



Seville

POP 703,000 / ELEV 30M

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Best Places to Eat

- » Vinería San Telmo (p66)
- » Los Coloniales (p68)
- » Bar-Restaurante Eslava (p70)
- » Restaurante Egaña Oriza (p66)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Casa 1800 (p290)
- » Hotel Amadeus (p290)
- » Hotel San Gil (p292)
- » Hotel Sacristía de Santa Ana (p292)

Why Go?

Some cities have looks, others have personality. The *sevillanos* – lucky devils – get both, courtesy of their flamboyant, charismatic, ever-evolving Andalusian metropolis founded, according to myth, 3000 years ago by the Greek god Hercules. Doused in never-ending sunlight, Seville's beauty is relatively easy to uncover; pretty girls in polka-dot dresses riding in carriages to the Feria de Abril provides one of the more quintessential images. Its soul is a darker and more complex force, however. Flamenco's history is partially rooted here in the dusty taverns of Triana, and greedy conquistadors once roamed the sinuous streets of El Arenal counting their colonial gold. Tugged by the pull of both forces, it is Seville's capriciousness that leaves the heaviest impression. Come here in April and watch as haunting Semana Santa (Holy Week) metamorphoses into the cacophony of Feria de Abril (spring fair) and you'll wonder whether Bizet's Carmen wasn't more real than imagined.

When to Go

March to May is the best time to visit Seville when its two major festivals – Semana Santa and the Feria de Abril – run back to back. This is when the city wears its personality on its sleeve and is alive with colour, warm weather, orange blossom and that famous *pasión* (passion). The obvious downsides for spring visitors are the bigger crowds and elevated prices (rooms rates can triple). September and October are good quieter options, after the extreme heat of summer has diminished.

Getting Around

Seville offers a multitude of ways to get around, though walking still has to be the best option, especially in the centre. The Sevici bike-sharing scheme has made cycling easy and bike lanes are now almost as ubiquitous as pavements. The tram has recently been extended to the station of San Bernardo but its routes are still limited. Buses are more useful than the metro to link the main tourist sights. The recent 'greening' of the city has made driving increasingly difficult as whole roads in the city centre are now permanently closed to traffic; park on the periphery.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Lay of the Land

The joy of any new city is in those initial few hours when you're roaming the streets for the first time, sussing out the lay of the land. In Seville, you can get moving in the **Barrio de Santa Cruz**, contemplating intimate squares and narrow alleys. Come up for air in El Centro and brave a crowded tapas bar near **Plaza de la Alfalfa**. Admire (or not) the whimsical **Metropol Parasol** and the shopping chaos of **Calle Sierpes**. Then roll up for night-time drinks in the **Alameda de Hércules**.

Day 2: Big Hitters

The bell tower is calling you (literally). Take breakfast in the vicinity of Plaza Nueva and buy your ticket for the **cathedral**, which deserves at least two hours. Have lunch in the *barrio* (district) of **El Arenal** and stroll the river banks down to **Parque de María Luisa**. Two excellent museums will delay you here. Return to Santa Cruz, take tea at the **Baños Árabes** and book a ticket for a musical performance at the **Museo del Baile Flamenco**. Browse the exhibits until showtime at 7pm.

Day 3: Arty Seville

Go early to the **Alcázar** and take your time absorbing the palaces and gardens. Outside its walls you can lunch at **Catalina** or next door at **Vinería San Telmo**. Rent a Sevici bike and follow the cycle lanes to the **Museo de Bellas Artes**. After a dose of Murillo and Zurbarán, cross the river to **Triana** where ceramics shops beckon. Finish day three cruising the vivacious riverside strip of **Calle del Betis** for evening drinks and tapas.

Accommodation

Seville has boundless accommodation options in all categories, but it is still best to book well ahead during *Semana Santa* and *Feria de Abril*, when prices can treble. New top-bracket places include EME Cathedral Hotel, Hotel Casa 1800 and Hotel Palacio Alcázar. Central bargains include Pensión San Pancraccio and Hotel Simón. Read all about hotel choices in our dedicated Accommodation chapter (p288).

DON'T MISS

Reopened in 2012, El Pabellón de la Navegación (p64) explores Seville's history-defining relationship with the sea. It is the latest architectural icon in a city that stubbornly refuses to live in the past.

Best Places to See Flamenco

- » Museo del Baile Flamenco (p58)
- » Casa de la Memoria de Al-Andalus (p70)
- » Tablao El Arenal (p70)
- » Casa Anselma (p70)

Best Viewpoints

- » Giralda (p49)
- » Torre del Oro (p67)
- » Schindler Tower at El Pabellón de la Navegación (p64)
- » Panoramic walkway at Metropol Parasol (p59)

Resources

- » **Explore Seville** (www.exploreseville.com) Covers everything from dining etiquette to safety.
- » **Turismo de Sevilla** (www.visitasevilla.es) The city's official tourism site; its 'Accessible Guide' is useful for travellers with disabilities.
- » **Guía Flama** (www.guiaflama.com) Who's flamencoing where and when? Find out here.