

Tour Extension 'Historical'

Overview



Our 'historical' tour extension is a fascinating 'add-on' to our main tours for guests who would like to visit additional locations with a historic bias.

The ancient Dolmen Burial Site, the fascinating Ruined Royal City of Medina Azahara, the imposing fortress of 'La Mota', the Baroque town of Priego de Córdoba and the walled City of Carmona are packaged together to make a wonderful extra few days to your tour.

Day 1: DOLMENS & MEDINA AZAHARA After breakfast, we visit Antequera and the Dolmen Burial Chambers.

According to the available information, they may be more than 6,500 years old.

Recently declared a Unesco World Heritage site, it comprises three megalithic monuments: the 'Menga' and 'Viera' dolmens and the 'Tholos of El Romeral'.

Built during the Neolithic and Bronze Age out of large stone blocks, these monuments form chambers with lintelled roofs or false cupolas.

The three tombs, buried beneath their original earth tumuli, are one of the most remarkable architectural works of European prehistory and one of the most important examples of European Megalithism.



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The largest, the Neolithic Dolmen of Menga, represents one of the most important masterpieces of megalithic architecture.

It has enormous dimensions that push the size possible in such structures, by incorporating the unprecedented solution of intermediate support pillars.

Both the Dolmen of Menga and the Tholos of *El Romeral* have anomalous orientations. The Dolmen of Menga points to the striking nearby peak called the Peña de los Enamorados. This rises abruptly from the plain and on the summer solstice, the sun rises directly above it and into the Dolmen.

After visiting the Dolmens, we depart for the ruined Royal City of Abd al-Rahman III (891AD to 961AD), the most powerful ruler of al-Andalus who claimed the title of 'Caliph' (Ruler of the Islamic World).

Known as the shining City '*El Ciudad Brillante*', Medina Azahara is now a large archaeological site which you can wander around.

It was constructed as a vast, fortified Palace City on the western outskirts of Córdoba.

Building started in 936 AD and at its height, it was said to be the most beautiful City in the world, with marble and limestone buildings, red granite floors, stunning arches and water features.

It became the de facto capital of Islamic Spain and the heart of the administration and government was within its walls.

The city included ceremonial reception halls, mosques, administrative and government offices, gardens, a mint, workshops, barracks, residences and baths.

Water was supplied through aqueducts.



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The main reason for its construction was political and ideological.

The importance of the Caliph required the establishment of a new city. It was a symbol of his great power, as had occurred in many Middle Eastern Caliphates.

Above all, the construction of Medina Azahara demonstrated the Caliph's superiority over his great rivals, the 'Fatimids of Ifriqiya' in Northern Africa, as well as the Abbasids in Baghdad.

Legend also says that it was built as a tribute for his favourite wife 'Azahara'.

The complex was extended during the reign of Abd ar-Rahman III's son Al-Hakam II (r. 961-976), but after his death soon ceased to be the main residence of the Caliphs.

In 1010, it was sacked in a civil war, and thereafter abandoned, with many elements re-used elsewhere.

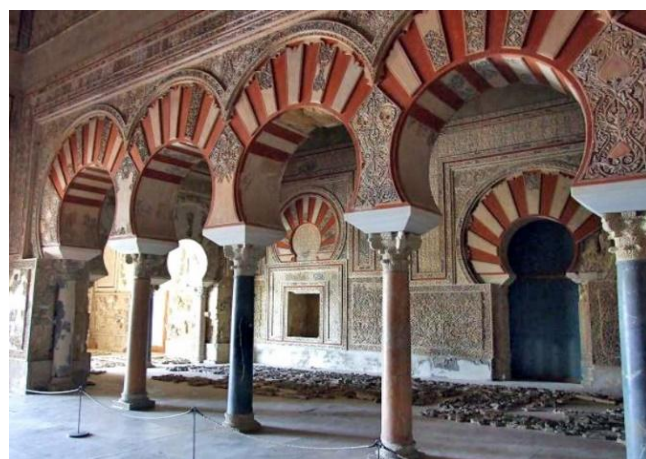
Its ruins were excavated starting in 1910.

Only about 10 percent of the 112 hectares have been excavated and restored, but this includes: the central area, with two caliphal residences, associated bath complexes, two aristocratic residences, service quarters, administrative buildings, barracks, an extraordinary court complex presided over by the reception hall, the great garden spaces and the congregational mosque.

A superb new museum on the edge of the site has been built low, with much of the space underground, to minimize disruption to the views of the landscape from the ruins.

On July 1, 2018, the site was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

If you are interested in the Islamic history of Southern Spain then this is a great site to visit.



In the afternoon we visit Antequera and the Dolmen Burial Chambers.

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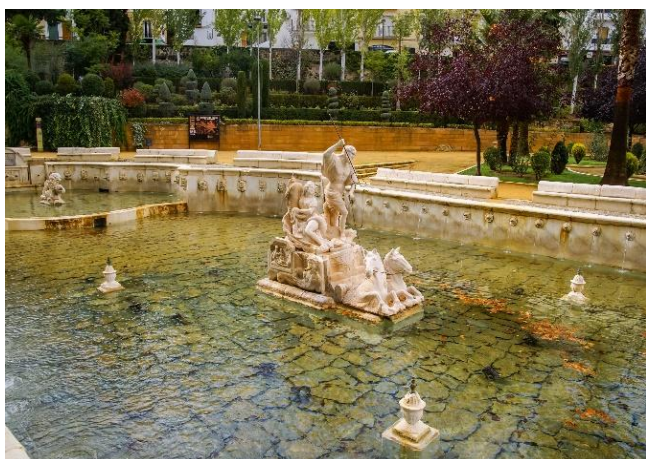
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Day 2: PRIEGO DE CÓRDOBA & ALCALÁ LA REAL After breakfast, we depart for the beautiful Subbética National Park and the Baroque town of Priego de Córdoba.



In addition to the pretty narrow, flower lined lanes, that radiate out from the large fortress, the town has the most splendid display of Baroque houses and churches, which were commissioned by wealthy merchants who made their fortunes in the trade of Olive Oil and Wines.

It is called 'City of the Water' because of the many springs and also 'Jewel of the Baroque Native of Córdoba' for its beautiful Baroque Architecture.

It is also often referred to as the lock and key to the Kingdom of Granada.

The oldest section of Priego is the 'Barrio de la Villa'.

It is bordered on one side by the town's natural fortress, a high cliff.

The alleys that wind through this part of the town are Moorish in style, decorated proudly with flower pots and religious icons.

Some homes even retain the ancient tunnel system that went from their cellars 'Bodegas' to the castle

The Olive Oil from Priego de Córdoba is highly prized winning many of the most prestigious prizes in international competitions.

'Venta del Barón' winning the title of best olive oil in the world for three consecutive years, 2014, 2015 and 2016

'Niceto Alcalá-Zamora y Torres' (6 July 1877 – 18 February 1949) was born in Priego.

A Spanish lawyer and politician, he served, briefly, as the first prime minister of the Second Spanish Republic, and then, from 1931 to 1936, as its President until the start of the Spanish Civil War.

His house is now a museum and well worth a visit, giving a good insight to the lead up to the divisive war.

We make the short journey to Alcalá la Real, where we take lunch and then visit the fascinating fortress of the Castillo de la Mota.



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After the Muslim conquest in 713, the town was renamed 'Qal'at' meaning 'fortified city'.

In the following centuries, Umayyad Caliph Al-Hakam II (971–976) had a series of watchtowers built to defend the city from the Viking/Norman incursions, today 12 of the 15 original towers remain.



Around the year 1000, the main of these towers, the 'Mota', became a true fortress, one of the mainstays of the Al-Andalus defence against the Christian Reconquista.

In the 12th century it was the domain of the Banu Said family, and became known as 'Qal'at Banu Said'.

After the dissolution of the caliphate, and its breakdown into a series of 'Taifas', small kingdoms, Qal'at was a stronghold of the Muslim Kingdom of Granada.

From here numerous raids were launched against Jaén and other frontier areas of the Kingdom of Castile.

The city was finally captured on 15 August 1341 by Alfonso XI of Castile, who conceded it the title of Real (Royal).

Alcalá remained under the jurisdiction of Jorquera until 1364, when King Peter I gave it the privilege of a Government Council, under the royal crown and the state of Villena.

It was elevated to the rank of city in 1432 by King John II.

The conquest of Granada in 1492 stripped Alcalá of its strategical importance.

The population started to move from the upper hill to the now safer slopes, thus gradually creating the current settlement.

The depopulation of the La Mota hill ended after the Peninsula War against Napoleon. Whose troops occupied the fortress from 1810 and 1812.

On retreat, the Napoleonic forces set fire to the upper city, resulting in partial destruction of the Abbey Church. The visit to the Fortress gives a great insight to the life and times living in a fortified City on the borders between two distinct cultures.

In the Abbey, they have a video projection on the walls detailing what happened in the Castle and how it was taken by stopping the water supply.



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Day 3: CARMONA After breakfast, we depart for the walled City of Carmona in the province of Seville.



Built on a ridge overlooking the central plain of Andalusia, to the north is the Sierra Morena, with the peak of San Cristobal to the south.

The City is known for its thriving trade in wine, olive oil, grain and cattle.

Carmona was originally a Tartessian-Turdetani settlement.

With the arrival of Phoenician traders from Tyre, in current day Lebanon, Carmona was transformed into a City, and centuries later became a Roman stronghold of Hispania Baetica. It was known as *Carmo* in the time of Julius Caesar (100–44 BC).

The city was made even more impregnable during the long occupation of the Moors, who erected walls around it, and built fountains and palaces within.

In 1247, Ferdinand III of Castile captured the town, and bestowed on it the Latin motto '*Sicut Lucifer lucet in Aurora, sic in Wandalia Carmona*' 'As the Morning-star shines in the Dawn, so shines Carmona in Andalusia'.

The town has a historic centre full of single storey houses, snaked by cobbled alleys and narrow passageways.

The Parador of Carmona is beautiful and here you can take coffee in a stunning setting.

Carmona has an ancient Carthaginian/Roman defensive gate, '*Puerta de Sevilla*', built around 220BC and incorporated centuries later into an Arab fortress.



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What's included

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

What's not included

- Any other meals, drinks, subsistence
- Any shows, performances
- Monument entrance fees
- Any flight, train, bus or other transportation
- Any expenditure not detailed above

Tour Extension Price	Per person	Single Supplements
'Historical' 3 days/3 nights	£690	£95
Room upgrades if available Premier Suite Junior Suite	£80 £50	
Antequera Parador	£795	£195



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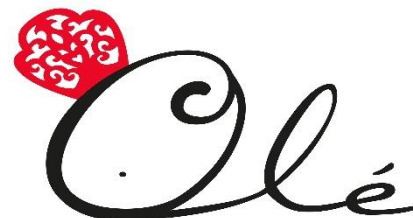


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Notes

- 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
- All bookings are subject to our terms and conditions, a copy of which are included in the booking form
- Prices are based on two guests sharing a room
- Prices are in £GBP



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