

FEAT: September 23 to 11 October 2014

Day 1 – Arrival in Madrid (Danny Mathias is our Spanish guide). Your tour manager will be meeting you at the airport and welcoming you to the capital of Spain, Madrid. We take our transfer to our well-located Hotel Ganivet***. In the evening we will be using a local restaurant and having a “tapas” meal, our first introduction to Spanish cuisine.

Day 2 – The old quarter of Madrid and the Prado Museum
After enough time for a leisurely breakfast, today we take a guided tour on foot of the centre of Madrid to include La Latina quarter, Tirso de Molina Square, Puerta del Sol and the spectacular Plaza Mayor. We will have time for a light lunch in the quaint Plaza Santa Ana before heading down Calle Huertas towards el Museo del Prado (entrance included with guide).

Day 3 – Toledo, the city of the three cultures
After breakfast we check out of our hotel and head for Toledo. This city is beautifully situated on the banks of the longest river on the Iberian Peninsula, the Tagus. In the Middle Ages Toledo became the symbol of religious tolerance where followers of the 3 main religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity – all coexisted peacefully. We take a walk together in the historic centre of the city where our guide will explain how three faiths coexisted.
Overnight and dinner at our hotel in Granada (lunch on your own).

Day 4 – Granada, the last stronghold of the Moors
Today we will have a comprehensive visit of Granada, the last stronghold of the Moors before they were finally lost their dominance in Spain in 1492. We will be taking a walking tour around the city centre, where we can see highlights such as Spain’s first Renaissance cathedral and the Capilla Real with the sepulchre of Ferdinand and Isabella, the legendary catholic king and queen who sponsored Christopher Columbus’ voyages to America.
We have some free time for lunch in the centre of the city, for example in Calle Navas, well known for its many tapas-bars.

After lunch we go up to the Alhambra, where a local guide will show us the unique architectural treasures of this magnificent fortress and also the 'Generalife', the spectacularly situated summer palace with its beautiful fountains and gardens. Dinner and Overnight in Granada.

Day 5 – Córdoba, capital of the caliphs

After breakfast, our drive from Granada to Córdoba takes us through the beautiful Andalusian landscape with its rolling hills covered with parallel lines of olive trees. Once we reach this beautiful city on the banks of the Guadalquivir river, we check into our hotel and head into town for lunch (not included). After lunch, our local guide will be taking us to the Jewish quarter and to the spectacular Mosque of Córdoba. This building is unique in the world as it was originally a mosque but a cathedral was built into it, making it an unmissable visit. Dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in Cordoba

Day 6 – Córdoba, el Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos

Today we strongly recommend a visit to these beautiful fortified gardens, taken over by the Christians in the 14th century, and with a history that dates back to the times of the Romans. It is well located within the city and a very pleasant visit. In the afternoon, your guide will suggest and arrange a visit to nearby Moorish ruins of the Medina Azahara Palace which are beautifully placed at the foot of the mountain range, Sierra Morena, half-an-hour's drive from Córdoba. The palace was built in the 10th century as seat of the government of Abd al Rahmann III, who had just named himself caliph and separated from Damascus. Today Medina Azahara is in ruins, but you still feel the breath of history and the existence of enormous wealth of gold, silver and precious stones, that were in the palace at that time. Medina Azahara is named after the sultan's favourite wife and it minted its own coins. (no entrances today are included) Dinner at a local restaurant in Córdoba.

Overnight in Córdoba.

Day 7 – Sevilla, the most "Spanish" of Spanish cities

After breakfast in Córdoba, our last stretch on the road takes us from Córdoba to Sevilla past the typical towns of Ecija and

Carmona.

As the saying goes, Sevilla has a special "colour". This charming city on the banks of the Guadalquivir, the longest in Andalusia, is really spectacular and spring is the best time to visit it. Our hotel is well located in the city centre and after checking in and free time for lunch, we will be taking a guided tour of the old Jewish quarter, "the barrio de Santa Cruz" where our guide will be pointing out the main sights and informing us about the local history and traditions. In the evening we will be having a typical dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight in Sevilla.

Day 8 – Sevilla: art, culture and history

Today we are going to take a leisurely stroll through the streets of Seville, viewing Seville's famous 19th C. bullring situated by the promenade alongside the Guadalquivir River. This bullring is one of the most traditional and impressive in the world and it was here that the legendary Carmen was killed by her frustrated lover. Bullfighting is losing popularity in many arenas in Spain but the "plaza de toros" in Seville draws full houses every Sunday during the bullfighting season. We finally reach the Museo de Bellas Artes (Fine Art Museum) in Seville. It is set in a fine building that used to house a convent and has several typical Andalusian patios. A collection consists mainly of 17th C. paintings by Spanish artists: this was known as the Golden Age of Spanish art. Murillo, who was born and lived most of his life in Seville, is well represented, but there are many more works of art, both paintings and sculptures (not included).

After an included "tapas" lunch, we walk to the centre of the city where we strongly recommend a visit to the Cathedral, the largest Gothic building in the world and the Reales Alcazares, with its Moorish palaces & beautiful gardens. After this, for our last evening together, we will be going to one of the local "tablaos" to see the most popular of Andalusian folklore: flamenco (included). This sensual and passionate dance, a combination of gipsy, eastern and traditional Andalusian dance is a must here in Seville, and is enjoyed by all.

Overnight in Sevilla

Day 9 - Departure from Seville to Segovia via Madrid

After breakfast, our time together comes to an end as you head further north in Spain. Travel to Madrid by AVE or by coach (tbc). We will arrive in Madrid for departure to Avila and spend the evening. The journey north to Camino along the French Way begins on Day 12. Dinner and time to explore

Day 10- Avila & Segovia and Leon

We will begin with breakfast and take time to survey the ancient Roman aqueduct that was in use through the 1950s and into the 1960s. Our visit concludes with the Alcazar of Segovia. The Alcazar began as a Moorish fort and blossomed into this magnificent castle. We will take off for an afternoon in Avila, which is the best representation of a walled city in Western Europe. There are eighteen tours surrounding the city. Avila was the home of St. Teresa and we will visit the convent started under her direction. The quaint streets make this a marvelous walking city. We depart Avila to Leon

Day 11 - Guided tour of Leon in the morning, stop for lunch in Molinaseca (beautiful place on the Camino). Next stop is O Cebreiro, which is a very important place on the Camino. Continue to Sarria and overnight there before our Camino. Our walk for the Camino continues with Danny Mathias. The details below are only a skeletal depiction of what will find along the way to Santiago.

Day 12 begin the camino Sarria to Portomarin

Sarria is on the French Way in Galicia and it is region a popular starting point for the Camino and many pilgrims choose Sarria because the distance from this point to Santiago allows them to cover the necessary kilometers to get the Compostela. Sarria represents the point of entry to the beautiful landscapes on the oriental side of Galicia

Day 13 Portomarin to Palas de Reis

The town of Portomarin was constructed and built next to a Roman bridge over the Minho River and rebuilt in the Middle Ages. There are beautiful views of the Miño Valley and the

Embalse de Belesar as you walk this stretch of The Camino

Day 14 Palas de Reis to Arzua

The history of Palas de Rey is linked to military culture, still retaining many archaeological remains. According to tradition, the city was named "pallatium recorded" where the palace of an early Visigoth king lived. The mark on the religious architecture, highlighting the church of Vilar de Donas is one of the main references in Galician Romanesque building.

Day 15 Arzua to Amenal

Arzua possesses many ancient traces of the past: paleolithic, bronze age, Roman and the Middle Ages. In the latter period, it developed the rich history that makes it a jewel along the route to Santiago.

Day 16 Amenal to Santiago

The final leg of the journey takes us through the countryside as we will wide down the journey into Santiago. Our guide, Danny Mathias, will provide us with the stories of Amenal and much more through the final day walking along the French Way into Santiago

Day 17 Santiago and Finisterre

We arrive to our destination. The trip is partially built around this arrival and we will have much to share about our first trip into Santiago and then our journey, by bus, to Finisterre.

Day 18 Return to U.S

The program for Madrid, Andalusia, The Camino is brought to you by Monique and Rick Moniz. Danny Mathias is our Spanish guide. Your program includes two meals per day, hotels, guided tours, transportation entrance fees -unless otherwise noted-transporting of baggage along the Camino daily, airport shuttle, etc. The cost is \$3195 for the entire program (participants arrange their own airfare).