



Iberian Inspiration 2025

Sevillian sun-ripened tomato gazpacho, crispy *jamón Ibérico* croquettes, flaky Portuguese *pastel de natas*... Take your tastebuds on a tantalising journey as we trace the scenic back roads of Spain and Portugal! Not just a culinary adventure, our path will reveal a heady mix of historical riches – from the Alhambra's kaleidoscope mosaics to the eye-catching Islamic arches of Córdoba's Mezquita. Are you ready to immerse yourself in the captivating stories and scrumptious local dishes of ancient Iberia?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Quatro Puerta del Sol @ 18:00

C. de Sevilla, 4, Madrid, 28014

Fado Museum for Hotel Turim Terreiro do Paço @ 15:00

Lisbon

Worth noting

On Day 6, we'll enjoy a guided tour of the spectacular Alhambra. As tickets sell out quickly, we'll need your full passport details – including your middle name – at least 6 months before your tour departs to get you booked in.

Due to last-minute closures and private events, the sections of the Alhambra you visit may differ depending on your departure date.



Expertly crafted small-group tours



Tour highlights

- Fully immerse yourself in the historic charm of Córdoba, Granada, Úbeda, Estremoz and Ronda with stays in atmospheric old town hotels
- Close your eyes as you savour succulent *jamón ibérico* at a traditional farm in Sierra de Aracena
- Tap your toes and clap your hands during a fiery flamenco show in Seville
- Be blown away by the exquisite beauty of the Córdoba Mezquita – a UNESCO-protected mosque

More inclusions

- 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
- 11 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

Spain - EUR
Portugal - EUR



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Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.



Your itinerary

Day 1

Did you know that Madrid's ancient name was Ursaria – meaning 'land of the bears'? While you won't find any of these fearsome creatures roaming its streets today, you will be greeted with a glittering array of treasure-filled art galleries, elegant shopping arcades and grand royal palaces.

Meet your small group of fellow explorers in the city's vibrant heart where we'll settle down for our very first meal together. Local specialties you might spot on the menu? Crispy *patatas bravas*, simple but tasty *tortilla* and juicy *campo real* green olives tossed in fragrant herbs. *Buen provecho!*

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Cuatro Puerta	Dinner
Del Sol (or similar)	

Day 2 | Toledo

After a filling Spanish breakfast and a steaming mug of *café con leche*, we'll swap the country's current capital for its ancient one as we venture an hour south to Toledo. Perched above the serene Rio Tajo, it's often called the 'city of three cultures' – and we'll discover why during a guided walking tour with our history-loving Tour Leader.

Prepare to get lost in centuries of beguiling tales as we stroll beneath the horse-shoe arches of the Mosque of Cristo de Luz and gaze up at the gilded scallop detailing on the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca's vaulted ceiling. You'll also have a chance to roam the storied galleries of the 15th-century Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, which was founded by Spain's most iconic royal duo: King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile.

The afternoon is yours to delve even deeper into this diverse city. If you have a sweet tooth, don't forget to seek out some intricately shaped marzipan. It's a Toledo speciality that's been crafted by local artisans for centuries. And when you're ready for dinner, ask your Tour Leader for the best places to try traditional Castilian delicacies like herby roasted partridge, crispy *cuchifrito* (deep fried pork) and paprika-spiced *sopa de ajo* (garlic soup).

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Carlos V (or similar)	Breakfast



Day 3 | Córdoba

We'll be greeted by the waving arms of traditional windmills today as we weave our way through the golden-hued valleys of the lush La Mancha plateau. We'll pause in the sleepy town of Puerto Lápice that's best known as the setting of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* adventures. They'll be time to uncover more about the suave fictional gentleman at the dedicated museum. Or you could seek out a local cafe to try a slice of *tarta de flor*: a moreish milk tart featuring layers of ruffled, flaky pastry.

Then, it's onwards to Valdepeñas where we'll savour the fruits of this fertile region at a local bodega. As well as sipping three sumptuous natural wines, we'll tuck into a tasty homecooked lunch. You'll also have a chance to purchase some wine in the bodega's shop; the perfect souvenir to remind you of the day's culinary adventures.

Afterwards, our path will lead us to Córdoba: a city of jaw-dropping Moorish architecture, exhilarating equestrian events and fantastical fiestas. Spend the last few hours before dusk getting lost in its UNESCO World Heritage Old Town or enjoying a little downtime by the pool in your hotel's sun-dappled courtyard. Eager to experience more of Córdoba's local culture? Venture to the city's 16th-century Royal Stables to watch its evening showcase that merges expert horsemanship with a touch of flamenco. ¡Olé!

Included today

● Accommodation

Las Casas de la
Judería de Córdoba
(or similar)

● Meals

Breakfast
Lunch



Day 4

Prepare to step back in time to the days of Islamic Iberia during this morning's locally guided tour around Córdoba Old Town. The highlight will be the spectacular UNESCO-protected Mezquita where we'll marvel at the former mosque's mishmash of architectural styles – walking beneath orange and white striped Islamic arches and across glass floors which reveal the remains of ancient Roman mosaics.

We'll follow this up with a stroll around Córdoba's Jewish Quarter. Wander past the bronze Maimónides Monument – dedicated to a famed medieval philosopher – and revel in the vibrant atmosphere of the artisan souk (known locally as El Zoco). Nestled in a small courtyard around the corner from the city's 14th-century Synagogue, it's the perfect spot to pick up local keepsakes like intricate silver filigree jewellery and hand-carved wooden puppets.

Then, you'll have another afternoon free to slow down and soak up Córdoba's treasures. Tuck into some sugar-dusted churros at a cafe in Plaza del la Corredera: the site of the city's bullring in the 16th century. Or settle down at a bodega to sip on a fifty-fifty – a heady local cocktail made with equal parts white wine and sweet sherry. *Delicioso!*

Included today

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| ● Accommodation | ● Meals |
| Las Casas de la
Judería de Córdoba
(or similar) | Breakfast |



Day 5 | Granada

As we wave goodbye to Córdoba and dive deeper into the Andalusian countryside, you'll notice one thing dotted across the landscapes: olive trees!

We'll be sampling some authentic Spanish olive oil in Úbeda: a World Heritage-listed town bursting with elegant Renaissance palaces. Take a moment to admire the blue and white tiled tower of the Hospital de Santiago before we step inside the town's Centro de Interpretación Olivar y Aceite. This museum is entirely dedicated to the cultivation of extra virgin olive oil. As well as enjoying a masterclass in olive harvesting with a local expert, we'll savour the subtle differences between several oils during a tasting session.

If that whets your appetite, they'll be time to grab lunch before we continue our journey. Seek out *ochíos con morcilla*: a regional speciality featuring soft, paprika spiced bread rolls filled with savoury black pudding. Then, intriguing tales of revolution and the Reconquista await us in Granada – another of Spain's UNESCO World Heritage treasures. Here, we'll be snoozing like royalty in a former palace at its very heart. *Dulces sueños...*

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Sercotel Palacio de los Gamboa (or similar)	Breakfast



Day 6

Pomegranates are traditionally symbols of success and abundance – so it's no surprise that Granada was named after this sweet, ruby-red fruit. The city has stood proudly at the foot of the soaring Sierra Nevada mountains for over 2,000 years, with its tapestry of incredible monuments a testament to its immense history.

No visit would be complete without stepping foot in the ancient walled Alhambra fortress: one of the world's best examples of Islamic architecture. The corridors of this intricately decorated complex whisper of enthralling stories – from the expulsion of the Moors in the late 15th-century to the bombardment of its towers by the French during the Napoleonic Wars. We'll enjoy a guided tour around a few sections, remembering to pause and feast our eyes on the Alhambra's sweeping outlook across Granada's Moorish old town.

Then, you'll have the rest of the day to weave your own path through Granada's historical streets. Get lost in Albayzin's tangled web of lanes, admire the sunlight shining through the stained-glass windows of Granada Cathedral or clap your hands along to some flamenco at a cave bar in Sacromonte.

There's no better way to complete a day in Granada than settling down in a cosy local tapas bar. It's still common for drinks to be served with complimentary tapas, too. A glass of full-bodied Tempranillo paired with fried anchovies or potatoes dipped in garlicky aioli? Yes, please!

Included today

● Accommodation

Sercotel Palacio de los Gamboa (or similar)

● Meals

Breakfast



Day 7 | Ronda

Ernest Hemingway once described Ronda as ‘a romantic set’ – and we’ll find out just why as we meander our way south to its dramatic location in the Sierra de las Nieves National Park. Your passionate Tour Leader will take you on an orientation through its cobbled streets and bodega-lined squares, uncovering thrilling tales of bullfights and bandits as we go. Our stroll will end at Puente Nuevo: the largest of Ronda’s three bridges which hangs over the narrow, craggy chasm of the El Tajo Gorge.

Then, the afternoon’s activities are up to you. Seek out Plaza Duquesa de Parcent in the heart of the Old Town and guess how many architectural styles have influenced the exquisite yet eclectic Iglesia de Santa María la Mayor. Or amble beneath the gently swaying trees of Alameda del Tajo park, pausing at its clifftop gazebo to soak up jaw-dropping vistas of the surrounding hills and vineyards.

As golden hour approaches, why not regroup with your fellow travellers for a glass of delicious wine at the Hotel Catalonia’s rooftop bar? Clink your glasses as the sun sets over nearby Plaza de Toros de Ronda – casting fantastical shadows from the bullring’s arches and pillars. Then, it’ll be time for a delicious group dinner at a local restaurant.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Maestranza	Breakfast
(or similar)	Dinner



Day 8 | Seville

A city known for fiery flamenco and juicy oranges is on our agenda today. But before we glide into stunning Seville, we'll leisurely explore the scenic back roads of Andalusia – stopping off at several wonderful, white-washed towns in Cadiz province along the way.

Grazalema is up first – and its lofty location among the limestone peaks of the Sierra del Endrinal is truly breathtaking. Spend an hour or so wandering the village's cobbled streets that explode with colourful potted plants throughout the spring and summer.

Next, we'll feast our eyes on more hilltop vistas during a brief photo stop at the equally as enchanting Arcos de la Frontera. As lunchtime approaches, we'll roll into Jerez – specifically the Bodegas Fernandez GAO where an indulgent sherry tasting and tapas feast awaits. Flutter your eyelids closed as you relish the aromatic notes of three sweet wines...

If you're feeling merry and content, why not settle down for a *siesta* in the minicoach? When you wake up, we'll be in Seville where our evening plans include a traditional flamenco show at the prestigious Museo del Baile Flamenco. Hope you've practised your claps and heel taps!

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Las Casas de la	Breakfast
Judería (or similar)	Lunch

Day 9

Two words to sum up Seville? Charismatic and colourful. This ancient city has stood proudly on the banks of the tumbling River Guadalquivir for over 2,000 years, and it shimmers with architectural gems. We'll delve into one of its most famous – the UNESCO World Heritage Alcázar of Seville – on a locally-guided tour.

Then, the rest of the day is free to get lost in local Sevillian life. Centuries of history make up the rich tapestry of this city and you could easily spend several hours roaming rugged Roman ruins, hunting down Moorish mosaics or ambling leisurely around the sweeping, classical-era Plaza de España. Alternatively, embrace the contemporary at the Setas de Sevilla: a series of space-age, mushroom-like structures housing the city's archaeological museum and a sprawling marketplace.

And, finally, don't forget to end your explorations with a refreshing glass of quintessential orange wine at one of the abundant bars in the atmospheric Santa Cruz neighbourhood.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Las Casas de la	Breakfast
Judería (or similar)	



Day 10 | Sierra De Aracena

Today, we'll swap the bustling streets of Seville for the tranquillity of the Sierra de Aracena – an unspoilt mountain range peppered with castles, quaint villages and sheep-filled pastures. It's part of a vast national park crisscrossed with scenic, snaking roads which we'll effortlessly traverse in our minicoach.

As well as soaking up all the spectacular scenery out of your window, we'll stop off at a local pig farm to indulge in an iconic Iberian treat: *jamón ibérico*. Watch the resident hogs' curly tails twirl as they run around happily in the surrounding *dehesa* (pastures) before paying a visit to the farm's cellars where the cured meat is dried. Then, it'll be time for the main event: a delectable tasting of several authentic *jamón* varieties paired with a duo of scrumptious local cheeses.

With our camera rolls and bellies full, we'll move onto our next hotel in the Sierra de Aracena countryside for an evening of leisure.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Convento	Breakfast
Aracena (or similar)	

Day 11 | Estremoz

Ready to explore the Portuguese side of Iberia? After a lazy morning at our hotel, we'll get comfy in our luxury minicoach and continue our journey west – pausing for a quick *café con leche* just before the border in Rosal de le Frontera.

Then, say *adiós!* to Spain as we enter Portugal's Alentejo region – gaining an hour of time back in the process. That's a whole extra hour to enjoy the delights of Monsaraz; an impeccably preserved medieval village. You'll wander its winding streets during an orientation tour with your Tour Leader. Keep your eyes peeled for its four historic *portas* (gates) and feel the sun kiss your face as you gaze out over the Alqueva Dam that sprawls for miles across the wild countryside.

After getting your first taste of Portuguese food for lunch (ask your Tour Leader for their favourite recommendations), we'll continue to Estremoz. Known as the 'White City' for its magnificent white marble architecture, you'll have the remainder of the afternoon to explore its 13th-century Old Town before we reconvene for our farewell dinner. Tuck into some seasonal Alentejo delicacies and raise a toast to our Iberian adventure. *Saúde!*

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Pousada Castelo de	Breakfast
Estremoz (or similar)	Dinner



Day 12 | Lisbon

After one last tasty breakfast together, we'll venture further into the Alentejo region – stopping off in the elegant city of Évora. The Roman goddess of nature will be the star of our orientation walk as we amble past the town's main attraction: the Templo de Diana.

You'll also have the chance to pick up a map of the area at the tourist information office; the perfect keepsake from our mini jaunt around Portugal! Then, tuck into a bowl of local *sopas de pão* – an aromatic soup topped with chunks of bread – before we hit the road for Lisbon.

We'll reach the undulating hills and tram-lined streets of the capital mid-afternoon and sadly say our goodbyes. But while the sun may have set on our Iberian journey – there's plenty more adventures to be had in this captivating corner of Europe... Why not continue your story by hopping on our Discover Portugal tour next?

Included today

- **Meals**
Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Sun hat | ● Long-sleeved tops | ● Light jacket |
| ● Sunglasses | ● Short-sleeved tops | ● Waterproof jacket |
| ● Sleepwear | ● Shorts/skirts | ● Trousers |
| ● Warm jacket | ● Socks | ● Swimwear |
| ● Underwear | ● Smart casual evening wear | ● Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| ● Sun hat | ● Long-sleeved tops | ● Light jacket |
| ● Sunglasses | ● Short-sleeved tops | ● Waterproof jacket |
| ● Sleepwear | ● Shorts/skirts | ● Trousers |
| ● Warm jacket | ● Socks | |



How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

Expertly crafted small-group tours



FAQs

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant former monasteries, grand town centre hotels and even the odd palace! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

What's the weather like?

The weather in Spain and Portugal varies depending on the time of year. Generally, summers are hot and dry (slightly cooler as you go further north), and from mid-June to the end of August temperatures can reach 45°C (113°F). Sun hats and sunscreen are essential!

Do many places in Spain still enjoy siestas?

The tradition of taking a break or having a nap during the hottest part of the day still lives on in many parts of Spain, so you might find shops and restaurants close in some smaller towns during the afternoons.

Due to *siestas*, restaurants – especially in southern Spain – tend to open for dinner after 8pm. Meaning? Later mealtimes are a completely normal part of the local culture.

How much walking can I expect to do?

Whilst we do cover ground in our minicoach to maximise our time, the best way to truly discover Iberia is on foot! Many of the historic town centres we visit – like Toledo – are mostly pedestrian-only, inviting us to freely explore their hidden corners. For that



reason, sometimes we'll need to walk 20 minutes or so to and from our minicoach's parking spot.

Combined with our guided walking tours, which typically last for around two to three hours and often include some hills, we'd say that's the perfect excuse for an extra chocolate-smothered churros at the end of the day!

Will we only travel on small roads?

While we try to only venture down scenic back roads on our tours, it's sometimes necessary to use main roads too. In Spain, there is often no suitable alternative which is why you may experience the odd motorway during your adventure.

Is entry into Alhambra included?

Yes, tickets are included. However, we will need you to share your full passport details (including middle names) in advance to prebook your entry. As the Alhambra is government-owned, changes can occur at the last minute, which we unfortunately have no control over.

Will we have time to see the Córdoba Horse Show?

Following our morning walking tour of Córdoba on day 4, you'll have the rest of the day to explore at your leisure. If you want to attend the magnificent equestrian show at the city's Royal Stables, please note that you'll need to book your tickets in advance on the official website [here](#).

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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