



EXAMPLE ITINERARY

**THE HIDDEN GEMS:**

A self-drive tour of Andalusia's White Villages

**Go beyond Andalusia's jewels and uncover its hidden gems...**

Andalusia is a region brimming over with history; from Granada's Alhambra to Sevilla's Alcázar & Barrio de Santa Cruz or Cordoba's Great Mosque/Cathedral, this region is abundant with splendid remnants of its rich past.

On this trip, we look past these shining jewels and take you off the beaten path to explore Andalusia's dramatic landscapes, littered with what we consider to be Andalusia's true hidden gems: the legendary White Villages of Andalusia.

These stunning ancient whitewashed villages perched upon hills, dot the characteristically rugged Andalusian landscape like snow-capped peaks in a sea of centennial olive groves and lush vineyards. Let yourself be inspired by these pretty villages' winding cobbled streets tastefully adorned with wrought iron *rejās* on their windows and plant pots spilling over with colourful flowers.

On this fantastic trip, take the time to discover this ancient land, savour its delicious gastronomy and soak in its distinctive and enchanting culture.

**SUMMARY (10 Nights)**

- Start & End Point: Madrid
- 1 N Madrid
- 2 N Subbética N.P.
- 2 N La Viñuela
- 2 N Ronda
- 2 N Vejer
- 1 N Madrid

**What's Included?**

- Car rental for 8 days\*
- Small 3-star Boutique Hotels
- Breakfasts & all meals mentioned in the itinerary
- Guided tours with fluent English speaking guides. (including: 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.*

*\*This tour can be also done with private drivers instead of a rental Car*



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## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: Arrival in Madrid

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

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

We will provide you with good recommendations for places to eat, drink and tips for city walks or any entertainment/events happening during your travel dates.



### DAY 2: Heading South

#### Morning: Train to Cordoba & pick up rental car

You will take the high-speed train to Córdoba (aprx. 2 hours) to collect your rental car. This will be your transportation as you explore the southern countryside of Andalusia and get around during the rest of your stay.

On your way to your rural accommodation in la Subbetica Natural Park, you will venture out into the countryside to explore the breath-taking rolling hills of Montilla wine region .

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 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 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.

Raise your glass for a toast to a great wine experience!

**After lunch**, continue on to your charming rural boutique accommodation (aprx. 1h drive) where you will have the rest of the day free 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.*

Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch



## DAY 3: La Subbetica N.P.

### Morning

Drive to the Subbetica Natural park (aprx. 20mins) here you can enjoy a nice short hike or ride along the Via Verde, an old railway line now converted into a popular walking and cycling path. This abandoned railway line was once the main transport route for olive oil between the towns of Jaen and Lucena.

Along the way, you will have the opportunity to stop and enjoy some of the path's most spectacular views over the picturesque white village of Zuheros and the olive groves of the Subbetica Natural Park. As it is not a circular trail, if you feel adventurous enough, we can walk back to Luque \*(an extra 7km) or we will organise a taxi to drive you back to Luque where you started. Back in Luque you enjoy some nice refreshments and a quick lunch at the old station restaurant/bar before heading to your next destination (cost not included)

*\*All rental bikes, equipment, and transfers are provided.*

You will have the **evening** free to enjoy your charming rural boutique accommodation at your leisure

*The Sierras Subbéticas is a stunningly beautiful, rugged park located in the heart of Andalucia 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.*

Meals included: Breakfast

## DAY 4: Get active!

### Morning

Drive to your rural hotel by la Viñuela lake (aprx 2 hrs drive), the interior countryside of the Axarquía region at only 30 min from Malaga city.

Today, you have the choice between two exciting outdoor activities:

#### OPTION 1: Snorkelling in Nerja

Discover the treasures of the Mediterranean on this fantastic journey which will take you around the Costa Del Sol's best snorkelling spots. This relaxing, safe and educational tour begins with a crash course in snorkelling from your expert guide who will show you where to swim and where to look. You'll seek out and will get to admire the many types of sea fauna and flora including flowered coral formations!

While you snorkel, your experienced & knowledgeable guide will always be close by in case you need assistance or if you just have a question.

The tour generally lasts for about an hour giving you enough time fully take advantage of this Mediterranean sea adventure.

After the tour you will be invited to spend some time together with your fellow snorkellers on the beach

*Includes: Soft drinks & snacks.*

*La Herradura is a pretty village in Nerja which overlooks a picturesque horseshoe-shaped bay, famous for its crystal-clear waters, sheltered beach, and excellent watersports facilities, particularly scuba-diving. It is one of the main resorts on the Costa Tropical.*

#### OPTION 2: Horse riding between avocado and mango plantations

Meet your guide at the stables where you will be matched with the perfect horse before getting some instructions, so that you can enjoy this experience to the fullest.

You will then be taken on a very enjoyable ride experience of aprx 2hrs to discover the Axarquía on horseback! The route will take you through the countryside where you will get to see mango and avocado plantations which are very popular around this area.

*The Axarquía area is still a breathtakingly beautiful and unspoiled region of Malaga. The main attractions are the area's dramatic hill and mountain scenery, its unspoiled, whitewashed villages and the strong sweet wine that is made from sun-dried grapes. Because of the region's sub-tropical climate, this is also a region where some of the more tropical fruits, such as mango and kiwi are grown.*

Meals included: Breakfast



## DAY 5: Nerja & Frigiliana

### Morning

Drive from your hotel and to the Nerja Caves (aprx. 1h) where you will go on a 45-minute audio-guided visit through the different halls of the Cave.

Afterwards, you can take a short orientation walk around the town of Nerja to visit its most representative viewpoints and highlights. Then, go on a very scenic drive to the charming white village of Frigiliana (only 7 km up the hills from Nerja coastal town). Once in Frigiliana, you can stroll the whitewashed narrow streets and explore the little town, stopping at the most breathtaking viewpoints. You will have the opportunity to take pictures of the ocean and the mountains.

For **lunch** (cost not included), we highly recommend the Restaurant El Jardin with spectacular views

of the town and of the Mediterranean sea (if you are interested, please let us know so we can reserve a good spot for you on the terrace)

After lunch, you could wander around some more and do some shopping (local wine, leather or ceramics) before driving back to your hotel in La Viñuela where you could spend the rest of the **afternoon & evening** relaxing.

*The magnificent Nerja Caves – Cuevas de Nerja – were discovered in 1959, when a handful of boys from Maro found it by chance. They had inadvertently stumbled on one of the most important geological finds of our era. The Nerja caves are home to the world's largest column, which has held its place in the Guinness Book of Records since 1989, and the world's oldest Neanderthal cave paintings, recently dated as being over 10,000 years older than the previous record holder. Frigiliana is a maze of cobbled streets, with meticulously maintained whitewashed houses, that provide a stunning contrast against the blue skies and red slate roofs. The colourful plant pots brimming with bougainvillea, lavender, and jasmine all add an extra dash of colour to this enchanting scene. Frigiliana is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful villages in Andalusia and has consistently won awards to that effect. Including being voted as the 'prettiest village in Andalusia' by the Spanish tourism authority.*

Meals included: Breakfast



## DAY 6: Caminito del Rey & Ronda

### Morning

From your hotel in La Viñuela, drive to the main entrance of the Caminito Path. (aprx. 1h 25 mins). This is a linear path, not a circular one. The route, which is 7.7 km long, is divided into 4.8 km of access ways and 2.9 km of boardwalks. It should take around 2 to 3 hours to complete.

After your walk, you could enjoy a delicious lunch at the La Garganta restaurant in El Chorro which offers stunning views over the Guadalhorce lakes and cliffs (cost is not included but a reservation could be made for you should you be interested)

Take the shuttle bus back to your car (aprx. 20-25 mins) and continue on to your hotel in Ronda (aprx. 1h 45mins)



*El Caminito del Rey is an impressive walkway, pinned along the steep walls of the Gaitanes narrow gorge in El Chorro with the Guadalhorce River flowing below it. Its name translates to The King's Little Pathway as it was originally built in 1901 as part of king Alfonso XIII's ambitious hydroelectric energy project to unify three rivers. It swiftly fell out of use and into disrepair, though – and soon became a magnet for climbers and adventurers, lured by the one-off views and the adrenaline-fuelled challenge. After four years of extensive repairs and renovations, the walkway re-opened in 2015. The new path is genuinely like few other places on earth. The trail gives both a thrilling and awe-inspiring experience as you traverse along the rocky cliff-faces and cross footbridges.*

## Ronda evening sunset tour

You will first check-in at your hotel where you could leave your luggage and straight after you will go on an introductory walking sunset tour of aprx 2.5 hours which will cover the old town, the cliffs, the New bridge and the bullring.

*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.*

Meals included: Breakfast



## DAY 7: Grazalema Natural Park

### Option 1: Grazalema NP white villages

Start your day by driving to the white village of Setenil de las Bodegas (aprx. 30 mins) for a nice stroll through its picturesque and charming cobbled streets. After a coffee break, go on a scenic drive through the spectacular Grazalema natural park. We recommend making sightseeing stops at the charming towns of Grazalema and Zahara de la Sierra.

We also highly recommend having **lunch** at a very nice restaurant overlooking the Zahara lake, called Al Lago (cost is not included but if you are interested we can make the reservation for you).

After lunch, you can stroll the narrow streets of the Moorish old town of Zahara and climb to the top of the Arab castle before heading to your hotel in Ronda.



*Setenil de las Bodegas: Named after its once flourishing wineries "bodegas", it is probably unique among the pueblos blancos or white villages, of Andalusia; its blinding white houses seem to emerge from the rocks, some even have rock roofs and olive groves on their roofs.*

*Grazalema, a pretty town whose immaculately kept cobbled streets are lined with whitewashed houses adorned with wrought-iron rejas on their windows and plant pots spilling over with colourful flowers.*

*Zahara de la Sierra, is quite simply a place that takes your breath away. It is, without a doubt, one of the most picturesque of all the Pueblos Blancos (white villages) in the Sierra de Grazalema, if not in the whole of Andalusia. The town enjoys an extraordinary setting, at the foot of the Sierra del Jaral and perched atop a hill surrounded by the turquoise waters of the Zahara-el Gastor reservoir.*

### Option 2: Morning circular hike of Ronda + Winery in Ronda

Start off your day with an invigorating hike around Ronda's incredibly beautiful gorge( aprx. 2h / 8km - directions will be provided).

You will then visit a boutique family-run winery where you will have a delicious wine tasting lunch (\*). The visit begins with a tour through the vineyards to admire the spectacular views over the Roman settlements of Acinipo. Then, you will continue visiting the different areas where wine is elaborated, bottled and finally aged at the cellar. You will learn directly from the family producers the whole wine-making process, 'from grape to glass'. The experience will be completed with a homemade lunch carefully created to achieve a perfect fusion between their beloved wines and the best quality local food.

*(\*) Even if the guided visit is part of a small group of 12 people maximum, you will have a reserved table to enjoy a private tasting and lunch.*



*This family run business is located near the old Roman city of Acinipo from where Roman sent wines to Rome via Malaga's coast. Their wine production nowadays combines traditional methods with the most cutting-edge enological technologies and the most experienced professionals. You will visit the vineyards and the winery, learn about the process of aging and elaboration and afterward a wine tasting of four of their wines paired with a delicious tapas lunch homemade and cooked by the owner herself.*

Meals included: Breakfast

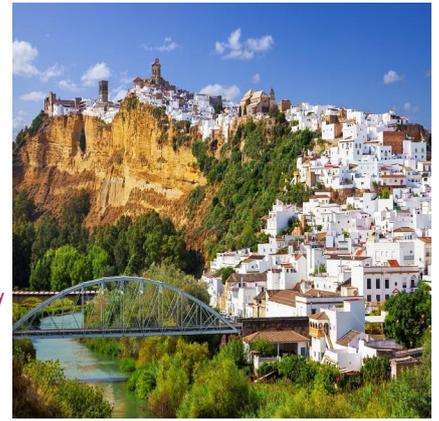
## DAY 8: Arcos de la Frontera & Vejer

### Morning

Drive to Arcos de la Frontera (aprx. 1h) where you could take some time to explore this beautiful town, before continuing on to your next charming hotel situated in the heart of the quaint white village of Vejer de la Frontera (aprx. 1h).

You will have the **evening** in Vejer free to enjoy at your leisure.

*Arcos de la Frontera appears to balance atop its rocky limestone ridge, its whitewashed houses and stone castle walls stopping abruptly as the sheer cliff plunges down to the lush Guadalete river valley below. Declared a national historic-artistic monument in 1962 in recognition of its exceptional architecture and impressive location, the old town is a tangled labyrinth of cobbled streets that lead up to a sandstone castle, the Castillo de los Arcos. As you'd expect from such a spectacular vantage point, it offers exhilarating views of the town and the rolling plain below. In addition to its Moorish history, Arcos history goes further back, as shown by the discovery of numerous archaeological remains from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Tartessian, Phoenician and Roman periods.*



Meals included: Breakfast

## DAY 9: Options in Vejer

### OPTION 1: "Tastes of Andalusia" cooking class

*Part of a group of 8 people maximum*

This culinary experience will begin with shopping for supplies in Vejer's local market. Depending on the season, the dishes which you will help prepare and get to savour are likely to include *gambas al ajillo* (garlic shrimp), tuna & red pepper salad, *gazpacho* (melon & mint, traditional tomato or almond & garlic). Fresh boiled octopus and *boquerones* (anchovies) are also a delicacy of this region as it is close to the sea!

Your passionate guide will help you uncover the secrets for the perfect tortilla (Spanish omelette), introduce you to *albondigas* (Spanish meatballs) and treat you to a yummy cake for dessert.

Being in the province of Cadiz, this culinary experience would not be complete without sampling the region's specialties, which is why you will enjoy a preserved tuna and sherry tasting!

*Based in beautiful Vejer de la Frontera, on the Costa de la Luz in Cadiz Province, Andalucía, this food tour will give you a unique insight into Spanish food culture. During this creative hands-on class using delicious local ingredients, a hint of exotic Moroccan flavours and more than just a splash of Spanish wine and Sherry, you will create authentic Spanish "slow food". With a relaxed and fun atmosphere, this cooking class is the ideal food experience, even for non-cooks!*



### OPTION 2: Day trip to Conil & Tarifa

Today you can go off and explore a bit the breath-taking villages of Conil (aprx. 30 mins of Vejer) & Tarifa (aprx. 1 h from Vejer)

*Tarifa sits at the southern-most point of mainland Europe, where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic. Just 14km across the Straits of Gibraltar at its narrowest point, the town enjoys spectacular views of the Rif mountains of North Africa, just across the water. The narrow cobbled streets, tumbling jasmine and beautiful wrought-iron rejas make Tarifa old town a charming place for a stroll.*



### OPTION 3: Cadiz-Day trip

Drive to the beautiful coastal city of Cadiz (aprx. 45 mins) where you will meet your art historian guide who will take you for a 3h walking tour of this historic city which will include a guided visit of the New Cathedral and its bell towers, from where you will admire the breath-taking views of Cadiz landmarks and the Atlantic Ocean.

After the guided tour, you could have **lunch** (cost not included) and then enjoy a walk around the old town where you will find some pretty shaded squares (i.e. Plaza de la Candelaria, Plaza de la Mina, Plaza de San Antonio, Plaza de las Flores). You could also go for a circular promenade starting by walking along the Alameda Podaca, then crossing the beautiful Parque del Genovés, stopping at the Santa Catalina Castle (beautiful views over the Caleta beach).

You could then continue by passing the Caleta beach and lighthouse to finally end up at the long seafront of "Campo del Sur".

Drive back to your hotel in Vejer where you will have the **evening** free to enjoy at your leisure.

*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. From the palm-lined promenades to plazas filled with fragrant orange trees, Cádiz has plenty of Mediterranean charm to match the balmy weather. Las Puertas de Tierra (the city gates) guard the ancient center of Cádiz, an enchanting jumble of distinct barrios such as La Viña, the old fisherman's neighborhood; the historic area of El Pópulo; and the gypsy quarter of Santa María, the birthplace of flamenco singing. From Cádiz, tourists can also explore the beautiful beaches and seaside villages along the Costa de la Luz. More adventurous travelers can head to the nearby port town of Algeciras or Tarifa and embark on an exotic adventure in North Africa.*

Meals included: Breakfast

### DAY 10: Drive to Sevilla & train to Madrid

#### Morning

Drive from your hotel in Vejer to Seville train station (aprx. 1h 45mins) where you will drop off your rental car before taking the high-speed train to Madrid (aprx. 2.5 hours).

Alternatively, if you haven't visited Sevilla before, we highly recommend to spend at least 2 nights in this spectacular city, the capital of Southern Spain.

Upon arrival in Madrid, take a taxi to your hotel.

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

Meals included: Breakfast

### DAY 11: Departure

Take a taxi to the airport for your flight home\*.

*\*This trip could be extended to include stays in other regions of Spain*

**End of your trip :(**

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

**We hope you enjoyed your stay with us here in Spain. Hasta pronto!**



**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:

- Small 3-star Boutique hotels with double or twin rooms sharing
- Breakfasts included - Great locations
- Air conditioning - En-suite bathrooms

**TRANSPORT** (all included)

- 8-day car rental (model and size are subject to availability)
- Full car insurance during rental period (nothing extra to pay)
- All trains mentioned in the above itinerary

**GUIDED VISITS & TOURS** (all entrance fees included)

- Montilla - Olive & Wine experience
- Ronda - Private guided tour

**OPTIONAL** (extra costs)

- La Subbetica- Hike/bike
- La Viñuela– Snorkeling / Horse riding
- Frigiliana & Nerja- Day trip
- Vejer- Food tour & Cooking class
- Tarifa & Conil- Day trip
- Cádiz- Day trip (incl. guided tour)
- Ronda - winery

**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\***

\*Depends on the number of travelers and dates

Please enquire for furthers details

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

