

# Winter Break Tour Andalucía

Duration 5 days/4 nights



Our shorter Winter Break tour takes you to visit the 3 main Cities of Andalucía . It is designed to provide you with a wonderful 'get away' from Winter experience. The tour is available from the beginning of November through to the end of February. Accommodation is at the 4\* Antequera Parador Hotel.

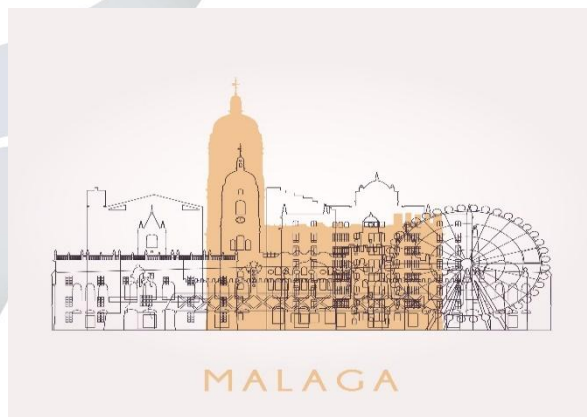


**Day 1: ARRIVAL & MÁLAGA** We collect you in Málaga from the airport, train station or local hotel and, subject to time, we take you to visit the lovely Mediterranean City of Málaga.

One of the oldest Cities in Europe, and one of the most continuously inhabited Cities in the world, Málaga was a Phoenician seaport and one of the main entry points into the Iberian Peninsula due to its natural harbour.

The Phoenicians called it Malaka, not too far from how its known today.

A beautiful Mediterranean City, there are marble pavements, a mostly pedestrianised old quarter and often a fresh light breeze blowing in from the sea. The massive Alcazaba fortress looms over the ancient Roman Theatre and close by is the birthplace of the famous painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso.



The second largest City in Andalucía, with a municipal population of around 600,000,

Málaga is the southernmost large City in Europe and, with its chilled lifestyle, temperate sunny climate, 'chiringuito' fresh fish barbeque restaurant shacks on the beach and full of tapas bars and cafeterias, to be a Malagueño explains why the people are so happy.

If you arrive in the morning, we will take lunch and afterwards give you a short walking tour of the beautiful old quarter of the City. Then you have time to visit any of the



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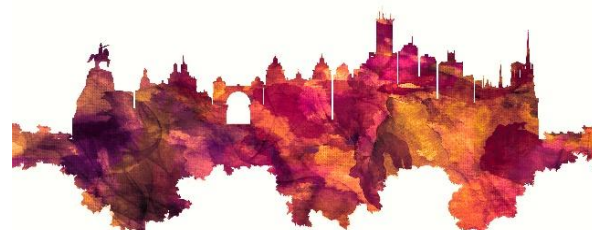
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sites, the large Alcazaba Fortress or the Picasso Museum. At 18:00 we reconvene and transfer you to your accommodation, the 4\* Antequera Parador Hotel where you stay for the next 4 nights.

**Day 2: CÓRDOBA** At 09:30, we depart for the historic City of Córdoba. Once the Capital of both the Roman and Islamic Empires in the Iberian Peninsula, Córdoba is a walled City with the largest official old quarter of any European City, much of it a Unesco World Heritage Site. A fascinating City of charm and history.



-Cordoba-

As a visitor, you are transformed back in time. The Capital of both the Roman and Islamic Empires, it was once amongst the most powerful and important Cities in the world.



Amongst the largest Cities in the world, in terms of its population in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it now is roughly the same size as Granada, but has an intimate feel of a much smaller and contained City.

The ancient walls of the City appear almost recently built and they surround the old City giving the visitor the feel of emerging into the middle ages as you walk through them.

Famous for its patios, packed to the brim with colourful flowers, the courtyards of Córdoba are a lovely and a cool retreat from the heat of the summer sun.

To many, the mesmerising 'Mesquita', the greatest ancient Mosque in the Western World, is the most impressive building in the whole of Andalucía and certainly the only Mosque in the world with a Baroque Cathedral right in the centre. The first references to a settlement is from the Carthaginians, who named this *Kartuba*.



Conquered by the Romans in 206BC, it was renamed 'Corduba'. During the Roman Civil War, the City was sacked



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by Julius Caesar in 45BC due to its Pompeian allegiance. And it was later settled with veterans by the Emperor Augustus.



It became the Capital of Baetica, one of three Roman provinces in Hispania (the Iberian Peninsula) and had a provincial forum and many temples.

The great Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger, his father, the orator Seneca the Elder, and his nephew, the poet Lucan came from Roman Córdoba.

In 711, when the Moors invaded the peninsula, Córdoba was captured by the 'Umayyad' army. The new commanders established themselves within the City and in 716 it became a provincial capital, subordinate to the Caliphate of Damascus, known as 'Qurṭuba'.

The Saint Vincent Church was shared for worship by Christians and Muslims, until construction of the Córdoba Mosque started on the same spot under the Umayyad Sultan 'Abd-ar-Rahman I' in 785.

Designed along the lines of the Great Umayyad Mosque of Damascus, it is now the greatest Mosque in the Western world. And the Sultan personally laboured one hour every day laying stones in its construction.



In May 766, Córdoba was chosen as the capital of the independent Umayyad emirate, later caliphate, of al-Andalus.



Córdoba flourished, becoming a megacity of the time with widely ranging population estimates of between 400,000 and 1,000,000 people. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Córdoba was one of the most advanced cities in the world, and a great cultural, political, financial and economic centre.

Córdoba had a prosperous economy, with manufactured goods including leather, metal work, glazed tiles and textiles,



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and agricultural produce including a range of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices, and materials such as cotton, flax and silk.

In particular, filigree silver work, from silver mined in the Sierra Morena mountains behind the City, is a craft that lives on today with many small workshops producing and selling unique jewellery in this fashion.

It was famous as a centre of learning, home to over 80 libraries and institutions, with knowledge of medicine, mathematics, astronomy and botany, far exceeding the rest of Europe at the time.



In 936, a powerful ruler Abd-ar-Rahman III was inaugurated as the first Caliph of Córdoba and became known as the red haired, blue eyed Caliph due to his non-Arab appearance.



But after his death and several subsequent and weaker rulers, the caliphate collapsed, as did Córdoba's economic and political hegemony, and it subsequently became part of the Taifa of Córdoba.

Some of the best Olive Oil in the World come from the Province of Córdoba.

We arrive in Córdoba at the 'Puerta de Sevilla', a small entrance into the San Basilio district of the City. After a short background to the City, we pass through the entrance and see the beauty of the white-washed houses with trailing geraniums in blue pots dangling from the 'rejas', window railings. We take a short coffee and restroom stop in a local cafeteria and then walk the cobbled streets to our first visit, a typical Córdoba Patio.

Continuing through the lovely residential barrio, we see the large walls that sub-divided the City into districts and have a quick look at the Royal Stables 'Caballerizas Reales' where they train the famous Andalusian Horses.



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A little further up the street we come across the Christian Alcazar with its beautiful gardens. Here you have a



45 minute visit. Leaving the Alcazar we take you for a meander through the old Jewish Quarter with its narrow lanes and atmospheric patios before arriving at the site of the Great Mosque of Córdoba (now a Cathedral) the 'Mesquita'.

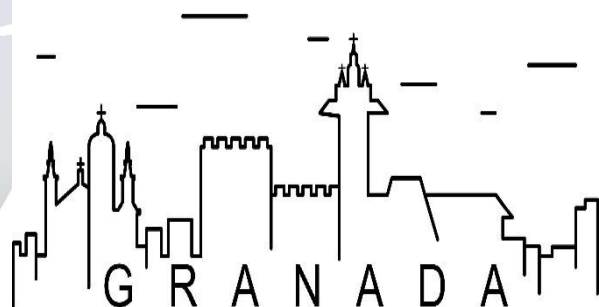
We stop for a relaxed tapas lunch to sample typical dishes from the region and, after lunch, walk up the little lane of the flowers for an iconic photo opportunity.

You then have free time to visit the Mosque, shop and enjoy the charismatic old quarter before we meet up at 17.30 at the Roman Triumphal Arch, cross the famous Roman Bridge and return to your accommodation.

Of all of the places you visit on our tour, Córdoba is the City where ghosts of the past come alive and the presence of a glowing Golden Age is most felt.

**Day 3: GRANADA** At 09:00, we depart to visit the *Jewel of Andalucía*, the City of Granada.

'*Gar-anat*' meaning '*Hill of the Pilgrims*' or '*Hill of the Strangers*', now known as Granada, nestles at the bottom of the towering mountain range, the Sierra Nevada.



Romantic and Majestic, it was once wealthy and the home of both Sultans and Christian Monarchs, including the famous Ferdinand and Isabella, who made it their final resting and burial place.

It's hard to imagine, but the Islamic Kingdom of Granada held on for nearly a quarter of a millennium after the rest of the Iberian Peninsula was recaptured by the Christian '*Reconquista*' and imposing Islamic Fortresses spread throughout the region.



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Now a vibrant City of Education and Business, the reminder of its great importance looms high and visible in the form of the Alhambra, the spectacular royal complex of Fortress and Palaces and one of Europe's most visited sites.

'al-Qal'at al-Ḥamrā', the 'Red Fortress', sits proudly on top of the hill of 'La Sabika', the 'Hill of Gold', as an imposing gesture to the dynasties that once ruled this land.

Granada is located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and at the confluence of four rivers, 'Darro', 'Genil', 'Monachil' and 'Beiro'. It has an elevation of 738m (2,421 ft) and a municipal population of around 240,000.

The University of Granada is highly regarded and has an estimated 82,000 students spread over five campuses around the City.



After the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate, when al-Andalus broke down into a series of 'Taifas' or small



independent kingdoms, the Berber 'Zawi ben Ziri' established the Taifa of Granada which was essentially, and surprisingly, a Jewish state in all but name. The Muslim King being mainly a symbolic figurehead, the power and control of the Taifa and its armies were under Jewish control. It was the centre of the Jewish Sephardi culture and learning. Early Arabic writers often refer to the Taifa of Granada as 'Garnata al-Yahud', Granada of the Jews.

The Royal City Complex of the Alhambra is by far the most famous monument in Granada. It is a renowned Islamic historical legacy set of buildings, Palaces, Fortress and Gardens.

Originally constructed in 889 as a fortress on top of older Roman fortifications, it remained almost a set of ruins until renovation in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century by the Nasrid Emir 'Mohammed ben al-Ahmar' who added the Palaces and walls.

Moorish poets describe it as a 'pearl set in emeralds' in reference to the colour of its buildings and the surrounding woods.



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It is also often referred to as a ship sailing towards the City of Granada with the large watch tower of the Alcazaba fortress being the prow.

The Gardens and pools of the Alhambra are spectacular with fragrant flowers in abundance. The Palaces are highly decorative with beautiful columns, stalactite vaulted ceilings and highly ingenious hydraulic water management systems, as featured in the Fountain of the Lions, where every hour, one of the twelve white marble lion statues surrounding the fountain would produce water from its mouth. A marvel and baffling visitors of the time.



As you walk around the city you will see the heraldic emblem of Granada cast in rain water downpipes and on other items, the Pomegranate, in Spanish '*Granada*'.



Arriving in Granada, we park and take a short walk to the beautiful Bib Rambla Plaza where we indulge in a treat of '*Chocolate con Churros*' before having a walking tour around the Cathedral area, through the '*Alcaicería*', the Arabic Silk Market.

Interestingly, the name '*Alcaiceria*' means '*Place of Caesar*' in reference to the Arabs being given the rights to manufacture and sell silks in the 6<sup>th</sup> century by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian.

You are then free to explore, maybe visit the Cathedral or '*Capilla Real*' now the museum of Granada and the burial place of the Catholic Monarchs '*Ferdinand and Isabella*'.

We will meet up at 13:00 and take a short walk along the banks of the River Darro with its charming stone bridges before returning to the tour vehicle to drive up to the Alhambra.

You will have pre-booked tickets that include entrance to the '*Nasrid Palaces*'.



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After the visit, we drive to the top of the 'Albayzin', the old Arab Quarter, with its atmospheric cobbled streets



and have dinner at Restaurante Jardines de Zoraya, who have a great menu and an excellent authentic Flamenco Performance by talented local artists.

We also visit the Mirador San Nicolas to see the Alhambra lit up at night from across the valley before returning back to your accommodation.

A long but unforgettable day.

**Day 4: SEVILLE** At 09:00, we depart to elegant and colourful City of Seville *Sevilla* with its impressive buildings, parks and culture.

Seville is an absolute delight and has been awarded the Lonely Planet Guide's 'Number 1 City to Visit'.

Once the wealthiest City in Europe, as a result of trade with the Americas, Seville is located on the banks of the 'Gualquivir' river which empties into the Atlantic, some 80km to the west, making Seville once the most inland port in Europe.



Sevilla (Seville) is the capital of the autonomous region of Andalucía. It has a municipal population close to 700,000 and a metropolitan population of 1.5 million, making it the fourth largest City in Spain after Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia.



With one of the world's largest Cathedrals, 'Mudéjar' Islamic style Palaces, majestic fountains, winding narrow lanes, a day in Seville passes in the blink of an eye.

The 'Reales Alcázares de Sevilla' are the oldest Royal Palaces in Europe still in use. Built in the style of the Alhambra Palaces, they are spectacular and a delight to visit.

The 'Sevillanos', people of Seville, love to sing and party and truly know how to enjoy themselves.



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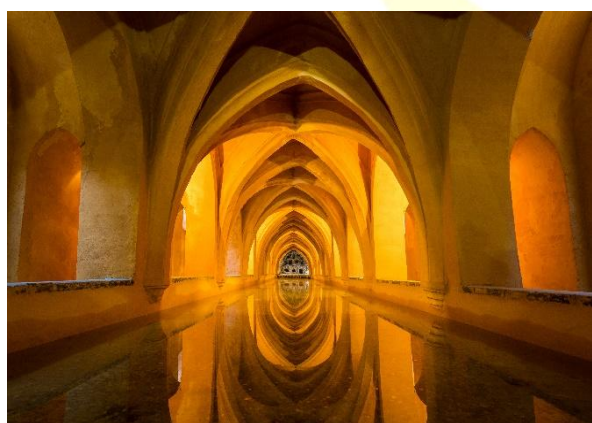


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Original founded by the Romans, it was called 'Hispalis' and was taken by the Muslim conquest in 712 and renamed Ishbiliyya. In 1147, the 'Almohad' Islamic Sect, meaning 'Those who profess the unity of God', invaded al-Andalus and made 'Ishbiliyya' their centre.

Great constructors, they built the famous 'Giralda Tower' that looms over the City, now the Cathedral Bell Tower, but once the Minaret of the Great Mosque, which was mainly destroyed as part of the construction of the large Cathedral. The 'Patio of the Oranges', some original walls and some entrances into the original Mosque are all that remain.



As the economic centre of trade with the Americas, Seville grew extremely wealthy opening a new Golden Age of arts and literature. Beautiful impressive Baroque Buildings were built and wealthy merchants commissioned mansions for themselves and their families. The narrow lanes of the colourful Barrio Santa Cruz district, the old Jewish Quarter, are known as the 'kissing lanes' since the balconies of the buildings either side of the lanes nearly touch each other.

Opening into pretty little plazas, it is a lovely place to meander.

There are three Unesco World Heritage sites in the old quarter: The Alcázar Palaces, the Cathedral (the largest Gothic Cathedral in the world) and the General Archive of the Indies which houses the National Archives, including details of Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas.

In 1519, 'Ferdinand Magellan' departed from Seville for the first circumnavigation of the Earth.

When the Guadalquivir river silted up in 18<sup>th</sup> century and became no longer navigable, the merchants and trade moved and relocated to Cadiz, deserting Seville and leaving it to enter a serious decline.



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The incredible 'Plaza España', built as part of the 1929 Ibero-Americana exposition, has been the setting for several hit movies, including 'Lawrence of Arabia' and 'Star Wars'.



Unfortunately, the exhibition failed to restore trade and its fortunes, but the City has more recently recovered from investment in new industries, services, tourism and the University. The Alcazar Palaces are also star of the glittering screen having been some of the Palaces in 'Game of Thrones' and also the Palaces of Jerusalem in the 2005 Ridley Scott Epic 'The Kingdom of Heaven'.

Known as the City of Opera, Seville is the setting for around 100 operas, the most famous, surely, being 'Carmen'. Renowned composers such as Beethoven, Bizet, Mozart, Rossini and Verdi have all been inspired by this fabulous City.

We start our tour with a visit to the vast Plaza de España, the scene of the 1929 Ibero-Americana exhibition. With its impressive towers, buildings, fountain and ceramics, set in a huge semi-circle, it is quite breath taking.



Walking from the Plaza, we pass by the historic buildings of Seville telling you their background until we reach the Cathedral Square where the largest Gothic Cathedral in the world imposes its presence. Entering the Barrio Santa Cruz, the old Jewish Quarter, we take a wander and stop for lunch.



After lunch, you are free to visit the 'Reales Alcázares', with its 'Mudejar' Patios and scented gardens.

And if you wish, the Cathedral which houses the tomb of 'Christopher Columbus', so it is claimed.

The Giralda Tower, has a winding internal ramp up to the top from where you have fantastic views over the City.

We meet at 18:00 for the journey back to the accommodation.



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**Day 5: RONDA & DEPARTURE** Subject to departure time, we visit the spectacular town of Ronda perched on top of the impressive Tajo Gorge.

Ronda was first settled in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC by the early Celts naming it 'Arunda'.

The current Ronda, though, is of Roman origins, having been founded as a fortified post in the Second Punic War, by 'Scipio Africanus'.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Napoleonic invasion and the subsequent Peninsula War caused much suffering in Ronda,

whose inhabitants were reduced from 15,600 to 5,000 in three years. Ronda's area became the base first of guerrilla warriors, then of numerous bandits, whose deeds inspired artists and folklore.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the economy of Ronda was mainly based on agricultural activities and In 1918, the city was the seat of the Assembly of Ronda, in which the Andalusian flag, coat of arms, and anthem were designed.

The iconic Puente Nuevo Bridge, towering 100m above the river below, spans the two parts of the town and the famous bullring, now a museum, is the oldest in Spain.

After a short orientation walk, you are free to wander the narrow lanes of the old quarter, visit any of the monuments, take lunch, before we met up to take you for your onward departure.



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## What's included

- All return tour transportation from accommodation to Cities in one of our air conditioned tour vehicles
- Transfers from airport, train station and local Malaga Hotels between the hours of 09:00 and 18:00
- Dedicated Tour Leader
- Bed and breakfast accommodation
- Orientation and background walking tour in Cities

## What's not included

- Any other meals, drinks, subsistence
- Any shows, performances, including the dinner/Flamenco in Granada
- Monument entrance fees
- Any flight, train, bus or other transportation
- Any expenditure not detailed above



## Tour Price

Accommodation (4 nights)	Per person	Single Supplements
4* Antequera Parador Hotel	£1,175	£210



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## Notes

- Our Tour Leaders will give you background information of the Cities and places we visit, but they will not enter the monuments with you. Audio guides are available for rental at the major monuments if you wish to have one
- The walking distance during each day can normally vary between 5km and 10km. Wear comfortable shoes, drink lots of water and use sunscreen cream
- The Winter Break tour is run to meet your required dates rather than to a schedule
- All bookings are subject to our terms and conditions, a copy of which are included in the booking form
- Please request or download a copy of the latest tour schedule for the dates of the tours
- Prices are in £GBP and are for two people sharing a room with single supplements, as shown



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