

SPAIN: ANDALUSIA & SEVILLE

Guest Handbook

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





Table of Contents

Daily Itinerary	4
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	10
Traveling To and From Your Tour	14
Information & Policies	17
Spain at a Glance.....	21
Packing List	26

Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—with no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.

Overview

Southern Spain's Andalusia is a true walking destination, with extensive trail networks winding through the bucolic Sierra de Aracena—a European-designated sustainable park, connecting simply beautiful historical villages of whitewashed ancient homes gathered around town squares, Renaissance churches, and perched ancient Moorish castles. Routes following Roman roads or old mule paths lead through flower-filled meadows bordered by cork oak and chestnut trees beneath which Ibérico pigs graze, and on to dramatic mountain viewpoints. You begin and end in vibrant Seville, with its centuries of Moorish and Renaissance architecture in an accessible historical center. True hospitality is ubiquitous in boutique hotels and impeccable family-run country inns, conveying the essence of Andalusia. Here you will delight in some of the world's freshest and most authentic cuisine—a bounty of vegetables, mushrooms and meats served in local dishes, many varieties of olive oil and olives, and a wide array of local cheeses and hams, all of which you get to sample at the producers.





Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Seville

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.

Overnight in Seville

DAY 2

Transfer to the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park. Tasting and visit at authentic producer of Ibérico ham. Transfer 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 and containing bucolic landscapes of oak and cork forest alternating with valleys, ancient villages, and Moorish forts and castles. In the village of Corteconcepción, you join your local Representative for an interpretive visit of a small, family run *finca*. This farm specializes in rearing Ibérico pigs—the famous

black pigs that produce the most exclusive hams in the world. You tour the extensive grounds, learning about the flora and the fascinating *dehesa* ecosystem and its associated farming process.

Afterward, you enjoy a tasting of their mouth-watering hams. Following your visit here, you transfer to your home for two nights in the region's capital, Aracena, a town of 8,000 inhabitants,

over which stand the ruins of a 12th-century Moorish fortress, 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 the town 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 dinner on your own.

Overnight in Aracena

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. Later you can stroll out and explore the many plazas of Aracena, with ample cafés and restaurants to choose from for an evening drink and dinner.

Overnight in Aracena

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 is Cortelazor, a charming village of just 300 inhabitants

dating back to Roman times and surrounded by cork and chestnut forests. You may wish to enjoy a drink at one of the three bars in the main square, all serving local tapas-style food, as you watch a bit of local life—as throughout Andalusia, the locals are friendly and welcoming. In the center of Cortelazor, you 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—a true taste of the local life.

Overnight in Cortelazor

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. As well as the cultivated woodlands of the *debesa*, the mixed forest and pastureland typical of southern Spain and Portugal, you walk through forests and along fertile river valleys between small villages. Along the way, you stop for a picnic lunch in the shade of a chestnut tree looking out over the forested mountains. The Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche nature park has been recognized by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. With more than 600 miles of trails, this park in the foothills of the broader Sierra Morena contains archaeological traces pre-dating the Romans. The area is also teeming with bird life, including birds of prey such as an important population of 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, you transfer to the neighboring village of Los Marines for

dinner—an avant-garde tasting menu created by celebrated chef, Javier Fuster (based on availability).

Overnight in Cortelazor

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 Fuenteheridos. Passing through *debesa*, 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 sea. A narrow wooded path leads you all the way 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 warm dining room.

Overnight in Alájar

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, you notice the design of cobbled “door mats” in front of the traditional whitewashed houses, unique to this village. The route then continues through the semi-abandoned hamlet of Los Madroneros and into the beautiful forested countryside leading to Linares de la Sierra. In the village, you may encounter locals still gathering at the communal *lavanderia* 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 beautiful grounds surrounding your hotel, or



decide to celebrate the week's accomplishments with a visit to the local hammam and take a taxi back instead (not included).

Overnight in Alájar

DAY 8

Departure from Seville

After breakfast at your inn, you depart by private transfer from Alájar to Seville (1½ hours).

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 at countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available starting Sunday through Thursday, on request, from March 20 through June 30 and September 1 through October 31, 2019. Thursday and Sunday start dates work best for availability. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one departure transfer from Alájar to Seville on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

TOUR PRICE

2019 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3 guests	Per person 4+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
March 20– June 30	\$3,148	\$2,898	\$2,798	\$780	\$665
September 1– October 31	\$3,148	\$2,898	\$2,798	\$780	\$665

STARTING POINT

Seville, Spain (Night 1 Hotel)

ENDING POINT

Seville, Spain (Seville San Pablo Airport, Seville Train Station, or city hotel)

Based upon individual departure times

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 cobbled 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!**

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, four lunches (Days 2, 4, 5 & 7), and three dinners (Days 5, 6 & 7); beverages not included
- » Tasting of *jamon* and charcuterie and visit at authentic producer of Ibérico ham
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes, maps, and use of a handheld GPS unit
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour travel-related support provided by One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will receive:

Within 24 hours of reservation confirmation:

A Confirmation Email with a link to our online guest portal, My Account, which allows you to view important information and manage parts of your account online. Similar to other web-based portals you may already use for online banking or shopping, My Account will let you:

- a. View your active reservations.
- b. Make a payment.
- c. Access the latest version of your reservation invoice.
- d. Access your guest profile where you'll be able to update essential information and preferences (passport information, important dietary considerations, allergies, etc.).
- e. Ensure that your contact information is the most up to date (name, address, phone number, email).
- f. Provide us with your tour arrival and departure details so that we may arrange any included arrival and departure transfers and/or orientation meetings.

One day following reservation confirmation:

An Online Participation Agreement Form to sign and submit (emailed).

Within one week of reservation confirmation:

- a. Your reservation invoice (emailed).
- b. Welcome Documents including your specific dated Hotel Itinerary and this Guest Handbook (emailed).

Approximately one month prior to departure:

Your Travel Documents including the following items (mailed):

- a. Printed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes (day-to-day walking directions; emergency contact information; detailed daily itinerary; information regarding included meals, transfers, and daily logistics; restaurant recommendations for non-included meals; town maps; and information regarding optional activities and transportation).
- b. Printed Travel Documents (your specific dated Hotel Itinerary, Daily Itinerary Overview, and—if included—Arrival & Departure Transfers Overview).
- c. Luggage tags.

At your orientation meeting:

- a. Maps.
- b. A handheld GPS unit (to be returned at the end of your tour).

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however, additional tips are always welcomed, especially by your driver(s). Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Seville, Spain (Night 1 Hotel)

You may check into the hotel at any time on the first day of the tour (if you arrive prior to the hotel's check-in time of 2:00 p.m., and your room is not yet ready, you may store your luggage at reception and set out to explore the city).

A tour representative will meet you on Day 2, either at your hotel in Seville, or upon arrival at the family *finca* in Corteconcepción, to accompany you on an interpretive visit of the farm. Afterward, your local Representative will transfer you to Aracena to check in to your hotel, provide an **orientation meeting**, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have. This afternoon, your local Representative will guide you on a short exploration of the town before stopping for a tapas lunch.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

San Pablo Airport, Seville (SVQ)

aena.es

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

There are no direct flights from the U.S. to Seville, and connections are required in Barcelona, Madrid, or another major European city.

The most convenient way to travel to the tour starting point from the Seville airport is by taxi. The journey takes approximately 15 minutes. The taxi stand is just outside the terminal building. City buses also depart the airport regularly for the Plaza de Armas, in the city center, with stops at the Santa Justa and the AVE train stations. The journey takes about 35 minutes; tickets are purchasable onboard the bus.

RAIL INFORMATION

Approximate travel times for train travel to Seville from various cities are as follows: Granada: 3 hours; Madrid: 2½ hours; Barcelona: 5½ hours. A taxi from the central train station to the hotel takes less than 15 minutes.

We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. In Spain, train tickets usually go on sale at least three months before the date of

travel. For further rail information, including reservations, up-to-date schedules, and fares, please visit one of the following websites:

RENFE (Spanish Rail official site): renfe.es. While Spanish trains in general are a pleasure to ride and most travelers encounter few problems once actually on them, the national train company's own website has proven difficult to use for foreign travelers, including past CW guests. Foreign credit cards are declined on a random basis, the site is incompletely translated, and there are plenty of error messages and failures that may force you to restart your search.

Trainline: trainline.eu. This sharply designed powerhouse is a staff favorite for buying train tickets for Spain—and perhaps most importantly it offers exactly the same prices as when purchasing from the official Renfe site. Trainline is easy to use: the site is in English, it accepts foreign credit cards, is smooth and functional, and offers quality customer support, easy cancellations, and preference of seats and class. With Trainline, you print your tickets at home (recommended) or else in the station itself at a ticket kiosk using your booking reference.

RailEurope: raileurope.com. This U.S.-based retailer with award-winning localized customer care also offers an easy, user-friendly way for North Americans to purchase tickets for train travel in Europe. With RailEurope, you can have physical tickets mailed to you before your trip but you also have the option (in some, *but not all* cases) to print your own tickets, print an e-ticket at the self-service kiosk in the train station, or have an e-ticket sent to your phone. Please note; however, that RailEurope charges steep fees and doesn't always list all the available rail journeys.

PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We suggest arriving in Spain at least one day prior to the tour start date. This will give you time to rest after your travels and recover from any effects of jet lag. You may wish to stay in Seville at the hotel where you will spend Night 1 of the tour. We would be happy to make a reservation on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible. The cost is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your pre-tour reservation directly with the hotel, you may not be able to secure the same room as assigned to you for the night on tour. Please call for current rates.

ENDING POINT

Seville, Spain (Seville San Pablo Airport, Seville Train Station, or city hotel)

Based upon individual departure times

On the last day of the tour, you may choose to take an optional walk or depart after breakfast. A transfer (1½ hours) will be provided to the Seville airport, train station, or a hotel in the city center.

In order to arrange your departure transfer, please provide us with your arrival and departure details at least 45 days prior to departure through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)

Please note that the tour price includes one departure transfer from Alájar to Seville on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*, which gives peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless Self-Guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip early.

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at countrywalkers.com or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If possible, we recommend you provide a

range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact you. Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel Availability: Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

Room Category: We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.

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. Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement to accept your responsibilities.

CHANGES IN PLANS

After booking, you may change your reservation's destination, departure date, departure city, or Tour Extensions for a \$100-per-person administrative fee. We will waive this fee for changes made within the first two weeks of booking. Any cancellation charges or applicable fees imposed by hotels or operators will be passed along to the guest. We encourage you to consult our cancel policy for the particular trip you have booked. All changes are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please note that tours with seasonal pricing may involve a higher price point. Please note: This change policy does not apply to Special Departures. Please notify us in writing.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Cancellations must be made in writing and fees are applied as noted.

Cancellation refunds will be calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation. All payments for travel services not provided to the guest will be refunded in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and in accordance with Country Walkers' cancellation policy. Exceptions to this cancellation policy cannot be made for any reason, including personal emergencies, illness, or weather. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

Self-Guided Adventures

- » Cancellations received on or before 91 days prior to the start of the trip: \$150 per person
- » Cancellations received 90 to 61 days prior to the start of the trip: 25 percent loss of trip price

» Cancellations received 60 or fewer days prior to the start of the trip: 100 percent loss of trip price

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

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

SELF-GUIDED FLIGHT CONCIERGE

Our knowledgeable team will happily find flight itineraries that sync perfectly with your international Self-Guided Adventure. Simply request a price quote at the time of booking and, once your reservation is confirmed, we will contact you with available options. Please note that you are under no obligation to purchase the quoted flight itinerary.

Learn more about the Self-Guided Flight Concierge—including our complete policies—on our website at: <https://www.countrywalkers.com/self-guided-air-terms-and-conditions/>.

Other travel arrangements not included in the price of your trip (such as local train tickets or post-tour excursions) can be purchased through your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com).

Spain at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required. To minimize any inconveniences during travel, the State Department recommends that passports be valid for at least six months following your scheduled return. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.



CURRENCY

Spain uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit 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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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 Andalusia, 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 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 Catalan 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, 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 that most hotels are small and family-run and may not provide luggage assistance from the reception area to the room, so there may be times you have to carry your own luggage short distances. **Due to space constraints on pre-arranged transfers, we require you to limit your luggage to one backpack (that you carry with you on the trail) and one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) not exceeding 44 lbs (20 kg) per person. Additional charges will apply should you exceed this limit; please contact Country Walkers in advance if this is necessary so that we may reserve an appropriate-sized vehicle.** Please also note that due to health and safety reasons, our local representatives are not permitted to carry (individual) bags that exceed 44 lbs (20 kg). 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. Make a copy of your passport (and other important documents) and keep it 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 or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. If you are bringing a favorite pair of older boots, please check that soles and seams are in good shape before you depart! By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 6 to 9 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.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » 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

EQUIPMENT

- » Cell phone (an International cell phone or your own cell phone with an International calling plan): for both practical and safety reasons, **we strongly advise that you carry a cell phone while traveling and at all times while you are out walking.** (Please note you may encounter intermittent coverage while on the trail or in remote areas.)
- » Travel adapter/s (connectors that change the plug shape to match the electrical outlet, thereby allowing a dual-voltage appliance or a converter from one country to be plugged into the wall outlet of another country) and converter/s (only if bringing electric appliances, such as a hair dryer, iron, or any appliance that has a mechanical motor. If the appliance is electronic, which contains a computer chip, a converter is usually not required.)
- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, 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 one liter)
- » 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 optional use of hotel pools
- » Flip-flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides
- » Folding umbrella
- » Waterproof poncho (in addition to aforementioned rain gear, especially if expecting wet weather): while the aforementioned rain gear may suffice, a poncho offers the advantage of being lightweight, compact, big enough to cover both you and your backpack, long enough to allow for sitting on wet surfaces or act as a shelter, cool enough to wear during summer rains, and is cheap!
- » Bandanna
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion-sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on bus or car rides
- » Alarm clock

ONLINE STORE

To help you prepare for your trip, we've carefully selected a range of comfortable, easy-packing travel apparel and accessories from leading brands such as Eagle Creek, Craghoppers, Patagonia, Tilley, and others. Whether you're traveling to Vietnam, walking in Canada, or exploring the hills of Ireland, our Travel Shop is here to ensure you're ready to enjoy your adventure to the fullest.

Visit the CW Travel Shop at cw.newheadings.com.