

# Springtime in Spain

13 Days / 12 nights: April 12–24, 2017

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Stay in 4-star hotels in the historical centers of the culturally rich cities of Madrid, Seville, and Barcelona and in exclusive Spanish paradors, restored medieval monasteries in Almagro and Granada
- Visit the sophisticated cities of Toledo and Córdoba and the cliff-perched town of Ronda
- Experience the pageantry of a traditional Spanish Easter while staying in a restored 15<sup>th</sup> c. monastery in the village of Almagro in La Mancha
- View masterpieces of the greatest Spanish artists and the architectural genius of Gaudí
- Photograph the windmills of Don Quixote fame along the country roads of La Mancha
- Enjoy flamenco music and dance at its finest in Seville
- Learn about the history of Spanish bullfighting at Spain's first professional bullring, now a museum
- Tour the magnificent palace of the ancient Moors, the Alhambra, and stay on the grounds of the Alhambra at the luxurious Parador
- Spend a day visiting the spectacular wine-growing region and countryside of Barcelona

## ITINERARY

- Day 1.** Arrive this morning in Madrid, Spain's grand and vibrant capital. After a short siesta at the hotel, join your tour director for a neighborhood stroll to Retiro Park and the local shops, museums, cafés and restaurants. In the evening, experience a tapas dinner walking tour to sample different local specialties from various restaurants.
- Hotel Paseo del Prado – 3 nights**
2. Today, enjoy a guided tour of Madrid, exploring the historical Old Quarter. Tour the ornate Royal Palace, one of Europe's most beautiful palaces, and the impressive Plaza Mayor, a vast square and stage where many historical events have occurred since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Enjoy lunch at your leisure at one of the many outdoor cafés in this historical plaza. (B)
  3. With your Madrid guide, visit one of the world's most impressive art museums, The Prado, home to masterpieces by Velasquez, Goya, and El Greco. Have the afternoon and evening at your leisure to relax, shop, dine, and explore. In the evening, view the spectacle of one of Madrid's passionate Good Friday processions.
  4. Depart Madrid for Toledo, the well preserved medieval city that is one of Spain's artistic highlights. With its rich mix of Roman, Jewish, Moorish, and Christian heritages, the entire city has been declared a national monument. Explore the highlights of Toledo and have lunch at your leisure. Then continue on to the town of Almagro in the region of La Mancha, stopping by the windmills that Don Quixote once battled. After viewing an evening Easter procession, sleep soundly in a beautifully restored medieval monastery in the village of Almagro.
- Parador de Almagro – 2 nights**
5. In the morning, explore the small town of Almagro, visiting the historical plaza with its traditional shops and medieval theater. Easter services are available throughout the day for those who wish to attend. At noon, view the colorful Easter pageant spectacle and enjoy a special Easter supper at the parador.

6. Travel to Córdoba this morning for a guided walking tour of this ancient capital of the Roman and Moorish empires. Tour the magnificent Mezquita, the Moorish mosque turned Catholic cathedral, and the charming historical Jewish Quarter. Dine and shop at your leisure before continuing on to Seville in the afternoon.  
**Hotel Amadeus– 2 nights**
7. Explore Seville on a guided walking tour of the Cathedral, the third largest in the world and the final resting place of Christopher Columbus, the Moorish-inspired Alcazar castle, and the Barrio Santa Cruz, the ancient Jewish neighborhood. Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure shopping, dining, or taking a carriage ride. Optional (extra cost): Enjoy a hands-on cooking class including olive oil tasting and dinner. You will cook and taste some of the most famous dishes of Andalusian Cuisine. In the evening, experience flamenco, a music and dance style unique to Spain, in an authentic setting.
8. This morning, travel south to visit the cliff-top town of Ronda located on the top of the spectacular Tajo Gorge. Tour the historic bullring and enjoy lunch at leisure in this charming town. Continue on to Granada, the fabled city located in the foothills of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada. Check in to the luxurious Parador de Granada with stunning views of the city of Granada.  
**Parador de Granada – 2 nights**
9. Enjoy a guided walking tour of the world-famous Alhambra, the exquisite Moorish palace surrounded by the beautiful Generalife Gardens. At your leisure in the afternoon, visit the artisan market in the city center and the Royal Chapel, final resting place of the Catholic monarchs, Isabelle and Ferdinand, before returning back to the hotel for dinner. Since the parador is located on the grounds of the Alhambra, take the opportunity to visit the palace at night, a magical experience.
10. Take a short morning flight from Granada to Barcelona, one of Europe’s most visually stunning cities. Check in at the hotel, relax, and have lunch at your leisure before embarking on a guided tour of Modernist Barcelona and Gaudí architecture. Antoni Gaudí is renowned as Spain’s most imaginative architect who designed buildings with ornate curves and gables. Enjoy dinner at your leisure at one of the highly recommended restaurants near the hotel.  
**Hotel Condes de Barcelona – 3 nights**
11. Today you will have a guided walking tour of the historical Gothic Quarter of Barcelona viewing Roman remains and Medieval buildings and the Picasso Museum, designed by Pablo Picasso himself. Stroll down La Rambla, the famed pedestrian marketplace with its colorful flower and bird markets. Shop for souvenirs and choose a restaurant to enjoy a leisurely lunch.
12. You will enjoy a full day excursion to the Penedés Wine Region, visiting a local winery for a tasting of the local food and wine.
13. Depart Barcelona for the return flight to Sacramento.

**SMALL GROUP TOUR includes:**

- Daily breakfast plus special dining experiences
- Accommodations in 4-star hotels and paradors
- All entrance fees for events listed in the itinerary
- Local guides in Madrid, Seville, Granada, and Barcelona
- Full time tour director
- In-country flight from Granada to Barcelona
- Transportation in modern vehicles with professional, experienced drivers
- Gratuities for guides and drivers

**\$4,350 pp (double)**  
(roundtrip airfare not included)