



Spain



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Itineraries



1 WEEK Barcelona & Around

Spend a lifetime in **Barcelona** and it may not be enough, but to get a taste of why that's the case you'll need a minimum of two days to soak up the Gaudí sights, taste the city's culinary excellence and wander its old town. When you can tear yourself away, rent a car and head north along the Mediterranean shoreline, passing through **Tossa de Mar** and its castle-backed bay, then **Calella de Palafrugell** and **Tamariu**, two beautifully sited coastal villages, before heading inland to pass the night in wonderful **Girona**. The next day is all about Salvador Dalí, from his fantasy castle **Castell de Púbol**, his extraordinary theatre-museum in **Figueres**, and then his one-time home, the lovely seaside village of **Cadaqués**. The next morning, leave the Mediterranean behind and drive west in the shadow of the Pyrenees – a long day in the saddle, but a day with one jaw-dropping vista after another. Your reward is a couple of nights based in **Taüll**, gateway to the utterly magnificent **Parc Nacional d'Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici**. A loop south via Lleida then east will have you back in Barcelona by mid-afternoon on your final day.



4
WEEKS

Grand Spanish Tour

If you have a month to give, Spain will reward you with enough memories to last a lifetime.

Begin in **Barcelona**, that singular city of style and energy that captivates all who visit. Count on three days, then catch the high-speed train to **Madrid**, a city that takes some visitors a little longer to fall in love with, but it will only take a couple to fall under its spell of culture high (fantastic art galleries) and low (brilliant hedonistic nightlife). We recommend that you spend an extra two days here, using the capital as a base for day trips to **Segovia** and **Toledo**. Catch another train, this time heading for **Salamanca**, that plateresque jewel of Castilla y León. After a night in Salamanca, travel north by train to **León** to stay overnight and see the extraordinary stained-glass windows of its cathedral, and then continue on to **Bilbao**, home of the Guggenheim and so much that is good about Basque culture. Spend a night here, followed by another couple in splendid **San Sebastián**. A couple of days' drive along the Cantabrian, Asturian and Galician coasts will take you along Spain's most dramatic shoreline en route to **Santiago de Compostela**, where a couple of nights is a minimum to soak up this sacred city. Wherever you travel in the north, from San Sebastián to Santiago, make food a centre-piece of your visit.

Catch the train back to Madrid, then take a high-speed train to **Córdoba** (two nights) and **Seville** (two nights). While you're in the area, detour north by bus or train to the Roman ruins of **Mérida** (one night), the fabulous old city of **Cáceres** (one night) and medieval **Trujillo** (one night). Return to Seville and make immediately for **Granada** (two nights). Add an extra couple of nights and a rental car and you can visit the lovely villages of **Las Alpujarras**. Keep the car (or catch the train) and travel from Granada to **Valencia** to spend a couple of days enjoying its architecture, paella and irresistible energy. You've just enough time to catch the high-speed train to cliff-top **Cuenca** (one night) on your way back to Madrid at journey's end.

10
DAYS

Andalucian Adventure

Begin in **Málaga**, whose airport receives flights from almost every conceivable corner of Europe. Málaga has enough attractions to keep you occupied for one very full day; don't miss the Picasso Museum. No Andalucian itinerary is complete without at least a couple of nights in peerless **Granada** with its astonishing Alhambra, gilded Capilla Real and medieval Muslim quarter of Albayzín. Rent a car and make for the otherworldly valleys of **Las Alpujarras** with their fine mountain scenery and North African-style villages, where you should stay overnight. If you've kept the car, head west for three days along quiet back roads to some of Andalucía's most spectacular villages and towns – Mudéjar **Antequera**, spectacular **Ronda**, white-washed **Tarifa** with its bohemian air, beguiling **Vejer de la Frontera** and **Arcos de la Frontera**, one of Andalucía's most glorious *pueblos blancos* (white villages). With three days left, leave the car and spend a night in **Jerez de la Frontera**, allowing time to visit its sherry bodegas, then catch a train north to flamenco-rich **Seville**, which is for many the essence of Andalucía.

10
DAYS

Northern Spain

There is no finer introduction to the north of the country than **San Sebastián**, with its dramatic setting and fabulous food. Two nights is a minimum. Less than three hours west of San Sebastián by train, **Bilbao** is best known as the home of the showpiece Guggenheim Museum and warrants at least a night, preferably two. To make the most of the rest of the coast, you'll need a car. Cantabria's cobblestone medieval marvel, **Santillana del Mar**, the rock art at **Altamira**, and the village of **Ribadesella** will fill one day, with another taken up by the steep valleys of the **Picos de Europa**. After a third night in irresistible **Oviedo**, tackle Galicia's coastline, one of Spain's great natural wonders, punctuated with secluded fishing villages and stunning cliffs. As you make your way around the coast for a further two nights, don't miss **Cabo Ortegal**, dynamic **A Coruña** and the **Costa da Morte**. For the last two nights, linger in **Santiago de Compostela**, a thoroughly Galician city with fine regional cuisine, a cathedral of rare power and many pilgrim footfalls.



10
DAYS

Essential Spain

So many Spanish trails begin in **Barcelona**, Spain's second-biggest city and one of the coolest places on earth. Explore the architecture and sample the food, before catching the train down the coast to **Valencia** for another dose of nightlife and the 21st-century wonders of the Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias. This is the home of paella, and if you only try Spain's signature dish once, make it here. A fast train whisks you inland to the capital, mighty **Madrid**, for the irresistible street energy, the pretty plazas and one of the richest concentrations of art museums on the planet, along the iconic Paseo del Prado. Yet another fast train takes you deep into Andalucía, with **Córdoba** your entry point into this wonderful corner of Spain. The most obvious highlight is Córdoba's 7th-century Mezquita, which captures the essence of the country's formerly Islamic south. But we've saved the best until last: **Granada**. the one-time capital of Muslim Al-Andalus boasts the extraordinary Alhambra, its soulful alter ego, the Albayzín, and an eating and drinking scene that embraces Spanish culinary culture in all its variety.

1
WEEK

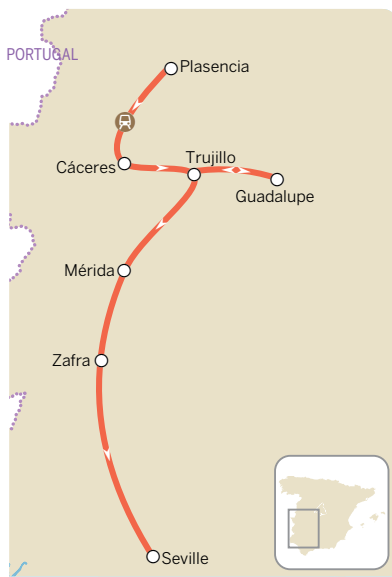
Valencia & the Balearics

Valencia, Spain's third-largest city, has many calling cards, among them the chance to eat Spain's finest paella, the Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias, which may just be Spain's most extraordinary example of contemporary architecture, and the Barrio del Carmen, one of the country's liveliest quarters. After at least two days, catch a ferry to pretty **Palma de Mallorca** and spend at least a full day in the town, lingering in particular over its astonishing cathedral. Take the vintage train to **Sóller** and hire a car to drive along the **Serra de Tramuntana** coast and explore the villages of Mallorca's northwest, such as **Fornalutx**, and the fine coastal scenery at **Cap de Formentor**, where the drama of these rocky isles takes on full power. After a couple of days in the northwest, return to Palma for the ferry to **Ibiza** and dive into its world-famous nightlife, before island-hopping again, this time to **Menorca** and its wonderful south-coast beaches. If we had to choose just one of these, we'd make it **Cala en Turqueta**.

2
WEEKS

Castile & Aragón

From **Madrid**, head northwest then west to some of the loveliest towns of the Spanish heartland: **Segovia** with its Disneyesque castle and Roman aqueduct, walled **Ávila** and vibrant **Salamanca** should together occupy around four days of your time with short train rides connecting the three. Trains also connect you to the cathedral towns of **León** and **Burgos**, home to two of Spain's most extraordinary churches. Spend at least a day in each. An extra night in Burgos will, if you rent a car for a day, allow you to take a day trip to the medieval village of **Covarrubias**. Cross the border into Aragón and make for **Zaragoza**, one of Spain's most vibrant cities, with a wealth of monuments and great tapas – two days is a must. Rent a car and head for the hills where **Sos del Rey Católico** looks for all the world like a Tuscan hill town – stay overnight to appreciate its quiet charm. Drive south for an overnight stop in dramatic **Daroca**, which is encircled by mountains and ruined city walls, then continue to **Teruel** with its Mudéjar gems. Finish your trip with two nights in **Albarracín**, one of Spain's most spectacular villages, with medieval architecture as extraordinary as the setting.

10
DAYS

Extreme West

Extremadura is one of Spain's least-known corners, which is all the more reason to visit. Begin with a night in Extremadura's north, in **Plasencia**, which is jammed with notable buildings, churches and convents. From Plasencia, catch the bus or train to **Cáceres**, whose Ciudad Monumental is one of the finest surviving medieval cores in any Spanish city. Allow two nights here. Regular buses take an hour to nearby **Trujillo**, a smaller but equally enchanting relic of the Middle Ages. Spend two nights here, one to explore the warren of cobbled lanes, and another to rent a car for a day trip to the charming hill town and pilgrims' destination of **Guadalupe**. From Trujillo it's just over an hour by bus south to **Mérida**, but the journey spans the centuries: Mérida boasts some of Spain's most impressive Roman ruins, and you'll need at least two nights here to take it all in. Further south again by bus across the dry plains lies whitewashed **Zafra**, a precursor to Andalucía in spirit, architecture and geography. After a night in Zafra, all roads lead to magical **Seville**, one of Andalucía's (and Spain's) most captivating cities.

Off the Beaten Track: Spain

ILLAS CÍES

Galicia has many candidates for little-known secrets but the Illas Cíes, off the coast of Vigo, is our pick for its fine beaches and lack of crowds. (p533)

ZAMORA & AROUND

Zamora is a little-visited Romanesque treasure. Not far away, the medieval village of Puebla de Sanabria is stunning. (p170)

SIERRA DE FRANCIA

The timeworn Sierra de Francia contains some of Spain's least-visited back-country villages. The pick is probably La Alberca but San Martín del Castañar is utterly beguiling. (p155)

WESTERN EXTREMADURA

Western Extremadura is the land time forgot, from the quiet valleys of the Sierra de Gata and Las Hurdes (p560) to remote Alcántara (p551) with its fine Roman bridge.

CÁDIZ

Cádiz is all about narrow white-washed streets where the seafood and wine flow freely in summer. The nearby beaches are some of Spain's best. (p606)

BAEZA & ÚBEDA

These twin towns (p709 and p711) in the north of Andalucía are two of Spain's finest Renaissance gems. Better still, they're lightly touristed.



NORTHERN ARAGÓN

Draw near to the Pyrenees from the postcard-perfect villages of Aínsa, Alquézar and Torla on the cusp of the Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido. (p382)

EL MAESTRAZGO

Straddling southwestern Aragón and western Valencia, isolated El Maestrazgo specialises in meandering back roads and pretty hamlets. (p393)



CABO DE GATA & ALMERÍA

The Cabo de Gata (p721) is dramatic, wild and an antidote to overdeveloped shorelines. Its gateway, Almería (p717), is one of Spain's most agreeable provincial towns.

FORMENTERA

Travellers in the know make for Formentera, a little-visited Balearic island south of Ibiza with some of the best beaches in the Mediterranean. (p820)



John Noble

Santiago de Compostela & Galicia John, originally from England's Ribble Valley, has lived in an Andalusian mountain village since 1995. He has travelled lengthily all over Spain and helped write every edition of Lonely Planet's Spain and Andalusia guides. He loves returning to Galicia's green countryside, stone architecture, magnificent coastline and wonderful music, food and wine. The novelty of his latest trip was experiencing Galicia in its winter clothes, disappearing in the fog at Cabo Fisterra and getting stuck in the snow at O Cebreiro.



Josephine Quintero

Castilla y León, Aragón Josephine moved to Spain some 25 years ago, fleeing from the invasion of Kuwait (but that's another story). She still revels in the relaxed way of life in Andalusia and loves to explore the rest of the country, seeking out hidden corners, appreciating the unsung glories and meeting some extraordinary people along the way. During research for this title, one of the highlights was visiting Zaragoza's fascinating origami museum,

another was finally appreciating the appeal of birdwatching, particularly in the magnificent Aragón Pyrenees.

Read more about Josephine at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/Josephine.Quintero



Brendan Sainsbury

Seville & Andalusia's Hill Towns, Granada & South Coast Andalusia Originally from Hampshire, England, Brendan first went to Spain on an Interrail ticket in the 1980s. He went back as a travel guide several years later and met his wife-to-be in a small village in rural Andalusia in 2003. He has been writing books for Lonely Planet for a decade, including two previous editions of the *Spain* guide. Brendan loves Granada, the writing of Federico Lorca, cycling along via verdes, and attending as many flamenco shows as his research allows.



Regis St Louis

Barcelona Regis first fell in love with Barcelona on a grand journey across Iberia in the late 1990s. Since then he has returned frequently to explore this endlessly fascinating city. Favourite memories from his most recent trip include earning a few scars at a *correfoc* in Gràcia and watching fearless *castellers* build human towers at the Santa Eulàlia festival. Regis is also the author of *Barcelona*, and he has contributed to dozens of other Lonely Planet titles. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.



Andy Symington

Catalonia, Valencia & Murcia Andy hails from Australia but has been living in Spain for over a decade, where, to shatter a couple of stereotypes of the country, he can frequently be found huddled in subzero temperatures watching the tragically poor local football team. He has authored and coauthored many LP guidebooks and other publications on Spain and elsewhere; in his spare time he walks in the mountains, embarks on epic tapas trails, and co-bosses a rock bar.



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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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



Anthony Ham

Coordinating Author, Madrid, Toledo & Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura

In 2001, Anthony fell in love with Madrid on his first visit to the city. Less than a year later, he arrived on a one-way ticket, without knowing a word of Spanish or a single person. After 10 years of living in the city, he recently returned to Australia with his Spanish-born family, but he still adores his adopted country as much as the first day he arrived. His most recent Spanish passions, among many, are trying to track down the critically endangered Iberian lynx and sharing stories of Spain's wild places. When he's not writing for Lonely Planet, Anthony writes about and photographs Spain, Scandinavia, Australia and Africa for newspapers and magazines around the world. Read more about Anthony at www.anthonham.com



Stuart Butler

Bilbao, the Basque Country & La Rioja Stuart's first childhood encounters, in Parque Nacional de Doñana and on family holidays along the north coast, left lasting impressions. When he was older he spent every summer on the Basque beaches, until one day he found himself unable to tear himself away – he has been there ever since. His travels for Lonely Planet, and a wide variety of magazines, have taken him beyond Spain to the shores of the Arctic, the deserts of

Asia and the forests of Africa. His website is www.stuartbutlerjournalist.com

Read more about Stuart at:
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Kerry Christiani

Mallorca, Menorca & Ibiza Kerry met her now husband in Mallorca in 1999 and has jumped at every chance to return to the Balearics since. Memorable moments for this edition include waking up to a goat bells at a monastery near Pollença, watching fiery sunsets at Ibiza's beach cafes and walking barefoot on Formentera's sugar-white beaches. Kerry studied Spanish to MA level and has authored some 20 guidebooks. She contributes frequently to magazines and

websites and tweets about her adventures @kerrychristiani.

Read more about Kerry at:
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Isabella Noble

Cantabria & Asturias Isabella's in-depth investigation of distant northern regions far from her Andalusian home began at the age of 12, and she was thrilled to discover that the two bears of the Senda del Oso are still there a decade later. English/Australian on paper but Spanish at heart, she has lived and travelled in Spain since 1994. Adventures this trip include exploring after-dark Gijón, tackling snowy mountain passes, and falling in love with Oviedo. For now, she lives

between Andalucía and London.

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OVER MORE
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