

Crossroads of Cultures - Spain

a *Signature Tour*

Riches of Madrid and the Andalucia region of Spain

April 17-28, 2023 12 Days/11 Nights

Spain is a country of colour and passion, where food, art, music and landscape define the lifestyle and character of its people. A country of diverse cultural influences, historical pageantry and artistic legacies that include the paintings of Picasso, Valázquez and Dali, the architecture of Gaudi, and the romance of Cervantes' "Don Quijote de la Mancha". Almost nowhere is the mix of three of the world's most influential cultures and religions more present than in Spain; Madrid, Andalusia and the Costa del Sol region. Beginning around 711 ad with the conquest of Al-Andalus (Muslim-Iberia or Islamic-Iberia) until the 1500's existed a tug-of-war between the Moors and the Christian Reconquista. During this same period of struggles between the Muslims and Christians was what is considered the golden age of Judaism. Being located at the crossroads of Europe and Africa, Spain has over the centuries been ruled by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and French. This fusion of Moorish and European influences has helped to create the diverse civilisation that is modern day Spain.

Our Signature Tours are custom tours created by Champlain Tours with only the finest 5-star hotels, meals, and personal experiences designed just for you!

The tour is to be accompanied by 2 directors

Tim Kahn, 35-year veteran of the French classroom and executive producer of the documentary film, *The Last Link*, about the French Basque and Béarnais shepherding culture of the Pyrénées. Tim's dad, Albert E. Kahn wrote *Joys and Sorrows* with world renowned cellist Pablo Casals and took over 2,000 photographs of Casals. Tim helped his dad inventory the Casals archive which now comprises much of the collection at the Casals museum, at the Casals home in El Vendrell.

Lee Hoehn has lived in the south of France for extended periods of time and has developed trips for students and adults throughout France and Spain for over 30 years.

INCLUDED

- 11 Nights in superior class hotels
- 20 meals (11 breakfast, 2 lunches, 7 dinners*)
- Escorts throughout the trip
- Private coach and vans for excursions
- Special events:

Wine tasting (Jurancon), Traditional Music and Dance, Cheese making demonstration & tasting
Cooking class, **Paris**: Choice of guided sightseeing, or "Heart of Paris" walk

HIGHLIGHTS

- **5 nights in Madrid and its region:** **Palacio Real, Prado Museum, Plaza Mayor, Reine Sophia Museum, Monestario, del Corpus Christie, Market San Miguel, Toledo:** *Cathedral, San Juan de los Reyes, Alcazar, Santa Tome, Mezquita Mosque, Transito Synagogue as well as El Greco Museum and home, El Escorial:* *The Royal Apartments and the Pantheon of Kings, where almost all the kings of Spain have been buried since Charles Quint.*
- **1 night in Cordoba:** **Mosque / Cathedral, Roman Temple and Bridge Patios and courtyards, Medina Azahara**
- **2 nights in Seville:** Three UNESCO world heritage sites: **The Alcazar Palace, The Cathedral, The Archives of the Indies**
- **2 nights in Granada:** Antequera Ancient Burial mounds, Alcazaba of Antequera, a walk of in the El Torcal nature reserve, **El Torcal Nature reserve, Alhambra, Mirador de San Nicolas, Alcaiceria, Albayzin & Sacromonte neighborhoods**
- **2 nights in Malaga the Costa del Sol and the Mediterranean sea:** **Picasso Museum, Moorish fortress Alcazar / Gibralfaro Castle, The White villages:** *Nerja, Frigiliana & Mijas*



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Day 1 – April 17 (Monday)



Welcome to the Costa del Sol nestled along the Mediterranean. This evening a group ‘meet and greet’ cocktail before the beginning of your Andalucía cultural adventure.

Day 2 – April 18 (Tuesday): Malaga



This morning a visit of the Buenavista Palais which will give us a first taste of the typical Andalucía architecture. Housed in the Palais, a visit of the **Picasso Museum**, Malaga’s native son, with his iconic style. Afternoon walking through the city streets for lunch, on your own, at the Mercado Central. Then a visit of the XI century **Alcazaba** (fortress) built on the hillside overlooking Malaga with a beautiful panoramic view of the port and the sea. Dinner this evening in a local restaurant. **B/D**

Overnight in Malaga

Day 3 – April 19 (Wednesday) White Villages

This morning we will drive along the Mediterranean to the renowned “**Pueblos Blancos**” of the region with their beautiful flowered steep cobbled alleyways and spectacular views of the sea. We will visit the village of Nerja with the **Balcon d’Europe** where on a clear day you can see Africa across the sea. Then on to **Frigiliana**, to walk through the picturesque narrow winding streets of this exceptionally beautiful, whitewashed village. Return to Malaga for a walk along the “Paseo”, the walkways along the beach that have been a central part of the village social life, where you will mingle with the Spanish families there to enjoy the afternoon together. We will stay on the beach for dinner in a “**Chiringuitos**”, local beachfront restaurants, to eat fresh grilled fish. **B/D**

Overnight in Malaga



Day 4 – April 20 (Thursday) Ronda

Today we will depart Malaga for the village of **Ronda**. A quick walk across the impressive Tajo del Ronda, this 150-meter-deep canyon separates the old and new towns. Lunch on your own. Continue to the city of Seville. The Golden age of Seville, in the 1500s, became one of the economic centers of the Spanish Empire and the world, as its ports monopolized the trans-oceanic trade with the discovery of the Americas. Dinner on your own this evening in Seville. **B/L**

Overnight in Seville



Day 5 – April 21 (Friday) Seville

After breakfast a visit of **Seville** situated on the Guadalquivir River, with its “Old Town”, an area of 2 square/miles, contains three UNESCO world heritage sites: the **Alcazar**, the Cathedral, and the Archives of the Indies. This evening we will have a late afternoon river cruise along the Guadalquivir for dinner. **B/D**

Overnight in Seville



Day 6 – April 22 (Saturday) Wine Tasting

Today we will have a wine tasting at the “**Bodegas Tradicion**” in Jerez de la Frontera. This Bodegas can trace its origin back to the 1600s and is a winery exclusively devoted to the elaboration and ageing of very old sherries and brandies from Jerez. With the tasting and lunch tapas we will also be able to enjoy the private collection of works by Spanish artists from the 14th to the 17th century, including: an altarpiece by Levi to Zurbarán, Velázquez, Sorolla, Goya and El Greco. Return to Seville for the evening with dinner on your own. **B**

Overnight in Seville

Day 7 – April 23 (Sunday) El Torcal / Hike

Morning drive through the Andalusian countryside to the Antequera region. Those in the group that wish may go for a hike in the **El Torcal Natural Reserve** which contains dramatic limestone tower rock formations. For those who do not wish to hike enjoy a relaxing afternoon at the hotel with a leisurely countryside stroll. Dinner this evening at the hotel. **B/L/D**

Overnight in El Torcal

Day 8 – April 24 (Monday) Cooking / Wine

This morning take advantage of a relaxed wake-up and breakfast as our cooking class will be at our hotel. We will have half the group begin the cooking while the other half may enjoy optional visits to the El Torcal natural reserve as well as enjoy a tour and wine tasting of the organic vineyards of the Bodega Gross Hermanos, before inverting the groups. Dinner this evening will be your “superbly” prepared Andalusian dishes. **B/D**



Overnight in Torcal

Day 9 – April 25 (Tuesday) Granada



After breakfast a bus transfer for Granada. On arrival walk through the picturesque market “**Barrios Alcaiceria**”, choosing your lunch tapas before a visit of the “**Barrios Albayzin**” with its splendid views of Granada, The Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada mountains. Granada this evening for dinner and a flamenco show. **B/D**

Overnight in Granada

Day 10 – April 26 (Wednesday) Granada

This Morning will be spent in the Majestic **Alhambra** (the Red One) palace/fortress with its many airy rooms containing delicately carved calligraphy walls to its lovely courtyards and the magnificent “**Généralife Garden**”. Dinner this evening on your own in Granada. **B**



Overnight in Granada

Day 11 – April 27 (Thursday) Cordoba

After breakfast depart Granada, for the charming city of **Cordoba** with its Cathedral and beautiful flower **adorned patios**. In the afternoon visit the fascinating **Cathedral of Cordoba** which is a confusing and intriguing historical structure. After the Moors captured the city in 711 the Visigoth Christian church was split in two and used by both faiths until 70 years later when it was rebuilt as a mosque. Reclaimed by the Christians in 1236 and converted into a cathedral and finally in the 16th century Charles V added the Renaissance Nave atop the Moorish architecture creating the unique structure that exists today. Farewell dinner in Cordoba this evening. **B/D**

Overnight in Cordoba

Day 12 – April 28 (Friday)

From Cordoba the participants that have requested will have a morning bus transfer to Malaga and its airport.

For those who may wish to continue their adventure a Champlain Tours representative is ready to work with you, before your departure, on an extension to Madrid and/or Toledo. **B**

