommodations	✓
14 meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 3 dinners	✓
Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes, maps, and use of a handheld GPS unit	✓
Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative	✓
Local representative available 24/7	✓
Scheduled taxi and luggage transportation (Please note: If unable to walk, it is possible to travel with your luggage from one accommodation to the next; there may be an additional charge.)	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary: Tasting and visit at authentic producer of Ibérico ham and guided exploration of Aracena	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz Global Assistance	✓
Access to Self-Guided Flight Concierge—Ask our knowledgeable team to find flights that sync perfectly with your planned trip.	✓