

2020 SACRED ART OF LIVING SPAIN PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY



DAY	DATE	SCHEDULE	SITES	HOTEL
Thurs	May 14	Morning 3pm departure	Arrive in Madrid (Madrid-Barajas Airport) Bus to Toledo	Parador de Toledo

In order to arrive on the morning of May 14, North American flights will need to depart on May 13

Toledo is the heart of medieval Spain. The rich history, art and culture of the ancient city is a destination in itself. One of the highlights of the trip is lodging and dining at one of Spain's amazing "paradores." The Spanish Paradors are hotels considered to be a national treasure--- known for luxury accommodation in Castles, Palaces, Fortresses, Convents, Monasteries and other historic buildings and always in places of outstanding beauty. Spending four nights in the Parador de Toledo, which features daily native cuisine, is sure to be one of the highlights of the trip.

Fri.	May 15	Local Sites	Day in Toledo	Parador de Toledo
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Toledo, a UNESCO world heritage site, is one of Spain's gems. It sits majestically above the Tagus River and dates back to Roman occupation (Toletum) circa 200 BC. The ruins of the Roman circus are still visible just outside the walls of the city. Roman occupation was followed by Visigothic rule, Muslim rule and finally the "Reconquest" of Toledo in 1085 AD. Toledo was the capital of the Spanish empire until the mid 1500's when the royal court moved to Madrid. The winding, cobbled streets of the old town are filled with the art of El Greco and the architecture of medieval Spanish court.



Sat. May 16

Day Trip

Avila

Parador de Toledo

Few places in the world give you a chance to travel back in time as Avila. Well-known for the amazingly intact medieval walls surrounding the city, it is also the birthplace and home of Santa Teresa (the medieval mystic nun whose writings are a highpoint in spiritual literature). Avila is also the home of many unique culinary specialties including Yemas: sweetmeats made of egg yolks and sugar made by local nuns and sold in small shops throughout the city.



Sun. May 17

Day Trip

Segovia

Parador de Toledo

*This town boasts some of the world's great Roman ruins, the last great medieval cathedral of Spain, and a castle that inspired fairy tales. Segovia is like a medieval "ship" waiting for you to climb and explore. The tangle of narrow streets descend to the famous Alcázar at the bow. The 2,000-year-old **Roman aqueduct** is 2,500 feet long and 100 feet high, has 118 arches, was made from 20,000 granite blocks without any mortar and still carries a stream of waters. Segovia is also the spiritual home of the other great medieval Spanish mystic, Juan de la Cruz [John of the Cross].*



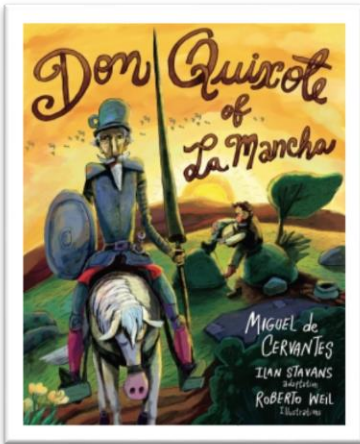
Mon May 18

Travel Day

Toledo to Granada

Palacio de Granada

Today will be a road trip across the heartland of Spain to Andalusia, fabled land of light and Moorish history. We will see the famous windmills of La Mancha and Don Quixote's fame. It is an immense landscape that changes dramatically as we travel from north to Spain's famous southern region of Andalusia, Arabic for The Land of Light.



Tues May 19

Local Sites

Granada

Palacio de Granada

Granada has the usual quotient of ancient and medieval sites typical for a southern European city. However, only Granada has the Alhambra which is considered to be one of the 10 Cultural Wonders of the World. Consisting of the most famous water gardens in antiquity, Middle Eastern fortifications and sumptuous palaces, it was the home of many of the Arab Sultans who ruled Andalusia. For centuries it received the optimum in interior decoration and architecture. If you read the Koran, it continually repeats the idea that heaven is a garden with running water. From this perspective you could say that the ancient palaces of Granada are an Arabic attempt to create heaven on earth. Our hotel is situated on the brow of a hill overlooking the Sierra Nevada mountains and the ancient. It is within easy walking distance to the areas greatest attractions.



Wed May 20

Alhambra & Generalife Gardens

Palacio de Granada

We will dedicate an entire day to visit, ponder and savor the great World Alhambra. Its palaces and gardens were considered the most beautiful place on earth even by its later Spanish conquerors and kings. The ancient water garden, called the Generalife, is still fed by aqueducts built by the Arab architects a thousand years ago. Today will be a chance to be immersed in the remarkable history and artistic beauty of the Andalusia's crown jewel site.



Thurs May 21

Free Day

Granada Region

Palacio de Granada

A good pilgrimage always includes a midway retreat day—a vacation from your vacation. Today is a day to create your own wish list of sites and experiences, including time to browse Granada's unique local crafts such as inlaid wood and ceramics. There are plenty of ways to enjoy the culture and natural beauty of Granada. One option is to spend your evening meal in one of Granada's fabled Gypsy caves of Sacromonte, family dwellings for centuries where you can sample Spain's national dish, paella, and witnessing traditional Flamenco song and dance-- heart of Andalusian culture.



Fri May 22 Travel Day Granada to Seville Medieval Quarter Hotel

A bus trip across the heart of Andalusia will stir your imagination with natural beauty and ancient sites...

Sat May 23 Local Sites Seville Medieval Quarter Hotel

Seville certainly is one of the most beloved places of visitors around the world but especially by local Spaniards. Today Moorish influence is most evident as Seville was ruled by Arab Spain for 800 years. But this ancient city has also been a cultural center for three thousand years thanks to its amazing Mediterranean climate—becoming home to the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and later, the Romans. Seville has also been home to some of history's most famous legends, including medieval popes, the Emperor Trajan and "Don Juan" who started from here to conquer the hearts of women across all Europe. Seville is also where Columbus departed to discover a new world... [his body is buried in the amazing local cathedral which is also the world's second largest sacred building]. Seville is the heart of gypsy culture, so the color, song and dance of Moorish Spain are ubiquitous in the old medieval city.

Sun May 24 Free Day Your Own Seville Medieval Quarter Hotel

When you explore Seville, you are in the very heart of Andalusian culture, the centerpiece of Spanish history. Give yourself time to take life easy as local Andalusians do, and interrupt sightseeing from time to time to have a few "tapas", those typical "small Spanish dishes", and a glass of local Sherry wine in one of the probably thousands of bars in this city. After sampling the paella and being intoxicated by the smell of Seville oranges (there are 25,000 orange trees lining the streets), you will feel as though your senses have been to another world!



Mon May 25

Trip to Cordova

Medieval Quarter Hotel

Cordoba presents itself to today's visitor as impressive and surprising as was in antiquity. A thousand years ago it was one of the most important capitals in Europe where people of different cultures and religions - Jews, Muslims and Christians - were living peacefully together. This is why some of history's great philosophers, scientists, spiritual writers and artists- like Moses Maimonides and the Kabbalah- have emerged from medieval Cordoba. Learning about Cordoba's cultural background will increase your appreciation of its great monuments – among them, the world-famous Mezquita, once the largest Mosque in the world and later turned into a Renaissance Cathedral. Cordoba is a very lively town in the best Andalusian tradition, where you will sample incredible Arabic and Sephardic cuisine. You will see craftsmen creating and selling their traditional wares like jewelry and hand tooled leather in its winding medieval streets. No wonder it is one of the most attractive destinations in southern Spain.



Tues May 26

Bus Trip to Madrid

Alameda Aeropuerto Hotel

It will be hard to leave Andalusia, but our trip will take us full circle back to Madrid, one of Europe's great capital cities. Consider adding an additional day/s to see the World class Prada Museum and Royal Palace. The very adventurous might even consider a side trip across the Straits of Gibraltar (only seven miles from southern Spain) into exotic Morocco and North Africa.

Wed May 27

Fly back to home

You can schedule your flight from the Madrid Barajas airport as early as you like and will probably return home the same day...

