



Spain



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PARQUE NATURAL SIERRAS
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Itineraries



1 WEEK Barcelona & Around

A lifetime in Barcelona may not be enough, filled as it is with so many intensely wonderful experiences. But drag yourself away, and you'll soon discover that the wider Catalonia region is a brilliant place to explore.

You'll need a *minimum* of two days in **Barcelona** to soak up Gaudí, taste the city's culinary excellence and wander its old town. When you can tear yourself away, rent a car and head north, 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** to 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. Your reward for the long drive is a couple of nights in **Taüll**, gateway to the magnificent **Parc Nacional d'Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici**. A loop south via Lleida then east has you back in Barcelona by mid-afternoon on your final day.



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 of days to fall under its spell of high (fantastic art galleries) and low (brilliant hedonistic nightlife) culture. 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 Museo Guggenheim Bilbao 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 on 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 centrepiece of your visit.

Catch the train back to Madrid, then take a high-speed train to **Córdoba** for two nights and **Seville** for two nights. While you're in the area, detour north by bus or train to the Roman ruins of **Mérida** for a night, the fabulous old city of **Cáceres** for another night and medieval **Trujillo** for a third night. Return to Seville and make immediately for **Granada**; plan on 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** for a night on your way back to Madrid at journey's end.

10
DAYS

Andalusian Adventure

There's more to Andalucía than the monument-rich cities, although these are not to be missed. This route takes you through three iconic cities and some of the region's most beautiful villages. Begin in **Málaga**, whose airport receives flights from almost every conceivable corner of Europe. It has enough attractions to keep you occupied for one very full day. No Andalusian 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 other-worldly valleys of **Las Alpujarras** with their fine mountain scenery and North African-style villages. 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**, whitewashed **Tarifa**, 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.

2
WEEKS

Essential Spain

If you want to understand why many visitors fall in love with Spain and never want to leave, look no further than its vibrant, passionate, extraordinarily beautiful cities. This itinerary takes you through the best Spain has to offer.

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 a dose of paella, nightlife and the 21st-century wonders of the Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias. 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. 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 8th-century Mezquita. From Córdoba it's a short hop to fabulous **Seville**. But we've saved the best until last: **Granada** 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.



2 WEEKS Castilla & Aragón

The Spanish interior may not fit the stereotype of sun, sand and sangría, but we love it all the more for that. This route takes in a stirring mix of lesser-known cities and stunning villages.

From **Madrid**, head to some of the loveliest towns of the Spanish heartland: **Segovia**, with its Disney-esque castle and Roman aqueduct, walled **Ávila** and vibrant **Salamanca** will occupy around four days of your time with short train rides connecting you to **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 allow you to take a day trip to the medieval villages of **Covarrubias** and **Santo Domingo de Silos**. 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. Drive south for an overnight stop in dramatic **Daroca**, then on to **Teruel**, filled with Mudéjar gems. Finish your journey in **Albarracín**, one of Spain's most spectacular villages.



10 DAYS Northern Spain

Spain's Mediterranean Coast may get the crowds, but the country's northern coastline from San Sebastián to Santiago is one of the most spectacular in Europe.

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. West of San Sebastián by train, **Bilbao** is best known as home to the showpiece Museo Guggenheim Bilbao 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 **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. 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, a place of pilgrim footfalls, fine regional cuisine and a cathedral of rare power.

2
WEEKS

Mediterranean to Mountains

This journey takes you from the shores of the Mediterranean to the deep valleys of the Pyrenees. You'll need a car to cover this in two weeks. Your reward is a chance to visit some of northwestern Spain's lesser-known jewels. Begin in **Valencia**, that most appealing of Mediterranean cities, then drive northeast, pausing in the flamingo-rich **Delta de l'Ebre** en route to **Tarragona**, one of Catalonia's most underrated destinations, with its fabulous Roman ruins. From Tarragona, head inland along the **Cistercian Route**, then cut through Aragón to vibrant and historic **Zaragoza**. After a couple of days in the Aragonese capital, and six days after leaving Valencia, pause overnight in the engaging provincial capital of **Logroño**. Continue west through the fine monastery towns of **Santo Domingo de la Calzada** and **San Millán de Cogolla** and then on into La Rioja, Spain's premier wine-producing region – **Laguardia** is a wonderful base. Head out into the eastern reaches of Navarra, for the beguiling fortress towns of **Olite** and **Ujué**, then on to pretty **Pamplona**. From here, climb into the **Navarran Pyrenees**, at their most beautiful in the Valle del Baztán and Valle del Roncal.

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. After two nights here, including a half-day excursion to charming **Garrovillas**, 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 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

RÍAS ALTAS

Galicia's northern coast is a succession of plunging cliffs, awe-inspiring vistas, wild surf beaches, quiet cove beaches, long, snaking inlets and quaint fishing villages. (p573)

ZAMORA & AROUND

Zamora is a little-visited Romanesque treasure. Not far away are the stunning medieval village of Puebla de Sanabria and the pretty Sierra de la Culebra, Europe's best wolf-spotting area. (p181)

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 also utterly beguiling. (p164)

SIERRAS SUBBÉTICAS

A surprising rural oasis of green hills, pretty villages, good hiking and excellent hotels and restaurants in the centre of Andalucía – with Granada, Córdoba and Málaga within easy reach. (p717)

CAZORLA

This lively, historic town, set where an ocean of olive groves meets rugged mountains, is the perfect base for exploring the big, beautiful Parque Natural Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas. (p781)



Among the least known but most beautiful of Spain's Pyrenean retreats, these twin valleys are laced with superb hikes, cosy lodgings and great meals. (p418)

CISTERCIAN ROUTE

The Cistercian Route weaves between three venerable monasteries that showcase some of Catalonia's most beautiful architecture – and the classy Priorat wine region is close by. (p398)



CABO DE GATA & ALMERÍA

The beach-and-cliff-strung Cabo de Gata promontory is dramatic, wild and an antidote to overdeveloped shorelines. Its gateway, Almería, is one of Spain's most agreeable smaller cities. (p790)

CARTAGENA

With a lovely waterfront and wonderful natural harbour in use for millennia, this port is one of Spain's most historically fascinating cities – an excellent surprise stop on the Mediterranean coast. (p838)

Behind the Scenes

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

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OUR READERS

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THIS BOOK

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Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Isabella Noble

Andorra, Cádiz Province, Catalonia, Formentera, Gibraltar, Ibiza, Menorca English-Australian on paper but Spanish at heart, Isabella has been wandering the globe since her first round-the-world trip as a one-year-old. Having grown up in a white-washed Andalusian village, she is a Spain specialist travel journalist, but also writes extensively about India, Thailand, the UK and beyond for Lonely Planet, the Daily Telegraph and others. Find Isabella on Twitter and Instagram @isabellamnoble.



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Aragón, Córdoba Province, Galicia, Jaén Province John has been travelling for Lonely Planet since the 1980s. The number of LP titles he's written is well into three figures, on numerous countries scattered across the globe. He's still as excited as ever about unfamiliar destinations. Above all, he loves mountains, from the Pyrenees to the Himalaya. See his pics on Instagram: @johnnoble11. John also contributed to the Understand section of this book.



Josephine Quintero

Castilla-La Mancha Josephine launched her journalism degree at a wine and life-style magazine followed, ironically, with a move to 'dry' Kuwait where she worked as the Editor of the *Kuwaiti Digest* until the day Iraq invaded. After six weeks as a hostage, Josephine moved to the relaxed shores of Andalucía in southern Spain. Josephine has worked as a ghostwriter for crooks and minor celebrities, while also regularly writing for in-flight magazines and Lonely Planet. She primarily covers

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Málaga Province, Andalucía Born and raised in the UK, Brendan didn't leave Blighty until he was 19. He's since squeezed 70 countries into a sometimes precarious existence as a writer and professional vagabond. He has written over 40 books for Lonely Planet from Castro's Cuba to the canyons of Peru. When not scribbling research notes, Brendan likes partaking in ridiculous 'endurance' races, strumming old Clash songs on the guitar, and experiencing the pleasure and pain

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Andy Symington

Valencia & Murcia Andy has written or worked on over a hundred books and other updates for Lonely Planet (especially in Europe and Latin America) and other publishing companies, and has published articles on numerous subjects for a variety of newspapers, magazines and websites. He part-owns and operates a rock bar, has written a novel and is currently working on several fiction and non-fiction writing projects. Andy, from Australia, moved to Northern Spain many years ago. When he's

not off with a backpack in some far-flung corner of the world, he can probably be found watching the local football side or tasting local wines after a long walk in the nearby mountains.

Contributing Writers

Esme Fox contributed to the Barcelona chapter.



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, Dublin, 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



Gregor Clark

Asturias, Cantabria, Huelva Province, Picos de Europa Gregor is a US-based writer whose love of languages and curiosity about what's around the next bend have taken him to dozens of countries on five continents. Since 2000, Gregor has contributed to Lonely Planet guides, with a focus on Europe and the Americas. Titles include *France*, *Portugal* and *Mexico*, among many others. Gregor has lived in California, France, Spain and Italy prior to settling with his wife and two daughters in Vermont.



Sally Davies

Barcelona Sally landed in Seville in 1992 with a handful of pesetas and five words of Spanish, and, despite a complete inability to communicate, promptly snared a lucrative number handing out leaflets at Expo '92. In 2001 she settled in Barcelona, where her daily grind involves nose-to-tail eating, getting lost in museums and finding ways to convey the beauty of this spectacular city.



Duncan Garwood

Almería Province, Granada Province, Seville From facing fast bowlers in Barbados to sidestepping hungry pigs in Goa, Duncan's travels have thrown up many unique experiences. These days he largely dedicates himself to Spain and Italy, where he's been living since 1997. He's worked on more than 30 Lonely Planet titles, covering Rome, Sardinia, Sicily, Bilbao and San Sebastián, among others, and has contributed to books on food and epic drives.



Anthony Ham

Castilla y León, Extremadura, Madrid & Around Anthony is a writer and photographer who specialises in Spain, East and Southern Africa, the Arctic and the Middle East. In 2001, after years of wandering the world, Anthony fell irretrievably in love with Madrid. When he finally left ten years later, he was married to a local and Madrid had become his second home. Now back in Australia, he continues to travel in search of stories. Anthony also contributed to the Plan Your

Trip and Survival Guide sections of this book.



Catherine Le Nevez

Barcelona Catherine's wanderlust kicked in when she roadtripped across Europe from her Parisian base aged four, and she's been hitting the road at every opportunity since, travelling to around 60 countries and completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and postgrad qualifications in Editing and Publishing along the way. She's written scores of Lonely Planet guides and articles covering Paris, France, Europe and beyond.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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