

WINE TOUR: SHERRY TRIANGLE & MONTILLA-MORILES D.O.



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6 Nights:

3N Jerez

3N Cordoba

Indulge yourself into the amazing world of wine and gastronomy on this all-inclusive and educational tour that explores the best kept secrets of Andalucía's oldest wines and recipes. On this 6 nights tour you will have the opportunity to discover 2 of the most important wine regions in Southern Spain: the famous world known "Sherry Triangle" in the Cádiz province and the more discrete but equally important "Montilla-Moriles" wine region in the Córdoba province. We can split the tour in two sections so you can either enjoy the whole experience (6 nights) or half of it (3 nights). If you are visiting other areas of Spain and will have no time to do this entire tour, you will be more than welcome to join us on either Part 1 (The Sherry Triangle) or Part 2 (Cordoba province).

Andalusia has a 2,000 year history of viticulture dating from Phoenician times as the topography, geology and climate are all excellent for growing grapes. The mild Mediterranean average temperatures, lack of frost and many hours of sunshine a year yield wines of great quality and wide characteristics. And with over 40,000 hectares of vineyards in Andalucía (that's more area "under vine" than New Zealand) – no wonder there are so many great wines waiting to be discovered!

If you are a wine lover and have curiosity about the winemaking tradition in Andalucía, whether you are part of a group, a family, a couple or a solo traveller, this tour is just perfect for you!

When to do this tour?

Spring offers a good combination of mild weather and outdoor activities.

Autumn is the best time for those with a serious interest in viticulture as it coincides with harvest season (end of August / beginning of September) and wine festivals (September / October)

Winter provides respite for people wishing to sample Andalusian wine and enjoy the local sights in relative tranquility.

SUN
DAY
1

PART 1: THE SHERRY TRIANGLE

Together with Sanlucar de Barrameda and El Puerto de Santa Maria, Jerez forms what is known as the "sherry triangle". The area is positioned midway between the sea and the mountains, and is perfect for growing white grapes. For anyone who likes a good Sherry, in the traditional tulip shaped glass (Copita), or in any glass for that matter, this may be just the place for you. Jerez de la Frontera has had a reputation for producing incredible sherry right back to the days of the Phoenicians in 1100BC. Later the Moors introduced distillation, which produced brandy and other types of fortified wines.

With over 300 days of sun each year, plus predictable rainfall, the region has an excellent climate for growing grapes. Sherry, once uncorked, is best drunk within two or three weeks, but 'hey', you are on holiday, so that's not going to be a problem! Visit the famous vineyards and taste free samples, but 'poco a poco', (little by little) as they say in Spain! Why not shop at the sherry bodegas in the area and see how the process is achieved?

What else does Jerez de la Frontera have to offer?

The Royal Andalucía School of Equestrian riding is based in Jerez, second only to the world famous riding school in Vienna. Incredible and magnificent horses and proud Spanish riders provide an amazing spectacle. The Horse Fair (Feria del Caballo), which takes place during May, is of international importance and, alongside the sherry, has helped put Jerez de la Frontera on an international map.

The Andalucía Centre of Flamenco promotes the traditional art form and Jerez claims to be the place where flamenco singing first started, and is most certainly deeply engrained in the locals' souls.

The old centre of Jerez is full of historical and cultural sights, many of which date back to medieval time. Its tiny streets and plazas make Jerez the perfect place to stroll around, before another sherry. The Cathedral of San Salvador is an impressive building, a complete mixture of styles, including Gothic, Baroque, and Rococo.

All in all Jerez de Frontera is an extremely interesting place to visit, so raise your glasses to the 'Sherry Triangle' and enjoy!

DAY 1: Arrival & welcome dinner (D)

Upon arrival in Southern Spain (preferably at Sevilla or Malaga airports as Jerez has a very small airport and therefore very few international airlines operate there) we will offer transportation arrangements to your hotel* in Jerez, where the tour will start this evening with a welcome dinner.

** Please check with us for the transportation costs from your arrival airport to Jerez hotel*

** For early arrivals at the airport, please note that hotels do not guarantee an early check-in but if your room is not ready by the time you arrive, as the usual check-in time is 2 pm, the reception staff will do the check-in for you and will keep your luggage in their safe room. In the meantime, you could use the hotel facilities (bar area, spa, library...)*

20:00 After checking-in and getting settled, you will enjoy a lovely welcome dinner to get to know all the participants and the tour leader of this adventure.

**MON
DAY
2**

Jerez - City tour and two Sherry bodegas (B+L+D)

09:00 After breakfast, your art historian guide will meet you in the lobby of your hotel and will take you on a 1:30-hour guided tour of Jerez' old town. This tour will help you to get your bearings around the city and to get a feel for its culture and history.

10:30 You will head to a local centrally located Sherry-making Bodega, ***Bodegas Tradición***. In addition to a visit to the cellars and a tasting of a few of their flavourful sherries and brandies (accompanied by some snacks), the tour will include a visit to the Bodega's extensive collection of paintings by Spanish artists. The art has been curated chronologically with pieces dating as early as the 14th century.

12:00 Transfer to Sanlúcar (30 min) to have **lunch** at the restaurant ***Mirador de Doñana***, a restaurant which offers beautiful views of Doñana National Park. Here you will be able to enjoy a delicious selection of the famed Spanish Mediterranean cuisine.

15:30 After lunch, we continue our exploration of the Sherry triangle with a visit to centuries-old family-owned ***Bodega Hidalgo Gitana*** in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. This visit will include a tasting of their famous Manzanilla directly from the barrels!

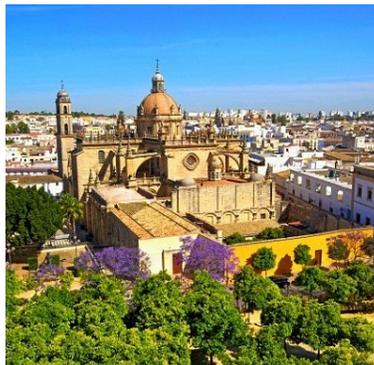
17:00 You will then be transferred back to Jerez where you will have some free time to relax before dinner.

20:00 Dinner at the hotel.

Jerez is the capital of Andalusian horse culture, being the home of the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art and its famous dancing horses. It is equally famous for its Sherry as well as its Flamenco style. Jerez is also a vibrant, chic modern Andalusian city, where fashion brands live in old palaces and stylishly outfitted businesspeople sit down to distinctly contemporary cuisine.

Bodegas Tradición is one of the newer bodegas in Jerez, but one with an impressive collection of wines that are older than the company itself. It was started in 1998 when Joaquín Rivero, acquired old soleras from defunct bodegas and restored a 19th-century bodega to bring the two together.

Bodega Hidalgo Gitana was founded in 1792. Today, it is still run and managed by the eighth generation of the founding family. The Palomino grapes for this wine are harvested in the bodega's own vineyard in the areas of Balbaina y Miraflores, two of the most respected zones around Sanlúcar. Its solera system, founded in the early 19th century, is made up of 14 scales, with a high refreshment rate and an average age at the time of bottling of around five years.



TUE
DAY
3

El Puerto, Cadiz Bay & Flamenco evening (B+L+D)

09:30 After breakfast you will be transferred to El Puerto de Santa Maria (aprx. 30 min)

10:00 You will enjoy a 1:30h guided visit to **Bodegas Gutiérrez Colosía**, a winery located at the mouth of the Guadalete River. The tour will include a very detailed tasting and snacks.

12:30 Being at the mouth of the river which opens into the ocean, we will take this opportunity to cross the Cadiz Bay by boat.

13:00 For **lunch**, you will enjoy a guided food tour around the most iconic streets and plazas of Cadiz old town including a visit to the historic Central Market!

16:00 After lunch, you will go on a panoramic sightseeing tour of Cadiz. This tour will include a visit to the Cathedral where you will get breathtaking views from the very top of its towers.

17:00 You will be transferred back to Jerez (aprx. 30 min)

17:30 Free time to rest before tonight special's evening venue.

20:00 Often referred to as the birthplace of Flamenco, one cannot visit Jerez and not enjoy this unique and vibrant art. Tonight you will be treated to a night of folklore and gastronomy at the famed **Puro Arte Tablao** (Flamenco hall) in Jerez.

Bodegas Gutiérrez Colosía located at the mouth of the river Guadalete where the dry "Levante" and the humid "Poniente" winds regulate the surrounding moisture level thus maintaining optimum conditions for their wines to age. The first Bodega was built in 1838 and it has been preserved almost as such to this day. After different owners, it was re-acquired by José Gutiérrez Dosal at the start of the 20th century, the late great-grandfather of this generation of the Gutiérrez Colosía family.

Cádiz is an elegant seaport surrounded by endless beaches along the sunny Costa de la Luz in Southern Spain. Settled by the Phoenicians around 1100 BC, Cádiz is the oldest city in western civilization as well as the launching point for the adventures of Christopher Columbus in the New World. Today, Cádiz is still one of Spain's leading ports and has a vibrant cosmopolitan culture.

Tablao Flamenco Puro Arte offers modern comforts in a traditional atmosphere as a tribute to the city referred to as the birthplace of flamenco. The founders of the tablao are dedicated to the promotion of the art of pure flamenco, offering visitors and locals a taste of Jerez and region of Andalusia. The 1-hour performance is complemented by Andalusian cuisine that features regional specialties.



**WED
DAY
4**

PART 2: MONTILLA & CORDOBA EXPERIENCE

Stick a pin in the centre of a map of Andalucía and you might well hit Montilla (south of Cordoba). Geographically this is the **heart of Spain's deep south**, with Seville to the west and Granada over the mountains to the east. Most of the wineries are small affairs in the folds of the sierra and remain under the radar, as discreet as their brands. Only the determined traveller finds them.

Montilla on the edge of a rolling sierra of white limestone, where the **pedro-ximénez** grape flourishes. A close cousin of sherry in strength and flavour, Montilla-Moriles wines are not easy to track down. You can order a fragrant, dry *fino*, a nutty *amontillado* (named after Montilla), a voluptuous *palo cortado* or a figgy *oloroso* in Cordoba, but they're rare further afield. Only 10 of the 170 producers export their nectar.

So it's supremely rewarding to stop off here, tour a bodega or three and bask in a mellow little-visited vino-world (big bodegas in Jerez are visited by thousands of tourists a day). Earthy, authentic and just about surviving the economic storms, the area is at its liveliest in the grape harvest in late August and early September (Spain's first of the year), when the hills hum with activity and party-time kicks off in Montilla.

Montilla is a busy working town spilling downhill from its medieval heart, short on postcard prettiness but proud of its bodegas, its 16th-century convent where unseen nuns sell biscuits through a revolving hatch, and its workshops where oak wine casks are still made by hand. The two imposing buildings on the main street are Alvear (the oldest bodega in Andalucía, founded in 1729) and Pérez Barquero (1905). Tours take in silent, shadowy "cathedrals" where hundreds of barrels of wine, some decades old, are stacked to the rafters.

DAY 4: Cordoba guided tour & Equestrian Show (B+L+D)

10:00 After breakfast, you will be transferred to Cordoba (aprx. 2:30h) where you will check into your hotel which would be located in the historic center.

13:30 You will head out to for a traditionally *Cordobes* lunch at Casa Pepe

16:00 Your private art historian guide will then meet you to take you for a 2-hour tour of this Unesco listed city. This tour will include a visit of the Mosque/Cathedral (*La Mezquita*) and of the Jewish quarter

18:00 Free **afternoon** to get acquainted with this pretty historical city and the wealth of culture it has to offer. Here are a few suggested places to visit:

- The Royal Alcazar
- The Synagogue
- The Viana Palace (a beautiful manor with stunning courtyards and gardens)
- Julio Romero Museum (a local painter's art collection)

20:00 Equestrian show at the Royal Stables.

21:30 Dinner at Taberna la Viuda.

Córdoba is a city in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia, and the capital of the province of Córdoba. It was an important Roman city and a major Islamic center in the Middle Ages. It's best known for La Mezquita, an immense mosque dating from 784 A.D., featuring a columned prayer hall and older Byzantine mosaics. After it became a Catholic church in 1236, a Renaissance-style nave was added in the 17th century.

The Royal Stables, once the birthplace of the Andalusian Horse and now an unparalleled setting for this unique 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. tonight, you will enjoy an enchanting evening of music, lights, and dancing combined with majestic horse dressage.



**THU
DAY
5**

Montilla olive oil & wine experience (B+L+D)

10:00 After breakfast, your private driver will take you to the pretty town of Montilla (45 min)

11:00 You will visit a local family olive oil mill, **Juan Colin**, to learn about extra virgin olive oil production and to taste two of their delicious varieties along with freshly baked bread.

12.30 Afterward, it's on to **El Lagar Blanco**, a local family winery located right in the heart of the vineyards of Montilla's hills. You will learn about the entire process involved in the production of the unique "sherry" wines of this region (one of the oldest in Spain). You will also taste the 5 different varieties they produce here. This will be followed by a traditional tapas **lunch** homemade by the winery owners.

15:30 Transfer back to Cordoba where you will have the afternoon free. A few more suggestions:

- The Roman Bridge and The Calahorra Tower (Al Andalus museum)
- The Roman Temple
- Plaza de la Corredera
- Plaza de las Tendillas

20:00 Dinner at Casa Rubio

Montilla is the center of the Designation of Origin wine zone known as Montilla-Moriles. The winemaking history of this area dates back to the Romans and the Moors and is quite possibly the oldest in Andalucia. The landscape here is dry and the soil is a blinding white *Albariza* (white marl composed of clay, calcium and marine fossils). Its excellent moisture retention is very significant as this area is hotter than almost anywhere else in Spain. The main white grape variety in this area is the worldwide known Pedro Ximenez. With a delicate skin and high sugar content, the wines that are made from it, reach up to 14 and 16% alcohol, leaving behind plenty of residual sugar. They are then matured using the *solera* system and classified into the following styles: Joven (young and fruity), Fino (dry and nutty), Amontillado (gradually oxidized), Oloroso (richer and heavier) and Pedro Ximénez (sweet and thick, honoring the actual grape name)



**FRI
DAY
6**

Los Pedroches, Ibérico ham experience (B+L+D)

09:30 After breakfast, your private driver will pick you up and will take you to the Los Pedroches Natural Reserve (1h drive from Cordoba) to visit a family-run Iberian pig farm (acorn-fed)

11:00 Full day experience in the countryside including ham cutting workshop, tasting, and a homemade **lunch**.

16:00 Transfer back to Cordoba.

17:00 Free time to relax.

20:00 Dinner at Bodegas Campos.

The name **Pedroches** derives from the Spanish word for stone (Piedra), referring in this case to the granite that is abundant in the subsoil and which has traditionally been used by masons in the area to build churches, late-Gothic chapels, and houses with elaborate arches. The Los Pedroches Natural reserve is located in the Sierra Morena area at the northern end of the province. There, you will discover the unique landscape of the Spanish "Dehesa" habitat where the black pigs are released and bred in complete freedom from November through March.



SAT
DAY
7

Zuheros white village + transfer to Malaga (B+L)

10:00 Your driver and guide will meet you after breakfast to take you to Doña Mencía a town in the Subbética National Park. From here, you will go for a short hike along the Via Verde (aprx 2h). It is a very comfortable, easy and enjoyable walk with a few stops at a few spectacular viewpoints. The hike will bring you to the picturesque town of Zuheros.

14:00 Seeing as Zuheros is the most popular goat cheese producer in the region, you will enjoy a cheese tasting which will be followed by a wine-pairing **lunch**. The wines you will try over lunch are mostly organic and will be provided by our local wine producer who is part of the famed Montilla /Moriles denomination of origin known for its varied, flavourful and unique wines.

15:30 You will continue making your way to Malaga (aprx. 1:30h).

17:00 Farewell drink at El Pimpi, located right in the heart of Malaga's historic center.

Late evening return flight (your own travel arrangements) or additional night in Malaga for those who would like to extend their adventure in Andalucía

Via Verde - This abandoned railway line was once the main transport route for olive oil between the towns of Jaen and Lucena (56 km). It has now been converted into a popular walking and cycling route offering beautiful views of the olive groves of the Subbética Natural Park.

Zuheros is a stunning Subbética village nestled in a gorge backed by steep rock cliffs. A cluster of white houses tumbles down the hill below a romantic Moorish castle carved directly into the cliff. On the edge of a small square, the archeological museum displays fascinating finds from the Cueva de los Murciélagos (bats cave). This cave is located in the hills above the village and was first explored in 1938. Nearby Zuheros, there are many scenic walking and cycling routes such as the old olive oil railway trail (Via Verde), with dramatic views of the whole Subbética landscape.



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!

