



Cádiz Province & Gibraltar

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Why Go?

If you had to choose just one province to explain Andalucía in its full, complex beauty, it'd probably be Cádiz province. Thrillingly sited white towns, craggy mountains, endless olive trees, a stunning white-sand coastline dotted with surfer-cool villages, flamenco in its purest incarnation, the font of Andalusian horse culture, fortified sherry, festivals galore, and – just when you'd half-sussed it out – that idiosyncratic British anomaly, Gibraltar. Packed in among all this condensed culture are two expansive natural parks covering an unbroken tract of land that runs from Olvera in the north to Algeciras in the south. The same line once marked the blurred frontier between Christian Spain and Moorish Granada, and that ancient border remains dotted with castle-topped white towns, many with a 'de la Frontera' suffix that testifies to their fascinating, volatile history.

Driving Distances

Jerez de la Frontera	32			
Tarifa	103	113		
Gibraltar	144	113	43	
Arcos de la Frontera	63	32	113	115
	Cádiz	Jerez de la Frontera	Tarifa	Gibraltar

CÁDIZ

POP 121,700

You could write several weighty tomes about Cádiz and still fall miles short of nailing its essence. Old age accounts for much of the complexity. Cádiz is generally considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in Europe, founded as Gadir by the Phoenicians in about 1100 BC. Now well into its fourth millennium, the ancient centre, surrounded almost entirely by water, is a romantic jumble of sinuous streets where Atlantic waves crash against eroded sea walls, salty beaches teem with sun-worshippers, and cheerful taverns echo with the sounds of cawing gulls and frying fish.


Spain's first liberal constitution (La Pepa) was signed here in 1812, while the city's distinctive urban model provided an identikit for fortified Spanish colonial cities in the Americas. Indeed, the port – with its crenellated sea walls and chunky forts – is heavily reminiscent of Cuba's Havana or Puerto Rico's San Juan.

Enamoured return visitors talk fondly of Cádiz' seafood, sands and stash of intriguing monuments and museums. More importantly, they gush happily about the *gaditanos* (people from Cádiz), an upfront, sociable bunch whose crazy Carnival (p112) is an exercise in ironic humour and whose upbeat *alegrías* (flamenco songs) will bring warmth to your heart.


Sights

To understand Cádiz, first you need to befriend its *barrios* (districts). The old city is split into classic quarters: the Barrio del Pópulo, home of the cathedral, and nexus of the once prosperous medieval settlement; Barrio de Santa María, the old Roma and flamenco quarter; Barrio de la Viña, a former vineyard that became the city's main fishing quarter and Carnival epicentre; and Barrio del Mentidero (said to take its name from the many rumours spread on its streets) in the northwest.

Plaza de San Juan de Dios SQUARE
Glammed up for the 200th anniversary of the 1812 constitution, cafe-lined Plaza San Juan de Dios is dominated by the grand neoclassical **ayuntamiento** (Town Hall) built around 1800.

★ Catedral de Cádiz CATHEDRAL
( 956 28 61 54; Plaza de la Catedral; adult/child €5/3; ☉10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1.30-6pm Sun)

Cádiz' beautiful yellow-domed cathedral is an impressively proportioned baroque-neoclassical construction, best appreciated from seafront Campo del Sur in the evening sun. Though commissioned in 1716, the project wasn't finished until 1838, by which time neoclassical elements (the dome, towers and main facade) had diluted architect Vicente Acero's original baroque plan.

With the same ticket you can check out religious treasures at the **Museo Catedralicio** (Cathedral Museum;  956 25 98 12; Plaza de Fray Félix; adult/child €5/3; ☉10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun), just east. You may be able to climb the cathedral's **Torre de Poniente** (Western Tower), although it was closed indefinitely at the time of research.

Casa del Obispo MUSEUM
(www.lacasadelobispo.com; Plaza de Fray Félix; adult/child €5/4; ☉10am-8pm, to 6pm mid-Sep–mid-Jun) Outside the cathedral's eastern exterior wall, this expansive museum of glass walkways over 1500 sq metres of excavated ruins takes you through Cádiz' eventful history, from the 8th century BC to the 18th century. It served as a Phoenician funerary complex, Roman temple and mosque, before becoming the city's Episcopal Palace in the 16th century. It was closed temporarily at research time: enquire at the tourist office (p118).

Teatro Romano ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE
(Campo del Sur) On the seaward edge of the Barrio del Pópulo is Cádiz' Roman theatre. Though the theatre itself is closed for renovation works, you can see parts of it at the adjacent, recently reopened **Centro de Interpretación del Teatro Romano** (Calle Mesón 12; ☉11am-5pm Mon-Sat & 10am-2pm Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sun Oct-Mar, closed 1st Mon of month Apr-Sep) **FREE**.

Plaza de Topete SQUARE
About 250m northwest of the cathedral, this triangular plaza is one of Cádiz' most intimate. Bright with flowers, it's usually talked about as Plaza de las Flores (Square of the Flowers). Right beside is the revamped **Mercado Central de Abastos** (Plaza de la Libertad; ☉9am-3pm), built in 1837 and the oldest covered market in Spain.

Torre Tavira TOWER
(www.torretavira.com; Calle Marqués del Real Tesoro 10; admission €6; ☉10am-8pm, to 6pm Oct-Apr) Northwest of Plaza de Topete, the Torre Tavira opens up dramatic panoramas of Cádiz and has a camera obscura that projects live,