

SPAIN

# Andalusia & Seville

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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## 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

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## 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.

### Hotel Amadeus, Seville

In the historic heart of Seville, with panoramic views of the Giralda bell tower and the city's cathedral, this classical music-themed boutique hotel occupies a beautifully restored 18th-century mansion. Spacious individually decorated guestrooms—each named for a different composer—feature family antiques, complementary Wi-Fi and laptops, flat-screen TVs, and libraries of classical music. A rooftop terrace offers breakfast daily and cocktails in the evening with arguably one of the city's most romantic views.

## DAY 2

Transfer to Aracena. Town exploration and cheese tasting

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. Your destination and home for two nights is 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. Your local Representative, Ángel, guides you on a short exploration of the town before you visit an artisan cheese-maker's shop for a tasting. If you wish, there is time to visit the stunning cave system of the Gruta de las Maravillas before dinner on your own.



### Hotel Convento, Aracena

A four-star hotel, located just below the Aracena castle, occupies a carefully restored 17th-century convent, retaining historic elements combined with modern amenities. Guest rooms are contemporary with exposed wood and stone, crisp fabrics, and neutral tones. An on-site spa offers whirlpool and swimming pools and a selection of treatments, while an outdoor saltwater pool is surrounded by terraced grounds and chaise lounges. The on-site restaurant features traditional and updated versions of the region's distinct cuisine and fresh products.

## DAY 3

Corteconcepción loop; 9.6 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain and loss. Tasting and visit at authentic producer of Ibérico ham

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. In the village of Corteconcepción you meet up with Ángel again 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. 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.

### **Hotel Convento, 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.

### **La Flamenca Inn, Cortelazor**

Occupying a large traditional home in the small village of Cortelazor, this charming guesthouse has been beautifully renovated with late 19th-century reclaimed and restored furnishings and décor, much from England, from late-Victorian stained glass to ceramic stoves. Spacious guest rooms have been individually decorated, each in a unique style accommodating the building's original architecture, featuring late-Victorian, William Morris, or Art Deco pieces, natural wood and colorful tile, and comfortable and eclectic furniture. Your host, Lola, makes this private residence feel like a home away from home as soon as you arrive—with her warm welcome and the authentic family-style meals served

in the large kitchen. An honesty bar is available in one of the two cozy common areas, or you may choose to relax at one of the local bars on the village square, just a few steps away.

## 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. 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.

### La Flamenca Inn, 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.

### Finca La Fronda, Alájar

In the heart of the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park, this luxury rural hotel—environmentally constructed within the existing landscape with aged tiles and brick—has just seven guestrooms surrounding a typical Andalusian patio with orange trees and a goldfish pool. In addition to private terraces, spacious guestrooms have king beds, terracotta tile floors, classic furnishings with muted pastel colors, seating area, and desk. The *posada*, the traditional farm building, also includes two fireside sitting rooms, two covered terraces, and an outdoor swimming pool. In keeping with the rural character of the inn, guestrooms are not equipped with televisions or telephones. Please note that this family-owned hotel has a friendly dog on the property.



## DAY 7

Olive oil tasting. 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 to meet Ángel at his home—a charming posada that he and his wife Lucy have meticulously restored over several years. Both are avid cooks, and one of their passions is olive oil, and you discover their extensive collection as you sample several varieties. 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 *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 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).

### Finca La Fronda, 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.

# Itinerary Overview

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**PLEASE NOTE:** your detailed Route Notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these Route Notes may list a number of accommodation options, **your specific accommodations are listed below**. Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

## STARTING POINT

**Hotel Amadeus, Seville, Spain**

### NIGHT 1

#### Hotel Amadeus

Calle Farnesio 6 y Calle San José 10

Seville, Spain

Tel 011 34 954 501 443

Email [info@hotelamadeussevilla.com](mailto:info@hotelamadeussevilla.com)

[hotelamadeussevilla.com](http://hotelamadeussevilla.com)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

### NIGHTS 2 & 3

#### Hotel Convento

Calle Jesús María, 19

Aracena, Spain

Tel 011 34 959 126 899

Email [reservas@hotelconventoaracena.es](mailto:reservas@hotelconventoaracena.es)

[hotelconventoaracena.es](http://hotelconventoaracena.es)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

### NIGHTS 4 & 5

#### La Flamenca Inn

Calle España, 12

Cortelazor, Spain

Tel 011 34 959 124 117

Email [laflamencainn@gmail.com](mailto:laflamencainn@gmail.com)

[laflamencainn.com](http://laflamencainn.com)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## **NIGHTS 6 & 7**

### **Finca La Fronda**

Carretera de Cortegana a Aracena Km. 22,400

Alájar, Spain

Tel 011 34 959 501 247

fincalafronda.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

## **ENDING POINT**

**Seville, Spain, based upon individual departure times**

# Tour Facts at a Glance

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## TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

## DEPARTURES

This tour is available starting Saturday through Thursday, on request, from March 20 through June 30 and September 1 through October 31, 2017. Thursday, Saturday, 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

2017 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3–5 guests	Per person 6+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
March 20– October 31	\$2,698	\$2,498	\$2,298	\$720	\$610

## STARTING POINT

Hotel Amadeus, Seville, Spain

## ENDING POINT

Seville, Spain

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.

## INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, three lunches (Days 4, 5 & 7), and three dinners (Days 4, 6 & 7); beverages not included
- » Goat cheese tasting
- » Tasting of jamon and charcuterie and visit at authentic producer of Ibérico ham
- » Olive oil tasting
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local pre-paid cell phone (provided at your orientation meeting)
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed Route Notes (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure), a handheld GPS unit and maps (provided at your orientation meeting)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour 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 be asked to sign a Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route Notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

## **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

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## STARTING POINT

### Hotel Amadeus, Seville, Spain

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 at the second hotel upon arrival in Aracena on the second day of the tour to provide an orientation meeting, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

San Pablo Airport, Seville (SVQ)

[aena.es](http://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 and costs vary from 23–31 euros (flat fare), depending on what time of day you travel. 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 and costs 4 euros; tickets are purchasable onboard the bus.

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 and costs approximately 15 euros.

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

### **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**

#### **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.

**Please provide us with your arrival and departure details to arrange this service by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.**

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

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## **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, self-guided experience. 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. A \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. 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. 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.

*\*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](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.