

EXAMPLE ITINERARY

THE SPANISH IBERICO HAM TRAIL

Let's taste the real Spain & absorb its incredible culture along the way.

On this unique and pioneering tour centred around Spanish gastronomy in general and its Iberian ham culture in particular, you'll uncover the secrets of this internationally acclaimed delicacy. But don't worry, you won't be just hearing about ham all day everyday! You'll also get to explore and experience our country's wonderfully rich gastronomy, culture and history.

We will take you to the four different regions of the country known for and specialised in the production of the famed Spanish Ibérico Ham: Salamanca, Extremadura, Jabugo and Los Pedroches. In between, you'll also learn about our vibrant Spanish culture and get to sample our country's diverse and world-renowned cuisine.

What's more, not only will you explore Spain's cultural and historic highlights, but you'll also uncover some of its most unspoiled corners as we literally take you 'off the beaten path'. On this fascinating two-week journey, you will visit local farmers and artisan producers who will teach you everything there is to know about our Ibérico Ham; from the curing process, to the art of ham carving, you'll also enjoy our delicious gastronomy along the way and will get to taste fabulous wines all whilst learning about Spain's incredibly rich history and experiencing our unique lifestyle, culture and traditions.

This is not your run of the mill tour of Spain, it is a true celebration of Spanish culture, history, gastronomy, wine, and last but not least, **Jamón!**

SUMMARY (14 nights)

- Start & End Point: Madrid
- 2 N Salamanca
- 2 N Cáceres
- 3 N Sevilla
- 3 N Cordoba
- 2 N Granada
- 2 N Madrid

What's included?

- All private transfers
- Hotels (4 stars)
- Breakfasts & all meals mentioned in the itinerary
- Guided tours with
- Fluent English speaking art historian guides
- Skip the line access

What's not included?

- International Air Flights
- Medical/Travel Insurance
- Meals & Drinks, other than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips & Gratuities

This is an example itinerary which can always be adjusted to meet your individual requirements and budget.





WHY GO ON THIS FASCINATING TOUR?

1. HEALTH BENEFITS

The **health benefits** of *Jamón Ibérico* or Iberian acorn-fed ham are countless and these benefits are backed up by various studies from renowned universities. To start off, 100g of Iberian ham contains **33% of our required daily protein intake**. It is a rich source of calcium and phosphorus, it also contains vitamins B1, B2 and iron. The high proportion of saturated fats in this type of ham actually **lower cholesterol, counteract the effects of cardiovascular disease & improve the circulatory system**. Jamon Iberico is also rich in monounsaturated fatty acids like oleic acid. This is a healthy fat with a **low cholesterol content** (30-40 mg/100 g); **lower than most lean meats** such as chicken or turkey!

2. DISCOVER THE "DEHESA", A UNIQUELY MEDITERRANEAN LANDSCAPE

The *Dehesa* is an Iberian pig breeding land is a **pasture & oak forest agroecosystem** located in the South Western part of the Iberian Peninsula and is considered one of the most successful and efficient examples of **nature conservation and sustainable rural development**. The four areas or designations of origin where almost all of the Iberian ham is produced are: **Extremadura, Guijuelo** in Salamanca, **Jabugo** in Huelva and **Los Pedroches** in Cordoba. Each of these areas have the **ideal climate, soil and environment** for the Iberian pig breeding and ham curing. They also have large fields allowing the pigs to graze and eat fallen **Holm Oak acorns** throughout the season (November to February). They also make it easy for the animals to **freely move** as they search for food allowing them to burn more calories than confined pigs. This, in turn, produces **the finest kind of Jamón Ibérico**. **At least a hectare of Dehesa is needed to raise a single pig**, and since these trees are centennial, the prospects for reforesting lost Dehesa are slim at best which is why these lands are fiercely protected. True Dehesa is a **richly diverse habitat** with four different types of Oak, all of which are vital in the production of **prime-quality ham**.

3. LEARN ABOUT A BREED THAT ISN'T FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE

The **Iberian pig is native to the Iberian Peninsula** with ancient origins that can be traced back to the Neolithic period, when animal domestication began. Today, herds are mostly clustered in the **central and southern parts of Portugal & Spain**. Iberian pigs can either be red or dark grey/black, with little or no hair and a lean body, thus the origin of the name *pata negra*, or "black hoof".

4. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT EATING DELICIOUS HAM!

This round trip tour of 15 days starting and ending in Madrid, is a **great mix of history, gastronomy, natural beauty and a lot of cultural immersion**.

Most definitely a fun and pleasant once-in-a-lifetime trip!

SAMPLE ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Madrid

Arrival in Madrid & Transfer to Salamanca

Private transfer from Madrid to your hotel in Salamanca (approx. 2hrs)

First day at your leisure

First afternoon and evening to get acquainted with this cosmopolitan city and the vibrant atmosphere that Salamanca will offer over your stay.

We will provide with maps, tips and recommendations for good places to go for dinner so you will feel as much as a local as possible.



DAY 2: Salamanca - a cultural treasure

Morning Salamanca guided tour

Your art historian expert guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel for a 2.5h walking tour to the historic city of Salamanca.

You will visit two glorious Cathedrals (la Nueva and La Vieja), the University building (which holds the records of the Spanish Inquisition), the Shell House (Casa de las Conchas) and the famous Plaza Mayor (widely considered Spain's most beautiful plaza).

You will also see interesting medieval plazas and beautiful sandstone architecture.

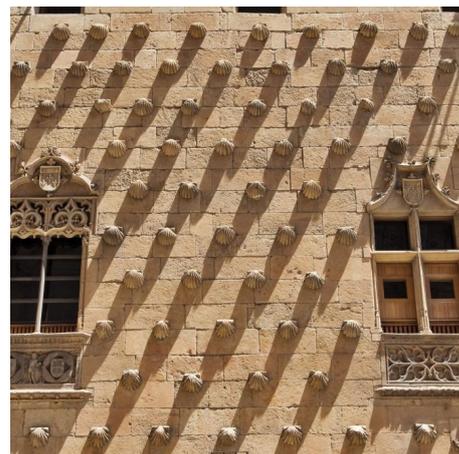
This tour will uncover both: hundreds year-old history and lively modern vibe.

Free **afternoon & evening** to further explore the city at your leisure.

Salamanca is an ancient Celtic city in north-western Spain belonging to the community of Castilla y León. The city lies on several hills by the Tormes River. Its Old City was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988 and has steeped in history dating back to Roman times.

*The **University of Salamanca** was founded in 1218. It is the oldest university in Spain, the fourth oldest western university and one of the most important university cities in Spain supplying 16% of Spain's market for the teaching of the Spanish language. With its 30,000 students, the university is, together with tourism, a primary source of income in Salamanca.*

Meals included: Breakfast



DAY 3: Castilla León & Extremadura countryside

Full day trip with private driver and guide (length: 9 hours)

After checking out, your private driver together with your guide will pick you up from your hotel and will take you on a very scenic drive through Dehesas of Iberian pigs farms to the charming little town of **La Alberca** (aprx 1 h drive).

At La Alberca, you will have a first introduction to the cured Ibérico ham by visiting the "Oh, Espacio del Jamón", an **interactive museum and tasting centre** where you will learn all about the different breeding areas in Spain and the varieties of which you will taste up to 5 different ones!

You'll then enjoy a short walking tour of aprx 1-hour around the picturesque town of La Alberca

This will be followed by a transfer to **Hervás** (aprx. 1h) where you will enjoy a set menu **lunch** with your driver and guide before the afternoon guided tour of this historic little town.

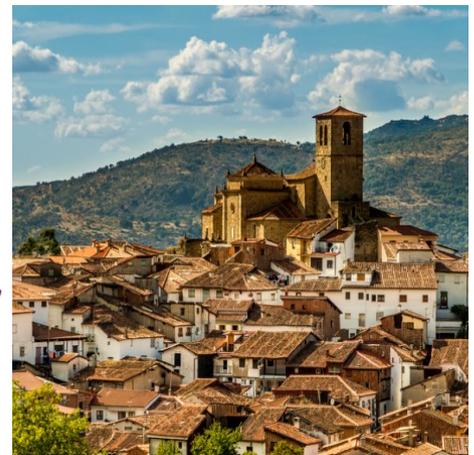
After lunch, your 2-hour panoramic and walking tour of the city will include stops at the best viewpoints and a stroll around the Jewish quarter.

You'll then be transferred to hotel in Cáceres (aprx. 1 hour) where you'll have the evening free to enjoy at your leisure.

La Alberca is a charming town nestled on the northern slopes of La Sierra de França at 1084 meters (3,556 feet) above sea level. It was founded in the 1300s and was the first village to be declared a National Historical Monument by the Spanish government. La Alberca's fabulous medieval architecture is extremely well-preserved, from its narrow cobblestone roads to its thatched roofs. Most of the houses were built with the intention of raising animals and smoking meat inside, as a result, many floors have holes in them, to allow for the curing of meat on every floor. Today, La Alberca abounds with fine meat shops, offering a large variety of delectable Jamón Serrano.

Hervás, a town with a Jewish flavour. Hervás houses one of the best preserved Jewish quarters in the whole country (declared a Historical Artistic Site in 1969). This is a neighborhood settled by Jews who came to the town in the 15th century, and one on which they left their indelible mark on its streets and buildings. You will find the narrowest street in Spain. It is barely a metre and a half and is called Travesía del Moral. Its granite, sun dried brick and chestnut wood buildings endow Hervás with a matchless beauty.

Meals included: Breakfast, ham tasting & lunch



DAY 4: Monumental Cáceres

Your art historian expert guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel for a 3h walking tour of the wall city of **Cáceres** where you will explore its monuments and learn all its history.

Embark on an exciting journey into the past by this **monumental City** as you travel through all its corners and cobble streets. You will start the visit at **Plaza Mayor**, then visit the **Judería Nueva**, the Forum of **the Balbos** and the **Town Hall** (Ayuntamiento).

You will continue the visit exploring the **Torre de Bujaco**, the most important of the city and whose viewpoint offers splendid views, the **Plaza del Socorro**, the **Albarranas Towers** belonging to its historical wall and the **Arch of Spain**.

After your tour, it's time to try the **traditional gastronomy** of the area at a Gourmet & Deli shop located right in the heart of the historic town. Together with your guide you will taste local wines and Ibérico cured meats from Extremadura.

Free **afternoon & evening** to further explore the town at your leisure. We will provide you with maps, tips and recommendations for local bars & restaurants.

The Old Town of Cáceres has a privileged Monumental Ensemble which is one-of-a-kind in Spain as well as in Europe. The walled area of Cáceres contains the best Spanish Renaissance Ensemble of both Civil and Religious Architecture, which keeps intact nowadays. The majority of the religious and civil buildings belonging to the Old Town of Cáceres date back to late 14th century, specially from refurbishments, extensions and newly constructed buildings made between 15th and 16th centuries. Because of this monumental splendour, Cáceres was declared as a Spanish National Monument in 1949, as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986.

Meals included: Breakfast, ham & wine tasting



DAY 5: Extremadura's history & wines

Full day trip to explore Badajoz province and the Extremadura countryside.

On your way to Sevilla (approx. 3 hours drive in total) you will explore two of the most attractive spots of this part of Spain located on the border with Portugal.

First, you will discover the well preserved archaeological site of **Mérida** by taking a 2.5h guided tour of the Roman Amphitheatre and the archaeological museum.

Afterwards, you will visit a **vineyard & winery** close by, where you will taste 4 different wines and enjoy a delicious **tapas lunch** of traditional local products such as cured meats, cheeses and homemade pâtés.

After lunch, you will be transferred to your hotel in Sevilla (apox. 2h drive/siesta...)

The **evening** will be **free** for you to get acquainted to this charming city at your leisure.

The Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1993. Located in Extremadura, it has its origins in the year 25 BC, when Augustus completed the conquest of the North of Hispania and founded the Colony of Augusta Emerita. The city was created as an idealised model of Rome and was the capital of Lusitania, the western-most province of the Roman Empire. Following Diocletian's reform, it functioned as the capital of the Diocese of Hispania. It was also temporarily the royal seat of two Germanic peoples - the Suebi and the Visigoths - and under the Arabic dominion, Mérida was one of the three border capitals of Al-Andalus, together with Toledo and Zaragoza, ensuring control of the western part of the Iberian peninsula. The modern city of Mérida has been built on top of Emerita; yet, archaeological remains are well preserved and still evidence the Roman city .

Meals included: Breakfast, wine tasting & tapas lunch



DAY 6: Sevilla's essence

Morning: Sevilla guided tour

Your art historian guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel for an introductory walking tour of aprx 3h to discover the main historic sites in Sevilla. The tour will include a visit to the Roman Catholic **Cathedral of Sevilla, the world's largest Gothic Church**, whose constructions lasted for over a century. You will then head to the **Royal Alcazar/Palace***, a beautiful example of Mudéjar architecture in the Iberian Peninsula. The tour will take you through the city's **Santa Cruz Jewish quarter**, this labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys designed to provide protection from the oppressive sun of the Sevillian summer are scattered with lovely green and lively plazas.

* The Cathedral closes at 15:30 on Mondays. On Sundays, it opens at 14:30.

* Subject to availability: Being an active residence of the Royal Family, the Alcazar Palace is occasionally closed to the public. For security reasons, the information is never provided ahead of time.

You'll have the **afternoon** free to enjoy at your leisure.

*Some cities blast you away, others slowly win you over. **Sevilla** disarms and seduces you. The irresistible city of Sevilla, Andalusia's capital, is located on the shores of the River Guadalquivir. Its population of about 1.5 million makes it the fourth-largest city in Spain. Its historic center, the third-largest in Europe with an area of 4 km², contains three UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the fabulous Mudéjar Alcázar palace, the Gothic Cathedral and the General Archive of the Indies. Lorded over by a colossal Gothic cathedral, the old town 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. But what is captivating about the city, as much as the monuments and works of art, is its essential romantic quality, the greatest city of Carmen, Don Juan and Figaro...*



Evening Flamenco Show & Dinner

Tonight you will enjoy an evening of art & emotion. 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 will last for approximately 1.5 hours.

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. This show features up to 15 of the most professional flamenco artists in the whole of Spain. Excitement and enjoyment are guaranteed!

Meals included: Breakfast & dinner



DAY 7: Aracena & Jabugo - Ham haven

Jabugo ham experience (approx. 9h)

On this day trip, you will discover **the secrets of one of Spain's gastronomic icons** by experiencing this artisanal process, used for **over 130 years**.

You will be taken on a very scenic drive along the Road 8105 (considered as one **of the most beautiful and picturesque roads in Spain**), admiring incredible viewpoints over the impressive Aracena mountains and the towns of Linares, Alhajar and Santa Ana., Start your day by **traipsing through the forest of the Dehesa** (in the Sierra de Aracena Natural Park) until you reach a private "finca" with holm oaks and acorns underfoot, to get a glimpse of **the famous black leg Iberian pig**. This protected breed makes the best ham, and on this tour you will witness it in its **natural habitat**. After this very pleasant and educational outdoor experience, we move onto the more delicious part of the process; you will continue the drive until the **ham factory itself**. You will visit the curing cellars of one of the most **prestigious Ibérico Ham producers** of the entire Sierra de Aracena in the **worldwide-known town of Jabugo**.



We step into **one of the best bodegas in Spain**, where you will learn about the process of crafting this celebrated charcuterie. Watch the **maestros**, a handful of **artisans**, at work, hanging and inspecting the ham by hand every day. They will take you underground, to the **130-year-old cellar**—a veritable cathedral of Spanish ham. After your crash course in its elaboration, we will sit for **a glass of sherry and a tasting of jamón**, where you will discover which part of the leg is your favourite and even be able to **try your hand at carving a slice** (under the close supervision of one of the world's best carvers).

This trip ends as it should; around a table at a local, **traditional restaurant** in a village of 330 inhabitants, where we will tuck in to a **lunch** rich with various pork cuts.

After lunch, you could either head back to Sevilla or enjoy an additional 2 h experience (included: no additional cost) to visit the spectacular **Gruta de la Maravillas in Aracena** (this is an audio-guided tour of aprx 1-hour duration, full description below)

You'll then head back to Sevilla where you will have the rest of the **evening free** to enjoy at your leisure.

The Sierra de Aracena Natural Park, a Unesco protected Biosphere Reserve, is where the famed free-range black Iberian pigs are raised and are allowed to roam freely from the month of November through March.

The Cave of Wonders (Gruta de la Maravillas) is a network of limestone caverns. This natural underground monument is located at the foot of a hill crowned by the medieval castle and Priory Church of La Señora del Mayor Dolor and has been open since 1914. These caves were formed over many thousands of years through a process known as "karstification" - the slow erosion of limestone, gradually dissolved by carbonic acid, producing fissures, sinkholes, underground streams, and caverns. Thanks to this phenomenon we are left with a spectacular setting. Las Maravillas Cave has been used as a location for many movies, both Spanish and foreign, most famously 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' (1959).

Meals included: Breakfast, ham tasting & lunch



DAY 8: The ancient city of Cordoba

Free morning in Sevilla

Leisurely morning in Sevilla to do some shopping, visit some museums or simply relax.

Some optional activities such as cooking class, tapas tour, river cruise or a bike tour can be arranged as well. Should you be interested, please let us know and we will be happy to provide you with these options for you to choose from.



Late morning high-speed train to Cordoba

Private transfer from your hotel in Sevilla to the train station where you will take the high-speed train to Cordoba (Only 45 minutes!). Upon arrival in Cordoba, your private driver will take you to your hotel in the historic city centre

Afternoon: Cordoba guided tour

Your art historian guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel to take you for an introductory walking tour of aprx. 3h to discover the main* sites of **Cordoba, a Unesco listed city**.

The visit will, of course, include the famed **Mosque/Cathedral (La Mezquita)**, a monumental site which encapsulates this city's identity like few other buildings can, with the layers of its beautifully complex history visibly integrated in its walls and bearing the marks of the various and diverse cultures and civilizations that helped shape this fascinating city.

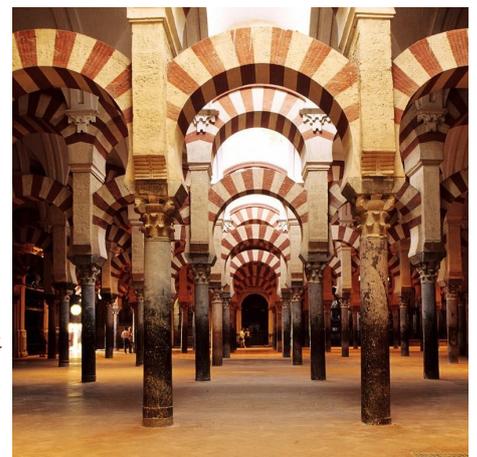
You will also discover the **Jewish quarter**, a quaint and charming network of pretty narrow lanes which will lead you to the Synagogue a unique building in Andalusia and **one of the three best preserved Medieval synagogues in the whole of Spain**. This wonderful tour will end at the Royal **Alcazar/Palace**, once the residence of Roman governors and Moorish caliphs, and finally, in 1328 the Cordovan home of the Spanish kings.

**All skip the line tickets will be provided by your local guide on the day of the tour.*

***On Mondays, the Royal Alcazar, the Synagogue and all museums in Cordoba are closed. On Sundays and holidays, opening hours are shorter.*

Córdoba is a city in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia, and the capital of the province of Córdoba. A great cultural reference point in Europe, this ancient city has been declared a World Heritage Site and contains a mixture of the diverse cultures that have settled it throughout history. Very few places in the world can boast of having been the capital of a Roman province (Hispania Ulterior), the capital of an Arab State (Al-Andalus) and a Caliphate. The city famously houses the Mezquita, a symbol of the worldly, sophisticated culture that flourished here more than a millennium ago when Córdoba was western Europe's biggest, most cultured city. Such splendor is palpable in the intellectual wealth of this city, that has seen the birth of figures like Seneca, Averroes, and Maimonides (Cordoba has in fact erected a life-size statue in honor of this physician and philosopher considered one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of all time).

Meals included: Breakfast



DAY 9: Taste the Andalusian countryside

Montilla olive oil & wine region day trip (approx. 7h)

On this exciting tour, we will venture out into the **countryside** to explore the beautiful hills of Montilla (still a very unspoiled wine region south of Córdoba). Olive oil, gastronomy, and wine are part of **Andalucía's popular wisdom** and with this tour, you will delve into **the fascinating world of olive oil and wine**.

Your private driver/tour guide will pick you up from your hotel and will take you to **Montilla** (approx. 40 min ride).

Your first stop will be a **family-run olive oil mill** where you will discover the full process of olive oil making. You will enjoy a tour of the family groves and learn about the different characteristics, culinary uses and health benefits of olive oil. After a visit to the mill and the on-site museum, you will enjoy a very interesting short video about oil production followed by **a tasting of two of their delicious varieties** along with **freshly baked bread made by the very same family!**

The second experience of the day is a visit to a **local family-run boutique winery** located right in the heart of the Sierra de Montilla, a stunning rural landscape with endless vineyards and rolling hills.

Upon arrival, you will be welcomed by a truly passionate viticulturist who will take you to the family vineyards to tell you about the **history of this ancestral winery**. Next, you will be guided into the wine cellar, named by the family as "Sacristia", a remarkable sacred space where their oldest wines are kept. On this **educational tour**, you will learn about the **unique grape variety** that grows exclusively in Montilla, the popular and worldwide known "Pedro Ximenez". You will also learn about the entire process and aging system of these unique dry and sweet wines, **a process that is probably the oldest in Spain**. The visit will end with a **delicious tasting** of some of these varieties paired with a **selection of tapas** showcasing some of the region's best products.

Your olive oil and wine experience will be completed with a lovely **pairing lunch** at one of the most emblematic taverns in town. Raise your glass for a toast to a great wine experience!

After lunch, private transfer to your hotel in Cordoba where you will have the rest of the **evening** free to enjoy at your leisure.

Did you know that Spain is the largest producer of olive oil in the world and that 80% of Spanish production is made in Andalusia? The history of olive oil takes us back to the Phoenician and Greek civilizations settled in the Iberian Peninsula over 3,000 years ago. The importance of olive oil to Spanish culture cannot be overstated; locals actually refer to it as "liquid gold". Spain is also home to an abundance of grape varieties; making it the third-largest wine producers in the world.

Home of the famed "Gran Capitan", Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, a Spanish general who fought in the Conquest of Granada and the Italian Wars, Montilla is the center of the Designation of Origin wine zone known as Montilla-Moriles. 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 wineries of the Montilla-Moriles Wine Route offer the possibility of enjoying a tailored tasting, both for connoisseurs and neophytes, for lovers or simply curious, while showing the peculiarities of the development of these wines where the undisputed star is the Pedro Ximénez grape variety and in which the biological aging (for the Fino wine) and the oxidative aging (for the Amontillados, Olorosos and Pedro Ximénez) take part following the system of criaderas and soleras.

Meals included: Breakfast, olive oil & wine tasting, tapas and wine pairing lunch.



DAY 10: The immense Dehesa of Los Pedroches

Los Pedroches full day trip (approx. 8h)

Your private driver will pick you up and will take you to visit a **family-run Iberian pig farm** (1h drive from Cordoba) .

Today, you will discover Cordoba's very own "Dehesa" habitat where the region's native black pigs are released and bred in complete freedom from the months of November through February.

This **very exclusive experience** makes for an enjoyable outdoor day including: Iberian ham slicing workshop lead by a master craftsman, **ham tasting and homemade lunch** (grilled vegetables, beef and pork, fresh tomato salad and traditional dessert).

After lunch, private transfer back to your hotel in Cordoba where you will have the **evening free** evening to further explore this beautiful and historic city at your leisure. We will provide you with maps, tips and recommendations for local bars & restaurants.

*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 of Córdoba. 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 February.*

Meals included: Breakfast, ham tasting & lunch.



DAY 11: The wonders of the Alhambra

Morning: private transfer to Granada

After check-out, private transfer from your hotel to Granada (approx. 2hs)

Early afternoon: Alhambra guided tour

You will enjoy a private guided tour* of aprx. 2.5 hrs during which you will discover **one of the most brilliant jewels of universal architecture**: the magnificent Moorish Alhambra Palace and its beautiful Generalife gardens. The Alhambra is a series of palaces and gardens built under the Nazari Dynasty in the 14th century. This mighty compound of buildings – including the summer palace called Generalife, with its fountains and gardens - stands at the foot of Spain's highest mountain range, the Sierra Nevada, and overlooks the city below and the fertile plain of Granada.

This tour includes the tickets and 'skip the line' access* to the different areas of the Alhambra so there is no need to queue.

Free **afternoon & evening** to explore Granada at your own leisure.

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).

Meals included: Breakfast



DAY 12: Another type of ham - The Serrano

La Alpujarra full day trip (aprx 10h)

Today you will discover the wild and picturesque region of the Alpujarra (Sierra Nevada Natural Park)

Your private driver will take you to Pampaneira (aprx 1.5h) where you will meet your **private local and expert nature guide**. From there, your guide will take you to explore the most picturesque villages in this beautiful area for the rest of the morning.

This 3h tour includes some **light hiking and a spectacular scenic drive**, passing through the most impressive viewpoints of the whole Sierra Nevada NP.

After a short introduction to the area and a walk around Pampaneira, you will be driven to the upper town, **Capileira** (only 4 km North).

This is where your downhill hike along the Poqueira ravine will start. You will pass by Bubi3n, where you will stop to visit **a local weaving factory** and will continue down to Pampaneira, where your hike and tour will end.

Your guide will then take you to our favourite place in town, **a little "bodega" and deli shop** where you will taste some **"Jam3n Serrano" from Tr3velez**, as well as **local cheeses, wines and craft beers** (one drink and a tapa is included)

Afterward, your guide will show you the best restaurants to have **lunch** after (cost not included) if you are still hungry after the tapas tasting at the bodega.

You will have some free time in Pampaneira afterward to visit the **chocolate factory** of Abuela Ili or have some coffee or homemade juices at Europa Caf3 in the Plaza.

You will then head back to Granada where you will have the **evening** free to enjoy at your leisure.

*This region of mountain villages known as **La Alpujarra** clings to the southern flanks of the Sierra Nevada, cloven by deep, sheltered valleys and gorges which run down towards the Mediterranean. The Alpujarra, as it is popularly known, in the singular, is famous throughout Spain because of its unique mini-ecology. Its terraced farmlands are constantly watered by the melting snow from above, constituting a high-altitude oasis of greenery which stands in dramatic contrast to the arid foothills below. The cultural interest of the region lies in its fifty-odd villages, which were the last stronghold of the Spanish Muslims, or Moors. Soon after the Castilians took Granada in 1492, all the city's Moors were forced to convert to Christianity.*

***Trev3lez ham** is one of the most popular delicacies in the province of Granada, hailed for its quality and great flavour. The particular features of this cured ham is its special curing process which is carried out in unique climatic conditions, seeing as how Trev3lez is one of the highest villages in Spain. This curing process can only take place in eight districts of the High Alpujarra (Granada Province), in curing barns over 1,200m above sea level. The curing process uses neither preservatives nor additives, and takes 14-24 months. The result is a delicate, tasty ham, with a low salt content.*

Meals included: Breakfast & tapas tasting



DAY 13: On to Madrid

Morning: Flight and transfer to Madrid

Private transfer to Granada airport to take an internal flight to Madrid (approx. 1 h duration).

Upon arrival at Madrid airport, private transfer to your hotel in the city centre.



Afternoon: Walking tour with private guide (Length: aprx. 4h)

Your art historian guide will meet you in the lobby of your hotel for an introductory walking tour* to discover the **highlights of Madrid**.

On this 4-hour private tour, you will explore both **Hapsburg and Bourbon dynasties' legacies**, spanning the 16th to the 19th centuries. In the Madrid of the Habsburgs, you will learn about the development of the area around the **Plaza Mayor, the Casa de la Villa square, and the Puerta del Sol**, which marked the eastern gate of the city under their reign. The Bourbons expanded the boundary of the city beyond the **Puerta del Sol to the Prado Museum and Retiro Park**. The Bourbon dynasty was **inspired by the court of Versailles** and you can see the French influence in the buildings they commissioned, including the **Royal Palace, with its elegant Plaza del Oriente and Royal Theater, the Bank of Spain building, the beautiful Cibeles and Neptune fountains, and the world-renowned Prado Museum**.



**The majority of the tour is done on foot but occasionally to avoid walking long distances and to optimize the time spent on-site visits, public transportation is sometimes needed (either taxi or metro). The cost of this public transportation is already included and no extra fees are added to the guided tour.*

*** Being a government building, the visit to the Royal Palace is subject to availability as it is sometimes closed for official events.*

You'll have this first **evening free** to get acquainted with this cosmopolitan city and the vibrant atmosphere that Madrid will offer over your stay.

Madrid, Spain's central capital, is a city of elegant boulevards and expansive, manicured parks such as the Buen Retiro. It's renowned for its rich repositories of European art, including the Prado Museum's works by Goya, Velázquez and other Spanish masters. The Habsburg dynasty (los Austrias) ruled Spain during its Golden Age and established Madrid as the capital of the country. During their reign in the 16th and 17th centuries, the old center of the city was transformed with the construction of many of the city's historic buildings around the area of the Plaza Mayor. The Bourbon dynasty reigned after the Habsburgs, and they continued the transformation and expansion of the city. They are responsible for commissioning some of Madrid's most iconic buildings, including the Royal Palace, the Cibeles and Neptune fountains and the Prado Museum...

Meals included: Breakfast



DAY 14: A little more of Madrid

Madrid-Free day

Free day to explore other sites of Madrid at your leisure.

We will provide with maps, tips and recommendations for good places to go for dinner so you will feel as much as a local as possible.



OPTIONAL: Prado Museum-guided visit

Your expert art historian guide will meet you at the lobby of your hotel for a 2-hour* guided tour of Madrid's Prado Museum to learn about the stories and figures behind the art. The most characterizing pieces from diverse periods in history will be noted; starting from the Renaissance all the way to the height of Impressionism.

** Including pick up on foot from your hotel, the whole experience will last 3 hours.*

***All skip the line tickets will be provided by your local guide on the day of the tour.*

The Prado Museum houses one of the finest art collections in the world. It displays thousands of European paintings, sculptures, and other works of art throughout its halls. Featuring more than 8,000 works of art, the museum can be overwhelming to visit independently, but our knowledgeable guide will lead you to the most significant and admired paintings and sculptures, including works by Spanish, Dutch and Italian masters. The most famous piece in the collection that is on display at the Prado is Las Meninas by Diego Velazquez. He dedicated many of his own pieces to the museum and had a hand in obtaining several works from great Italian painters as well. In tribute to Velazquez, his statue is one of the few marking the entrances to the museum.



Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 15: End of your trip

We will arrange for a private driver to take you to the airport for your flight home :(

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

We hope you enjoyed your stay with us here in Spain.

Hasta pronto!

Meals included: Breakfast



ACCOMMODATION

At Just Explore we understand one of the biggest worries when booking a holiday is the standard for your hotel. That's why we only use pre-viewed character hotels with great locations to help you relax and enjoy your stay with us.

Your accommodation will be made up of:
 4 Star hotels with double rooms sharing
 Breakfasts included - All centrally located
 Air conditioning - En-suite rooms

TRANSPORT (all included)

Luxury AC vehicle
 All private transfers from airport/railway station to hotels and vice versa.
 All private transfers from town to town mentioned in above Itinerary.
 All trains and flights mentioned in the above itinerary.

GUIDED VISITS & TOURS (all entrance fees included)

Salamanca - City tour
 Caceres - City tour
 Mérida - City tour
 Córdoba - City tour
 Seville - City tour
 Granada - Alhambra
 Madrid - City tour

MEALS & SHOWS (all included)

- Flamenco show & dinner (Sevilla)
 - Olive oil, wine tasting & lunch (Montilla)

HAM EXPERIENCES (drivers, guides, tastings and lunch)

- Day trip to La Alberca,
 - Day trip to Jabugo, Huelva
 - Day trip to Los Pedroches, Córdoba
 - Day trip to La Alpujarra, Granada

Assistance During Your Trip

Full support & assistance on hand 24/7

As with all our clients we will provide you with maps, a list of recommended places to visit, bars & restaurants etc. to help you enjoy the authentic Spain whilst you're exploring at your leisure.

Insurance

We recommend that all travelers take out there own private medical & travel insurance whilst traveling to avoid any unforeseen expenses...

Please Note:

The above itinerary may change at any time due to circumstances beyond our control. We will duly advise of any such changes as soon as possible.

PRICE* (Per person)

Depends on the number of travelers and dates

Please enquire for furthers details

* Subject to our standard terms & conditions (full details on separate sheet)

