



Dear *Travel Friend*,

October 2024

Join us in September 2025 for Treasures of Spain: Madrid and Andalucía—a nine-night adventure to some of the most beautiful and romantic cities in Europe!

Our program will take you from Madrid, the Spanish capital with its beautiful parks, boulevards and museums, south to Andalucía, the region that for centuries was under the domination of the Moors, the Muslim rulers, craftsmen, scientists and teachers who brought their learning, their architecture, their gardens, their music and their cuisine and left a lasting impact on the Iberian Peninsula and all of Europe. Our first four nights will be in the central area of Madrid, giving us easy access to the Royal Palace, the Prado Museum, the leafy Retiro Park and Madrid's famous public squares where people gather to socialize, eat, drink and celebrate.

Then we take a high-speed train to Córdoba, our home for the next four nights. We'll be a short walk from the Mosque-Cathedral built by the Muslims in the 10th century, with its beautiful Moorish design and surrounded by gardens and cobblestone streets, later converted to a Christian church with the gradual conquest of Andalucía by Castilian and Aragonese armies. Madrid and Córdoba give us easy access to four other outstanding cities of Spanish culture—Ávila, Segovia, Seville and Granada with its Alhambra Palace, often described as the most graceful and romantic palace in the world. We'll conclude with the return by train to Madrid for a farewell celebration and lodgings close to the airport for easy departures the next day.

We'll have plenty of time on our trip to stop and relax in parks, cafés, bars and restaurants to enjoy some of Spain's famous cuisine. We'll try some flavorful paella, gazpacho and Spanish cured hams and sample some of the fine wines from Spain's many wine-making regions. We'll enjoy a theater performance of flamenco dance, with its sharp, staccato rhythms that derive from traditional gypsy dance in Andalucía and that make flamenco one of Spain's major contributions to the performing arts.

The people of Spain are warm and welcoming, and the pace of our itinerary will offer plenty of opportunities for exploration, relaxation and time to enjoy the rich culture around us. We are excited for you to join us!



Karl & Mark

Treasures of Spain—Madrid and Andalucía

September 20-29, 2025



Friday, September 19

Program participants depart today from the United States.

Saturday, September 20

Flights arrive at the Madrid (Barajas) airport. The program conductors will meet participants as they arrive at the airport and escort everyone to the lodgings in the central part of Madrid. Transportation to the hotel is included in the program cost. Spain is six hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time.

We'll spend the rest of the day relaxing or taking some walks near the hotel or using Madrid's excellent subway system for some short trips around the city. We'll enjoy the evening with a dinner out, starting with a drink at one of the lively nearby cafés or bars.

Hotel: Madrid, Spain



Sunday, September 21

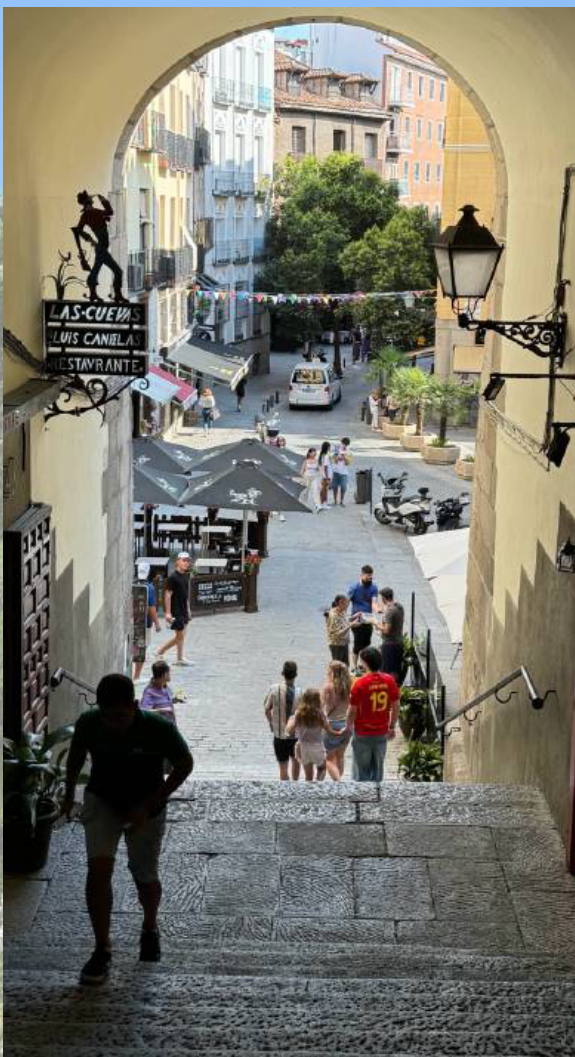
After breakfast (included every morning during our stay in Spain), we'll strike out on our first day of exploration of the Spanish capital. Most of what we want to see is concentrated in an area between the Royal Palace and the Retiro park, at its farthest a 35-minute walk between one point and another. We'll take advantage of our local transit passes (included in cost) to hop on and off public buses, trams and the subway to watch the *madrileños*—the people of Madrid—go about their day. We'll join a two-hour walking tour with a local guide to see and learn about the beautiful architecture on the Gran Vía, the elegant Plaza Mayor and the old churches and basilicas and beautiful parks near the Royal Palace. We'll walk through the lively San Miguel Market, which features fresh produce, local specialties and seafood brought daily from around the country. This afternoon we'll visit the Royal Palace, one of the largest in Europe with its more than 3000 rooms and a repository of fine art, clocks, Stradivarius string instruments and one of the world's largest collections of tapestries. The nearness of all these sites will allow us to return to the hotel for a break or siesta whenever we wish today. Dinner near the hotel.

Hotel: Madrid

Monday, September 22

After breakfast we'll head out for the nearby Prado Museum, Spain's national art museum and one of the largest and most important museums in the world. The Prado holds works by Spanish and European masters such as Francisco Goya and Diego Velázquez. The museum café is a great place for us to rest and enjoy a coffee or tea and a sandwich. In the afternoon we'll take a stroll through the leafy avenues of the city's beautiful Retiro Park, behind the Prado, and enjoy the fountains and people-watching in one of Madrid's favorite places of recreation. We'll have a leisurely dinner out and then head back to our hotel. We'll also keep an eye on the schedule at the Royal Theater. The culture calendar starts this week and usually opens with an opera, always a fun event, for the excitement and the spectacle of the opera's merging of drama, staging and music.

Hotel: Madrid





Tuesday, September 23

After breakfast we'll join a full-day bus tour to Ávila and Segovia, two nearby small cities with beautiful examples of art and architecture from the Roman past through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. On our way into the old quarter of Ávila, we'll pass by the well-preserved medieval walls and fortified towers that once guarded the city, then visit the Basilica of San Vicente, an outstanding example of Romanesque architecture from the 1100s, and the Convent of Saint Teresa, built on the site reputed to be the birthplace of the Catholic mystic Teresa of Ávila. We'll continue to Segovia, seeing one of the best-preserved ancient Roman aqueducts anywhere, the city's Cathedral and the Alcázar, the palace of the kings of Castile. The castle's high walls, towers and moat make it one of the most picturesque in Europe. We'll return to Madrid in the late afternoon. Those who wish may instead spend a leisurely day in Madrid, enjoying time to shop, to walk around the neighborhoods in the center of town, and to prepare bags for departure for Córdoba.

Hotel: Madrid

Wednesday, September 24

After breakfast, we'll gather our belongings and head to the Atocha Station for a two-hour train trip south to Córdoba, once the capital of the Moorish (Muslim) emirate of Al-Andalus (now Andalucía) that dominated medieval Spain and Portugal starting in the 700s. Córdoba became the largest city in Europe outside Constantinople and an important crossroads of education between Muslim and Christian cultures. We'll use Córdoba as our base in the coming days to explore some of the most picturesque and historically important cities in the country. This afternoon we'll move into the hotel and take an easy walk this afternoon to get acquainted with our new host city.

Hotel: Córdoba



Thursday, September 25

After breakfast we'll visit Córdoba's Mosque-Cathedral, built by the Muslim rulers of Al-Andalus starting in the 700s in a beautiful Moorish style and converted into a Christian church with the gradual conquest of Andalucía in the 1200s. The Cathedral retained much of the original Moorish architecture in the prayer hall and courtyard, and adopted Moorish style when making additions, such as in the richly decorated Royal Chapel. We'll have an audioguided tour of the Mosque-Cathedral, then spend the afternoon strolling through the city's old quarter and the parks along the Guadalquivir River. This evening we'll enjoy a performance of flamenco, the most emblematic of Spanish dance, which draws its sharp, rapid movements from gypsy dances here in Andalucía.



Friday, September 26

After breakfast we'll make our way to the train station for the one-hour ride to Seville, the beautiful capital of the region of Andalucía immortalized in literature and music in works such as the operas Carmen and the Barber of Seville and the story of Don Juan. The central area of the city, where we'll spend a leisurely day, includes the Alcázar, the beautiful palace of the Moorish rulers from the Middle Ages which later held the administrative hub of Spain's empire in the New World. We'll also see the Gothic-style Cathedral and the beautiful Plaza de España, with its Moorish architecture and canals with rowboats for hire. We'll stroll back or take the metro to the train station in the mid-afternoon for the return trip to Córdoba.

Hotel: Córdoba



Saturday, September 27

We'll take another short train ride this morning to Granada, one of the loveliest cities in Europe and the site of the Alhambra, the palace of the longest-lasting dynasty of Muslim rulers in Andalucía and among the most romantic palaces anywhere. The American writer Washington Irving brought international attention to the palace in 1832 in his Tales of the Alhambra. More recently Francisco Tárrega conveyed its timelessness in his guitar piece "Recuerdos de la Alhambra" (Memories of the Alhambra). We'll visit this World Heritage Site with Moorish tile and lattice-work design and have time to relax in the gardens and explore the old quarter of the city. We'll return by train to Córdoba in the late afternoon.

Hotel: Córdoba

Sunday, September 28

After breakfast, we'll get our bags ready and head to the station for the short train ride back to Madrid, where we'll check into a hotel with convenient access to the city center and the airport. We'll have the rest of the afternoon to relax and will share stories of our most memorable adventures in Spain over a farewell dinner in the evening.

Hotel: Madrid

Monday, September 29

The tour conductors will be available to accompany everyone to the Madrid airport for departure home, or to the main train station for those who will continue their adventures elsewhere. Those participating in the Barcelona Get-Away will depart with the tour conductors in mid-afternoon from the Atocha Station for the two and a half-hour trip to Barcelona.

Fees and payments

Fee for the nine-night Treasures of Spain program is \$3500.00 per person, in a double-occupancy room. The fee includes:

--Nine nights double-occupancy lodging in tourist and superior-tourist class lodgings in Madrid and Córdoba, Spain with self-served continental breakfast each day.

--All local land transportation in Spain, including in-out transportation from and to the Madrid airport and local lodging, round-trip train and bus tickets from Madrid to Córdoba and from Córdoba to Seville and Granada, and public transportation tickets in Madrid, except where specified as not included.

--Entrances for the Madrid walking tour, Royal Palace and Prado Museum, Ávila-Segovia bus tour, Mosque-Cathedral and Flamenco show in Córdoba, Palace and Cathedral in Seville, and the Alhambra Palace in Granada.

--Gratuities to drivers and hotel staff.

Fee does not include airfare, meals or entrances not specified in the program, or travel insurance.

Supplement for a single room is \$1300.00.

This fee is based on a minimum of ten passengers.

Payments are due on the following schedule:

March 1, 2025	\$ 500 due
May 1, 2025	\$3000 due (plus \$1300 single-room supplement if applicable)

Payments should be made to River Plate Seminars through one of the following:

Bank wire transfer:

Chase Bank
Orlando, Florida
account: 105 987 770
routing number: 021000021
attn: Mark McMeley

U.S. Mail:

Mark McMeley
River Plate Seminars
1001 Brynlor Lane
Orlando, Florida 32818

Zelle:

321-977-1389

For further details about the program, contact us at the website, address or numbers below.



www.TravelFriends.info

e-mail: TravelFriends@icloud.com

WhatsApp: +54-911-6360-6649

phone: 321-977-1389