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# **From Aqueducts to al-Andalus: 2000 Years in Spain**

11 days | April 2018





**Educational Tours**

# From Aqueducts to al-Andalus: 2000 Years in Spain

Included on tour



Round-trip flights on major carriers; full-time Tour Director; weShare, EF's personalized learning experience; hotels with private bathrooms; breakfast and upgraded dinner daily

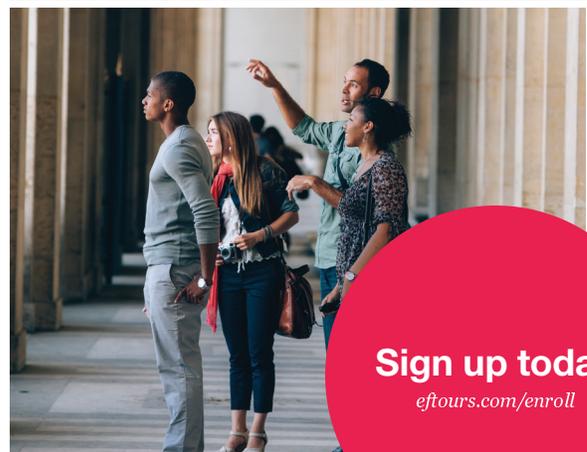
**Sightseeing:** Barcelona; Sagrada Familia; El Escorial and Segovia; Seville; Córdoba; Granada

**Entrances:** Tarragona archaeological site; Park Guell; Sagrada Familia; Historia de la Ciudad Museum; Reina Sofia; Prado Museum; Cathedral, Segovia; Alcázar, Segovia; El Escorial Palace; Museum of Roman Art, Merida; Merida Roman sites; Italica; Cathedral, Seville; Alcazar, Seville; Bullring Seville; Mezquita, Cordoba; Alhambra, Granada

**Overnight stays:**

- Barcelona\* (2)
- Madrid\* (3)
- Merida (1)
- Seville (1)
- Granada\* (2)

\*Denotes Central Location



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## Your itinerary

### Day 1: Fly to Spain

Board your overnight flight to Barcelona!

### Day 2: Barcelona

#### Arrive in Barcelona

Arrive in Barcelona, Spain's second-largest city. As the capital of fiercely nationalistic Cataluña, Barcelona was the hotbed of resistance under the rule of General Franco and celebrates its unique identity through its language, its increasingly influential government, and on the global stage as host to the unforgettable 1992 Olympic Games.

#### Excursion to Tarragona

Journey to the southernmost province in Catalonia. Here you will find not just golden sandy beaches and clear waters, but also some of the most beautiful monuments of Iberian civilization.

#### Walking tour of Barcelona

Absorb the colorful and dynamic atmosphere of Barcelona during your walking tour down Las Ramblas; a mile-long tree-lined pedestrian boulevard which runs from the pulsating Plaza de Catalunya down to the towering monument of Christopher Columbus pointing out to sea. Flower stalls, mime artists, puppeteers, diners and waiters all vie for your attention. You will also see the thrice-burned-down Gran Teatro de Liceu, the nostalgic Café de l'Opera, and still have chance to savor the splendid La Boqueria food market.

### Day 3: Barcelona

#### Guided sightseeing of Barcelona

Stroll the narrow lanes of the 14th-century Barrio Gótico, the oldest surviving part of the city. Continue on to Gaudí's masterpiece, the fantasyland of Park Guell, complete with a bright mosaic lizard fountain and the longest bench in the world. Then enjoy a marvelous harbor view from atop Montjuïc Hill, where much of the 1992 Olympics took place.

#### Guided Sightseeing of the Sagrada Familia

Enter into this amazing skeleton of a cathedral. Gaudí began this church in 1882, and it remains unfinished. Construction still continues and completion is slated for the mid-21st century, yet no one knows if the finished product will be what Gaudí intended. Take your time to explore this bizarre masterpiece by wandering around the base, marveling at the enormous statues of saints or climbing one of the many towers for a spectacular view of the city.

#### Visit the Historia de la Ciudad Museum

Get to know the history of Barcelona through objects from the past. So, beneath Plaza del Rei, Calle Comtes, Plaza de Sant Lu, the Marès Museum and part of the Gothic cathedral, you can visit archaeological sites with important remains that show the origins of the city known as Colonia Iulia Augusta Faventia Paterna Barcino, founded by the Romans 2,000 years ago.

### Day 4: Barcelona | Madrid

#### Transfer via AVE train to Madrid

Board Spain's high-speed train, dubbed the AVE-Alta Velocidad Española. The first AVE train was inaugurated in 1992 with the completion of the Madrid-Sevilla line. The train will reach a maximum speed of more than 180 miles per hour before arriving in Madrid, your destination for the evening.

#### Visit the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Visit the "MOMA" of Madrid. See the greatest collection of 20th-century art in Spain, including Picasso's famous *Guernica* (1937), in a building that was once designated "the ugliest building in Spain" by architect Oriol Bahigas.

### Day 5: Madrid

#### Visit the Prado Museum

Explore the Museo del Prado which houses an astonishing 3,000 paintings collected by Spanish royalty. This massive building is constantly expanding in order to accommodate its impressive catalogue of Velazquez and Goya. It also boasts fine pieces by El Greco, Botticelli and many Flemish artists.

#### Walking tour of Madrid

Meet at the Puerta del Sol for your walking tour of Madrid. Here Madrileños once battled Napoleon. Then, walk through one of the nine arched gateways leading to the Plaza Mayor, the Renaissance hub of the city. This square has witnessed events ranging from bullfights to public festivals as well as the infamous autos de fe (procession of those condemned as heretics during the Spanish Inquisition). See the restaurant immortalized by Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises*.

### Day 6: Madrid

#### Guided excursion to El Escorial and Segovia

Journey into the Castilian countryside. First, stop in the beautiful medieval city of Segovia, where your guided walking tour is highlighted by a visit to the 14th-century Alcazar fortress. Enjoy free time before proceeding to legendary El Escorial, "the eighth wonder of the world," where you will tour the city's enormous Renaissance Palace

### Day 7: Madrid | Merida

#### Travel to Merida

Once capital of the formerly unified kingdom of Spain and Portugal, strategically located Merida was founded by the theater-loving Romans in 25 B.C. Wandering around the backstage of the Roman theater and through the rooms of the amphitheater where wild animals were once held, the ruins evoke a time when gladiators publicly fought to the death before a crowd of 15,000.

#### Visit the Roman sites of Merida

First you will see the Roman Theater (Teatro Romano) is the jewel of Merida's Roman heritage. It was built by Agrippa in 18 B.C. 6000 people could be seated in the theater. In June and July plays are staged there. Next see the Aqueducts. There are over 5 miles of aqueduct running through Merida, although there isn't a section as complete as the one at Segovia. The Acueducto de los Milagros on the northwest side of town is the most complete, and feeds two nearby man-made lakes. You will also have a chance to marvel at the Roman Bridge. Consisting of 64 Granite arches, the longest in Roman Spain, it's now a footbridge over the Guadiana River. The modern bridge you see behind was used to take the load off the ancient one; it wasn't until 1993 that the Roman Bridge was decommissioned as the main entrance into town for vehicle traffic. Right smack in the center of town is a strange looking Roman ruin consisting of several columns Temple of Diana. In the 17th century a nobleman built a rather large residence inside the columns, using four of them in the construction of the house itself. What a fence, these columns!

#### Visit the Museum of Roman Art

The museum, opened in 1986, provides a beautiful display of statuary and other antiquities used by the Romans. It's located in front of the entrance to the theater and amphitheater.

### Day 8: Merida | Seville

#### Travel via Itálica to Seville

Visit the ancient Roman city of Itálica, founded in 206 B.C and later birthplace of Roman emperors Trajan and Hadrian; it is home to one of the most magnificent ruined amphitheaters remaining from the Empire.

### Guided sightseeing of Seville

Hispalis, as Seville was called in Roman times, rests on the banks of the Río Guadalquivir and is Spain's only river port. See the Old Tobacco Factory, setting of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, and pass the Plaza de Toros, one of Spain's preeminent bullrings. Then visit Maria Luisa Park to view the beautiful mosaics of Plaza de España, built for the 1929 Ibero-American Fair. Next, walk through the geranium-strewn alleys of the Barrio de Santa Cruz, an aesthetic treat you'll always remember. As you wind your way through this historic Jewish Quarter, notice the whitewashed houses with sand-colored trim-this is typical of Sevillian-style architecture. Top off your tour with a guided visit to the Seville Cathedral, the world's third largest church, and the Moorish Alcázar. Built for Pedro the Cruel in the 14th century, the Alcázar is one of the purest examples of mudéjar architecture in the world.

### Visit to the Bull Ring in Seville

Enter one of the most celebrated bullrings in Spain. The Plaza de Toros de Maestranza took almost one hundred years to build, and countless spectators have witnessed bullfights within its walls since the middle of the 18th century. The golden sand of the ruedo, (the main space where the matador faces the bull), is surrounded by the traditional red walls and rising rows of hard stone benches. Enter the ring, and it's easy to imagine yourself in the shoes of a world-class matador, performing in front of a crowd of cheering spectators all anxiously awaiting your confrontation with the charging bull!

### Day 9: Seville | Granada

#### Transfer via guided sightseeing of Cordoba to Granada

Transfer to provincial Córdoba, once the heart of intellectual and cultural Europe and sacred capital of Moorish Spain. See the Patio de los Naranjos and visit the 8th-century Mezquita, formerly the largest mosque west of Mecca. As you walk past the Mezquita's 850 candy-cane columns, recall the days when Córdoba was one of the world's great centers of learning. At its height, Córdoba was home to 700 mosques, 900 public baths, and 70 libraries.

#### Arrive in Granada

Journey to Granada, which was once the capital of Moorish Andalucía. It is now an architectural masterpiece and thriving university city. Strategically located between the foothills of the imposing, snowy-peaked Sierra Nevada and the beautiful Mediterranean coast, Granada boasts an eclectic cuisine of sweet Moorish desserts. It also boasts one of Europe's most romantic buildings, the exquisite Arabian palace of the Alhambra.

### Day 10: Granada

#### Guided sightseeing of the Alhambra

Recall both *The Arabian Nights* and the works of Washington Irving as you tour Spain's most celebrated building: Granada's 14th-century Alhambra. See the exotic mosaics and richly ornamented courtyards of the country's last Moorish stronghold. Here Christopher Columbus discussed with the king his plans for sailing to India. Then walk in the footsteps of sultans as you tour the Generalife- a 14th-century palace surrounded by magnificent rose gardens- where they often spent their summers. *(Please note: Because of the Alhambra's extreme popularity, guided visits of the interior cannot be guaranteed during peak seasons.)*

#### Visit the Cathedral

Continue getting to know the history of Granada with its notable sights, including the Cathedral that was once a mosque and the Royal Chapel which houses the tombs of Isabella and Ferdinand as well as other members of the royal family.

### Day 11: Return home

#### Transfer to the airport for your return flight

Your tour director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

Itinerary is subject to change

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions at [www.eftours.com/bc](http://www.eftours.com/bc).

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–**CHARLOTTE, PARENT**

