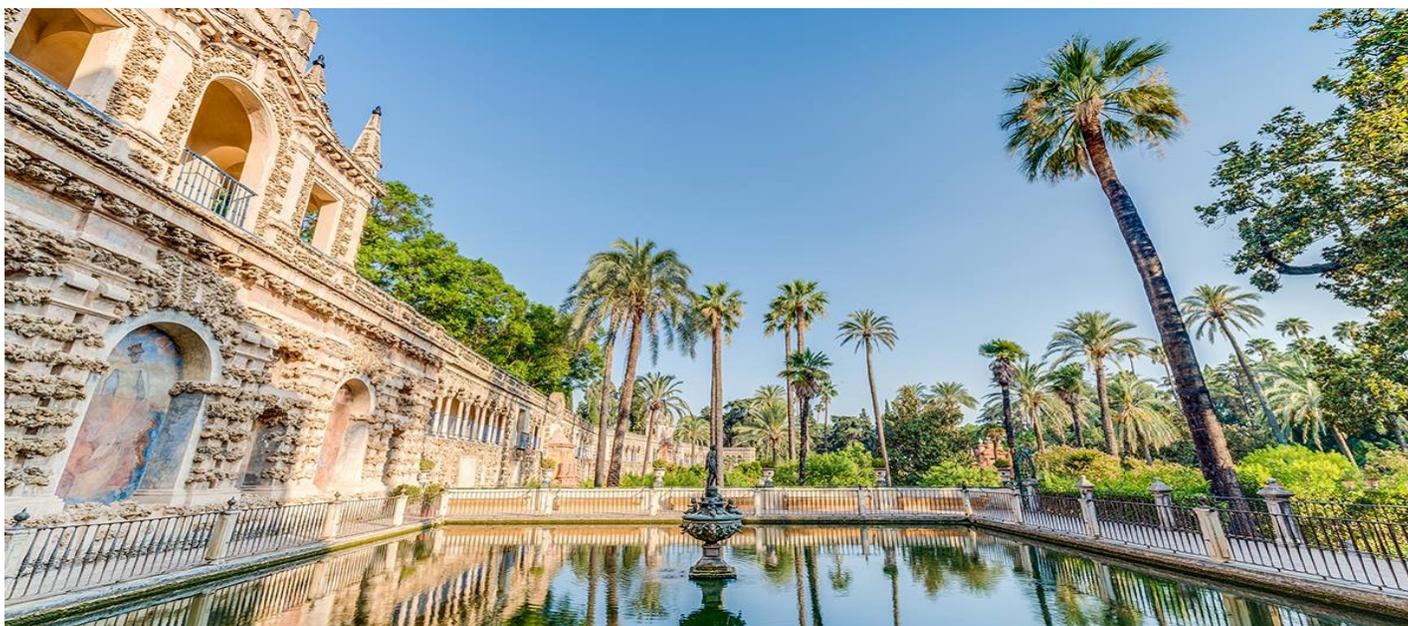


# GARDENS & COURTYARDS OF ANDALUCIA



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## ITINERARY

7 Nights:

1 N Ronda  
1 N Sevilla  
2 N Cordoba  
2 N Granada

- Feel captivated by the finest gardens throughout Andalusia. We invite you to join this unique opportunity to visit the best selection of Moorish, Renaissance and Tropical gardens hidden in this historic corner of Spain.
- Discover the main Unesco World Heritage sites in Spain such as the Alhambra Palace in Granada, the Mosque of Córdoba and the Gothic Cathedral in Sevilla.
- The explosion of colours in the Andalusian courtyards, the deep smell of orange blossoms on the streets and the water silence of the fountains will make you feel in paradise.
- Enjoy some privileged spots on this land of castles, palaces and gardens.
- Some private houses will open their gardens to you so you can meet the owners, try their food and toast with local wines.
- Stay in character historic buildings converted into charming accommodations for a real feel of the Andalusian architecture.

## RECOMMENDED TIME TO DO THIS TOUR?

Spring time: March-April-May

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**SUND**    **Malaga: meet & greet! Concepcion Botanical Gardens (L+D)**

**DAY**      **Morning**

**1**

After meeting at Malaga airport in the morning we will take you to **La Concepción Botanical Gardens** just between Malaga city and the airport. These gardens are a tropical paradise with over 800 species. After visiting the gardens and having some lunch at the coffee shop of the Botanical gardens, we will drive you to the picturesque town of Ronda on a beautiful scenic road connecting the Mediterranean coast and the Serrania mountains.

Check-in at your hotel in Ronda, dramatically located overlooking the Tajo gorge and cliffs. After settled in your room, it's time to relax and enjoy a nice welcome dinner with amazing views

**Concepcion botanical and historical gardens** were initially created in 1855 by the Marquis of Casa Loring and his wife. The Gardens were subsequently expanded by their second owners, the Echevarria-Echevarrieta family, who acquired the estate in 1911. They were officially declared gardens of historical and artistic importance in 1943 and have now achieved the "BIC" status (Building of Cultural Interest). In 1990, they were taken over by Malaga city council and were opened to the public on 21st June 1994.



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**MOND**    **Ronda & transfer to Sevilla (B+L)**

**DAY**        **Morning**

**2**

After breakfast, we will visit the most representative gardens in Ronda, starting with the gardens of **Casa del Rey Moro**: XVIII century mansion built on Morish foundations. The gardens were constructed in 1912 by Forestier and offer excellent views of the Tajo gorge and the surrounding mountains.

We will visit next the **Palacio de Mondragón**: XIV century palace which was the residence to the Moorish kings. Three Mudejar courtyards preserving original stuccowork and mosaics. Walk along the *Alameda del Tajo*: public garden from the XIX century representing a selection of mature trees typical in ornamental gardening in the Málaga province to end up at the most famous viewpoint to stare down into the gorge.

Lunch will be offered in a beautiful traditional restaurant in the old town, where you will try local wines from Ronda.

After lunch, you will be transferred to magic Sevilla, the capital of Southern Spain (aprx 1:45h drive)

Check-in at a charming hotel in the Jewish quarter.

You will have the evening free to enjoy Sevilla at your leisure

**Ronda** is a mountaintop city that sits in the heart of the Serrania de Ronda. Set dramatically above a deep gorge and surrounded by lush river valleys, it is a place that is absolutely breathtaking. The gorge, *El Tajo*, separates the city's 15th-century new town from its Moorish old town. Puente Nuevo, a stone bridge spanning the gorge, has a lookout offering stunning views and the new town's Plaza de Toros, a legendary 18th-century bullring, is one of the city's most recognizable landmarks.



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## TUES Sevilla (B+L+D)

DAY Morning

3

After breakfast, meet your local art historian guide, fluent English speaking, in the lobby of the hotel to embark you on a 3.5h guided walking tour of the historical center of Sevilla (one of the largest in Europe), including the **Casa Pilatos** (XV century Andalus palace and courtyards with a harmonious mixture of Mudéjar, Gothic and Renaissance styles), the **Barrio de Santa Cruz** (the old Jewish quarter with a labyrinth of tiny alleys and white houses with traditional Moorish courtyards), the **Reales Alcazares gardens** (an active Royal residence boasting impressive gardens and fountains from the XIV century) and finally the great **Cathedral** (the third largest Gothic cathedral in the world).

The tour will finish at the Giralda tower (Cathedral's bell tower), where you can walk up to the very top (104 m high over ramps, no steps) at your own pace.

Your tour guide will pick you up at the exit gate of the Cathedral for a 2h tapas tour, the Sevilla way!!

**Free afternoon** with optional activities:

Murillo gardens

Tea experience at the oldest hotel in Sevilla (Alfonso XIII, purely mudejar style)

Arabian spa

Shopping

Metropol panoramic view (Plaza Encarnacion)....

### Evening

#### Flamenco venue and diner.

Your tour guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel to take you to one of the most emblematic "Tablaos" in Sevilla. With more than 40 years of experience this "Tablao" offers the purest Flamenco you can find in Andalusia. Probably the best place in Sevilla to live the excitement and duende of flamenco. Prior to the performance, à la carte dinner with dishes of high Andalusian cuisine will be served (all drinks are included). Towards the end of the dinner, the show will start and last approximately 1.30h. This show features up to 15 of the most professional flamenco artists in the whole Spain. Excitement and enjoyment are guaranteed!

Some cities blast you away, others slowly win you over. **Sevilla** disarms and seduces you. Its historic center lorded over by a colossal Gothic cathedral, is an intoxicating mix of resplendent Mudéjar palaces, baroque churches and winding medieval lanes. Flamenco clubs keep the intimacy and intensity of this centuries-old tradition alive whilst aristocratic mansions recall the city's past as a showcase Moorish capital and, later, a 16th-century metropolis rich on the back of New World trade.



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**WEDN**

**DAY Sevilla and Córdoba (B+L)**

**4 Morning: Maria Luisa Park & Plaza de España (Sevilla)**

After breakfast, meet your local art historian guide, fluent English speaking, in the lobby of the hotel for a private guided visit to *M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Parc* and the spectacular *Plaza de España*



After your tour, private transfer to Córdoba (aprx 1:30 hrs drive) where you will enjoy a unique gourmet experience at a very trendy food court in town: the Mercado Victoria.

**Afternoon: Alcazar Gardens, Patios & Viana Palace**

After lunch, you will meet your local guide for a private guided visit to the **Alcazar gardens**, followed by a short walking tour within one of the most popular areas from Córdoba, San Basilio quarter, to admire some of the most incredible “**Patios**” (private courtyards recently named Unesco intangible cultural heritage). This walk will bring you to the **Palacio de Viana**: XVII century house with 13 interconnected delightful patios and gardens.

Check-in at a charming hotel in the heart of the Jewish quarter where you will have some time to relax and get ready for one of the highlights of this tour: a night visit of the impressive Mosque/Cathedral

**Evening: Guided tour of the Great Mosque and Cathedral**

You will meet your group, travel specialist and your guide and will head out for a unique night visit of the impressive Mezquita (Mosque/Cathedral).



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## THU Hornachuelos Natural Park, Córdoba province (B+L)

### DAY Morning: Moratalla Gardens

5 Today you will explore one of the most unspoiled treasures of architecture and gardening. On the way to Hornachuelos natural park, at only 50km North of Cordoba, you will be driven through a very scenic route with stunning viewpoints over the impressive and amazingly well preserved **Almodovar Castle**, a Moorish fortress from the 8th century. If you take this tour by the end of May or early June, the landscape is truly spectacular as you will be able to admire the sunflowers fields colouring in deep yellow the Andalusian countryside.

Your driver and tour guide will take you to Moratalla (aprx 1 h). Here, you will enjoy a 2h guided visit around the spectacular gardens and some of the common areas of the Palace.

Later, you will be transferred to the town of *Hornachuelos* named as per the natural park (aprx 20 min) where you will enjoy a delicious **lunch** at a local restaurant, specialized in grilled food with a privileged location to admire the stunning views of the *Bembezar* river.

After lunch, you will head back to Córdoba where you will have the **afternoon free** to relax, further explore the city or do some shopping.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Julio Romero Museum (a local painter's art collection)
- The Roman Bridge and The Calahorra Tower (Al Andalus museum)
- The Roman Temple
- Plaza de la Corredera
- Plaza de las Tendillas

Within the Hornachuelos Natural Park at only 50 km north from Cordoba, you will find one of the most unspoiled treasures of architecture and gardening, the **Moratalla Palace**. It is considered to be the Versailles of Cordoba. It was designed by Forestier team and nowadays it's a private palace declared artistic garden since 1983.



## Evening: Andalusian Equestrian Show - Royal Stables in Cordoba

You will enjoy a marvelous equestrian exhibition in which pure bred Spanish horses are the main protagonists. The stage; an emblematic and magical historical building, once the birthplace of the Andalusian Horse and now an unparalleled setting for this enchanting 1-hour equestrian show.

The Royal Stables are located next to the Royal Alcázar and just a 5-7 mins walk from your hotel. You will have allocated central seats for the best possible view.

After the show, you can have **dinner** (cost not included) at one of the local restaurants in the nearby and authentic "San Basilio" district (i.e. Posada del Caballo Andaluz, Taberna la Viuda o restaurante Puerta de Sevilla) or close to your hotel in the Jewish quarter.

One of the sights you can't miss when visiting the city of Córdoba is the **Royal Stables**, home to the Cordoba Equestrian Show. This emblematic and historical building was founded in 1570 by King Felipe II, a great horse lover with the dream of making a pure Spanish thoroughbred. The structure of the Royal Stables is quite grand, with vaulted ceilings and archways. Once the birthplace of the Andalusian Horse and now an unparalleled setting for this unique equestrian show. The performance is a chance to marvel at the beauty and magic of these animals in various disciplines as well as the extraordinary skills of the riders. You will enjoy an enchanting evening of music, lights, and dancing combined with majestic horse dressage.



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## FRI Subbetica Natural Park (B+L)

### DAY Morning

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After breakfast, we will make our way to our next destination but before heading to Granada, we stop at two interesting places in the heart of the natural park of the Subbetica mountains, surrounded by the most Andalusian landscape: hundred years old olive groves.

First stop is the town of **Priego de Córdoba**: considered the most baroque of the Andalusian white towns. It's beautiful houses, palaces and gardens bring to this picturesque little town a delicate beauty that can't be missed.

Next, you will head to **Finca Olivar la Hoyabuena**, a private Cortijo (Andalusian country house), turned into a very exclusive rural hotel. Its owner will open his doors to welcome us into his beautiful gardens where you will enjoy a very local gastronomic experience based on an olive oil tasting from the area, which is indeed the most awarded of the whole Spain, followed by a lovely **homemade pairing lunch**.

After lunch you will be transferred to Granada where you will have the evening free to enjoy at your own leisure

The **Sierras Subbéticas** is a stunningly beautiful, rugged park located in the heart of Andalucía between the three great cities of Córdoba, Granada, and Sevilla. The park was designated a natural park in 1988. It is home to one of southern Spain's largest breeding colonies of griffon vultures, as well as around 70 other bird species, like booted, Bonelli's and short-toed eagles. It also has a rich variety of wildflowers. The park comprises 32,056ha of a plateau largely made of limestone, from 500m to the 1,568m peak of La Tiñosa, the highest in Cordoba province. During your stay in this picturesque area, we will be exploring some of the more interesting towns: *Rute, Iznajar, Priego, and Zuheros*.

**Priego** is the capital of the Subbetica region and one of the Andalucía's little-known Baroque wonders. The northern approach presents a dramatic view of the whitewashed buildings of its old quarter (Barrio de la Villa), laid out along the edge of a natural gorge (Balcón del Adarve) of impressive height which has guaranteed the safety of Priego throughout history. Priego is also in the center of a major olive oil zone that produces some of Spain's finest oils which have been internationally awarded and given their own denominational label.



## Evening: Orientation walk in Granada

After checking into your hotel in Granada's city center, you will have some free time to freshen up and relax before meeting up with the group and your tour guide again to go on a short orientation walk of approx 1.5h. You will walk along the Darro river promenade and through the maze of tiny, narrow cobbled streets of the picturesque Albaycin Moorish district. During the walk you will be stopping at some of the most spectacular viewpoints to admire the stunning Alhambra Palace and take the best pictures shots.

A great way to complete this evening tour would be tasting some of the local tapas at some of the most emblematic taverns in town. We invite you to join us for a fun evening to try best food and wine (being an optional activity, every traveler will pay separately for his own meal).



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## SAT Granada (B+L)

### DAY Morning: Alhambra guided tour

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After breakfast, our tour leader will take you to the Alhambra where you will be introduced you to your local art historian guide, fluent English speaking who will show you the incomparable Alhambra Palace and the Generalife gardens in a 3h private tour. You will admire the greatest treasure of Moorish Spain. The Generalife is the image of how the paradise is described in the Koran (“shaded, leafy garden refreshed by running water where the fortunate ones may take their rest under tall canopies”)

After the guided tour of the Alhambra, you will enjoy a nice lunch at the Parador terrace, with breathtaking views over the Generalife gardens.

**The Alhambra** is Granada’s – and Europe’s – love letter to Moorish culture, a place where fountains trickle, leaves rustle, and ancient spirits seem to mysteriously linger. Part palace, part fort, part World Heritage site, part lesson in medieval architecture, the Alhambra has long enchanted a never-ending line of expectant visitors. The Generalife was intended to reflect how paradise is described in the Koran (“shaded, leafy garden refreshed by running water where the fortunate ones may take their rest under tall canopies”)



### **Afternoon: Carmen de los Mártires**

We will visit this delightfully tranquil garden filled with palms, cypresses and tinkling fountains. A wonderful oasis where we will spend aprx 2 hours and will take your breathe away...

We will make our way down town back to your hotel where you will have the rest of the evening free at your leisure.



### **Free evening**

Here are some of our recommendations for a special last evening in Andalucia:

- Book a nice restaurant in the Albaycin district to enjoy a romantic dinner overlooking the Alhambra
  - Enjoy a nice Arabian bath and relaxing massage at the Hamman Al Andalus (open until midnight)
  - Explore the Realejo (old Jewish district) through its tapas bars
  - Flamenco show & diner at the Sacromonte caves
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## SUN Departure from Malaga airport (B+L)

DAY Morning

8

After breakfast and check-out, you can leave luggage at reception for a later pick up and transfer to the airport. This last morning, you will be taken on a short walk within the city center to admire the magnificent **Cathedral and Royal Chapel**. To say goodbye to Granada and Andalucia, we will take you off the beaten path to be delighted with the incredible views and the beautiful gardens of one of the most emblematic Moorish “Carmens” in the city. The Andalusian patios are called “Carmens” in Granada and they are little paradises hidden from the outside streets inside the Arabian style houses.

After lunch, you will be transferred to Malaga airport for your evening departure flight



### End of your trip

*Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end...*

*We hope you enjoy your stay with us here in Spain.*

*Hasta pronto!*

