

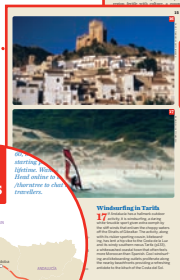
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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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itineraries

Outdoor Activities

Walking Highlights
The region is a treasure trove of walking opportunities, from the rugged mountains of the Sierra de Cazorla to the coastal paths of the Costa del Sol. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking experiences, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls.

One of the most popular walking routes in the region is the Camino de Santiago, which passes through the heart of Andalucía. The route is a mix of challenging mountain trails and easy coastal strolls, offering a wide range of walking experiences. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls.

Walking

Walking is a popular activity in Andalucía, with a wide range of routes to choose from. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls.

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UNDERSTAND ANDALUCÍA

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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Bullfighting

Bullfighting is a controversial activity in Andalucía, with a long history. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls.



Andalucía Today

Andalucía is a region of contrasts, with a mix of modern and traditional. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls. The region's diverse landscapes offer a wide range of walking opportunities, from challenging mountain trails to easy coastal strolls.

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Brendan Sainsbury

John Noble, Josephine Quintero, Daniel Schechter

Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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› Andalucía



Top Experiences >





OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Brendan Sainsbury

Coordinating Author; Seville, Cádiz Province & Gibraltar An expat Brit, now living near Vancouver, Canada, Brendan once worked in Andalucía as a travel guide, leading cultural and hiking trips in the hills of Grazalema and the Sierra del Teril. He fell unashamedly for the region's romantic charms when he met his future wife in a small white village not far from Ronda in 2003. He has been back numerous times since, and has developed a special passion for flamenco guitar and the city of Granada. Brendan has also written for Lonely Planet in Cuba, Italy and the Pacific Northwest.

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Andalucía Today, History Originally from England's Ribbles Valley, John has lived in the provinces of Cádiz and Málaga since the mid-1990s. He and his late wife Susan Forsyth raised their two children in Andalucía and wrote the first two editions of this guide, also playing a part in every subsequent edition. John has explored Andalucía from end to end but still finds its nooks and crannies endlessly intriguing to investigate, with every little village and valley revealing more about its fascinating story.

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Huelva & Sevilla Provinces, Córdoba Province Daniel C Schechter has lived on the Iberian Peninsula for a total of four years (Lisbon, Barcelona) and returns there often to travel, work or visit old friends or make new ones. As a Lonely Planet author, he has covered five of Spain's autonomous communities and independently explored four more, including the Canary Islands, where he once washed up on a small Dutch yacht. He currently resides and cycles in the Netherlands.

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two Weeks Highlights

> You'll need months to poke into every corner of Andalusia, but two weeks can bag you the highlights. The best starting point is unmissable **Seville**, deserving of three days, where the famous cathedral and Alcázar stand side by side in surreal juxtaposition. Head 150km east by train and a few centuries back in time to explore **Córdoba**, site of the ancient Mezquita and guarder of hidden patios. Free tapas, shadowy tea-rooms and the incomparable Alhambra beckon in **Granada**, where you could fill at least three days reclining in Moorish bathhouses and deciphering the Lorca paraphernalia. Easily reached by bus, **Málaga** is understated by comparison. Spend a day absorbing the Picasso museum and sample fresh-from-the-Med seafood. **Ronda** is a dramatic contrast, surrounded by mountains and doused in bullfighting and rebel-rousing history. You'll be unlucky to hit **Jerez de la Frontera** and not take in a festival; the city is also famous for its horses, sherry bodegas and flamenco. Forty minutes away by train, **Cádiz** has an abundance of free sights including a fine city museum and an aficionado's flamenco club. You can contemplate your trip's achievements while walking its romantic *malecón* (sea drive).



One Month Grand Tour

Lucky devils with a month to spare can linger a few days in **Seville**, visiting the obvious sights (the cathedral, Alcázar and some festivals) and the less obvious ones (Casa de Pilatos, Triana, and some quirkier flamenco haunts). Sorties to the west lead to Huelva province, which is prime hiking country if you head to the north where the gentle pastoral hills around **Aracena** promise legendary walks between sleepy villages. Passing back through Seville, head east, stopping for a day in gentle **Carmona** before a serendipitous escape to the serially overlooked Sierra Norte. On week two, head to **Córdoba**, long a historical foil to Seville, where you can map Andalusian history in its whitewashed streets, Roman relics and Islamic architecture. Tracking east to Jaén province delivers you to the land of olive oil and weighty Renaissance architecture. The former can be seen pretty much everywhere you look. The latter is concentrated in the twin towns of **Baeza** and **Úbeda**. Further east, **Cazorla** is the gateway to Andalusia's largest protected area, but one visited only by a small minority. **Granada** is a more mainstream sight at the start of week three, but loaded with exotic majesty. Checking all the provinces you'll need to circumnavigate the Sierra Nevada to **Almería**, the dry east that once hosted Spaghetti Western films. Hit the coast at the unadulterated Spanish town of **Almuñécar** and follow it west through ever-growing resorts to **Málaga**, the Costa del Sol city that is actually nothing like the Costa del Sol. Start your last week in **Ronda**, which has been on most itineraries since Hemingway visited, and for good reason – a bullfighting museum that contains work by Goya, plunging gorges and premier white-town status lure the masses. The white towns continue across the border in Cádiz province; pick and choose between **Olvera**, **Grazalema** and **Ubrique** and enjoy the surrounding natural parks. Attempts to bypass **Arcos de la Frontera** are normally futile – the sight of the spectacular hilltop settlement practically drags you off the bus. Your final week can be spent tying up the threads of Andalusia's culture in **Jerez de la Frontera** and **Cádiz**, two ancient yet quintessential cities that contain all the ingredients that have made this region so great.



Two Weeks The West in Detail

Start in Huelva province's **Parque Nacional de Doñana**, possibly Andalusía's finest natural attraction and a rare European wetland replete with birdlife. **Seville** broadcasts a litany of well-known sights, but its provincial hinterland is less heralded. Visit the tranquil towns of **Carmona** (with its Alcázar) and **Osuna** (with its grand palaces). Rugged **Ronda** is well on the tourist trail, though if you stay overnight you'll wave goodbye to 80% of them. Recommended stops on the way to Málaga include **El Chorro** gorge and ancient **Antequera**. **Málaga** is a ballsy yet arty city that offers great seafood and a decent August feria. With time to linger you can visit some of Cádiz province's less trodden jewels: **Jímena de la Frontera** demands a detour, as does hiking in the **Parque Natural Los Alcornocales**. **Gibraltar** lures expat Brits missing roast beef and warm beer. Ply the Costa de la Luz next, spending at least one night in the white village of **Vejer de la Frontera**. A final few days can be devoted to the culturally intense quartet of **Cádiz**, **El Puerto de Santa María**, **Jerez de la Frontera** and **Sanlúcar de Barrameda**, enjoying a mixture of sherry, flamenco and seafood.

One Week The Cultural Triangle

If you have to pick a smaller region-within-a-region that best sums up Andalusía's essence, head west to the triangle of territory between Seville, Cádiz and Jerez de la Frontera. With excellent air, rail and bus connections, **Seville** is the best starting point for this sojourn. Lap up the Moorish-meets-Gothic architecture and seemingly limitless festivals for a day or two. Fast trains now forge south to **Jerez de la Frontera**, first stop on the 'sherry triangle' where you can spend two days mixing bodega tours with horse shows, authentic flamenco and perhaps a *hammam*. Continuing west by bus to **Sanlúcar de Barrameda** gives you the option to compare *fino* with *manzanilla* and bag some of the best seafood tapas in Spain. This is also a good base for forays into the bio-diverse **Parque Nacional de Doñana**. Spend the evening in **El Puerto de Santa María**, home of more bodegas, festivals and fish restaurants. Surrounded by sea, **Cádiz** feels like the edge of Europe and the home of something mystical and old. The beaches here are famously broad and they continue south along the Costa de la Luz. Explore them from a base in **Vejer de la Frontera**, a dramatically perched white town with a refined air.



Three Weeks The Coast

The coast looms large in Andalucía, lapping five of its eight provinces with most towns linked by bus. Empires were once built here, although more recently resorts have colonised the littoral. Start in underdeveloped **Cabo de Gata**, a spectacular combination of cliffs and salt flats. Tracking west you'll dock in **Almería**, worth a stop for its Moorish Alcazaba and winding streets. Granada's Costa Tropical is precipitous and authentic; **Almuñécar** is a great base for exploring and **La Herradura** offers good diving. A short bus ride west, **Nerja** has tempered its development better than other resorts while excellent hiking beckons in **La Axarquía**. **Málaga** deserves three days of this trip; its international reputation has sky-rocketed in recent years thanks to its fine art and inventive gastronomy. **Marbella** is possibly the most interesting stop on the busy Costa del Sol, though **Mijas** merits a day trip. Further west, **Gibraltar** guards the jaws of Europe with British pubs and fascinating military history. Starting in windsurfing mecca **Tarifa**, the Costa de la Luz harbours a variety of flavours and different food. While away three days in **Barbate** and **Los Caños de Meca** with a grand two-day finale in **Cádiz**.

Two Weeks The East in Detail

The east is Andalucía's less obvious itinerary filled with more esoteric attractions. Spend three days each in the two big-hitter cities. **Córdoba** is a must-see, the one-time Iberian capital with one of the finest Islamic mosques ever built. **Granada** showcases the later Nasrid era, in its Alhambra, Albayzín and Moorish-style bathhouses. You can use both cities as base for rural forays into nearby mountainous regions. Córdoba province's ample wilderness includes the **Parque Natural Sierra de Hornachuelos**. Granada has the **Parque Nacional Sierra Nevada** and Las Alpujarras, the valleys that embellish their southern slopes. Detours from here can include **Guadix**, with its unusual inhabited caves, and coastal **Almuñécar**, a bit of domestic seaside bliss detached from the Costa resorts. **Jaén** is olive-oil heaven and guard of fine tapas bars, while **Baeza** and **Úbeda** are unique for their Renaissance architecture. Almería province is Andalucía's far east: **Mojácar** promises a sometimes boho, sometimes glitzy taste of the Levante; **Cabo de Gata** is the region's most unspoiled coastal enclave; while **Almería**, the city, is a kind of Granada-on-the-sea with plenty of mystic Moorish relics.

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