



Córdoba Province

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Best Places to Eat

- » Casa Mazal (p194)
- » Bar Santos (p194)
- » Bodegas Campos (p194)
- » Las Camachas (p200)
- » Restaurante Zahorí (p199)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Zuhayra (p302)
- » Casa Baños de la Villa (p302)
- » Hotel Caserío de Iznájar (p303)
- » Hospedería Alma Andalusi (p301)
- » Parador Nacional Arruzafa (p302)

Why Go?

Once the dazzling beacon of Al-Andalus, the city of Córdoba inevitably dominates a visit to its namesake province. Remnants of the caliphate, such as the Great Mosque and the palatial complex of Madinat al-Zahra, hold immense historical and architectural interest. But there's plenty of less trampled territory to explore outside the provincial capital. The Río Guadalquivir divides not just the city but the province. To the north looms the Sierra Morena, a mountainous expanse of protected forest and ruined castles. To the south, rippling terrain is carpeted with olive trees, an agricultural bounty that is transformed into a velvety oil, while Andalucía's signature wines flow sweetly around Montilla and Moriles. Further south, caves and canyons are carved out of the limestone massif of the Sierras Subbéticas, punctuated by the unexpected bustle of Priego de Córdoba and the remote splendor of Zuheros, a perfect base for mountain hiking and cheese noshing.

Driving Distances (km)

Priego de Córdoba	103				
Almodóvar del Río	30	133			
Baena	60	34	90		
Montilla	46	58	76	37	
	Córdoba	Priego de Córdoba	Almodóvar del Río	Baena	

DON'T MISS

Cool, flower-filled courtyards with fountains and mosaic floors, the *patios cordobeses* (p192) make a delightful retreat from Córdoba's sizzling summers. In May they're on view during the Festival de Los Patios Cordobeses.

Castles of Córdoba

- » Castillo de Almodóvar (p200)
- » Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos (p191)
- » Castillo de Miramonte (p202)
- » Castillo de Zuheros (p196)

Best Walks

- » Cañon de Bailón (p197)
- » Sendero Botánico (p201)
- » Cueva de los Murciélagos (p197)
- » Puente Romano (p191)

Resources

- » **Info Cordoba** (www.infocordoba.com) Practical info and tips.
- » **Córdoba 24** (www.cordoba24.info) What's on in Córdoba.
- » **Tourism of Cordoba** (www.turismodecordoba.org) Official tourism board site, featuring themed walking tours.
- » **Cordobapedia** (<http://cordobapedia.wikianda.es>) Córdoba's very own wiki covering the province's culture and history.

Getting Around

The city of Córdoba is an important crossroads for both highways and railroads, with connections to Spain's major cities and local buses to most towns in the province. Travellers with their own wheels often ply the scenic N-432, which drops down from Extremadura through the Sierra Morena, proceeding through the Sierras Subbéticas on its way to Granada, or the A-431, which hugs the Guadalquivir west to Seville.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Córdoba, a Fusion of Cultures

A day's exploration of Córdoba suitably starts with a visit to the **Torre de la Calahorra**, on the Guadalquivir's south bank, for inside is an exhibit on the fusion of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Cross the Roman bridge to the **Mezquita** and wander through its miles of archways. Navigate the tortuous lanes of the **Judería** and savor a Sephardic lunch at **Casa Mazal**. To complete the religious trilogy, stroll amid the palms of the **Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos**. In the evening, do some tapas bar-hopping, then enjoy fiery Flamenco jams at **La Pataita de Antonio**.

Day 2: Castles & Christians

Make a morning of the **Madinat al-Zahra**, ruler Abd ar-Rahman III's own personal city, featuring a superb new museum on Andalucía's Islamic heritage. Skirt the Guadalquivir westward and make for the castle on the horizon; keeping a stern watch over the river, the **Castillo de Almodóvar** sports nine towers. Proceed west to **Hornachuelos**, gateway to a swath of protected forest, and hike amid the cork oaks and wild olives. Celebrate your return to Córdoba with a fino (sherry) at **Bodega Guzmán**.

Day 3: Earthly Delights

Take a day to indulge in the culinary bounty of the province's southern reaches. Head first for the vineyards of **Montilla** and taste the signature wines at the area's bodegas. Next visit **Baena**, where mills produce an olive oil so outstanding it's been granted its own designation of origin; see it made the traditional way at the Núñez de Prado mill. Further south, the hills give way to the limestone cliffs of La Subbética, where the whitewashed village of **Zuheros** nestles. Take a ramble through the dramatic mountain scenery or burrow below to the cave network of the **Cueva de los Murciélagos**.

Accommodation

Córdoba has a wide range of options and makes a good base for exploring the province. Rates are competitive but leap in April and May, during fiesta season. Consider Zuheros, with its supremely situated Hotel Zuhayra (p302), for exploring the southern Subbética range; the western Hornachuelos range is awash in *casas rurales* (country homes). Read all about hotel choices in our dedicated Accommodation chapter (p288).