

TOUR ANDALUSIA 'FAQS'



Welcome and thank you so much for considering a tour with us.

We highly recommend that you take time to read through this FAQs document, since it covers a wide range of topics, many of the questions that past guests have raised, and information relating to the tours and your holiday with us.

We feel it will be very useful preparation for your trip.

It is written in an easy plain English style and it is not a contractual document, purely for information.

Its main purpose is to help you understand how we work, the style of our tours and to help you decide if we are the type of company you want to deliver your tour/holiday of the region.

We want to avoid guests arriving with expectations that are different to how we operate and how we deliver our tours.

It also clearly defines what the tour price includes and what it doesn't. So we can avoid any ambiguity that could arise.

If you do book, we recommend that you print this document and bring it with you and you can always read it again, whilst in transit.

To introduce ourselves, we are a small specialist tour operator who truly care for the experience our guests have and we will go out of our way to try to make your holiday wonderful and memorable.

We run high quality tours, with well balanced, comprehensive itineraries.

Whilst you will have guided walking tours around most to the locations in the morning, we don't hold your hand all the time and you will independently explore the locations with free time to yourselves in the afternoons.

Appreciating that you may only visit the region once, we want to make it as special as we can.

This document aims to answer questions you may have and help to set your expectation for the level of guidance, free time, and overall philosophy/ethos that we apply to our tours.

And, most importantly, as we say on our website, what we expect from you is to come in a friendly and relaxed manner, so that you can engage with us, and other guests, to have an experience that ranks right up there with some of the best travel experiences you have had.

We are very different to the large group coach tours and you are treated as mature adults, not children.

We try, as hard as we possibly can, to discourage people of a 'demanding' nature, so that our small group guests relate to each other wonderfully.

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We love to welcome guests who arrive with smiles on their faces and, being on holiday, there's no reason not to.

Whilst you will immerse yourself in the incredible history this region offers, you are on your vacation, here to enjoy yourself and we appreciate that.

That is why our tours are designed to offer a good balance of visiting sites, but also taking time to relax.

They are pretty full on, but definitely not a 'boot camp'

Spain is a laid-back country and can be more bureaucratic than many other Western countries, so don't get annoyed at any little problems or issues that may occur, they can all normally be resolved relatively easily.

Relax, participate and allow this wonderful region of Europe to enchant you.

Staff in restaurants don't rush, dishes come out individually, not all together, they take their time in presenting you with the bill..... it almost certainly will be a totally different style of service to what you find at home and you may find frustrating.

It's not unusual for starters and main courses to be served together or someone's desert to be served before you have had your main course.

It seems chaotic, but for the most part works, just differently from what you are used to.

However, recognise it is a different culture, enjoy it and the experience.

You are visiting them, their country and their culture, so appreciate this and don't expect it to be the same experience that you have at home.

You are on vacation, be easy going, a little adventurous and explore.

'Spanish time' is very different to many other countries.

People eat dinner later than you will almost certainly be used to, but by the time you return from your day's touring, rest a little, it will be around 8pm, which is when most restaurant kitchens open.

Our range of accommodation is mainly 'boutique', exceptionally clean and comfortable.

Our Guest House Villa is stylish, with character, and the hotels we use are carefully selected.

Our vehicles are comfortable and safely driven.

They are all air conditioned.

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Our Tour Leaders and staff are wonderful people, very friendly and knowledgeable, and the places we visit are beautiful, fascinating, cultural and historic.

Come in the right frame of mind, looking forward to having a wonderful time and we will deliver you a great experience.

We are looking forward to welcoming you upon one of our tours.

Gary Montagu
Owner Tour Andalusia

Q. How long have you been running the tours?

A. We were the original company in the region to offer 'small group' and private tours. Our first tours were run in 2009, so we have a high level of experience of running tours in Andalusia.

We established ourselves to offer an alternative for guests who wanted to make the most of their visit to the region, without the hassle of driving and those that did not want to be part of a large coach tour.

Each of our group sizes are normally only up to six guests with a Tour Leader and from time to time, we may have two groups running alongside each other, but independent from each other.

Our guests tend to be professional, respectful, independent people.

Q. What time do we need to arrive in Málaga?

A. You can arrive at any 'reasonable time' in the morning, afternoon or evening.

We collect you from the airport, local hotel or train station and, subject to the time of arrival, either spend some time in the mountain village of Mijas or just transfer to the accommodation.

There is a supplement applicable for any collections or drop-offs required outside of our normal working hours and our 'Booking Terms & Conditions' detail this.

Q. How far from Málaga are you based?

A. We are 45 minutes North of Málaga.

Q. Can we arrive by train or be collected from a local hotel?

A. Yes.

In our opinion, arrival by train from Madrid is a better option than flying. It takes less than 3 hours from Madrid to the main Málaga train station 'Maria Zambrano.

However, if you are arriving from Barcelona, then you would be better to fly, unless you particularly like long train journeys.

For train departures to Madrid, from the Villa/Antequera tours, we recommend departing from the local train station, Antequera Santa Ana.

If you take an early afternoon train, you can maximise your departure day, avoid unnecessary travel and arrive early evening in Madrid.

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Antequera Santa Ana train station is only 10 minutes from the Villa and 20 minutes from central Antequera.

If you require specific advice, please contact us for a recommendation based on your travel plans, we are highly experienced in assisting guests with practical recommendations.

For hotel collections in or near Málaga, we will either collect you from the hotel, if it is easily accessible for our Tour Vehicle, or we have a meeting point at 'Muelle Uno', the new marina, in central Málaga.

Q. What time departure flight/train/drop off do we need to have?

A. The departure transfers, on the official tour end day, for our centrally based tours, are included in the price of our tour and we can take you to the airport/train station for any 'reasonable' departure time.

However, if you need to arrive at the airport/train station outside of our normal operating hours, there is a supplementary charge of €50 which is payable directly to the driver to compensate them for this.

If your tour involves a final night in a hotel in Málaga, then you make your own way for onward departure.

The tour itineraries detail this.

Please also see our Terms & Conditions, which provide more information.

Q. Why do you not include the departure transfer for tours that finish with a final night in the hotel in Málaga, such as the Ultimate Andalusia tour ?

A. There are several sensible reasons.

Firstly, it is only a 15 to 20 minute taxi ride to the train station or airport from the hotel and there are taxis available right by the hotel we normally use.

We are based one hour North of Málaga, so, for us to provide the transfer, we would need to allocate a Tour Leader for the day to undertake the transfer and we would need to incorporate this cost into our tour price, increasing it significantly.

Many of these tours also finish on a Saturday, which is the main starting day for other tours, so we require our Tour Leaders to be available for these tours.

Additionally, guests regularly have different plans for onward travel, some staying a few additional nights in Málaga, some travelling to other European destinations or elsewhere in Spain, others renting a car, so not everyone's plan for departure is the same.

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Hence, it is far more sensible for departure, for tours that end with a final night in a hotel in Málaga, for our guests to take a short taxi ride to the airport or train station at the appropriate time for their departure.

Q. What time in the mornings do we leave for the City trips and when do we return back?

A. For the Villa, or Antequera based tours, we normally leave either at 09:00 or 09:30 depending on where we are visiting that day. We usually arrive back around 19:00 most days.

However, for the Granada visit, we spend the evening in the atmospheric Albayzin to see the Alhambra lit up at night and we have dinner in a 'Bistro Style' restaurant that has a very good local and 'authentic' Flamenco performance, so we don't arrive back until late in the evening.

For the Seville visit, we normally have an early dinner in Seville, arriving back around 20.45.

If you are on a 'circuit' style tour, such as a Private tour, or the Ultimate Andalusia tour, then you stay in the Cities each night.

Q. What accommodation do you have to offer?

A. We have a range of accommodation.

Our 'centrally' based tours are run from either 'Caserio Castaño' our lovely Guest House Villa located in the large village of Mollina, which is 15km from historic Antequera. Photos and details of this are on our website <https://tourandalusia.com/accommodation/>

Or from one of the 4* Antequera Hotels, normally the Antequera Parador Hotel <https://paradores.es/en/parador-de-antequera>

The tour schedule details which tours are based from the Villa and which tours are based from the Antequera Parador Hotel.

For logistical reasons, we try to avoid the situation where some guests on the same tour are based in the Villa and some in the Hotel.

For the 'circuit' style tours, you stay in high quality hotels in the centre of the Cities.

Where possible, and available, we try to use 'boutique' style hotels with character.

The tour itineraries contain a list of the hotels we tend to use for circuit tours.

If certain hotels lack availability, then we source alternatives of similar quality.

Q. We normally stay in hotels, so how different is the Villa accommodation.

A. It is a different experience and less formal.

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The Villa is a very relaxed environment and it is maintained to a high standard.

Most guests tend to socialise together in the evenings, but it's not mandatory. It's a very friendly environment where you should feel at home for the week.

You have your own comfortable bedroom with 'en-suite/master' shower room.

In the warm evenings, guests can sit outside on one of the terraces, or by the pool.

We have a couple of housekeepers who make breakfast and clean your room each day.

Q. What exactly is included in the tour price and what is excluded ?

A. Our tour prices include:

Bed & breakfast accommodation for the specified duration for the tour.

Tour Leader with tour vehicle for the duration of the tour, as specified in the itinerary.

Transfers as detailed in the itineraries, note if the final night is in Málaga, you make your own way for onward travel/departure.

A guided walking tour in the historic centres, given by the Tour Leader. This does not include entering the monuments with you.

The tour price excludes:

Other meals, including dinner at the Flamenco show in Granada, the Churros/Coffees at the Churreria or the fish lunch at the Chiringuito in Malaga. The only meal included in the tour price is breakfast.

Any train/taxi/air fares.

Any shows/performances, monument entrance fees.

Any expenditure that is not included above.

If you have any specific queries about what is included, that is not covered here, please raise them and we will be delighted to respond.

Q. What are the typical costs for lunch and dinner during the tour?

A. Most days you have a Tapas lunch, which is typically around €15 a head.

Dinner locally is good value, typically costing around €20 - €25, including one or two drinks.

If you are on one of the circuit tours, we recommend some nice restaurants in each of the Cities.

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Q. We note that monument entrance fees are included in the tour price ?

A. That is correct.

You are free to visit any monuments you would like, in the Cities, subject to time. We recommend the main ones and you will pre-book some of these online before arrival. We send you simple instructions to print out and follow to make the purchase of the entrance tickets.

Dependant on the tour, this includes the Alhambra, Seville Cathedral, Seville Real Alcazar and Jerez Sherry Bodega.

Other monuments/sites, you may wish to visit, are just payable at the entrance. We suggest budgeting around €80, per person, in total, for monument entrance fees.

If you think you may qualify for any 'age related' discounts, then make sure you ask at each monument, if it is not clearly displayed.

You must have your passport or other original photo identification with you when you enter some of the larger monuments, including the Alhambra, Seville Cathedral and the Real Alcázar of Seville.

Q. We could not find any tour schedules on your website?

A. We do not publish the tour schedules on the website.

The schedules are regularly updated during the year, so please email us to request the latest schedule. We run tours most weeks throughout the year. We may have a tour marked as 'Sold Out' but then subsequently receive a cancellation, so then have availability.

The Private tours are organised to meet your dates, so these do not have schedules.

Q. Are the tours fully guided?

A. The tours are 'semi-guided'.

We offer a mix of light guidance around the key Cities from our Tour Leaders.

However, they will NOT enter the monuments with you.

We know a considerable amount about the history and culture of the region from the Roman period and, in particular, when the Moors occupied 'al-Andalus'.

The major monuments offer audio/audio visual guides, which you can rent from the entrance for a few euros. The use of an audio guide is a personal preference.

Many of our guests prefer to visit the monuments and then read a little about them after their visit. It is entirely your choice. Some guests prefer to read about them beforehand.

You may also be able to download APPS to your mobile/cell phone, or tablet, for some sites.

Each City has their own City based licenced monument guides who just cover that City. We cover 5 to 7 Cities in the course of our tours, so we provide general guidance in each, along with some interesting background information.

The typical structure of a visit is as follows:

In the morning we will give you an orientation walking tour of the historic areas of the City, with some background history and interesting facts/stories.

Then we will take a tapas lunch and in the afternoon you visit the monuments and have some free time. You are not obliged to take lunch in a group, or where we recommend, but most guests prefer to. It is your choice.

Our style of delivery of the background information and history, tends to be interactive story telling about what happened in the past, rather than just flat facts. We have found that our guests enjoy this a lot.

Many guests say that we gave them a wealth of historical and cultural information, but different guests expect different levels of guidance, so we prefer to describe ours as 'light guidance', which we find is the appropriate level for most of our guests.

If you particularly want to have a licenced City guide give you a detailed tour in any of the Cities, and you are prepared to hire them, then please let us know, since we have contact with several of them. They normally charge around €150 for up to 3 hours. They are subject to availability, due to the many large tour groups that visit Andalusia.

Q. Do you recommend us hiring one of the licenced City Guides at any location.

A. As mentioned, the vast majority of our guests prefer to have the introductory walking tour with our Tour Leaders and hire an audio guide at the main monuments, if they want one.

Unless you are part of a large group, then we think this is ideal and, because we have small groups, we can interact with you on a more personal basis.

The coach tours tend to contract the City Guides, who walk them around in large groups of 30 to 50 people.

This suits a certain type of person, but we feel that, In our small groups, you are significantly more involved in exploring the Cities and have a better experience from this.

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Our tours tend to appeal to more independent professional people, who do not want to be part of a large coach tour.

They enjoy the interaction with a small number of similar like-minded people, many coming from different countries around the world.

We feel that having a lightly guided tour from one of our Tour Leaders, in a group of 2 to 7 guests, is a much more appealing option, where you can take your time, interact and get the most out of your visit to the Cities.

Q. What does the Flamenco show in Granada cost and do you recommend it?

A. The Flamenco performance is at a lovely 'bistro style' restaurant 'Jardines de Zoraya' at the top of the Albayzin, the hill opposite the Alhambra, and the atmospheric Arab quarter.

Hopefully, you will have got the impression by now, that we tend to opt for the smaller, more personal and intimate experience rather than a large volume experience.

The food at the restaurant is good. The dinner and show is not included in the tour price.

We have an arrangement with them where you pay a discounted price for the show and then you just pay for your meal and drinks, as you would at any restaurant.

Typically, the total is around €40 - €60 per person for a nice meal, a drink and the show. But like any restaurant these days, bottles of wine can increase the bill significantly. It is not a 'fixed' price meal/show aimed at bulk tourism.

The performance is by a small group of talented professional artists, it is a genuine intense and passionate Flamenco and we recommend it wholeheartedly.

However, it is loud and powerful, so be prepared for this.

If you do not wish to eat at the restaurant, or see the performance, then please let us know.

There are other restaurants in the Albayzin where you can have dinner, but we think the experience is a great addition to your holiday.

Please note that, because this evening is an integral part of our published tour itinerary for the small group tours, unless universally agreed by all guests on the tour, we stay in Granada until after the dinner and performance and return back to the accommodation late in the evening.

We also visit the 'Mirador San Nicolas' to see the Alhambra, across the valley, lit up at night from the viewing point. It is quite the special view.

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Q. I suffer from motion sickness, will that be a problem.

A. Motion sickness can range from a slight feeling of sickness to feeling extremely unwell.

Normally for each journey for the centralised based tours, you will spend around 1 hour in the vehicle before we reach our destination (1 hour 30 minutes for Seville).

If your motion sickness is acute, then possibly a touring holiday isn't the best option, since it does involve covering a large distance during the week.

We have had guests in the past request to sit up front every day, because of their motion sickness, but we ask you to consider other guests in the vehicle and, whilst the vehicles are spacious, it is only reasonable to rotate around and let other guests in the vehicle have the opportunity to sit up front if they would like to.

If you are on a Circuit style tour, then the journeys are around 2 hours between the Cities, but you make just the one way journey rather than a return journey

Q. How much time do we have in the Cities during the tour?

A. It depends on the City, but each visit is typically around 7 hours.

We take you to each City and show you the monuments and places to visit on a lightly guided walking tour.

As mentioned, we try to adopt an interesting 'story telling' style rather than just dry history.

We do not enter the monuments with you, or give you guided tours of them.

We leave you to enter the monuments on your own to explore and appreciate them.

Ronda is less itinerary based than the larger Cities and, after an initial orientation, you are left to explore on your own.

For the Ronda day, we first visit 'Setenil de las Bodegas, where the cliffs overhang the village and on the Málaga day, subject to weather conditions, we visit the stunning National Park 'El Torcal'. Consequentially, you will spend less time in these locations than you will in the other Cities.

Please see the tour itineraries, which provide more detailed information.

Approximately, 35% of your time in the 'major' Cities will be with the Tour Leader and 65% on your own, with a mixture of inside the monuments and free time.

Q. Do we have to eat at the restaurants you recommend for lunch?

A. No.

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We may suggest good value places for lunch, which we know serve tasty typical 'Andalucian' food, but you are free to eat wherever you wish.

We have no allegiance with any, and, unlike many Tour Companies, we do not take commission from them.

One of the reasons we have recommended restaurants in some Cities, is that we know they are efficient in the time taken to serve, so you don't spend too long at lunch, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing. It is Spanish Culture to take your time in restaurants, since eating out is an important aspect of it.

Q. If we want to have something light for dinner and don't want to go out can we?

A. Yes. If you are staying in the Villa, there is a local supermarket close by and you can buy provisions and eat these, either outside on the terraces, by the pool or inside.

You cannot cook meals at the Villa, but can use the kitchen to prepare cold picnic style meals.

The supermarket is closed on Sundays but open every other day until 21.00.

Q. What time do people normally take dinner?

A. Unless you live in another Southern European region, you will find that people tend to take dinner significantly later than you may normally take it.

Most restaurants do not open their kitchen until 8pm, so you may well be eating dinner from 8.30pm onwards. Most guests accept this and appreciate it is a cultural difference.

You don't have to have a large meal for dinner, the restaurants have lots of choices.

As mentioned, on the 'Highlights of Andalusia' tour, you stay for the evening in Granada and Seville and take dinner there.

Q. Do we need to be able to speak Spanish?

A. Not at all, we will help you when required.

All of the Cities are familiar with tourists and English is widely spoken.

In the villages, however, not so much, and very few people speak English.

Q. If we are on a centrally based tour, how long does it take to get to the Cities each day?

A. For the centrally based 'hub' tours, it takes roughly 1 hour to reach each City, other than Seville, which takes about 1 hour 30 minutes. It can take us a further 10 minutes to make our way through the City to the parking places, near the centre of the old quarter.

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For the circuit tours, where you move and stay in different Cities, the journeys are longer, being around 1.5 to 2 hours, but you spend the night in the City and don't have a return journey.

The detailed tour itineraries provide more information.

Q. What age demographic come on your tours?

A. This is quite difficult to answer, because we have guests of all ages and often groups are of mixed ages.

However, we would say that, typically, 70% are over 60, 25% are between 35 and 60 and 5% between 20 and 35. Very occasionally, we have a family with teenage children on tours.

We rarely have any young children on a tour and we don't run tours to 'mixed' groups with young children on them, only private tours for the family.

Q. Are all of the tours run to a published schedule?

A. No.

The small group tours are run to a published schedule, but the private tours are scheduled to meet our guests' required dates and, as such, are dedicated to the couple or private group.

Q. Do you cater for single guests or just couples/groups?

A. We have many single travellers join our tours and, if you are a single traveller, then we are delighted to have you participate in one of them.

There are single supplements, as detailed on the Prices page of our website.

We try to keep the supplements as low as we realistically can.

Q. What is the minimum number of guests you require to confirm a tour is taking place ?

A. Unlike most tour operators, who require quite a lot of guests booked before they confirm the tour, we run all of our tours, and tour extensions, subject to a minimum of just two guests booked on them.

Q. How many people are there in a tour group?

A. For the small group tours, the group size is normally no more than six guests per group, occasionally seven.

We run each vehicle, with driver/guide 'Tour Leader', as a separate tour group.

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At popular times, we may be running more than one tour group concurrently, but each has its own Tour Leader.

The private tours are dedicated tour to the couple or small group booking the tour.

Q. Is the booking deposit per person?

A. The single booking deposit covers a booking for up to three guests.

Q. What is the deposit if we have four or more guests?

A. In these instances, the deposit is 15% of the total tour price.

However, if the tour is for a 'group' of more than 8 guests, and is hotel based, then we may require a different deposit and payment terms for the balance to match any specific conditions imposed by the hotels.

Q. Is the booking deposit refundable if we need to cancel after we have paid it?

A. If cancelled by the guest/s, the deposit is non-refundable, since it covers planning, administration and retainers for tour leaders and accommodation.

It is essential that you have comprehensive travel insurance that covers any costs you may incur if your trip is cancelled for any reason.

We recommend choosing a specialist travel insurance provider that is based in your home country. Travel insurance policies, nowadays, are generally extremely comprehensive in the cover they provide.

Please see our Terms & Conditions for full details of our cancellation policy.

Q. Do you run coach tours for large groups.

We run coach tours for 'private' groups of more than 12 guests.

For example Colleges, Societies, Special Interest Groups.

These tend to be custom itineraries and we try to meet dates they require.

For such tours, the hotels may have particular booking conditions, which we may have to incorporate and modify our standard terms and conditions accordingly..

Q. How do we pay for the tour.

A. We email you an electronic invoice that can pay by Credit/Debit Card.

However, It is preferable, but not mandatory, for our UK guests to make payment by bank transfer to our UK bank account. This helps us to avoid the hefty card processing fees.

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Balance payments must be made no later than 30 days before the tour start date.

Please note that we do not accept any form of check/cheque.

When you have made the payment, we receive notification from our service provider, however, we request that you also send us an email informing you have paid and we will confirm receipt back to you.

Please put the lead guest name on any payment transfer, as the reference, so we can link the payment to you.

Q. Is there any particular dress code for any of the religious monuments, such as Cathedrals?

A. To a limited degree..

Spain is generally quite relaxed about what you wear to visit religious monuments, such as Cathedrals. But, you must be sensible and respectful.

Shorts are fine, but 'knee length' for instance.

Tee shirts are fine, but with covered shoulders, not vests.

We recommend, that if you intend to visit a religious monument in any location, it is prudent to dress in accordance with any rules they set.

Q. How much walking is involved in the tours?

A. There is a reasonable amount of walking on the tour, because the Cities and monuments are quite large.

The amount of walking normally varies between 5km - 10km a day, depending on the City.

We take things quite slowly, so you can appreciate the environment, and there is plenty of time to just sit and enjoy the atmosphere of the Cities.

Q. If we want to spend a few days at the end of the tour somewhere in the region can you help?

A. Yes, we can almost certainly help you. If it is within 15 km of Málaga City, we can take you there free of charge.

If it is more than this, then we can do this for €50 per additional hour, or part thereof.

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Q. What vehicles do you own for undertaking the tours?

A. Our tour vehicles are Mercedes Vito Tourer or Mercedes V Class vehicles, These can seat six to eight passengers, depending on the model. We currently have five such tour vehicles.

They all have passenger zone air conditioning.



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Q. Do we do something on departure day?

A. This depends on your flight/train departure times.

We plan to get you to the airport a minimum of 2 hours before your flight departure time and to the train station, at least 40 minutes before departure.

We often visit Antequera and some of the scenic local areas on the way to Málaga.

If it is realistic to visit somewhere on departure day, we will.

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Q. What time of year is best to come?

A. Andalucía is renowned as having one of the best climates in Europe.

We would say March/April/May/June and September/October/November are traditionally the best months, but we often have great weather in the other months.

It is normally very hot in July, August and early September.

Unfortunately, with global warming, it isn't easy to predict what the weather will be like, other than summer is hot.

Q. If we wanted to stay a few more days in the Villa or Hotel at the end of the tour is this possible?

A. Yes, this may be possible.

See the Prices page on our website for the cost of additional nights.

We also have a range of formal tour extensions which you can add to your tour.

Q. What days of the week do the tours normally start?

A. Most of the 'non-private' tours tend to start on either a Saturday or Wednesday, but consult the tour schedule for the actual day and dates.

Feel free to contact us if you have any specific dates and we will see if it is possible to accommodate these.

Q. Do you have laundry facilities in the Villa?

A. Yes. There is a laundry service offered by the Housekeeper, who charges €10 for a plastic carrier bag size of washing. This includes washing, drying and folding, but not ironing.

Typically laundry is returned the next day.

We do not allow guests to undertake their own washing using the washing machine.

The laundry facilities are required every day by the Housekeeper for towels, bed linen etc. and they need to schedule the washing and drying accordingly.

Q. Does the local village 'Mollina', where the Villa is located, have restaurants?

A. Yes, the local village has some small good value restaurants within walking distance.

Q. Is food available in the Villas?

A. We provide a comprehensive breakfast.

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This includes cereal, yoghurt, fruit, scrambled eggs, omelettes, fried eggs, toast etc. but not a full 'English' breakfast.

You can bring back food from the local supermarket and eat it on the terraces or guest lounges.

Guests can prepare food in the kitchen in the Villa, such as salads, cold cuts....but, as mentioned, we don't allow guests to cook meals for dinner.

Q. If we stay in the Villa, can we spend an evening in Antequera?

A. We often arrange an evening dinner in Antequera at a good Spanish restaurant.

Q. What is the village of Mollina like?

A. It is a typical large Spanish village of around 4,000 people.

There is a mixture of older and modern houses.

There is a small square in the village with a church. It is a relatively flat village.

It is very functional for our tours and, most conveniently, it is centrally located.

There are not a lot of shops in the village, however, it does have a good supermarket within walking distance of the Villa.

It is very safe to walk in the evening in the village and the local people are friendly. It is a working, agricultural village with mainly Spanish, but some British, residents.

It is not one of the famous cute 'Pueblo Blancos' white villages in the mountains, but is an excellent base for travelling to and from the Cities, the nature of a 'hub' tour.

You can use Google Maps Street View to tour around the village, if you wish.

Q. Are you on Trip Advisor?

A. Yes we are on Trip Advisor and we are pleased to have one of the highest ratings of any travel company on Trip Advisor.

http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g187438-d5555289-Reviews-Tour_Andalusia_International_Day_Tours-Malaga_Costa_del_Sol_Province_of_Malaga_An.html

Q. What protection do I have if the tour is cancelled or I have to cancel the tour?

A. It is essential that you have comprehensive travel insurance to cover your trip and cancellation for any reason.

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The only tours we have cancelled in the last 11 years are the ones where travel was restricted due to the Covid pandemic.

However, from time to time, guests may have to cancel their tour due to personal reasons.

In the unlikely event that we have to cancel a tour, due to reasons that we are solely responsible for, then we will transfer your payment to a future tour or issue a refund, in accordance with our cancellation policy.

However, in all other circumstances, we cannot refund any monies paid and you will need to claim on your travel insurance.

As we are sure you can appreciate, we have to prepay most of the resources we require for tours, well in advance, to ensure their availability for the required dates.

Q. Are your vehicles insured for carrying passengers?

A. Yes.

We have vehicle insurance that insures us for carrying our private passengers.

Q. We saw 'El Torcal' on the itinerary for the Málaga day, what is this?

A. El Torcal is a National Park at the top of the mountain range near Antequera.

It is quite a spectacular area and there is a 50 minute walk (1.4 km) which you can take through the stunning rock formations.

You should wear good quality shoes/trainers to do the walk and, if it is early Spring or Winter, it may be cold there, since it is very high, so wear warm layered clothing and take a small bottle of water.

Whilst the walk is officially rated 'low' in terms of difficulty, it can be quite arduous and you do have to walk up and down rocks on a narrow track and thread your way through some downhill parts. So, it can be quite 'tricky'.

Most of our guests do the walk, but don't underestimate it and walk it carefully.

You do not have to undertake the walk and there is an on-site cafeteria where you can just sit and enjoy the beautiful scenery, whilst other guests are on the walk.

There is also an interesting reception centre.

If you have any walking difficulties you should not do the walk.

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We have to stress that any walking of this nature is entirely at your own risk and, if you are at all concerned, you should check that your travel insurance covers appropriate activities, such as walking on marked paths in national parks.

Please note, if it has been raining hard and the ground is wet, then we do not undertake the walk, since it will be muddy, slippery and dangerous.

In such an instance, we will normally visit Antequera before travelling to Málaga.

Q. If we want to make some purchases of leather goods, where do you recommend?

A. Several guests have told us, in their opinion, Mijas offers the best quality of leather goods for attractive prices.

Because we only normally visit Mijas on arrival day, and this is subject to your arrival time, then we suggest if you see something you like when you are there, then buy it, since you may not see quite the same quality/value elsewhere.

Ronda and Granada are best for shoes.

Q. We like spending some time in the countryside, do you offer anything?

A. Yes, we offer a range of Tour Extensions that you can add at the end of any tour, to take advantage of the Andalucía countryside and/or white villages. These are detailed on our website.

Q. Why are your prices in £GBP and not in €Euro?

A. Whilst our guests come from all over the world, the largest individual group (around 35%) come from the UK, because of the ease of travel to Spain, with low cost flights.

As such, it makes business sense for us to use this as our base currency.

Q. What are the standards of hygiene like in Spain?

A. Hygiene standards in Spain are high, we rarely have guests suffer with 'dodgy tummies'.

You should drink plenty of water each day on the tour, because it is easy to become dehydrated and this will make you feel unwell.

We recommend a 'minimum' of two litres a day, if the weather is hot.

Q. How do the tour extensions work?

A. You choose any of the tour extensions and, on day 7 of the normal tour when the other guests are departing, you are taken by a Tour Leader for the first day of your tour extension.

You will either remain in the same accommodation, or stay in hotels, depending on the extension.

The details are published on our website and the associated pdf itineraries.

Q. Do you book our Alhambra entrances?

A. As an authorised Agent, we have the ability book the entrances for you and add the price of the tickets to your balance.

However, the Agents System has a limited amount of tickets that sell out a lot faster than the Public System, so we prefer to send you simple instructions so you can purchase them directly online.

Q Do we need to pre-book tickets for any monuments other than the Alhambra?

A. We recommend pre-purchasing tickets for the Cathedral of Seville and the Real Alcázar of Seville.

Also, if applicable, for the sherry bodega in Jerez.

We send you simple instructions for these.

For other monuments you just purchase tickets at the entrance.

Q. Do we need any Visas or special passport conditions to come to Spain.

A. You will need to check, depending on the Country of issue of your passport.

Please remember, that your passport may need to be valid for several months after the date of travel, so check its expiry date to make sure that you fulfil any travel requirements.

A search on the internet, or government travel websites, should provide this information.

Q. Will we have the same driver/guide for the duration of our tour?

A. Most tours have the same Tour Leader for the full duration,

Occasionally, we may need to switch Tour Leaders during a tour.

All of our Tour Leaders are personable, friendly and fun. Everyone enjoys their company.

Our Tour Leaders are neither frivolous or too serious, but professional with a good sense of humour and good company to be with.

All are very safe drivers.

They are all knowledgeable and highly competent.

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Q. What is the tipping culture in restaurants?

A. Spain is not a big tipping culture, but people do tip for dinner/lunch, normally you just work on a couple of euros per head, or around 10%.

You may find in some travel books it says 'Don't tip in Spain', this is somewhat misleading because people do tip, but just not at the same level you may do in North America, for instance.

You don't normally tip if you are just having a coffee or drink.

Q. Should we tip the Tour Leaders and/or the Housekeepers?

A. The Tour Leaders and the Housekeepers work very hard and diligently, and do not automatically expect tips.

However, if you have enjoyed the tour, and the service they have given you, and you want to express your appreciation in the form of a 'financial gesture', then they are delighted if they receive a tip.

It is totally at your discretion, but most guests do like to leave them a tip.

We are regularly asked for guidelines on tipping the staff and, of course, we feel a little awkward in making suggestions.

However, a reasonable guideline would be that, if you are on one of the mixed small group tours, then consider €10 per guest for the Housekeepers and, for the Tour Leader, maybe around €20 - €25 per guest.

If it is a private tour, then please just use your discretion regarding what you feel comfortable with.

If you have several Tour Leaders during your tour, then you can leave something that is put into a 'pot', which we will share out to the Tour Leaders.

Q. What do we do if there is nobody waiting at the airport, train station or comes to our hotel to collect us at the expected time?

A. Firstly, please do not panic.

We have an unparalleled level of punctuality in meeting and collecting our guests and we have never left a guest stranded.

However, occasionally, and for many different reasons, we may be slightly delayed.

Please be patient, you are on holiday, relax and we will arrive as quickly as possible.

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Similarly, if we agree a time to meet for departure at the end of the day, and the Tour Leader arrives late, just relax and do not get annoyed.

It isn't that they have forgotten, but sometimes we need to move vehicles in the afternoon, and there may be a traffic problem, parking problems or a blocked road, that we have been caught up in.

The delay will purely be because we are trying to make the service to you as good as we possibly can, no other reason.

You can call Gary or any of the other Tour Leaders, the telephone numbers are at the end of this document.

Leave a message if you get put through to voicemail or send a text/WhatsApp message.

We stress that it is extremely rare that we do not meet you as planned.

If there has been a serious delay, such as a vehicle breakdown, or traffic accident, where possible, we plan to have back-up capability to send someone to collect you.

We tend to use WhatsApp for messaging communication and it's a good idea to make contact with the Tour Leader before the tour commences.

We will normally confirm who will meet you upon arrival..

Q. Is there a printed itinerary we can have?

A. Yes, all the tour itineraries are available in 'pdf' format and can be downloaded from the 'Tours' page on our website <https://tourandalusia.com/tours/>

Note, for the centrally based tours, the sequence of the City visits may be slightly different to the published itinerary, depending on the day they start, but you will visit the same locations.

The reason for any difference in the sequence of the day trips is to avoid visiting Cities on days when certain monuments may be closed.

Q. What facilities does the Villa have?

A. All the rooms have private 'en-suite/master' bathrooms.

We supply towels, hair dryers, shampoo, shower gel, bathrobes.

There are also tea and coffee making facilities in each room.

Details of the Villa are published with photographs on our website on the 'Accommodation' page <https://tourandalusia.com/accommodation/>

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Q. Where are your meeting and collection points upon arrival.

A. We have meeting points in Málaga Airport and Málaga train station and we will email these to you.

We also have a meeting point in central Málaga or, depending on the specific location, we may be able collect you from local hotels in the Málaga area, or from other locations, subject to prior agreement.

We will always confirm the pick-up location by email to you.

For flight arrivals, we arrive at the meeting point 30 minutes after your flight arrival time, it takes at least this time for you to disembark, clear passport control, collect luggage and arrive there.

If you land early, there is a cafe 'La Manon' inside the terminal where you can have a drink and wait and this is also our meeting point in Málaga Airport.

Q. What do you expect from us?

A. We are a small and personable company and our only expectation is that you come in a friendly 'holiday' frame of mind with a positive attitude.

Smiling and being pleasant makes the holiday wonderful for everyone, including us.

We work immensely hard to try and deliver a fantastic experience for you, and it is wonderful if you appreciate this.

Spain is great, sometimes frustrating and sometimes different from other Western Cultures, but a fabulous place to visit.

Come in the right spirit and it will be a great holiday.

We will go out of our way to give you a unique experience and if any problem does arise, we will address it quickly and as best we can.

We aren't a big 'uncaring' tour operator, we genuinely care about the experience our guests have, so bear that in mind and come prepared to enjoy yourself.

Please don't be overly demanding, you are here for an authentic experience in a beautiful part of the world.

Remember that the whole experience of coming to Spain, is not just to replicate what you experience at home.

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The food will be different, the 'laid back' attitude may be different, the customs, restaurant service.... But that is precisely why you travel.

Spanish people eat later in the evenings, more people smoke (but not inside restaurants), they are noisy, enthusiastic and demonstrative people.

Enjoy their zest for life.

If the experience purely replicated of what you have at home, then it would be a waste of time and money coming.

Embrace the difference, adopt a relaxed style and take advantage of the whole experience.

Don't complain the waiter is slow or makes mistakes, if the bill/check takes ages to come, it is the way the Spanish do things. We are visiting their country and not trying to change it.

A large part of your holiday with us is to experience the Spanish culture and way of life, not just to see the amazing sites.

Whilst Andalucía has amazing Cities, it is still very much a farming and agriculture region, with Olive Oil, Wine, Hams and Cheeses being the primary produce.

Have fun, see the spectacular sites, enjoy the different food, it is a short visit and most people fall in love with Andalucía.

As mentioned, Spanish people do eat dinner later than what you may be used to, so be prepared for this. dinner is available from 20:00 in most restaurants and rarely before.

We clearly state, and cannot emphasise strongly enough, that we try to discourage visitors of a demanding nature and we wish to attract friendly 'easy going' guests who enjoy the company of other like-minded people.

Our tours are often sold out and many guests come from 'word of mouth' recommendations given by previous guests.

Q. There are quite a few Coach Tours in the region, why do you think we should book with you for one of your tours?

A. It entirely depends what you want from your touring holiday in Andalucía.

We are very different from a Coach Tour Operator.

The Coach Tour Operators have much larger marketing and advertising budgets and we are only a fraction of the size of them.

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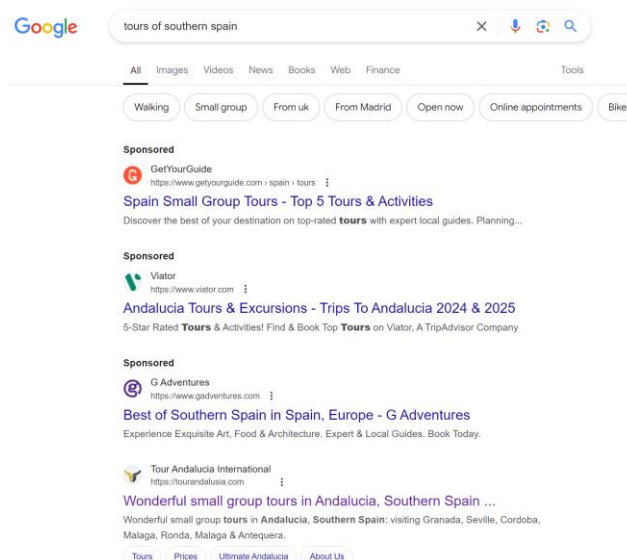
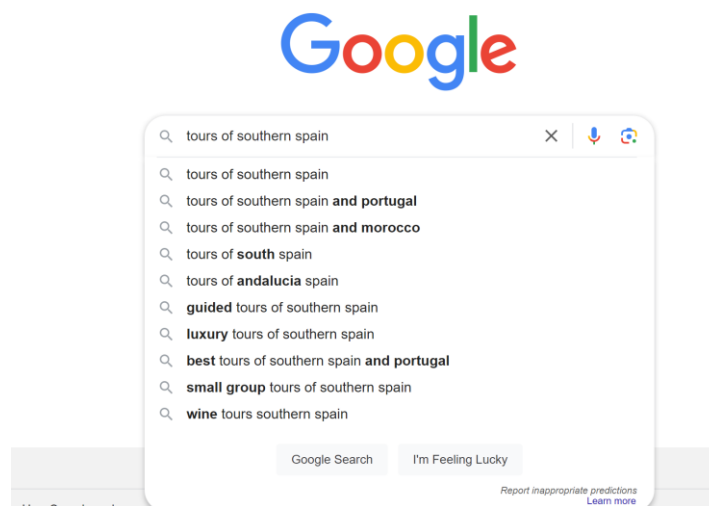
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We don't advertise and our marketing budget doesn't exist.

We come up very high, normally on the first page of Google and other search engines, for relevant internet searches, such as 'Tours in Southern Spain' and we don't pay for this.

The search engines recognise that we are specialists and like to present us, to people searching for tours in the region, as amongst the best matches.



The above screenshots show Page 1 on Google for the search 'Tours in Southern Spain'.

The 'Sponsored' results are paid for, by those companies, to appear in the results and Google marks them as such.

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The number 1 'organic/natural' result, or 'non-paid' for, is us.

Coach operators tend to focus on numbers, rather than individuals, since they make money in processing guests in volume.

If you are happy to be in a very large group and follow a Tour Leader, who is holding up an umbrella and talking to you via an electronic device in your ear, then the coach tour will be fine for you.

We are not 'knocking' the large coach tours, their 'rigidness' suit certain types of people superbly well, we are just explaining the difference.

Most of the coach tours will pass you over to a City Guide for a formal tour, we tend to be less formal and more flexible.

If you are an 'independent' type of person and want to have genuine conversations with someone knowledgeable about the area, and its history, have a 'true' experience of the region and its culture, then we feel we offer this far more than the coach tours.

Our guests tend to be professional people who enjoy the company of other 'like-minded' people from all around the world.

They don't like the idea of being in a large group and prefer to 'participate' in the Cities rather than simply 'observe' them.

They feel our small group philosophy endorses this.

We have many retired and practising: Doctors, Teachers, Lecturers, Engineers, Company Directors, Accountants, Scientists, Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Owners, IT Professionals, Civil Servants, Social Workers..... come on our tours and they find the company of their other guests, stimulating and enjoyable.

We do though insist that any particularly strong 'political' opinions to be restrained and tempered. Your vacation is a retreat away from this for a short period.

When you think about it, your choice boils down to one significant factor, which is, if you don't want to be part of a large group, you are social and you prefer not to do it yourself, then we offer a great alternative.

And, for more-or-less the same price of a coach tour, we deliver what we feel is a more appealing experience.

We make it extremely easy for you to turn up in Andalucía and just enjoy the holiday without hassle.

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Leave the planning and organisation to us and we'll make sure you see and visit the best of these amazing places.

It really is about what suits you best and, hopefully, we will be able to host you on one of our tours.

Telephone contact numbers for the Tour Leaders/Drivers:

Gary	+44 7928 495328
James	+34 659 860900
Alex	+34 722 497113
Javi	+34 687 30 76 48
Anne	+351 926 524 120
Franz	+351 912 801 048