



Heart of Spain.

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SPAIN | 10DAYS / 9NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip


Type of trip: Culture

TOUR OVERVIEW

Journey deep into the heart of Spain over 10 spellbinding days exploring the historic regions of Castile and Extremadura. Discover ancient Roman ruins, timeless medieval towns and historic cities. Visit temples, churches, cathedrals, basilicas and monasteries along the ancient Silver Way and admire Spanish art from classical times to the contemporary. Explore the cradles from which Spain's conquistadors set off to colonise the new world and behold the old world elegance of Spain's most prestigious seat of learning. Spain will conquer your heart every day of this fascinating round-trip starting and ending in Madrid.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 10 days / 9 nights



Spain

Start & finish destination
1. Madrid

Destinations

2. Toledo	4. Salamanca
3. Cáceres	5. Segovia

Madrid: Visit Europe's largest palace and the Reina Sofia Museum, where Picasso's harrowing Guernica is among the masterpieces on display

Toledo: The spirit of El Greco lives on in the ancient streets of this beautiful city with visits to the cathedral, historic churches and the medieval synagogue

Trujillo: The home town of conquistador Francisco Pizarro boasts a wealth of palaces and churches built with riches brought back from the New World

Caceres: This UNESCO World Heritage Site has a walled town with more than 50 historic buildings

Silver Way: Explore the former Roman capital of Merida, the walled town of Plasencia and the monastery of Yuste in stops along this ancient Roman trade route

Salamanca: Guided tour of the oldest university in Spain and visits to the old and new cathedrals

Avila: A walled city that is home to a fortified Gothic cathedral and the Convent of St Teresa of Jesus

Segovia: Admire the Roman Aqueduct and visit the fairytale Alcazar and the Gothic cathedral

San Lorenzo de El Escorial: Philip II's massive monastery is a masterpiece of Spanish Renaissance architecture

DON'T MISS!

San Miguel Market: This lively food court with a wrought-iron-and-glass exterior is packed with stalls serving tapas and wine

Iberian pork: Extremadura is famed for the quality of its cured meats such as lomo and jamón produced from acorn-fed black pigs

Find the frog: There's a mysterious frog carved somewhere on the façade of the university – see if you can spot it

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL IN MADRID

Meet and greet service at Madrid Barajas Airport and transfer to your hotel with the rest of the day at leisure. The Spanish capital is one of Europe's liveliest and most elegant cities, boasting beautiful boulevards, vast parks, bustling plazas and numerous historic churches and palaces. Madrid is also home to the legendary 'golden triangle' of art galleries, which house some of the world's most treasured masterpieces.

- Overnight in Madrid hotel on a half-board basis.

DAY 2 | MADRID

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a **panoramic tour of Madrid**. See all the main sights and attractions driving through famous locations like the Paseo de la Castellana, the Plaza de los Cibeles and the Gran Vía, and visit the Royal Palace, which is Europe's largest, and the Reina Sofia Museum of modern and contemporary art. The **Royal Palace** has more than 3,000 rooms and the appearance of those seen during the guided tour is an eclectic mix, ranging from cluttered Victorian to exotic oriental décors. Works of art by great masters such as Caravaggio, Velazquez and Goya adorn the walls while period furniture graces every room. The lavishness and opulence of the interiors stand in contrast to the sober baroque and neo-classical exterior, which faces the Almudena Cathedral and overlooks the Campo del Moro gardens. The **Reina Sofia Museum** boasts one of the greatest collections of modern art in the world. Admire works by mainly Spanish greats such as Joan Miro, Salvador Dali, Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso, whose vast and haunting Guernica is complemented by an exhibition of other works and resources, which help put the iconic painting in context.

- **Overnight in Madrid hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 3 | MADRID – TOLEDO (75km – 1 hr)

Depart after breakfast at the hotel, heading to **Toledo**. On arrival, enjoy a guided tour of this living museum, which evokes the mix of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cultures of medieval Castile. Wander through ancient streets dominated by the stunning cathedral and the legendary Alcazar overlooking the River Tagus. The old town boasts buildings from almost all periods of Spanish history. **Visit the cathedral** and admire the Gothic vaulting and the elaborate altarpiece. Appreciate, too, the numerous works of art such as frescoes, stained glass, altarpieces and paintings by artists such as El Greco, Caravaggio, Van Dyck, Rubens and Goya. Continue to **Santo Tome Church** – where El Greco's epic canvas The Burial of the Count of Orgaz is displayed – and the **former synagogue**, whose interior is one of the best-preserved examples of Mudejar architecture in Castile.

- **Overnight in Toledo hotel on a half-board basis.**



DAY 4 | TOLEDO – TRUJILLO – CACERES (265km – 3 hrs)

Bid farewell to Toledo after breakfast at the hotel, heading for Trujillo in the region of Extremadura. **Trujillo** was the home town of Francisco Pizarro, conqueror of the Inca Empire, and many of the town's attractions owe their existence to the wealth plundered by him and his fellow conquistadors. Enjoy a walking tour of the old town, which is in two sections: that within the old city walls and that outside them. Wander along the narrow cobbled alleys within the walls to see the **Moorish castle** and the churches of Santiago and **Santa Maria la Mayor** as well as a number of historic palaces. Outside the walls, explore the vast open space of the elegant **Plaza Mayor**, which is dominated by the **church of St Martin of Tours** and where three of the town's most important Renaissance ducal palaces can be found, including the **Palace of the Conquest**, which was built by the Pizarro family. Continue to Caceres for check-in at the hotel.

- **Overnight in Caceres hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 5 | CACERES – MERIDA – CACERES (150km – 2 hrs)

Explore the historic core of Caceres after breakfast at the hotel. Not to be outdone by its provincial neighbour, the **medieval walled old town of Caceres** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, packed with fortified homes, Renaissance palaces and historic churches. The walled area is compact and there are two main clusters of monuments. In the Santa Maria-Golfines area can be found the Renaissance **Toledo-Moctezuma** Palace as well as the Co-cathedral of St Mary while the area around the Plaza de las Veletas-Plaza San Mateo is dominated by the 15th century **Cigüeñas Palace**. Take to the road along the southern stretch of the ancient Silver Way to **Merida**, which as Emerita Augusta was one of the Roman capitals of Spain. The classical heritage of Merida is breathtaking with a Roman bridge and a theatre that are both still in use. **Visit the Roman theatre** and admire its stunning two-tier colonnaded stage. See the ruins of the adjacent amphitheatre and the columns of the **Temple of Diana** in the former Forum. Return to Caceres after the visit to Merida.

- **Overnight in Caceres hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 6 | CACERES – PLASENCIA – YUSTE – SALAMANCA (300km – 4.5 hrs)

Depart Caceres after breakfast at the hotel, heading north along the **Silver Way** to **Plasencia** on the north bank of the River Jerte. Enjoy a **walking tour of the magnificent medieval old town**, which was founded as a fortified Castilian city following its conquest from the Moors in the late 12th century – the walls built back then still surround virtually all of the old town. Explore the area to the west of the **bustling Plaza Mayor**, admiring historic structures such as the Mirabel Palace. See also the New Cathedral, with its plateresque façade, and the Romanesque Old Cathedral as well as the aqueduct. Continue to the rebuilt **Yuste Monastery**, which is where Emperor Charles V spent his final years and died. Visit the monastery and see the private quarters of the emperor as well as the beautiful cloister with manicured shrubbery and trees. Head to Salamanca, checking in on arrival.

- **Overnight in Salamanca hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 7 | SALAMANCA

Discover Spain's most venerable seat of learning after breakfast at the hotel with a **guided tour**, which includes **visits to the university and the old and new cathedrals**. Salamanca University is the third-oldest in the world and the college gives the city a lively buzz quite unlike the rest of Castile. At the time of the university's founding in 1134, Salamanca was in the Kingdom of Leon. Head to the heart of the action at the magnificent Plaza Mayor and savour the atmosphere. Every corner of Salamanca exudes history such as the Irish College, the **Casa de las Conchas palace**, the Monterrey Palace, the Art Nouveau and Art Deco Museum at the Casa Lis, the Clavero Tower, the convents of Las Dueñas and St Stephen and the baroque Clergy Church.

- **Overnight on a half-board basis in Salamanca hotel.**



DAY 8 | SALAMANCA – AVILA – SEGOVIA (200km – 2.5 hrs)

Take to the road after breakfast at the hotel, heading for **Avila**, whose old town is still **surrounded by uninterrupted medieval walls**. The perimeter of more than 2.5km is dotted with 88 towers and nine gates. Behind the ramparts is a city of immense beauty and heritage. **Visit the fortified Gothic cathedral** and the **Romanesque Basilica of St Vincent**. Stroll through its ancient streets, with Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and baroque styles evident, and take in the splendour of the Plaza de Santa Teresa. Continue to sensational Segovia, where a **guided tour** visits the Gothic **cathedral** and the **Alcazar**, which was one of the inspirations for Disney's Cinderella castle. See also the awe-inspiring **Roman aqueduct**, which dates from the reign of Emperor Domitian in the first century and cuts through the city centre.

- **Overnight in Segovia hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 9 | SEGOVIA – SAN LORENZO DE EL ESCORIAL – MADRID (110km – 1.5 hrs)

Head to San Lorenzo de El Escorial after breakfast at the hotel. This pretty and prosperous town is the location of one of Spain's most important Renaissance monuments, the **magnificent monastery of El Escorial**, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The complex also served as the royal palace of Philip II and he is among the two dozen monarchs whose final resting place is the Pantheon of Kings. Other attractions explored in the guided tour of El Escorial include the Hall of Battles, where large frescoes depict important Spanish military triumphs, the lavish library with frescoed ceilings and the breathtakingly beautiful basilica. Continue to Madrid for check-in at the hotel.

- **Overnight in Madrid hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 10 | DEPART MADRID

Transfer to the airport in Madrid for your departure flight. Breakfast included.

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with professional English-speaking tour guides

ACCOMMODATION:

- Three nights' half-board accommodation in a four-star Madrid hotel; one night's half-board accommodation in four-star Toledo hotel; two nights' half-board accommodation in four-star Caceres hotel; two nights' half-board accommodation in four-star Salamanca hotel; and one night's half-board accommodation in four-star Segovia hotel

MEALS:

- Nine open buffet breakfasts and nine dinners

TRANSPORT:

- Transportation in an air conditioned, non-smoking coach

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- All monuments and visits as indicated: Royal Palace and Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid; city tour, cathedral, Santo Tome Church and synagogue in Toledo; old town tour in Trujillo; old town tour in Caceres; Roman theatre, amphitheatre and Temple of Diana in Merida; walking tour of Plasencia; Yuste monastery; city tour of Salamanca; city tour and visits to the cathedral and basilica in Avila; city tour and visits to the cathedral and Alcazar in Segovia; and Monastery of San Lorenzo de el Escorial

NOT INCLUDED

- Items of a personal nature such as alcoholic drinks, laundry, and drinks and meals not stated explicitly in the programme
- Any others expenses which are not mentioned in the included section
- International flights
- All types of insurance
- Entry visas to Spain (if applicable)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in Spain though a warm jumper and jacket are advisable in the cooler months. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sun glasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay