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# ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE  
In-depth reviews, detailed listings  
and insider tips



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# SURVIVAL GUIDE

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE  
How to get around, get a room,  
stay safe, say hello

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**KEY PATTERNS**

To get by in Spanish, use these simple patterns to your choice:

**When's (the next flight)?**  
¿Cuándo sale (el próximo vuelo)? *kwa* (el)

**Where's (the station)?**  
¿Dónde está?

THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

**Anthony Ham**

**Stuart Butler, John Noble, Zora O'Neill, Josephine Quintero, Miles Roddis, Brendan Sainsbury, Damien Simonis**

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YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

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

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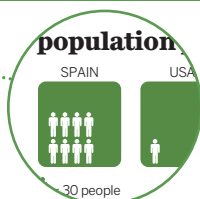
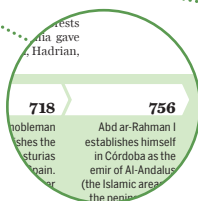
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GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

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can make sense of what you see

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# Spain



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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](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travellers.*



## One Month

### The Grand Tour

So many Spanish trails begin in **Barcelona**, Spain's second-biggest city. Explore the architecture and sample the food, then embark on a coast crawl with stops in **Tarragona** for the Roman ruins, **Peñíscola** for the beach, and **Valencia** for another dose of nightlife and the 21st-century wonders of the Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias. From here, flee deep into Castilla-La Mancha, halting en route at craggy **Cuenca**. Push on to the capital, mighty **Madrid**, for the hedonism and museums before continuing to **Toledo**, a medieval jewel. The road sweeps through La Mancha's plains and olive groves, before tilting at windmills like Don Quijote in **Consuegra**. Striking **Almagro**, deep in Almodóvar territory, has a beguiling charm, before you take the A4 to **Jaén** and its gorgeous cathedral. Nearby, **Baeza** and **Úbeda** are enticing Renaissance gems, while the Islamic glories of **Granada** and **Córdoba** are not far away to the south and west, respectively. The colourful capital of the south, **Seville**, also beckons. Hear the call of Africa? Drop down to **Cádiz** and proceed east to lovely **Tarifa** for the boat to Morocco and a whole new adventure.



## One Month Andalucian Adventure

If you're arriving by air, the natural starting point for any Andalucía trip is **Málaga**, whose airport receives flights from almost every conceivable corner of Europe. While in town, don't miss the exceptional Museo Picasso. Head north to the stunning Mudéjar architecture of **Antequera**, then east to **Granada**, the first in Andalucía's triumvirate of Unesco World Heritage-listed cities (the other two are Seville and Córdoba). In Granada, marvel at the peerless Alhambra, be overwhelmed by the gilded Capilla Real and linger in the medieval Muslim quarter of Albayzín. A detour south and then east takes you to the otherworldly valleys of **Las Alpujarras** with their fine mountain scenery and North African-style villages; explore these on foot if you've got the time and the energy. Away to the southeast, **Almería** is one of Spain's most agreeable provincial towns, while **Cabo de Gata** is one of the most dramatic sections of the country's Mediterranean coast and an antidote to its otherwise overdeveloped shoreline.

Returning into the Andalusian heartland, via Granada, make for **Córdoba**, home to the magnificent Mezquita and an enchanted *judería* (Jewish Quarter). Next stop, **Seville**, the heartbeat of Andalucía with its glorious architecture (especially the Alcázar and cathedral), fine tapas and soul-stirring live flamenco. There's more flamenco, as well as fine Andalucía horsemanship, at **Jerez de la Frontera**, while **Cádiz** is at once fun-loving and Europe's oldest settlement; if you're in Cádiz during Carnival in particular you'll understand what we mean. The region's hill villages don't come any more beautiful than cliff-top **Arcos de la Frontera** that conforms wonderfully to the stereotype of Andalucía's *pueblos blancos* (white villages). After breaking up your journey here, meander along quiet country roads east through the pretty whitewashed villages and mountain trails of the **Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema** and on to spectacularly sited **Ronda**, where a night in its palatial and precipitous parador is one of Spain's great sleeping experiences. **Vejer de la Frontera** is another hill town par excellence, while the sandy Atlantic beaches of the **Costa de la Luz** are some of Spain's best. End your journey in hip **Tarifa**, the southernmost tip of mainland Spain, and a centre for summer whale-watching, windsurfing and, of course, much lazing on the fine beach.





## One Month Spain's Northeast

Spain's well-drenched northern coast, at times rugged and wildly beautiful, forms a green band from the Basque Country to Galicia, backed by the Cordillera Cantábrica. This route takes you through what is arguably Spain's most spectacular (and certainly least developed) stretch of coastline, with gorgeous villages and fine food thrown in for good measure.

There is no finer introduction to the country than **San Sebastián**, its two dramatic headlands giving way to a perfect crescent bay. Its old town is arguably Spain's spiritual home of tapas (or *pintxos* as they call them here) and spending an evening wandering from bar to bar with their counters groaning under the weight of bit-sized morsels is close to gastronomic paradise. West of San Sebastián, **Bilbao** is best known as the home of the showpiece Guggenheim Museum. Heading west, hug the coast of Cantabria and Asturias and drop by the old centre of **Castro Urdiales**, to surf at **Ornión** and to promenade along the waterfront at **Santander**. Following Cantabria's eastern coast, explore the cobblestone medieval marvel that is **Santillana del Mar** and admire the Modernista architecture in **Comillas**. The eastern Asturias coast is best travelled by train, stopping off at **Llanes** and **Ribadesella**. **Arriondas**, the next stop, is one gateway to the majestic **Picos de Europa** with their vertiginous rock walls, outstanding scenery and fine hiking opportunities. Next make your way to **Oviedo**, Asturias' capital, for its pre-Romanesque architecture, and **Gijón**, a substantial port where cider, one of the great Asturian passions, flows freely. West of Gijón, secluded beaches await between the picturesque fishing harbours of **Cudillero** and **Luarca**. Galicia's coastline is one of Spain's great natural wonders, punctuated with secluded fishing villages and stunning cliffs. As you make your way around the coast, don't miss **Cabo Ortegal**, dynamic **A Coruña** and the **Costa da Morte**. **Pontevedra** and **Vigo**, on the cusp of Portugal, are worth continuing down the coastline for, before doubling back to **Santiago de Compostela**, a thoroughly Galician city, a place of pilgrim footfalls, fine regional cuisine and a cathedral of rare power.

Those with more time could make the final approach on foot along the Camino Portuguese route of the **Camino de Santiago** pilgrim route. Alternatively, discover the area with the Transcantábrico scenic train.



### Three Weeks Extreme West

From **Madrid**, travel north through the cathedral towns of **Burgos** and **León** before sweeping through the heart of Castilla y León to the enchanted medieval village of **Puebla de Sanabria**, one of Spain's best-kept secrets. Provincial **Zamora** is a little-visited Romanesque gem, but it's a mere entrée to the main event in southwestern Castilla y León: **Salamanca**. Wander with wonder at night through the pulsating streets of this vibrant university town, amid its splendid plateresque public buildings, luminous and floodlit. If you can tear yourself away, Salamanca is also a gateway to some of Spain's least-visited back-country villages, especially in the timeworn Sierra de Francia. **La Alberca** is probably the pick of a very fine bunch. You would never guess that until recent decades misery ruled in this quiet rural retreat that was one of the poorest regions of Spain.

The road continues to climb and then suddenly drops through woods into Extremadura, passing into the once equally poor Las Hurdes region to reach **Plasencia** to the southeast. Jammed with noble buildings, churches and convents, it was for centuries the region's principal city, and makes a good base for excursions up the northeast valleys. From Plasencia, a circuit takes you first to the birders' paradise that is the **Parque Nacional de Monfragüe** and then on to the charming hill town and pilgrims' destination of **Guadalupe**, lorded over by the monastery complex dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Country roads then lead westwards to the medieval town of **Trujillo**, a warren of cobbled lanes, churches and the newer Renaissance-era additions that were the fruit of conquistador gold. A short drive further west lies the ochre-coloured medieval jewel of **Cáceres**, a town with a lively student nightlife scene, too. To the south stand some of Spain's most impressive Roman ruins in **Mérida**. Further south again across the dry plains lies the white town of **Zafra**, a precursor to Andalucía in both spirit and geography. Rather than continue straight into Andalucía, make a westwards detour to the hilly town of **Jerez de los Caballeros** before finally heading south for magical **Seville**.



## Two to Three Weeks

### Madrid to El Maestrazgo

Escape **Madrid** and start this adventure in nonconformist fashion with a night or two in **Segovia** (rather than as the usual day trip from Madrid), with its Disney-esque Alcázar and Roman aqueduct, then repeat the dose huddled behind the perfect medieval walls of **Ávila**. Brooding and monumental **Toledo**, too, is at its best when the day-trippers head home, enabling you to catch the whispering legends of its multifaceted past. Wander further from convention by taking the road south to **Orgaz** and then a detour southeast to **Consuegra** and **Almagro**, an enchanting stop for a night or two. From Almagro, the trail takes you east towards the **Parque Natural de las Lagunas de Ruidera** with its lagoons, and then swing back northwest to Quijote territory, checking out **Campo de Criptana**, **El Toboso** and **Mota del Cuervo**. The road continues east to **Belmonte** and its castle. For a castle you can sleep in, press on to **Alarcón**.

Make the loop southeast to reach **Alcalá del Júcar**, on the stunning Río Júcar, which you can then follow west before heading back north for **Cuenca** and its hanging houses. A pretty riverside route takes you north along the CM2105 road into the hilly territory of the Serranía de Cuenca and then east to the ochre town of Muslim origin, **Albarracín** – there are few more beautiful villages in Spain than Albarracín, with its walls strung out along the high ridges that encircle this wonderful place. Next stop is **Teruel**, remarkable for its old town's Mudéjar architecture and far from well-worn travel routes; if you can be here for its February Fiesta Medieval you will, apart from being very cold, catch the essence of its appeal. The theme of leaving behind roads well travelled continues as you head east past hamlets of the high country of El Maestrazgo, including spectacularly sited **Cantavieja** and quieter-than-quiet **Mirambel**, where you'll feel as if you've arrived in one of the most secluded corners of the Spanish interior. Crossing into Valencia (but still in El Maestrazgo), our route takes you on to the pretty, castle-dominated town of **Morella** and finally to the coast at **Peñíscola**.



## One Month Balearics to the Pyrenees

You could spend weeks exploring the Balearic Islands depending, of course, on how long you need passing long, lazy days on its wonderful beaches. Begin, like so many holidaymakers, in pretty **Palma de Mallorca**, lingering in particular over its astonishing cathedral. Before leaving the island, set aside time to leave the crowds behind by trekking into the **Serra de Tramuntana** and exploring the villages of Mallorca's northwestern coast, such as **Fornalutx**, and the fine coastal scenery at Cap de Formentor. Take a ferry to **Ibiza** and dive into its world-famous nightlife, before island-hopping again, this time to **Menorca** and its wonderful south coast beaches.

Catch one last ferry from Menorca to **Valencia** and dine on paella by the sea, admire the breathtaking Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias and stay out late in the Barrio del Carmen. Follow the Mediterranean northeast to **Tarragona**, one of the most significant Roman sites in the country. Follow the Costa Brava, acquaint yourself with **Barcelona**, then head inland to **Girona** and Salvador Dalí's fantasy castle **Castell de Púbol**. Returning to the coast, dip into pretty villages such as **Tossa de Mar**, **Calella de Palafrugell** and **Tamarit** en route to **Cadaqués**, Dalí's beautiful one-time home.

Leave the Mediterranean behind and climb up into the Pyrenees, passing through the increasingly spectacular northwestern valleys to the **Parc Nacional d'Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici**, before crossing the provincial frontier into Aragón. Medieval, stone-built **Aínsa** is the prettiest among many Aragonese villages in the Pyrenean foothills; linger here for a couple of days before drawing near to the **Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido**, perhaps the most shapely mountains of all on the Spanish side of the frontier. Apart from being staggeringly beautiful, this is one of Europe's premier hiking destinations and its restrictions on the number of visitors make this a premier wilderness destination. As you head west in the shadow of the snow-capped peaks, detour up the **Valle de Ansó** and then end your journey in the idyllic hill village of **Sos del Rey Católico**.





## 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



### Anthony Ham

**Coordinating Author, Madrid, Aragón, Extremadura** In 2002, Anthony arrived in Madrid on a one-way ticket, has called the city home ever since and now lives with his *madrileña* wife and two daughters overlooking their favourite plaza in the city. He has written more than 50 guidebooks for Lonely Planet, including *Spain and Madrid*, and writes and photographs for newspapers and magazines around the world. Apart from rediscovering his home city afresh while researching this guide (Malasaña is his new favourite *barrio*), his happiest moments were losing himself again in the quiet streets of Albarracín after the tour buses had gone home.



### Stuart Butler

**Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarra & La Rioja, Spain's Outdoors, Spain's Passions** Stuart's first childhood encounters with Spain, 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.

When not writing for Lonely Planet he hunts for uncharted surf on remote coastlines. The results of these trips appear frequently in the world's surf media. His website is [www.oceansurfpublishations.co.uk](http://www.oceansurfpublishations.co.uk).



### John Noble

**History, Cantabria & Asturias, Santiago de Compostela & Galicia** John, originally from England, has lived in an Andalusian mountain village since 1995. In that time he has travelled all over Spain and helped write every edition of Lonely Planet's *Spain* and *Andalucía* guides. He loves getting to faraway parts of the country like Galicia and the north coast and being reminded just how diverse, in culture, landscape and climate, Spain is. He doesn't think he could stay away from Andalucía's sunny skies for ever, though.

Read more about John at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/ewodrover](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/ewodrover)



### Zora O'Neill

**Architecture** Zora studied 11th-century Andalusian Arabic literature in graduate school, so when she visited Córdoba, it was like walking into a poem. She finds the cultural mix of modern-day Spain just as intriguing – because it involves walking, eating and ogling architectural confections. Zora has been a guidebook author since 2003; in 2009, she contributed to *Andalucía* and, in a new adventure for this city mouse, *Hiking in Spain*. She lives in New York City and blogs at [www.rovinggastronome.com](http://www.rovinggastronome.com).

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OVER MORE  
PAGE WRITERS

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### Josephine Quintero

**Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, Murcia** Josephine Quintero moved to Spain after a seven-year stint in Kuwait where she was editor of the *Kuwaiti Digest* until the Iraq invasion. Some 20 years on, the relaxed way of life in Andalucía continues to appeal. Josephine loves exploring Spain, seeking out hidden corners, appreciating the unsung glories and meeting some extraordinary people along the way. During researching this book one of the highlights was discovering a

little-known Roman archaeological site in the middle of a field near Cuenca which was fabulously evocative and memorable.

Read more about Josephine at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/josephinequintero](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/josephinequintero)



### Miles Roddis

**Valencia & the Costa Blanca, Mallorca, Menorca & Ibiza** Miles and his wife, Ingrid, have lived for nearly 20 years in a shoebox-sized apartment in the Barrio del Carmen, Valencia's oldest and most vital quarter. These days, he writes about Mediterranean lands – Spain, France and Italy – and is author or coauthor of more than 50 Lonely Planet guidebooks, including *Valencia & the Costa Blanca*, *Valencia Encounter*, *Walking in Spain*, *Canary Islands* and six editions of

the book you're holding.



### Brendan Sainsbury

**Andalucía** Brendan has logged many achievements while in Spain, including meeting his future wife, learning to play flamenco guitar, holding down a job as a travel guide and realising that Granada is his favourite city on the planet. He first visited the country by train in the late 1980s, returned on a bike in the '90s, and came back to lead hiking trips around Andalucía in the early 2000s. He researched this book accompanied by his wife and four-year-old son.

Read more about Brendan at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/brendansainsbury](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/brendansainsbury)



### Damien Simonis

**Barcelona** In 1990, Damien found himself in pre-Olympics Barcelona. The place left a mark and, eight years later, Damien turned up in a Rambla-side *pensión* on assignment for Lonely Planet. He has called the city home since 2000 and wrote Lonely Planet's *Barcelona*, which he has continued to update. Long the coordinating author of *Spain*, he is amazed at the discoveries one can make in deepest Barcelona, like the excellent Cerveseria Gallega restaurant, a stalwart he had

never stumbled across before.

Read more about Damien at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/damienSimonis](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/damienSimonis)