

### Arcos de la Frontera

Deemed one of the most spectacular “pueblos blancos” (white villages), Arcos dramatically hangs from the cliff overlooking the Guadalete valley. The old portion of the city is full of twisting roads no more than a few feet wide.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

##### Plaza de Cabildo

This is the main square where you will find the town hall, the Castillo (castle), Parador, and the Iglesia de Santa María with a beautiful Gothic façade in Mudéjar style and some frescos from the 14th century. You also have a great view across the Guadalete gorge.



##### Iglesia de Santa María

*Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri 1000-1300 and 1530-1830; Sat 1000-1400*

Its southern façade is topped by an ornate 18th-century Baroque belfry, but the highlight is the finely carved Plateresque doorway on the west side. Built on the site of a mosque, the church interior is well worth visiting for its exquisitely ornate Baroque choir stalls, carved in mahogany, ebony and cedar.

##### Convento de las Mercedarias Descalzas

*Hours of Operation: Opened daily 0830-1430 and 1700-1900*

Buy homemade galletas (cookies) from the nuns at this convent. Just ring the doorbell by the revolving door to request and pay for your cookies.

##### Old Town Tour & Patios Tour (operated by Arcos Tourist Office)

*Hours of Operation: Mon – Sat 1000-1500 and 1600-1930; Sign up at the tourism office for walking tours.*

**Old Town Tour times:** 1030 and 1700 Mon – Fri, and 1030 on Sat

**Patios Tour times:** 1200 and 1830 Mon – Fri, and 1200 on Saturday

#### OTHER SIGHTS

- **San Pedro Galleria de Arte** – you can buy beautiful ceramic made by local artist, Andres Oviedo
- **Parador’s Café** – enjoy cafe on the terrace overlooking the cliff
- **San Pedro and San Miguel churches**

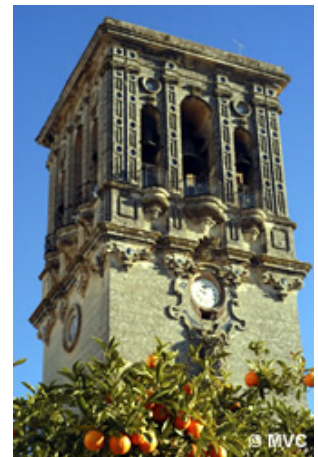
#### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

*Navidad and Belen Viviente-* during Christmas they celebrate the birth of Jesus with singing of carols, processions of Kings, and even a “living Bethlehem” with more than 20 scenes in the center of the city.

*Toro de Aleluya* – during Semana Santa celebrations, the two bulls (toros) charge through the streets of the old town on Easter Sunday.

*Fiesta de la Virgen de las Nieves* - in early August; flamenco and other live music performed in the Plaza del Cabildo.

*Feria de San Miguel* - starting on 28 September and lasts for three-days; the town’s fiesta dedicated to its patron saint.



**TRAVEL TIPS**

*Wear comfortable shoes for walking the hilly streets.*

*Park in the underground parking garage under the Paseo de Andalucía at the entrance to the town. Parking in the Plaza del Cabildo is very limited.*

**TRANSPORT**

**By Car:** Drive time is about 45 minutes.

Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Arcos de la Frontera Tourism Office

Plaza del Cabildo

Mon-Sat 10.00-14.00 and 15.30-19.30, Sun 10.00-14.00

Webpage: [www.ayuntamientoarcos.org](http://www.ayuntamientoarcos.org)



### Itinerary:

1730- Departs Naval Station, Bldg 48  
1800- Arrives in El Puerto de Santa Maria  
1900- Bullfight begins  
2230- Departs El Puerto de Santa Maria  
2300- Arrives Naval Station, Bldg 48



### Bull fighting

Bull fighting is a sport very closely associated with Spain, and its origins trace back to 711 A.D. This is when the first bullfight took place in celebration of the crowning of King Alfonso VIII. It is very popular in Spain with several thousand Spaniards flocking to their local bull-rings. The total number of people watching bullfights in Spain reaches one million every year.

Bull fighting was originally a sport for the aristocratic and took place on horseback. King Felipe V, however, took exception to the sport and banned the aristocracy from taking part believing it to be a bad example to the public. After the ban, commoners accepted the sport as their own and since they could not afford horses, they developed the practice of dodging the bulls on foot unarmed. This transformation occurred around 1724.

### What happens during a bullfight?

First the bull is let into the ring. Then the top bullfighter, the Matador, watches his chief assistant wave a bright yellow and magenta cape in front of the bull to make it charge. He watches this in order to determine the bull's qualities and mood, before taking over himself. Then a trumpet is sounded and several fighters called Picadores weaken the bull by placing spears into it. This takes around 10 minutes. Another trumpet is sounded and the Matador now removes his black winged hat and dedicates the death of the bull to the president or the crowd before beginning his *faena*.

The *faena* is the most beautiful and skillful part of the fight when the matador must prove his courage and artistry. The *faena* consists of the Matador being on foot and carrying a muleta, a piece of thick crimson cloth draped over a short stick. The muleta can be held in either the left hand or draped over the espada, the killing sword, which is always held in the right hand. Usually the muleta is first held in front of the matador to make the bull charge and is then swung across and away from the matador's body hopefully taking the bull with it. This is a show, basically a dance with death - one wrong move and the Matador could become impaled on the horns of the bull. It is the Matador's job to make this dance dramatic and enjoyable for the audience. The *faena* continues until the Matador has demonstrated his superiority over the bull. Once this is achieved the bull is ready to be killed.

The matador stands about ten feet from the bull keeping the bull fixated on the muleta and aims the espada between the shoulder blades. The matador then attacks pushing the espada over the horns and deep between the shoulder blades. If the sword goes in to the hilt it is an *estocada*, but if it hits bone it is a *pinchazo* or *media-estocada*. An *estocada* usually results in the bull dropping immediately to its knees and dying, but if the bull fails to



die, the matador may take the descabello (a sword with a short cross piece at the end) which he stabs into the bull's neck severing the spinal cord. Then the fight is over.

The matador may be awarded trophies by the president (director of the bull fight), according to his skills in killing the bull, which can be one or two ears from the bull, and the tail. The crowd will often encourage the president to award the trophies by waving white handkerchiefs, and this waving continues after the trophies have been awarded in an attempt to get the matador to throw his trophies into the crowd. The crowd in return hurls flowers which are collected by the matador's assistants. If whistling is heard at a bullfight, it signifies disapproval of either the bull's presence in the ring or their displeasure with the president because he didn't award a trophy.

## CÁDIZ “The Oldest Permanently Inhabited City in Western Europe”

Cádiz dates back to 1100 BC when it was founded by the Phoenicians. It hit its peak during the time of Christopher Columbus when he departed from Cadiz for his second and fourth voyages to the “New World.” Cadiz became the home port to the Spanish treasure fleet and received approximately 75% of the Spanish trade with America. During this time, Cadiz grew into one of the wealthiest and most cosmopolitan cities in Spain.



### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### Plaza de España

In this large plaza of Cádiz is a massive monument commemorating the meeting of the Cortes in Cádiz from 1810-1812, Spain's first representative national assembly, which enacted the constitution of 1812.

#### Museo de Cádiz (Plaza de Mina)

*Closed on Mondays; Tuesday 1430-2030; Wednesday - Saturday 0900-2030; Sunday 0930-1430*

An archeological and fine arts museum with outstanding exhibitions of Phoenician items.

#### Catedral Nueva (Plaza de Catedral)

*Monday – Friday 1000 – 1830; Saturday 1000 – 1630, Sundays 1300 – 1830.*

The interior of the New Cathedral in Cádiz, has massive pillars and a magnificent dome. The choir has fine 18th century stalls made by Pedro Duque Cornejo; the crypt contains the tombs of various bishops and the Cadiz native composer, Manuel de Falla.

#### Museo de la Catedral (Plaza de Fray Felix)

*Monday – Saturday 1000 – 1830, Sunday 1400 - 1830*

The Cathedral museum contains the cathedral treasury and a 13 ft high silver monstrance, the custodia del millón, which is said to be set with a million precious stones. There are also a number of valuable pictures, including works by Alonso Cano and Murillo.

#### Torre Tavira – Camara Oscura (Marques del Real Tesoro)

*Opened daily except on Christmas and New Year's Eve; from 15 June – 15 September hours are 1000 – 2200; from 16 September – 14 June 1000 – 1800.*

This is the highest and most important of the city's old watchtowers.



### OTHER SITES

- **Playa de la Caleta beach** - this beach is framed by the Santa Catalina and San Sebastián castles.
- **Alameda Apodaca park** – take a stroll along its gardens
- **Castillo Santa Catalina** and its museum – in Playa de la Caleta
- **Plaza de las Flores** – where you can find some good shopping or enjoy lunch at an outdoor café.

### LOCAL CULTURE

**Head to the beach!** Check out the beautiful beaches of La Playa de Caleta or La Playa de Victoria. La Playa de Caleta was used in the James Bond movie “Die Another Day.” There is also a nice walkway along this beach lined with chiringuitos (beach bars).

**Enjoy some seafood!** Surrounded by water, Cadiz has plenty of seafood restaurants. Try some local traditional seafood classics like gambas al ajillo (garlic shrimp), chocos fritos (fried calamari), pescado a la plancha (grilled whole fish), and more. Typical tapas include queso manchego (cheese of Spain), jamon Serrano (cured ham), ensaladilla (potato salad), and pimientos fritos (fried peppers).

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

*Parade of the Three Kings* – January 5<sup>th</sup>

*Carnival* – February; one of the largest carnival celebrations in Spain; known for its unique and off-beat costumes and also for its music and dancing.

*Semana Santa* – March



## TRAVELER TIPS

*Take the ferry over to Cadiz for a nice day trip. Parking may also be hard to find.*

*Be sure to remember some extra euros as well as a camera and comfortable walking shoes!*

## TRANSPORT

**By Ferry:** from Rota or Puerto; Takes approx. 30-45 minutes; Prices are approximate and may depend on the season. Pick up a schedule from the Traveler desk. *Note: Ferry does not operate in bad weather.*

**By Train:** from Puerto; Takes about 35 minutes; Visit [www.renfe.es/ingles](http://www.renfe.es/ingles) for times and prices

**By Car:** Takes about 40 minutes. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions.

## FOR MORE INFO...

Tourism Office:

Oficina de Turismo de la Junta de Andalucía

Avda. Ramón de Carranza s/n

Phone: 956.258.646

Email: [otcadiz@andalucia.org](mailto:otcadiz@andalucia.org)

Website: [www.andalucia.org](http://www.andalucia.org)



### CORDOBA

This city was originally inhabited by the Romans, however, it became more famous as a hub for the Moors. Cordoba happened to be the western capital of the Islamic empire during the 10th century. To this day, the Moorish occupancy remains evident with Moorish structures that still exist in the city.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### La Mezquita Cathedral

*Hours of Operation: Oct - Mar: Mon - Sat 1000 -1800 and Sun 1530-1730 and Apr - Sept on Mon - Sat 1000-1900 and Sun 1530-1900*

La Mezquita is a colossal, 10th century bastion in Cordoba, which is said to be the third largest place of worship in the world. La Mezquita was formerly a mosque consisting of several arches and over a hundred columns. The architectural design of this bastion is a mixture of Roman, Gothic, Byzantine, Syrian, and Persian fundamentals. La Mezquita was sanctified as a cathedral when the Christians took over the Moorish empire in Cordoba in 1236.



#### Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos (Palace of the Christian Kings)

*Hours of Operation: Oct – Apr Tues-Sat 1000-1400 and 1630-1830; May/Jun/Sept Tues-Sat 1000-1400 and 1730-1930; Jul – Aug on Tue-Sat from 0830-1430 and 2000-2400*

Alcazar de los Reyes Cristianos or The Palace of the Christian Kings was re-erected in the year 1328 by King Alfonso XI, the Spanish King of Castile and Leon. The entire castle covers over 4,000 square meters and in its interiors are impressive Arabian baths, Roman mosaics and a sarcophagus of marble from the 3rd century.

#### La Judería (Jewish Quarter)

*Hours of Operation: Tues-Sa from 0930-1430 and 1530-1730; Sun 0930-1400*

During the days of the Romans and the Goths, this Jewish area served a purpose of imperative cultural and scholarly value. Several shrines are found here to pay homage to the prominent people of Cordoba from past generations. Presently a few tabernacles from the ancient times still exist in the Juderia. This is also an ideal spot to find outlets of jewelers and silversmiths.

### ADDITIONAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Puente Romano and Río Guadalquivir** – The Roman Bridge is a two way passage over the Guadalquivir river that consists of 16 arcs with asymmetrical molds.
- **Torre de la Calahorra** - an Arabian structure located at the southern end of *Puente Romano*.
- **Museo Arqueológico** - found inside the magnificent *Renaissance Palace*.
- **Museo Julio Romero de Torres** - dedicated to display the works of the said painter.
- **Museo de Bellas Artes**



### LOCAL CULTURE

*Immerse yourself in Cordoba's Moorish Past.* Shop in the city's many Moorish-themed stores, enjoy a meal with Moorish influence or head to the hammam (Arabic bath) to relax and unwind.

*Purchase some local handicrafts.* Cordoba is known for its leather, painted ceramics and silver jewelry. Many of the shops surrounding the Mezquita have numerous objects for purchase.

*Enjoy a snack in the shadow of the Mezquita.* Bar Santos is a small bar well-known for its bocadillo (sandwiches). Set on the corner, the common overflow spot is the steps of the Mezquita.

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

*Festival of Patios* - 2nd week of May (usually starts on the first Wednesday of the month). This event aims to highlight the marvelous courtyards of Cordoba.

*Cruces de Mayo (Crosses of May Festival)* - celebrated annually on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd day of May. During this time, the whole town is decked out with crosses and an enormous quantity of flowers.

*Feria de Cordoba (Summer Feria)*- last week of May. This is regarded as a festival of *Flamenco* music and dance.



## TRAVEL TIPS

*Seeing all the sights in one day.* Be cautious of opening and closing times for each tourist sight. If you'd like to see the Mezquita and the Alcazar, head to the Alcazar first which takes a siesta (closed 1400-1630 or 1730) while the Mezquita stays open throughout the day.

*Wear comfortable shoes.* Though the old town is relatively small, prepare yourself for plenty of walking by wearing comfortable shoes.

*Avoid gypsy women trying to "give" you rosemary for donations.* Politely say, "No, gracias," and walk away.

## TRANSPORTATION

By Car: Approximately 3 hours; visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

## FOR MORE INFO...

Cordoba Tourism Office  
Plaza de las Tendillas

Website: [www.cordobaturismo.es](http://www.cordobaturismo.es)





### EL PUERTO DE SANTA MARIA - *Part of the "Sherry Triangle"*

This lively town is situated on the Costa de la Luz across the bay from Cadiz. There are 22 kilometers of Atlantic coastline around the town with 8 beaches. "El Puerto" as it is often called by locals, is the location where Christopher Columbus set sail on his 2<sup>nd</sup> voyage to America and it was an important fishing port. Its main industry now is the production of sherry and tourism.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

##### Castillo de San Marcos

*Hours of Operation: Tues – Sat 1000 – 1400.* The Saint Marcos Castle, located in the Plaza Alfonso X, is built on the site of an old Moorish mosque and dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

##### Plaza de Toros

This bullring is one of the oldest dating back to 1880, and is bustling during the Feria season when bullfights occur in July and August.

##### Monasterio de la Victoria

This monastery was a donation from the Duke of Medinaceli to a religious order; dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

##### Bodegas (Caballero, Grant, Osborne, Terry)

El Puerto is part of the "sherry triangle" which also includes Jerez and Sanlucar. The wineries are famous for their sherry and brandy. You can make an appointment to get a guided tour and to taste the sherry.

##### Iglesia Mayor Prioral

*Hours of Operation: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 0930–1300; 1800–1930; Thurs 0830-1300; 1800-1900; Sat 0930-1200; 1800-1930.* The El Puerto de Santa Maria Priory Church dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is located in Plaza España; admission is free.

#### OTHER SIGHTS

- **Fundacion Rafael Alberti** – Museum of the literature and paintings of the poet, Rafeal Alberti. Located on Calle Santo Domingo, 25; Tues-Sun 1100-1430.
- **Puerto Sherry** – a picturesque marina (located on Muralla Beach), where you can sit at a waterfront restaurant and enjoy the view across the bay.
- **Parque Natural Bahía de Cadiz**- this area has pine forests, salt marshes, and sandy beaches which serves as a haven for wildlife.
- **Beaches** – Vistahermosa, Las Redes, El Ancla, Fuentebravia, La Puntilla
- **Aqualand** – visit the water park for family fun; usually opens June – September
- **El Paseo Mall** – a great place to satisfy your shopping needs; has a good variety of stores including Carrefour

#### LOCAL CULTURE

*Visit the local gypsy market which is held on Tuesday at the Avenida de la Bajamar.*

*Do a little tapa hopping along the harbor. Sample local tapas and seafood which is their specialty.*

*Surfing buffs can enjoy riding the waves year-round. Locals and anyone willing to brave the cold in the winter can be seen surfing at the beaches of Las Redes.*



**FESTIVALS AND EVENTS**

The Three Kings – January 6th  
Las Fiestas del Carnaval – local carnival held in February  
Semana Santa (Holy Week) – Easter week processions held in March/April  
Feria del Vino Fino - Spring festival held in May  
Corpus Christi – a religious festival with a procession; held in June  
Dia de la Virgen del Carmen – 16 July

**TRAVELER TIPS**

*Ride your bike along the newly built green paths. Make sure you lock it up though because bike theft is common.*

**TRANSPORT**

**By Car:** Approximately 5-15 minutes directly outside the “Puerto” or Fuentebravia gates

**By Ferry:** The El Vaporcito ferry goes to Cadiz from El Puerto

**By Train:** The Cadiz to Sevilla line stops at the El Puerto station. See [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es) for more information.

**FOR MORE INFO...**

Tourism Office: Calle Luna, 956-542-413, [www.turismoelpuerto.com](http://www.turismoelpuerto.com)  
Paseo Maritimo s/n (Urb. Valdelagrana), 956-561-570

Websites: [www.elpuertodesantamaria.es](http://www.elpuertodesantamaria.es)



**Granada:** Home to the fortress La Alhambra, Granada was the Moors final stand on the Iberian Peninsula. After over 700 years of reign, the Christian's final siege laid on this city and its castle perched high above. Today the city still retains much of its North African influence through stores, restaurants and teahouses.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### La Alhambra

*Hours of Operation: (Mar-Oct) 8:30-20:00; (Nov-Feb) 8:30-18:00*

The Alhambra was declared World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 1984. Today it is one of the most interesting and beautiful

monuments in Spain. It was built as a watching center and later it became a palace and court complex. Inside La Alhambra, you can visit the Palacios Nazaries, the Alcazaba, the Charles V Palace, and Generalife Gardens.

#### Royal Chapel

*Hours of Operation: (Oct-Mar) Mon-Sat 10:30-13:00 and 15:30-18:30; (Apr-Sept Mon-Sat 10:30-13:00 and 16:00-19:00;*

*Sun 11:00-13:00 and 16:00-19:00.* The Royal Chapel was commissioned by the Catholic Monarchs and built in flamboyant Gothic style. Here you will find the mausoleums of Isabel and Ferdinand and their children Phillip "The Beautiful" and Joan "The Mad".

#### Cathedral

*Hours of Operation: (Oct-Mar) Mon-Sat 10:30-13:00; (Apr-Sept) Mon-Sat 10:30-13:00 and 16:00-19:00*

The Cathedral is located in the center of the Muslim area and dates back to 1523. It is considered the first renaissance church in Spain.

### OTHER SITES

- Arab baths - The building that houses the Arab Baths dates back to the XIII-XIV century, and water wells were found during the archaeological excavations. Both the structure of the building and its proximity to the former mosque leads them to think that they were used in public baths. They think the current building of the Arab baths is settled on an ancient hammam.
- Meander through the old quarter of Albaycin
- The overlook at San Nicholas Mirador with its views of la Alhambra
- Sacromonte (the heart of the Gypsy quarter) the traditional neighborhood of the Granada's gypsies, is where you can take in an Andalusian flamenco show.
- Sierra Nevada Mountains Sierra Nevada lodges the highest summits of the Iberian Peninsula and it has the main ski resort of the south of Europe.

### FESTIVAL AND EVENTS

*Granada music festival* - This annual festival offers visitors the chance to see Granada transform itself into an endless stage graced by ancient music, chamber and symphony performances and local flamenco.

*Semana Santa* - Holy week in Granada is one of the city's most deeply rooted traditions and is the one which attracts the largest number of visitors. Thirty-two brotherhoods set out on their processions on Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. The Gypsy processions are famous as they come down from Sacromonte with heavy floats playing devotional songs. The Silence or El Silencio is when street lights are switched off as the procession passes by and it goes around the Alhambra, winds its way around the Nazarene monument, and continues along the famous Puerta de la Justicia.



*Reyes Magos (Three Kings)* – On Jan 5th, children particularly welcome the arrival of the Three Kings with a big parade called the Cabalgata de los Reyes Magos, where the 3 Biblical monarchs process through the city accompanied by a whole entourage of colorful characters. The next morning, January 6, is like the Spanish equivalent of Christmas day in the United States- full of presents begging to be opened!

*Nochevieja (New Year's Eve)* - After a big family meal, young people take to the streets and head to Granada's main public squares- particularly the one in front of the Ayuntamiento (City Hall). The Spanish tradition is to eat twelve grapes- one with each chime of the clock- before uncorking the champagne and toasting everyone around you!

*Festival de San Cecilio* – On Feb 2nd, a celebration of the feast day of San Cecilio, Granada's patron saint, is held. A mass is held in the Abadía del Sacromonte (Sacromonte Abbey). Another big highlight of the festival is the gastronomic competitions- a great way to try the best of Granada's mouth-watering food!

## TRAVEL TIPS

*Wear comfortable shoes because you will be walking for hours!*

*Purchase your tickets for the Alhambra ahead of time because you might not be able to get them the day you visit. You can pre-buy your tickets for the Alhambra online at [www.alhambra-tickets.es](http://www.alhambra-tickets.es).*

**TRANSPORTATION:** Drive time is about 4 hours. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

## FOR MORE INFO...

*Granada Tourism Office:*  
Paseo Montes Jovellar, 5  
Alhama de Granada - 18120  
Phone: 958-360-686

Webpage: [www.turismodegranada.org](http://www.turismodegranada.org)



### Grazalema “A Hiker’s Paradise”

Grazalema is known for being one of the wettest villages in Spain due to its microclimatic position. It is a classic white village with white washed houses, cobbled narrow streets, and iron balconies. Traditionally, the economy of the village relied on small-scale agriculture, sheep herding, cork harvesting, and handicrafts. These activities are now quite limited and under-resourced. Due to the location of Grazalema in the middle of the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, and because the town is one of the pueblos blancos (white villages of Andalusia), tourism now plays a major role in sustaining the village. The mountainous area around Grazalema is popular with climbers and hikers, and local people make money by providing accommodations and hospitality to visitors.



#### POINTS OF INTEREST

##### Grazalema Natural Park

This 51,695 hectare park is famous for its spectacularly rugged limestone landscape of cliffs, gullies, caves, and gorges. The trails that fall within the national park require a permit. These trails include El Torreón, El Pinsapar, Garganta Verde, and Llano de Ravel. Permits are required to limit the number of visitors to some areas. Passport information is needed along with dates on which day you wish to enter and with how many people. The walking routes of Pinsapar and Torreón are closed each July - September to protect them from fire.

**Plaza de España** - In the heart of the village is this attractive main square lined with bars and restaurants. Here you will find many other points of interest: the Church of La Aurora is from the 18th-century, the town hall (ayuntamiento), and the parish church, Iglesia de la Encarnación.

**The Tourist Information Center** – here you can find guide books, maps, and other information sources. They have local artisan products and display exhibitions of artwork and photography too. They can also arrange your entrance permits for the restricted areas of the national park.



#### OTHER SIGHTS

- **Iglesia de San José** - a former 17th century Carmelite convent with paintings by a disciple of Murillo.
- **Puerto del Boyar Mirador** – this lookout is outside of Grazalema and has a 7 km walking trail leading to another white village, Benaocaz.
- **Pinsapo fir trees** – these trees are usually found in cold areas. Due to the location of Grazalema, these prehistoric trees can be found in abundance in the national park and a few around town. It is recorded as being prehistoric because it is the only tree to have survived the last ice age.

#### LOCAL CULTURE

**Purchase some local goods.** Grazalema is also known for its wool products which are made in little stores around the city. The surrounding countryside produces honey, jams, olive oil and more. The easiest place to purchase all these items is in their local store, Todo Sierra.

**Hike to the top of the hill.** Above the city, there is a small mirador. Be advised that it is all uphill and requires sturdy shoes. It is also recommended that you take water with you.

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Last Sunday in May - Romería of San Isidro Labrador celebrates the arrival of summer.  
June 13 - the village celebrates Benamahoma, the fiesta in honor of its patron, San Antonio.  
Third week of July- the Fiestas of Carmen  
First Sunday in August - Benamahoma celebrates the festival of Moors and Christians  
Third week of August - the most important agricultural festivals in Grazalema are held.  
September 8 - the day of the Virgin of the Angeles, who is the patron saint of Grazalema.

## TRAVELER TIPS

**Wear comfortable walking shoes.** This town is hilly and some surfaces are uneven.

**Be cautious of cyclist while driving to Grazalema.** The winding mountain road is a popular place for cyclists to ride, but can also be very dangerous.

## TRANSPORTATION

**By Car:** Approximately 2 hours driving time. Choose the best travel route for yourself on the ViaMichelin website at [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com).

## FOR MORE INFO...

### Tourist Office:

Centro de Información Turística  
Plaza de Los Asomaderos  
Hours of operation: daily from 10 am to 7 pm

**Websites:** Grazalema Guide: [www.grazalemaguide.com](http://www.grazalemaguide.com)

[www.andalucia.com/environment/protect/grazalema.htm](http://www.andalucia.com/environment/protect/grazalema.htm)



## Jerez “World Famous for its Sherry”

Jerez is a derivative of Sherry Xerez or Shariz, an Arabic name that was given to the city, occupied by the Moors for hundreds of years. Jerez de la Frontera is a municipality in the province of Cádiz situated midway between the sea and the mountains. This city is one of the largest in Andalucía and is known as the capital of sherry wine, horses, and the flamenco.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### González Byass Bodega

*Hours for English speaking tours: Mon – Sat 11:30, 12:30, 13:30, 14:00, 15:30, 16:30, and 17:30; In Summer, 15:30 tour is replaced by an 18:30 one. Sun: 11:30, 12:30, and 13:30.* This bodega is famous for Tio Pepe sherry. Learn how they make sherry on the tour and you might even get to see mice taking a sip!

#### Royal Andalucían School of Equestrian Art

*Hours of Operation: Tues – Thurs 1200 year-round; Fri 1200 in Aug; Visits to facilities and trainings: Mon, Wed, Fri – except in Aug, from 1100 – 1400; Sat – visits to museums, palace and gardens 1100 – 1400. (www.realescuela.org)*

Beautiful Carthusian horses trained at this school were first bred by Carthusian monks for many years. Contact the school for visits to their training sessions or shows.

#### Cathedral of San Salvador

*Hours of Operation: Mon – Sat 1130–1300; 1830-2000; Sun 1130,1330,1930,2100* Located in the Plaza de la Encarnacion, this cathedral was built on top of the Moorish mosque in 1695 and construction was completed in 1778. The Cathedral is a Gothic building that has Baroque and neoclassical elements designed by at least seven architects.

#### Cartuja de Santa Maria de la Defension (The Monastery of Our Lady of Defense)

*Mass on Tues & Sat 0800; Sundays and Mondays 1730.*

This structure is considered one of the most important monuments in the Province of Cadiz. The monastery belongs to the Cartesian Order and no one can enter the monastery or church except during mass, but you can view the exterior building and garden.



#### Alcázar (11-12<sup>th</sup> century Muslim fortress)

*Hours of Operation: from 1<sup>st</sup> May – 15 Sept 1000 – 2000; From 16<sup>th</sup> Sept – 30 Apr 1000 – 1800; Sun 1000 – 1500*

The walls of this fortress are solid evidence of its Moorish past. Enjoy its beautiful gardens, baths, and mosque.

#### Centro Andaluz de Flamenco (Flamenco Center)

*Hours of Operation: Mon – Fri 0900 – 1400; free admission*

Located in the Pemartin Palace, this center provides an insight to the history of flamenco with an archive of music and audiovisuals.



**OTHER SIGHTS**

- **Hamman Andalusi (Arabic Baths)** – don't miss this experience to treat yourself to a relaxing bath and massage
- **Zoobotanico** (Zoo and botanical gardens) - opened winter from 10:00 to 18:00; summer from 10:00 to 20:00; Closed Sundays
- **Jerez Archaeological Museum** – in Plaza de Mercado; this museum is known for the wonderful displays featuring a Greek helmet and the Bronze Age stone sculpture as well as a library
- **Other Bodegas** – Alvaro Domecq, Fundador Pedro Domecq, Garvey, Harveys, Sandeman, Real Tesoro, and many more.
- **Plaza del Arenal** - one of the main squares in Jerez with a monument in the middle of the plaza of General Miguel Primo de Rivera who was the dictator of Spain between 1923 and 1930.
- **Area Sur Mall and La Luz Shopping** – satisfy your shopping needs at these large malls



**LOCAL CULTURE**

Visit the gypsy market held each Monday at Calle Hijuela de Las Coles. Here you'll find inexpensive clothing, curtains, and olives by the gallon!

For a cultural evening of guitar playing, dancing, and singing watch an authentic flamenco show performed at one of many restaurants or flamenco clubs.

The Motorcycle Grand Prix at the Circuit de Montecastillo is held just outside of Jerez in May. More than 150,000 bikers visit the city for this event which normally takes about 3 days.

**FESTIVALS & EVENTS**

- Jan 5 – Cabalgata Reyes Magos (the Magic Kings Parade)
- Jan 20 – San Anton (Blessing of the Animals Festival)
- Early Feb – Carnaval
- Feb-Mar - Festival de Jerez (Flamenco festival)
- Late April –early May – Feria De Caballo (Horse Fair)

**TRANSPORT**

**By Car:** Driving time is about 25 minutes. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the ITT or Outdoor Recreation desk for information regarding discount GPS rentals.

**By Train:** The Estacion de Ferrocarril train station is located in the Plaza de la Estacion, s/n. Check train schedules on [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es).

**By Bus:** There are many different bus lines in Jerez... Comes ([www.tgcomes.es](http://www.tgcomes.es)), Unionbus ([www.eurobus-sa.com](http://www.eurobus-sa.com)), Linesur ([www.linesur](http://www.linesur)), Secorbus ([www.socibus.es](http://www.socibus.es))

**By Air:** Jerez has an international airport which is the main airport closest to Rota (30 mins).

**FOR MORE INFO...**

**Tourism Office**

Alameda Cristina s/n. Claustros de Santo Domingo. C.P. 11403  
Phone: 956.341.711; 956.338.874

Website: [www.turismojerez.com](http://www.turismojerez.com)





### Las Fallas: A Fiery Festival!

Las Fallas is a traditional Valencian celebration in praise of Saint Joseph. The term Fallas or “Falles” refers to both the celebration and the monuments that are created for and then destroyed during the festivities. These flammable monuments, up to 5 stories tall, are often satirical, parodying political and cultural figures, although cartoon characters and popular icons also abound.

During the festival, the city resembles an open-air nightclub with the sound of fireworks instead of music. Stalls sell products such as the typical fried snacks xurros (churros) and bunyols (fried pastries), as well as roast chestnuts and various trinkets.

The five days and nights of Las Fallas are one continuous celebration with processions galore – historical processions, religious processions, and hysterical processions. The restaurants spill out to the streets and children and adults wear elaborate festival dress. Explosions can be heard all day long and sporadically through the night with everyone from small children to elderly gentlemen throwing fireworks in the streets, which are littered with pyrotechnical debris.

### HISTORY

One theory of the history of the festival suggests that Las Fallas started in the Middle Ages, when artisans burned leftover pieces of winter wood to celebrate the spring equinox. During the winter, Valencian carpenters used planks of wood (called “parots”) to hold candles for light to work by. In the spring, the no longer necessary parots were burned.

With time, and the intervention of the Church, the date of the burning of these parots came to coincide with the celebration of the festival of Saint Joseph, the patron saint of the carpenters. Las Fallas evolved as the parots were first dressed to look like figures and then given features to mimic some known person. Wax and cardboard were added, and neighborhoods joined together to create more elaborate fallas than their neighbors.

Today, an entire suburban area of Valencia is dedicated to the creation of the fallas with crews of artists, sculptors, and painters spending months building the more than 500 fallas of the Valencian celebration.

### FESTIVAL DATES & TIMES

**Dates:** March 15-19 in Valencia

**Locations:** Las Fallas is common throughout the entire province but the one in Valencia is by far the largest!



## EVENTS

**La Despertà (0800 every morning):** Each day of Falles begins with la despertà ("the wake-up call"). Brass bands march down every road playing lively music. Close behind them, the fallers throw large firecrackers in the street as they go.

**La Mascletà (1400 every afternoon):** The Mascletà is an explosive display of co-ordinated fireworks barrages, taking place in each neighbourhood at 2pm every day of the festival. The main event is the municipal Mascleta in the Plaça de l'Ajuntament where the pyrotechnicians compete for the honor of providing the final Mascleta of the festival on March 19<sup>th</sup>. The Mascletà is unique to Valencia, with smaller neighborhoods often holding their own mascletas.

**L'Ofrenda Floral (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>):** Each falla casal takes an offering of flowers to the virgin throughout the days of March 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. The virgin's body is then constructed with these flowers.

**Els Castells and La Nit del Foc (15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>):** On the nights of the 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, there are fireworks displays in the old riverbed in Valencia. Each night is progressively grander and the last is called La Nit del Foc ("the night of fire").

**La Cremà (midnight of the 19<sup>th</sup>):** The festival reaches its culmination on El Día de San José (Day of St. Joseph). On the final night of Las Fallas, around midnight on March 19th, the fallas are burnt as huge bonfires. This is known as the cremà ("the burning") and is of course the climax of the whole event, and the reason why the constructions are called fallas ("torches"). Traditionally, the falla in the Plaça de l'Ajuntament at the city center is burned last. Many neighborhoods have a falla infantil, a smaller children's falla without satirical themes, which burnt first at 10pm.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Valencia is a large city with lots of hotels to accommodate all price ranges. Check out Priceline Europe at [www.priceline-europe.com](http://www.priceline-europe.com) or contact a local travel agency.

## TRANSPORT

**By Car:** Approximately 8-9 hours driving time. The route may include toll roads. Choose the best travel route for yourself on the ViaMichelin website at [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com).

**By Train:** Approximately 8.5 hours from Sevilla's Santa Justa station. If you do not have a car, you can reach Santa Justa station from El Puerto de Santa Maria train station. Check out the RENFE website for current train schedules and prices at [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es).

**By Airplane:** The major Spanish airlines, Iberia and Spanair, fly from several airports in Andalusia to Valencia. Their websites are [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com) or [www.spanair.com](http://www.spanair.com).

## FOR MORE INFO...

Las Fallas Information: [www.fallasfromvalencia.com](http://www.fallasfromvalencia.com)  
Valencia Tourism Office: [www.turisvalencia.es](http://www.turisvalencia.es)

#### Madrid "Spain's Capital"

The capital of Spain, Madrid is located in the center of the peninsula and has a population of over three million people. It is a cosmopolitan city, a business center, headquarters for the Public Administration, Government, Spanish Parliament, and the home of the Spanish Royal Family. Madrid plays a major role in both the banking and industrial sectors, but is also characterized by intense cultural and artistic activity and has a very lively nightlife.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

##### Palacio Real (Royal Palace)

*Hours of Operation: Oct-Mar, Mon-Sat: 0930-1700. Sun: 0900-1400; April-Sept Mon-Sat: 0900-1800, Sun: 0900-1500*

Visit the royal palace of the King and Queen of Spain, which is now only used for state ceremonies. The massive complex is not the palace that you would expect, gaudy royalty, but interesting at the same time. The most fascinating part is the royal armory where they display the armor worn by kings (adult and child alike) and their horses.

##### Prado Museum

*Hours of Operation: Tuesday-Sunday: 0900-2000. Closed Mondays, January 1, Good Friday, May 1 and December 25.*

It features one of the world's finest collections of European art, from the 12th century to the early 19th century, based on the former Spanish Royal Collection.

##### Mueso Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sophia

*Hours of Operation: Mon-Sat: 1000-2100, Sun: 1000-1430 and closed Tues.*

A contemporary art museum that is best known for having Picasso's "Guernica." Picasso had stated that the artwork would not be allowed into the country until it was returned to democracy.

##### Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

*Hours of Operation: Tues-Sun: 1000-1900. Closed Mondays.*

There are a large number of paintings from Italian, German, Flemish, Dutch and American artists including works from van Dyck, Brueghel, Rubens, Rembrandt, Titian, Dürer and Derick Baeger, Mondriaan, Picasso, O'Keefe and Kandinsky.

##### Parque del Buen Retiro

A wonderful park filled with beautiful sculptures and monuments, galleries, a peaceful lake and host to a variety of events. Great place to relax, have a drink, or go for a walk.

#### OTHER SIGHTS

- **Gran Via** – famous street in Madrid full of luxury hotels, hostals, high fashion, and cheap tacky stores. A little bit of everything!
- **Plaza Mayor** - the epicenter of Madrid and a nice place to sit outdoor and have a café con leche.
- **El Rastro Market** – a popular and crowded Sunday flea market opened from 0800 – 1300.
- **The Plaza de España** - one of Madrid's largest and most popular squares.

#### LOCAL CULTURE

**Sample Spain's tapas.** The newly reopened Mercado San Miguel is a foodie's heaven. Set in a refurbished 1916 building, the public market is buzzing from 1000 until almost midnight. The focus here is not purchasing food to take home and cook but sampling the cuisine. It has tapas available for purchase from all over Spain. There are numerous wine stalls selling wine by the glass, pastry shops, bread and even an oyster bar. Stop by for a drink, lunch or quick bite before dinner.



**Quench your cravings for American food!** Typically we promote enjoying the local cuisine but we'll make a rare exception for Hard Rock Café! What's better than some southwest appetizers, a hefty hamburger and a cold American brew. Satisfy all your cravings while listening to rock n' roll in this iconic restaurant.

**Take a day trip.** There are several historical towns that can be done as day trips from Madrid. Toledo, Segovia, Pamplona and Zaragoza to name a few! If you enjoy Spanish wine, you could head into the Rioja region and participate in a winery tour.

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Large American and European bands stop in Madrid for performance. You can checkout upcoming concerts on Ticketmaster España at [www.ticketmaster.es](http://www.ticketmaster.es)

**New Year' Eve** is celebrated at *Puerta del Sol* where thousands flock together waiting for midnight when everybody tries to eat twelve grapes... bringing good luck for the coming year.

**January 5th** - Three Kings Day; as in other cities of Spain, there is a procession of the *three Magi*.

**May 15th** - **Fiesta de San Isidro** to the honor of Madrid's patron, one of the best events of the year with numerous concerts and other kinds of public performances.

**July and August** - Series of cultural events are held called **Veranos de la Villa**, "*Summer in the Village*".

**August 6-15th**- the festival **Verbena de la Paloma**; shows best the popular traditions of Madrid.

**September** the concert houses and theaters have their best performances, while in **November** you may visit Madrid's **International Jazz-Festival**. In **December** there is an exposition of Christmas cribs at *Plaza Mayor*.

## TRAVELER TIP

*Shoppers beware...*the market is crawling with pickpockets, so keep a tight hold on your belongings and don't keep valuables in easy-to-reach pockets.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Madrid is a large city with lots of hotels to accommodate all prices ranges. Check out Priceline Europe at [www.priceline-europe.com](http://www.priceline-europe.com).

## TRANSPORTATION

**By Car:** Approximately 6-7 hours driving time. The route may include toll roads. Choose the best travel route for yourself on the ViaMichelin website at [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) .

**By Train:** Approximately 3 hours from Sevilla's Santa Justa station. If you do not have a car, you can reach Santa Justa station from El Puerto de Santa Maria train station. Check out the RENFE website for current train schedules and prices at [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es).



**By Airplane:** The major airlines, Iberia and Spanair, fly from several airports in Andalusia to Madrid. Their websites are [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com) and [www.spanair.com](http://www.spanair.com) .

## FOR MORE INFO...

Madrid Tourism: [www.esmadrid.com](http://www.esmadrid.com)  
Prado Museum: [www.museoprado.es](http://www.museoprado.es)  
Palacio Real: [www.patrimoniocional.es](http://www.patrimoniocional.es)  
Centro de Arte Reina Sophia: [www.museoreinasofia.es](http://www.museoreinasofia.es)  
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum: [www.museothyssen.org](http://www.museothyssen.org)



### Malaga

City, seaport, and holiday resort in southern Spain on the Mediterranean Sea, Malaga is the capital city of the Costa del Sol. Birthplace of Picasso, the attractive, cosmopolitan city of Malaga lies on a beautiful bay in Andalucía. Blessed with sunshine and a spectacular quality of light, Malaga is a city of wide boulevards, swaying palm trees, lively nightlife, good museums, and excellent seafood restaurants.



### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### La Alcazaba

*Hours of operation: Closed on Mon; Oct –Apr 0930-1800; Jun-Sept 0930-2000*

A short walk up from the Plaza de Aduana are the solid fortified walls of La Alcazaba, a major landmark of the city. This fortress dates back to the 700s, although much of the current structure belongs to the mid 11th century. The entrance is through the gateway known as the Puerta del Cristo (Christ's Door), where the first mass was celebrated following the Christian victory over the town.

#### Castillo de Gibralfaro

*Hours of operation: daily from 0900–1745*

The castle is famous for being the site of a three-month siege by the citizens of Malaga against the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. This magnificent building dates back to the beginning of the 14th century when it was built by Yusef 1 of Granada on a former Phoenician site and lighthouse from which the castle's name was derived "gebel-faro" (rock of the lighthouse).

#### "La Manquita" Cathedral

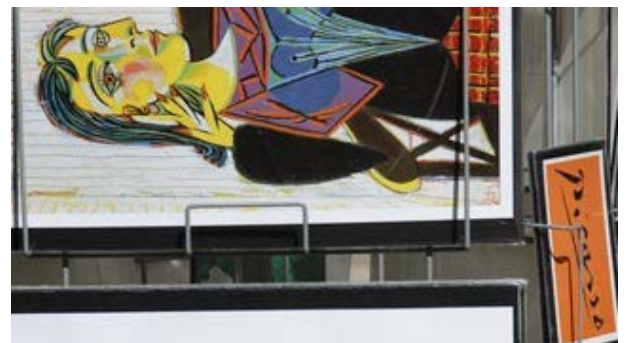
*Closed on Sun; Mon-Fri: 1000 – 1845; Sat 1000–1745*

Malaga's cathedral was built between 1528 and 1782 on or near the site of a former mosque. While original plans had allowed for two towers, lack of funds resulted in the completion of only one. This resulted in the name by which the cathedral which is affectionately referred to as "La Manquita," which loosely translates to "one armed woman." The mixture of styles is very apparent with a predominance of the Renaissance style. The lower parts are Gothic, while the coverings and facades are Baroque.

#### Picasso Museum

*Closed on Mon; Tues-Thurs: 1000-2000; Fri-Sat: 1000-2100; Sun and Holidays: 1000-2000 (Palacio de Buenavista, c/ San Agustín, 8)*

The museum, funded by the Junta de Andalucía with the support of heirs of the Andalusian artist, is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream of Picasso. It displays classic Picasso works, sketches, and ceramics as well as excellent temporary exhibitions.



### OTHER SIGHTS

- Casa Natal (Birthplace of Picasso) - exhibition rooms as well as pictures and a view of how life was for the artist in his early years in Malaga (located in Plaza de la Merced)
- The Roman Theater - located just below La Alcazaba, was not discovered until 1951. It hasn't been used since the 3rd century and the Moors used elements from the Theater in the construction of La Alcazaba.
- Botanical Gardens Finca la Concepcion – on the north side of the city (closed on Mondays)
- Marqués de Larios, Málaga's swanky shopping street, is traffic-free and luxurious with glossy marble pavements and expensive shops. On either side are alleyways and tiny squares with a number of churches and museums all within close range.

- Tivoli World - a theme park with many exciting rides. There are daily shows varying from Andalucian flamenco, Wild West Shows, and an open-air theatre presenting live music, ballet and children's specials.
- Beaches - The city of Malaga has three different types of beaches: the eastern beaches; the second group of beaches comprises those that extend from the Port of Malaga to the Pleasure Port of El Candado.

## LOCAL CULTURE

*Enjoy the gastronomy and wine of Malaga.* Most popular food includes pescaito frito (fried fish) and espeto of sardines. Malaga is known for its Quita penas which is a sweet wine only made here. Cartojal wine is a famous wine served during the feria of Malaga.

## FESTIVALS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Semana Santa (Holy Week) – week prior to Easter Sunday  
Feria of Malaga (two locations: downtown & feria grounds) – Mid-August

## TRAVEL TIPS

*Avoid the gypsy women trying to “give” you rosemary for a donation.*

*Remember that shops close for siesta so try to hit stores early.*

*Find a tourist office for a city map and suggested walking tours.*

*Wear comfortable shoes for all the walking you will be doing and for climbing the steep paths of the Alcazaba.*

## TRANSPORTATION

**By car:** approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

**By train:** from El Puerto de Santa Maria train station, you will make a connection in Sevilla to reach Malaga. The website for train information is [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es).

**By bus:** from Rota bus station, you will make a connection in Cadiz to reach Malaga. Portillo runs buses from Cadiz to Malaga bus station.

## FOR MORE INFO...

Malaga Tourism Office:  
Plaza de la Marina, 11, 29001  
952-219-893

Website: [www.malagaturismo.com](http://www.malagaturismo.com)  
[www.andalucia.com](http://www.andalucia.com)



### Marbella

With its gorgeous beaches that stretch for miles and a more sophisticated atmosphere than much of the Costa del Sol, it's no wonder that Marbella and the cosmopolitan area of Puerto Banus, attract the rich and famous. Marbella's center, however, retains its aspect of an important merchant town occupied by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. Remnants of its history can be seen in the well-preserved architecture and streets of the Casco Antiguo. Today Marbella serves primarily as an elegant beachside retreat for a wealthy international crowd.



### POINTS OF INTEREST

#### Plaza de los Naranjos

The Orange Square is the center of Marbella and is one of the most beautiful plazas in the Costa del Sol. Located in this square are the city hall, the Casa del Corregidor palace, and the Ermita de Santiago (chapel). Enjoy the outdoor seating at one of many restaurants in the square.

#### Avenida del Mar

This beautiful walkway from downtown Marbella to the Paseo Maritimo has fountains, yellow marble floors, and a wonderful view of the sea. What makes this walkway special are the ten bronze sculptures of the surrealist artist, Dali.

#### Puerto Banus

This town was built as a typical Andalucian fishing village along the marina. Docked in the marina are some of the most impressive yachts in the world- many owned by the king and princes of Saudi Arabia. It's considered one of the premier Mediterranean resorts because of the luxury stores, nightlife, and the jet setters who flock there every year. *Now they have a Hard Rock Café for those interested in good American cuisine.*

**Casco Antiguo (Old town)** is comprised of small cobble stoned streets lined with little craft stores and boutiques.

**La Cañada Shopping Mall** is the largest shopping mall in the Costa del Sol with 150 shops.

### OTHER SIGHTS

- Aquarium Puerto Banús
- Beautiful Parks – Alameda, Parque de Constitución, and Arroyo de la Represa
- Funny Beach – has an amusement park
- El Cable Beach – has summer evening concerts and entertainment
- Roman Villa – in Rio Verde see the remains of a Roman villa
- Marbella Ralli Museum – houses the most important collection of Latin-American art in Europe, including art from Dalí, Max Ernst, & Miró.



### LOCAL CULTURE

*Street market of Marbella:* every Monday from 9 am to 2 pm, at the fair site (Las Albarizas area).

**FESTIVALS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Semana Santa** – celebrated from Palm Sunday to Good Friday and then Easter Sunday

**Cruz del Juanar** – (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) A procession climbs up the mountain where the Cross of Juanar is located.

**San Bernabe Fair** – (June) The most important day is June 11, which is the Commemoration of the Christian Conquest.

**The night of San Juan** – night in June, celebrated on beaches; people dip their feet in the sea after midnight for good luck.

**Virgin del Carmen** – (July 16) This patron saint of sailors is celebrated with a procession of the image of the virgin in a boat decorated with flowers.

**The Three Wise Men Parade** – (Jan 6) Three men dress up as the kings ride and ride in town on mules or horses giving out sweets to children.



**TRAVEL TIPS.**

*Remember that shops close for siesta so try to hit stores early.*

**TRANSPORTATION**

By car: approximately 3 hours. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

By train: the website for train information is [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es).

By bus: from Rota or El Puerto de Santa Maria bus station, you will make a connection in Cadiz to reach Marbella. The website for the bus timetable is [www.ctsa.portillo.com](http://www.ctsa.portillo.com).

**FOR MORE INFO...**

Marbella Main Tourism Office :  
Glorieta de la Fontanilla, Paseo Marítimo  
Phone: 952 77 14 42

Website: [www.marbella.com](http://www.marbella.com)





#### Mérida

The capitol of Extremadura, Mérida, was one of the most famous Roman capitols of the Iberian Peninsula, and it boasts some of the best preserved Roman ruins in Europe. Extremadura had a history of Moorish and Christian occupation in Spain, and Mérida itself was passed between Christian, Moorish, and even Portuguese control. It was founded in the year 25 BC, with the name of Emerita Augusta (meaning discharged soldiers of the army of Augustus who founded the city and later becoming *Mérida*) by order of Emperor Augustus, to protect a pass and a bridge over the Guadiana river. This a fabulous place to visit Roman ruins, next to Rome. Mérida will not disappoint with its archaeological excavations, and the Moorish influence adds a grace of its own to the town.



#### POINTS OF INTEREST

##### The Alcazaba

*Hours of Operation: Jun-Sept: 0930-1345; 1700-1915 (Oct-May closes 1815).* The Alcazaba (Citadel) is a 9th century Muslim fortress and the first Arab fortress of the Iberian Peninsula. The interior of the Arab fortress preserves a Roman aljibe (underground reservoir) which was rebuilt and decorated with Visigothic pilasters. Don't miss out on the great views from the top.

##### Teatro Romano

*Hours of Operation: Jun-Sept: 930-1345; 1700-1915 (Oct-May closes 1815).* The Roman Theater is one of the most emblematic constructions in Mérida. It was built by Agrippa in 18 B.C. with seating for 6000 people. In June and July plays are performed here.

##### Roman Amphitheater

*Hours of Operation: Jun-Sept: 0930-1345; 1700-1915 (Oct-May closes 1815).* This ancient Roman amphitheatre dates back to 8 BC and was used for gladiators and ferocious animal games.

##### Templo de Diana

The Goddess temple of Diana is an enormous building that is probably one of the most majestic of those in Mérida. It is also one of the religious buildings that remained on its original site.



##### Puento Romano

The Roman bridge crosses over the Guadiana River. It is the longest surviving bridge from ancient times, having once featured an estimated overall length of 755 meters with 62 arches. The bridge stands out for its monumental size, 800 meters long with 60 arches, making it one of the largest ones in the Empire at the time.

##### Museo Nacional de Arte Romano (National Museum of Roman Art)

*Hours of Operation: Mar-Nov: 1000-1400; 1600-2100 (Dec-Feb closes at 1800). Sun 1000-1400; closed Mon.* This colossal Roman legacy is documented in the National Museum of Roman Art, where the history of the city can be explored through a priceless collection of artifacts found in Mérida and its vicinity.

##### Church of Santa Eulalia

*Hours of Operation: Jun-Sept: 1000-1345, 1700-1915 (Oct-May closes 1815); closed Sun and holidays.* This church dates back to the 4th century but rebuilt in the 13th century. In the atrium of the church is a well preserved chapel, "Hornito," in honor of the martyr Santa Eulalia built with ruins of what was once a Roman temple dedicated to the god Mars. During the early Middle Ages this was a place of pilgrimage of the entire peninsula and much of Europe.

## OTHER SITES

- **Aqueduct of Los Milagros** – this well-preserved aqueduct crossed the Abarregas River and supplied the city with water from the Roman dam of Proserpina.
- **Circus Maximus** - a Roman hippodrome used for chariot racing; modeled after the Circus Maximus in Rome.
- **Catedral de Santa María la Mayor de Mérida**
- **Trajan's Arch** - entrance arch, located in the main route of the city.



## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

February – *Roman Carnival*

Between March and April - *Semana Santa (Holy Week)*

July and August - *the Roman Theater and amphitheater has shows including Greek dramas and other performances.*

September - City's main *feria* is held

September 8 - *Extremadura Day*

Dec 10 - *Santa Eulalia de Mérida*: marks the Day of the Patron of the City, the martyr Santa Eulalia

## TRAVELER TIPS

*It's better to buy a combined ticket which provides access to most of the city's main sites rather than individual tickets.*

*Go to the International Classical Theatre Festival which takes place every summer in Merida.*

*Visit the Plaza de España for places to eat or to purchase some pottery or marble souvenirs.*

## TRANSPORTATION

**Car:** Drive time takes approximately 3-1/2 hours. Visit [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) for driving directions.

**Bus:** The station is on Avenida de la Libertad near the train station. There are fewer buses from Madrid, but many connections from Seville.

**Trains:** The RENFE station in Merida is located on Calle Cardero. You can reach this train station from Madrid and from Seville. Visit [www.renfe.es/ingles](http://www.renfe.es/ingles) for times and prices.

## FOR MORE INFO...

Tourism Office

Calle José Sáenz de Buruaga s/n

06800 Mérida (Badajoz)

Tel: 924-330-722

**WEBSITE:** [www.merida.es](http://www.merida.es)

