



*Classical Spain**

With a Taste of Wine

Savor the distinctive food, wine, art, history, and traditions of this elegant country
September 13-26, 2022

Day 1 Madrid

Arrive in Madrid, Spain's grand and vibrant capital. After collecting your luggage, meet your personal driver who will chauffeur you to the hotel. Take time to relax and refresh before joining your friends for a visit to Madrid's Royal Palace, one of the most elaborate palaces in Europe. Stroll through the royal neighborhood surrounding the palace and learn about Spain's infamous kings and queens. Enjoy a cup of coffee or a glass of wine at Café de Oriente, an elegant coffee house and restaurant frequented by Spain's royal family.

Hotel Paseo del Prado (3 nights) www.nh-hotels.com/hotel/nh-collection-madrid-paseo-del-prado

Day 2 Madrid

This morning, enjoy a guided walking tour of artistic and literary Madrid. With a local art expert, visit one of the world's most impressive art museums, The Prado, home to masterpieces by Velasquez, Goya, and El Greco. Wander the nearby streets of Madrid's literary neighborhood, Las Letras, where buildings and monuments keep alive the memory of writers such as Cervantes and Lope de Vega. End the tour at the magnificent Plaza Mayor, a vast square and stage where important historical events have taken place since the 17th century. Enjoy a leisurely lunch at one of the many outdoor cafés on the plaza. In the evening, meet your Spanish host to participate in a two centuries-old tradition, the tapas stroll, visiting several tapas bars, each with their own specialty. Tapas are small portions of different dishes that are shared and accompanied by the house wine and lively conversation. This is an opportunity to exchange views with your Spanish host to learn about topics of interest such as Spanish traditions, history, family life, politics, food, and wine. (BD)

Day 3 Madrid – Ribera del Duero – Madrid

Enjoy a full day excursion to the Ribera del Duero Wine Region and the famous *López Cristobal Winery*. The López family have dedicated their lives to constantly improving their vineyards and winemaking processes. The Bodega López Cristóbal vineyards have mostly Tempranillo grapes with some Merlot and Albillo grapes. The soil is unique in its mineral content and especially conducive to producing red wines. Enjoy an informal tapas lunch with your host, sampling the local delicatessen and wines and discussing the Ribera lifestyle. (BL)

Day 4 Madrid – Toledo – Almagro

Depart Madrid with your private driver for Toledo, the well-preserved medieval city that is one of Spain's artistic highlights and the country's spiritual capital. With its rich mix of Roman, Jewish, Visigothic, Moorish, and Christian heritages, the entire city has been declared a national monument. With a local expert guide, explore the highlights of Toledo: the magnificent Cathedral, the ancient Synagogue, and El Greco paintings. Have lunch at your leisure and then continue on to the town of Almagro in the region of La Mancha, stopping by the windmills that Don Quixote once battled. After a leisurely dinner in the village town square or at the parador's fine dining restaurant, sleep soundly in a lovingly restored medieval monastery. (B)

Parador de Almagro (2 nights) www.parador.es/en/paradores/parador-de-almagro

Day 5 Almagro – Valdepeñas – Almagro

This morning, visit Calatrava Castle, a cliff-top 13th century giant fortress that presides over the Manchegan plains and was the headquarters for the the Knights of Calatrava. Return to the monastery for a siesta before your late afternoon visit to La Bodega de las Estrellas, a traditional winery with thick clay walls, Arabic tiles, and a rock cave hewn out by hand. Learn about the history of wine growing in the Valdepeñas region where wine has been produced since Roman times. Learn about the unique traditions of this winery and how organic wine is processed. The evening is at your leisure at the parador or join the locals as they gather for the evening *paseo* on the plaza. (BD)

Day 6 Almagro – Córdoba -- Seville

Travel to Córdoba for a self-guided walking tour of this ancient capital of the Roman and Moorish empires. Visit the magnificent Mezquita, the Moorish mosque turned Catholic cathedral, and the charming historical Jewish Quarter. Enjoy lunch at your leisure before traveling to Seville and settling in to your charming hotel, once a Sevillian mansion. (B)

Hotel Casa del Poeta (3 nights) www.casadelpoeta.es/en

Day 7 Seville

Explore the historical center and neighborhoods of the sophisticated city of Seville by horse and carriage. Visit the Cathedral, the third largest in the world and the final resting place of Christopher Columbus and the Moorish-inspired Alcazar Castle, still used by the King of Spain today. Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure shopping, dining, or wandering the labyrinth of ancient streets near the hotel. In the evening, take a short walking tour of the Barrio Santa Cruz on the way to a flamenco show. Flamenco, with its Moorish, Jewish, and Romano (Gypsy) influences, is a music and dance form unique to Spain. (B)

Day 8 Seville – Jeréz -- Seville

This morning travel to Jeréz, a city renowned for its grand palaces, finely bred horses and fighting bulls, passionate flamenco, and sherry wine. At noon, you will attend a performance of the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art – an amazing equestrian ballet that brings horse and rider into perfect harmony with choreography, Spanish music, and 19th century costumes. Before the show, visit the gardens, palace, training grounds, and museum of the Royal Equestrian School. After the performance, enjoy a private visit to Díez Mérito Winery. This winery began two hundred years ago and the majestic building dates from 1730. During the visit, enjoy the patios and gardens where you can smell and sense one of the oldest wines in the world: the prestigious Fino Imperial. End the visit with a delicious tapas lunch of local products and tastings of sherry wines. (BL)

Day 9 Seville – Ronda – Granada

Travel south to visit the cliff-top town of Ronda, one of the White Hill Towns, located on the top of the spectacular Tajo Gorge. Take a self-guided tour of the old city and the historic bullring. In the early afternoon, enjoy a unique visit to *Los Descalzos Viejos* Winery and wine tasting with one of the owners of the winery, the Retamero Salesi Family. Set in an old convent founded in 1505, the buildings, vineyards, gardens, orchards, ponds, and fountains have been lovingly restored. Located in the Málaga wine region, some of the varieties produced here are Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Garnacha, and Merlot. After spending the afternoon at the winery, 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, an elegantly restored convent originally built by Queen Isabel after conquering the last stronghold of the Moors, located on the grounds of the Alhambra with stunning views of the mountains and the city of Granada. (BL)

Parador de Granada (2 nights) www.parador.es/en/paradores/parador-de-granada

Day 10 Granada

Enjoy a guided walking tour of the world-famous Alhambra, the exquisite Moorish palace surrounded by the beautiful Generalife Gardens. All the refinement, wealth and delicacy of Islamic art and architecture reached its height in the south of Spain in this unique complex. The Alhambra is a stunning fortress/city once alive with royal palaces and harems, homes and shops, gardens and orchards, and an elaborate water system that provided running water from the nearby mountains to the palace's bath houses, gardens, and fountains. In the afternoon, visit the Artisan Market in the city center and the Royal Chapel, final resting place of the Catholic monarchs, Isabel and Ferdinand. From there, you can walk or taxi up the hill to the Albaicin, the ancient Moorish neighborhood unchanged for hundreds of years. Have dinner at a traditional Carmen, an intimate restaurant with a patio and garden and a view across the river of the sun setting on the Alhambra. (BD)

Day 11 Granada – Barcelona

Wander the peaceful grounds and gardens of the Alhambra and Generalife one last time before taking an early afternoon flight to Barcelona, one of Europe's most visually stunning cities and renowned as the new culinary capital of Europe. In fact, this evening you and your friends will participate in a unique cultural and culinary event discovering the secrets of traditional Spanish tapas. Under the supervision of a professional chef, you will help prepare and then enjoy the regional specialties paired with select Spanish wines. (BD)

Hotel Condes de Barcelona (3 nights) www.condesdebarcelona.com

Day 12 Barcelona

This morning take a guided tour of Modernista and Gaudí architecture with a local art expert. Antoni Gaudí is renowned as Spain's most imaginative architect who designed buildings with ornate curves and gables. Experience La Sagrada Familia, an architecturally complex building full of nature and religious symbolism. The great genius dedicated more than 40 years to his work and after his death in 1926, the project continues according to Gaudí's original plans and drawings. Visit Parc Guell, Gaudí's planned whimsical, self-contained neighborhood now a stunning park above the city. After lunch, on a self-guided tour, wander the labyrinth streets of Barcelona's historical *Gothic Quarter* to view ancient Roman walls and medieval architecture. In this same neighborhood, you can visit the Picasso Museum. (B)

Day 13 Barcelona – Penedés – Barcelona

On your last full day in Spain, enjoy a full day excursion to the famed Penedés Wine Region where prestigious wines of exceptional quality are produced in this region of Catalonia. This is where another renowned drink is also produced – Cava, sparkling white wine. At the first winery, Can Rafols dels Cau, enjoy a freshly-prepared private lunch followed by a premium wine tasting. Continue on to a second winery rich in history and traditions for an additional tasting of premium wines and local foods. Later in the evening, join your friends on the terrace of the hotel for a panoramic view of nighttime Barcelona and a farewell toast to España. (BL)

Day 14 Barcelona – Home

Depart Barcelona for your return flight home. *Adiós a España. Hasta la proxima vez.*

SMALL GROUP DELUXE TOUR includes:

- Daily breakfast plus special dining experiences as stated in the itinerary
- Accommodations in 4-star+ distinctive hotels and paradors
- Wine tasting with food pairings at 5 regional wineries
- Wine & food tasting with a Madrid host and tapas-making class with a Barcelona chef
- All entrance fees for events as stated in the itinerary
- Local expert guides in Madrid, Toledo, Seville, Granada, and Barcelona
- Full time services of a bilingual tour escort
- In-country flight from Granada to Barcelona
- Luxury vehicle transfers with professional, experienced chauffeurs
- Gratuities for guides and drivers

\$5,350 per person / sharing a room

*Dates, Itinerary, Accommodations, and price are tentative at this time and subject to change.



“Accept what life offers you and try to drink from every cup. All wines should be tasted; some should only be sipped, but with others, drink the whole bottle.” ~ Paulo Coelho