

# SACRED ART OF LIVING SPAIN PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY APRIL 4-15, 2025



| DAY           | DATE    | SCHEDULE | EVENT                                                                                         | HOTEL                |
|---------------|---------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Day #1/Friday | April 4 | 5pm      | Arrive in Madrid<br>(Madrid-Barajas Airport)<br><br>Group Welcome &<br>Pilgrimage Orientation | Crowne Plaza Airport |

*In order to arrive for April 4 orientation, most North American flights will need to depart on April 3*

|                 |         |  |                                                                         |                   |
|-----------------|---------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Day #2/Saturday | April 5 |  | Madrid to Toledo<br><br>Highlights of Toledo<br>& Dinner at the parador | Parador de Toledo |
|-----------------|---------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|



After a full breakfast buffet in Madrid we will take a short trip to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Toledo. Medieval Toledo is one of Spain's cultural gems. It sits majestically above the Tagus River and 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. We will walk the winding, cobbled streets of the old town which are filled with the art of El Greco, the 11<sup>th</sup> century synagogue in the Juderia and architecture of the medieval Spanish court—no wonder this was called 'Holy Toledo' in ancient times!

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 "paradors." 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 three nights in the Parador de Toledo, which features daily native cuisine for both breakfast and dinner (included), is sure to be one of the highlights of the trip.



Day #3/Sunday

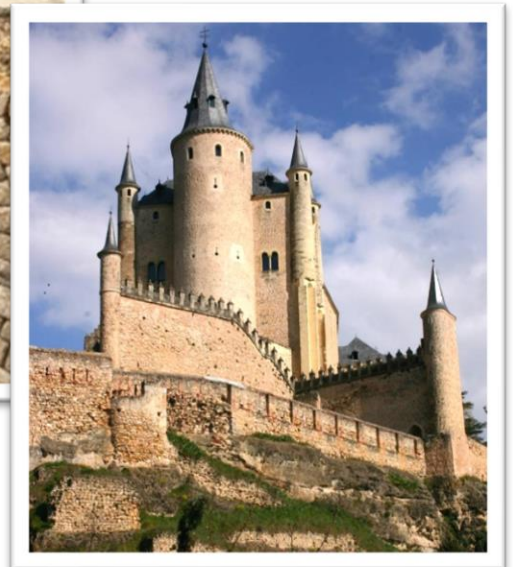
April 6

Day Trip to Avila & Segovia: Parador de Toledo  
Birthplace of Great Mystics

*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.*



*A short journey from Avila to Segovia takes us to a town that 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]. We will end the day with a special ritual celebration honoring Spain's great mystical tradition.*



**Day #4/Monday**

**April 7**

**Free Day in Toledo**

**Parador de Toledo**

*Today will be a welcome break from group sightseeing to explore your own corner of Toledo. World class museums and a unique artisan colony are all within walking distance. The Moorish art of gold, inlaid Damascene craft, and medieval reproductions made from Toledo steel seem to be on every corner of the medieval village. The El Greco museum hosts the paintings of one of Toledo's most famous residents.*



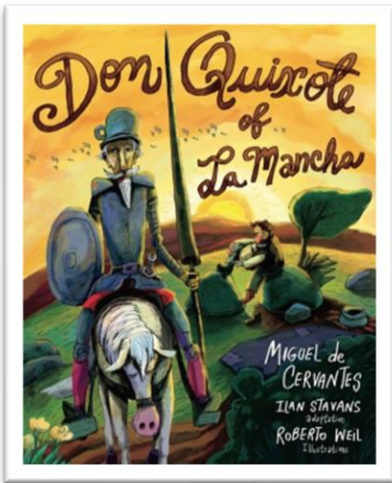
**Day #5/Tuesday**

**April 8**

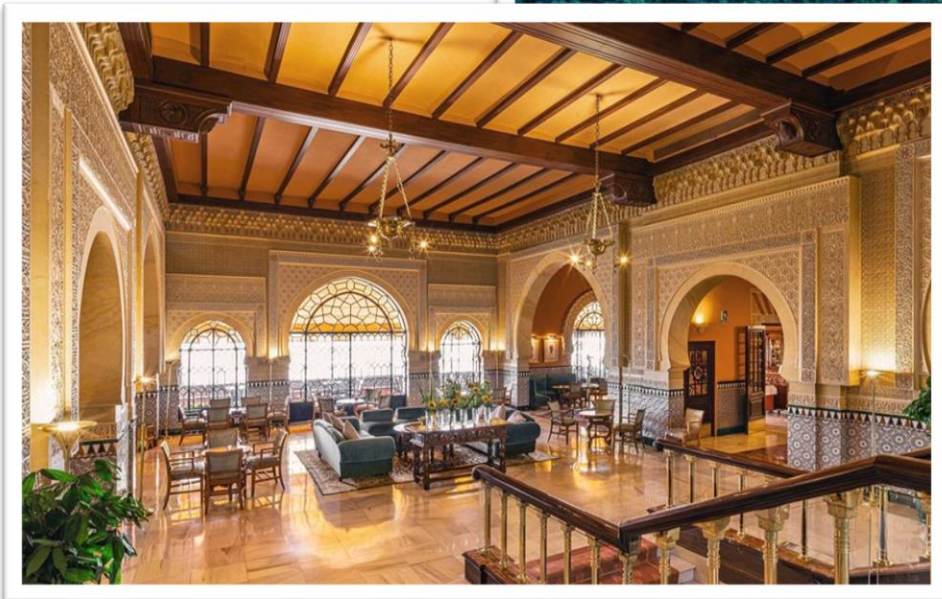
**Road Trip to Granada**

**Alhambra Palace Hotel**

*After a full morning breakfast buffet, today will be a road trip across the heartland of Spain to Andalusia, fabled land of the 'ornament of the world' and Jewish-Moorish-Christian 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.*



The fabled ancient City of Granada (picture # 1 below) has the usual number of ancient and medieval sites typical for a southern European city. However, only Granada has the World Alhambra (picture # 2 below) 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 (picture #3 below) is situated on the brow of a hill overlooking the Sierra Nevada mountains and ancient city. It's within easy walking distance to Grenada's greatest attractions.



**Day #6/Wednesday**

**April 9 Tour of the World Alhambra  
& Generalife Water Gardens**

**Alhambra Palace Hotel**

*We will dedicate an entire day to visit, ponder and savor the great Alhambra, which is like walking into a fantastic dream world. Its palaces and gardens were considered the most beautiful place on earth even by its later Spanish conquerors and kings. The ancient water gardens, called the Generalife, are 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. We will end our day with a special ritual celebration honoring the three spiritual traditions that created 'the ornament of the world' in Granada a thousand years ago!*



**Day #7/Thursday**

**April 10 Free Day Granada Region**

**Alhambra Palace Hotel**

*A good pilgrimage always includes a midway break—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 witness traditional Flamenco song and dance—the heart of Andalusian culture.*



Day #8/Friday

April 11

Travel Day

Granada to Seville

Al Andalus Palace

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

*Seville certainly is one of the most beloved places of visitors around the world but especially for 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.*



Day #9/Saturday

April 12

Day Trip to Cordoba

Al Andalus Palace

*Cordoba presents itself to today's visitor as impressive and surprising as it 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 Maimonedes 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.*

*This pilgrimage was planned in order to arrive in Cordoba for the first day of Passover... a special celebration of this Holy Day will end our day in a sacred city of ancient memories for people of all faiths.*



Day #10/Sunday

April 13

Holy Week in Seville

Al Andalus Palace

*Being in Seville for the start of Holy Week (Palm Sunday) is to participate in one of Europe's oldest traditions. We will encounter a celebration that will be the crown of our pilgrimage experience! Regardless of your spiritual path, the coincidence of Passover and Easter Week will inspire you.*

*After the morning's festivities take time to explore the very heart of Andalusian culture and the centerpiece of Spanish history. Give yourself time to interrupt sightseeing 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. Enjoy a final evening meal surrounded by the cuisine of Andalusia while 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!*





**Day #11/Monday**

**April 14**

**Back to Madrid**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel**

*It will be hard to leave the magic of Andalusia, but our trip will take us full circle back to Madrid, one of Europe's great capital cities. Our trek will take us through some of the best preserved Roman Ruins in Europe including the great amphitheater of Merida and its 2000 year old Temple of Diana.*

*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.*



**Day #12/Tuesday**

**April 15**

**Return Home**

*You can schedule your flight from the Madrid Barajas airport as early as you like and will probably return home the same day... Depending on the time of your flight, our Crowne Plaza Hotel will offer a final full breakfast buffet.*

