

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, disapproval of either the bull's presence in the ring or their displeasure with the president because he trophy.



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Mijas “Jewel of the Costa del Sol”

This historic village nestles comfortably in the foothills of the *Sierra de Mijas* mountains almost 1500 feet above sea level, and it offers spectacular views over Fuengirola and along the coast and Mediterranean Sea. It is a traditional mountain village and very typically Andalusian with its narrow cobbled streets and white washed buildings.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Mijas Pueblo- village of Mijas is situated inland on the hillside of Sierra de Mijas. From here it's like a huge balcony overlooking the Mediterranean, and the layout of the town is a reminder of its Arab past. The lively town is full of history and the streets are lined with charming local craft shops.

Mijas Costa - part of the municipality of Mijas which covers the 12 kilometer stretch of coastline. La Cala de Mijas is the center of this area.

Sanctuary of the Virgen de la Peña (17th century) and the **Church of la Concepción** (16th century) are some of its major monuments.

Small bullring with its quadrangular exterior, actually one of Spain's oldest rings in existence

Golf courses - Mijas has many choices to offer on the Costa del Sol with 12 top class courses opened to golfing enthusiasts of all standards. Courses here include Mijas Golf, El Chapparral, Calanova, La Noria, La Cala (now Spain's largest golfing complex), Miraflores, La Siesta, and Cabopino.

The beach offers water sports ranging from jet skis, waterskiing, wakeboarding, windsurfing, and more.

TRAVELER TIPS

Hiking lovers can enjoy numerous rural paths which run inland through pine groves and around peaks. The tracks lead to the hermitage of the Way of the Cross (19th century) or the old marble quarry.

Catch one of many cultural events held at the Auditorium.

The Pueblo is also well known for its donkey-taxis which offer trips around the centre and outskirts of the Village.

There is a very popular street market ('el barratillo') in La Cala every Wed and Sat from around 0900 - 1430. The market offers everything from fresh fruit and vegetables to local crafts, clothes, ceramics and pottery, flowers and plants.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

La noche de San Juan (the night of San Juan) falls on the 24th of June

The festivals of Las Lagunas and La Cala (25 July)

Virgen de la Peña (between 7 and 12 September) - the festivities in honor of the town's patron.

TRANSPORT

By car: Approximately 2.5 – 3 hours

FOR MORE INFO...

The Mijas Village Tourist Office, (Plaza Virgen de la Peña); Tel: 952-58-9034

Hours of Operation: Winter: 0900 - 1900 Weekdays; Summer: 0900-1500 and 1600-2000; Sat: 1000-1400

Ronda “Picture Perfect”

Set like a classic postcard view, it's no wonder Ronda draws romantics as well as throngs of tourists. This white-washed village is perched on a cliff and split by the 100 meter deep El Tajo gorge. The stunning view isn't the only reason to visit Ronda. This city is considered home to modern bullfighting and plays host to some of the most prominent bullfights each year.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Puente Nuevo (New Bridge)

Completed in 1793, the bridge's construction took more than four decades. Its importance comes from linking the old Moorish citadel to the newer market-area of Ronda. There is a small city museum within one of the bridge's arches. Entrance tickets can be purchased by the Parador (Plaza de España).

Plaza de Toros (bullring)

Hours of Operation: Nov – Feb 1000-1800 daily; Mar-Apr from 1000 – 1900; Apr 16–Oct 1000-2000

This bullring is one of the oldest in Spain and home to one of the most famous 'schools' of bullfighting. Today the Plaza de Toros is a museum opened to tourists and used only in the spectacular September Goyesca bullfights (bullfighters dress in the style of Goya's portraits of 18th century life in Spain).

Casa del Rey Moro (House of the Moorish King)

Hours of Operation: Mar-Oct 1000-2000 daily; Nov-Feb 1000-1900 daily

An 18th century house built over the supposed remains of a Moorish palace. Currently you are unable to enter the house, but you can visit “La Mina: and the French-landscaped balcony gardens overlooking the gorge. “La Mina” is a 365-step tunnel to the bottom of the gorge. Traveler tip: the steps of La Mina are uneven, dark, and wet. Please use caution and consider bringing a headlamp/flashlight.

Palacio Mondragon

Hours of Operation: Mar-Oct 1000-1900 Mon-Fri; Nov-Feb 1000-1800 Sat; 1000-1500 Sun

A beautiful Mudejar-Renaissance mansion that was home to a succession of Moorish governors until King Fernando captured Ronda. There are three cliff top courtyards with one, Patio Mudejar, maintaining its Islamic influence. The palace rooms have been converted into an archeology museum on the local surrounding area,

Santa Maria la Mayor Church

Hours of Operations: Apr-Oct 1000-2000 daily; Nov-Mar 1000-1800 daily

Ronda's main church is set on the orange tree lined Plaza Duquesa de Parcent. The minaret and Muslim prayer niche have survived from a 13th century mosque on the current church site.

OTHER SITES

- **Baños Arabes** – Archeological site consider one of Andalucia's best preserved hammam
- **Plaza de España** – Rumored to be the setting of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* famous scene
- **La Cuidad** – the old Muslim portion of Ronda which is typified by narrow cobblestone streets
- **Alameda del Tajo** – Cliffside park behind the Plaza de Toros with dramatic views to the countryside
- **Museo del Bandolero** – Museum dedicated to the local banditry



LOCAL CULTURE

A meal with a view. Enjoy a drink, lunch or dinner at the Parador (Plaza de España) perched on the edge of the cliff and gorge. The morning brunch is very good, but expensive.

Test your strength and endurance. Participate in the annual La Legion's (Spanish Army) 101 km race. You can compete in three ways: mountain bike and run, or walk/run. You have 12-24 hours to complete the entire race.

Indulge your sweet tooth. Ronda has plenty of traditional Spanish pastry shops in addition to Chocolat, a store near the pedestrian street that specializes in Belgium chocolates. Enjoy thick hot chocolate or an assortment of gourmet truffles.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

La Legion 101km Race – annual event held early Fall

Pedro Romero Festival – early September

TRAVELER TIPS

Stay the night and feel like a local. Ronda takes on a different feel after all the tourist buses leave. Enjoy an evening dinner overlooking the gorge or walk the shopping streets with the locals. Contact ITT or a local travel agency to find a hotel.

Wear comfortable shoes. Because of its strategic location, the town is full of hills and steps. Prepare yourself for all the walking and wear comfortable shoes.

TRANSPORTATION

Driving: Approximately 2 hours

Visit www.viamichelin.com for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

FOR MORE INFO...

Tourist Offices: Plaza de Blas Infante, 952-18-7119

Plaza de España, 952-87-1272

Ayuntamiento, Plaza Duquesa de Parcent, 952-87-3240

WEBSITE: www.turismoderronda.es



ROTA

Rota is primarily a resort town and a summer destination for tourists from all over Europe. Because of its coastal location, it has been a passage for various cultures and civilizations such as Tartesics, Romans, Arabs, and finally the Christians who gave the city its actual name.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Castillo de Luna (Castle of the Moon)

Hours of Operation: 1000 – midday; reopens at 5 pm.

Once used by the family Ponce de Leon, it was built on top of a Moorish fort in the 13th century. The ground floor is open to the public for free, but the second floor is used by the town hall and is not opened to the public. Today it serves as the main government building (Ayuntamiento) for the city of Rota.

Parroquia Nuestra Señora de la O Catedral

Hours of Operation: 0900 – 1300; 1830 – 2100

The Parish Church was erected in the years of the great Spanish empire when Spain was ruled by Emperor Carlos I.

Museo Ruiz-Mateos

The museum is set in a typical manor house remodeled to maintain its original structure. Opened in 2005, Museum Ruiz-Mateos has an extensive art collection in addition to rotating exhibits such as “Villa de Rota” exhibits.

OTHER SITES

- Walk the wooden boardwalk that begins at the edge of Rota (near Fuente Virgen del Mar) and continues past Hotel Playa de la Luz. There are little outposts and sitting areas along the way.
- Explore the tide pools of the Almadraba (near Hotel Playa) during low tide.
- Hotel Duque De Najera is a beautiful 4-star hotel to have a café con leche or nice dinner....dress appropriately.

LOCAL CULTURE

Shop for souvenirs or enjoy some tapas. Head to the pedestrian streets of Charco and Garcia Sanchez.

Want to buy local olive oil or garlic-stuffed olives? Visit the gypsy market held every Wednesday right outside the Rota gate.

Try some Spanish pastries at Torremolinos near the Casillo de Luna.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The Three Kings – Jan 5th

Carnival – mid February

Semana Santa (Holy Week) – week prior to Easter Sunday

Feria de Primavera – early May

Feria de la Urta – early August

Arranque Rotenos Flamenco Festival – mid August



TRAVELER TIPS

Visit the one of oldest cities in Spain across the bay. Take the ferry to Cadiz from the Rota marina, and do some shopping or go sight-seeing.

Don't have a car to get around? The bus station is right outside the Rota gate and you can easily take day trips to places such as Jerez or Sevilla.

TRANSPORTATION

Walking: takes approximately 15 minutes from the Rota base gate

Driving: approximately 5 minutes

Taxi: for an inexpensive way to get around Rota call, 727-2929 (956-82-2929).

Rental cars: the Air Terminal has a car rental agency and there are other rental car agencies in Rota

Visit the Traveler desk in Expeditions for a Base/Rota map and bus or ferry schedules.

FOR MORE INFO...

Rota Tourism Office:

Castillo de Luna

Calle Cuna, 2, Rota

956-846-345

Website: www.turismorota.com



Sanlúcar de Barrameda: “Home of the oldest horse races in Spain”

This city is at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River and in the past it was the port used by Columbus and Magellan during their voyages to America. After King Alfonso X took Sanlúcar from the Moors in 1264, it was reconstituted and became one of the most important ports for trade connecting the Atlantic with the Mediterranean Ocean. It is also one of Spain's better known sherry producing towns. Today the people from Sanlúcar make their living primarily in agriculture and fishing.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Castillo de Santiago

The Castle of Santiago is one of the oldest buildings in Sanlúcar dating back to the 15th century, and was home to the Catholic Kings. It is considered a monument and after being restored, it is now used for social and cultural celebrations.

Parque Nacional Coto de Doñana (Doñana National Park)

This is a large wetland reserve and a major site for migrating birds. You can catch a ferry to the park from Playa Bajo de Guia.

Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la O

Hours of Operation: Tues-Sat 10am-1pm, Sun 10am-noon. Mass Mon and Fri 8pm, Sun 9am, noon, 8pm. Free

This church in Plaza de la Paz dates back to the 14th century, has a Rococo-style altar along with nine adjoining chapels of Gothic and Baroque, and is the focal point of the religious community in Sanlúcar.



Palacio de los Duques de Medina Sidonia

Hours of Operation: Open Mon-Fri 8 am-9 pm, Sat 9 am-2 pm, Sun 9 am-9 pm. Free. This former home of the aristocratic family who owned much of Spain now houses the municipal archives. The Palace of Medina Sidonia is located at Plaza Conde de Niebla, 1, in the Barrio Alto, the high part of the town.



Palacio de Orleans y Borbon

This Palace was built in 1860 by the Duke of Montpensier, Antonio d'Orléans, and Maria Luisa Fernanda de Borbón for the holidays. It is now used as the city hall with its flamboyant neo-Mudejar architecture and public library in the gardens.

OTHER SIGHTS

- **Bajo de Guia** - the strip where you'll find local seafood restaurants and tapas bars
- **Plaza del Cabildo** – in the heart of old town; enjoy a café con leche at one of the outdoor cafes in this plaza
- **Museo del Mar las Caracolas** – unusual exhibits of objects retrieved from the sea and beach
- **Barbadillo sherry company** – town's largest sherry producer; offers tours
- **Convento de Santo Domingo**

LOCAL CULTURE

Visit the local daily market at Plaza de San Roque.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Los Reyes Magos – the Three Kings (Jan 6)

Semana Santa - The processions take place during the week leading up to Easter Sunday

Feria de la Manzanilla – late May or early June; Week-long Spring festival

Noches de Bajo de Guia – flamenco season with classical and jazz festivals

Sanlucar horse races – August; an important annual summer event taking place at sunset

Virgen del Rocio - pilgrimage to El Rocio where the statue of the Madonna of the Dew is worshipped (May or June)

TRANSPORT

By Car: 30 minute drive taking A-2077 from Rota.

By Train: The bus station is on Avenida de la Estación, one block from the main Calzada del Ejército. Transportes Los Amarillos (956-34-1063) goes to Jerez (45min.; Mon-Fri every hour 8:10am-9:10pm, Sat-Sun every 2 hours).

FOR MORE INFO...

Tourism Office: Calle Calzada del Ejército, s/n; telephone: 956-36-6110

Website: www.aytosanlucar.org



Sevilla “An Iconic Andalusian City”

Steeped in history, Sevilla has many narrow streets and main avenues with magnificent monuments and buildings which stand as a legacy to this city’s fascinating heritage. The city walls and gates offer an insight into history spanning from the Roman era to the Muslim period.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Cathedral and La Giralda

Open Mon-Fri 1100-1700, Sat 1100-1600, Sun 1400-1600

The cathedral is the third largest in the world and the largest and highest in Spain. Attractions include the tomb of Christopher Columbus and La Giralda, the minaret of the old Moorish mosque. You can climb the tower by walking up 35 ramps for a bird’s eye view of the city.



Real Alcázar (Royal Palace with Gardens)

Open Tues-Sat 1030-1700 and Sun 1030-1300; Closed Mon

The Alcazar has been home to royalty for centuries. Ferdinand and Isabelle, two of Spain’s greatest rulers, lived in the Alcazar, and it was here that they welcomed Columbus back from his historic voyage discovering the “New World”. The Alcazar is the oldest castle to be used as a royal residence in Europe. Spain’s monarchs, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, still stay in the Alcazar during visits to Seville.

Plaza de España

Originally built for the World’s Fair of 1912, this plaza is a masterpiece showcasing all provinces of Spain by a tiled mural. The huge half-circle structure wraps around a huge water fountain and a moat with several bridges. Today, the structure houses several of the city hall offices.

Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza (Bull Ring)

Open Mon-Sat 1000-1330; Closed Sun/Holidays

One of the finest and most important bull rings in Spain, this plaza holds 14,000 spectators during fights. The rest of the year, people can tour the plaza and museum. The Spanish/English tour includes the bull ring, emergency room, small museum of bullfighting history and matador prayer chapel.



OTHER SIGHTS

- **Museo de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Museum)** – Set within a former convent, this is a well-respected museum focusing on religious artwork.
- **Barrio Santa Cruz** – The former Jewish quarter’s narrow streets are crammed with bars, restaurants and stores.
- **Parque de Maria Luisa** – Largest park in Sevilla and one of the most beautiful parks in Europe.
- **Torre del Oro (Tower of Gold)** – A remnant of the Moorish fortified walls which originally enclosed the city. In recent years, the tower has been restored and turned into a maritime museum.
- **Isla Magica** – Amusement park located on La Cartuja island.

LOCAL CULTURE

See the city another way. Explore the city by carriage or boat! Take a horse-drawn carriage ride around the major sites of the city (approximately 30-50 €). Carriages pick up at most major tourist locations such as the Cathedral and Real Alcazar. You can catch the boat cruise by the Torre del Oro (Tower of Gold) for approximately 15 € per person.

Get your exercise while sightseeing! Rent a public bike from one of the many pick-up points around town. These bikes can be dropped off at locations around the city. The first ½ hour is free and afterwards a nominal hourly fee is charged.

Shop for ceramics. Head across the river to the Triana District to do some shopping for brightly colored ceramics and tiles. This area was originally the gypsy district of Spain and still produces world famous tiles. Enjoy some tapas while you're there because they're cheaper!

Tapas hop at some famous bars. Enjoy delicious tapas in the El Arenal area surrounding the bullring. Look for bars with olive pits and crumbled paper covering the floor. In Spain, this means it's a good tapas bar!

Play the tourist. The Plaza de España is a "must" for your Sevilla visit. Get your picture taken by the Cadiz province tile mural. You can even point to Rota on the map!



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Pet Market – Every Saturday in Plaza Alfalfa

Semana Santa – week before Easter Sunday

Feria de Abril – late April

TRAVELER TIPS

If you want to see the cathedral, plan your visit around its operating hours. The cathedral is frequently closed for various events and services. Plan on visiting the cathedral first or at least check that day's operating hours before going to other tourist sites.

Wear comfortable shoes. Even though the city is relatively compact, you will be doing a lot of walking.

Use caution in tourist areas and shopping streets. Gypsies near the major tourist sites (i.e., Cathedral) will try to "sell" you rosemary or read your hand for money. Continue walking or say "no gracias." The major shopping streets are a common area for petty theft.

TRANSPORTATION

By Car: Approximately 1.5-2 hours driving time. The route may include toll roads. Choose the best travel route for yourself on the ViaMichelin website at www.viamichelin.com.

By Train: Approximately 1.5 hours to Sevilla's Santa Justa station from El Puerto de Santa Maria. Check out the RENFE website for current train schedules and prices at www.renfe.es.

By Bus: Approximately 1.5-2 hours from Rota bus station. Check the Comes website for current schedules and prices at www.tgcomes.es.

FOR MORE INFO...

Seville Tourism Office – Paseo de las Delicias, 9

Tourism Website: www.turismosevilla.org

Seville Cathedral: www.catedraldesevilla.es

Seville Real Alcazar: www.patronato-alcazarsevilla.es

Tarifa “Wind Surfing Capital”

With ten kilometers of white sandy beaches, a beautiful countryside and some of the best windsurfing that Europe has to offer, Tarifa has become a surfers' paradise. If surfing's not your thing, Tarifa offers plenty to keep you busy. Located just 11 km across the Straits of Gibraltar at its narrowest point, Tarifa is the southern-most tip of Europe where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean.



POINTS OF INTEREST

The Church of San Mateo

The main building is of late Gothic style, dating back to the 16th century. The facade, accomplished by the architect Torcuato Cayón in the 17th century, is neo-classic.

Puerta de Jerez and the City Walls

The current walls that enclose Tarifa are the result of several construction phases and restorations, the most important accomplished in the 18th century, when the city was converted into a military base during the Spain's attempt to recapture Gibraltar. Two main sections of the wall can be distinguished. The first one corresponds to the walls built during Islamic domination, which included the ancient Tarifa medina, located in the extreme south end of the city. Its remains can be seen in various parts of the city as for example on the steep frontal cliff facing the Straits. The only remaining gate of the Islamic section of wall is the so-called "Puerta de la Almedina". In the north front of this new defense system opens the only existing gate, the "Puerta de Jerez". Formed by three consecutive arches, the first of them is built of stone and is middle-point shaped. The other two arches are made of red brick in a horseshoe shape and testify a Moorish architectural influence.

The Castle of Guzmán el Bueno

The castle was built in 960 AD by the Caliph Abderramán III on the ruins of a possible Roman military camp. It was strategically sited for the control of the communication routes between Africa and Europe, being in the narrowest point of the Strait of Gibraltar. The central core is the most ancient part. Its towers are still original except the ones on the south front that were modified in the 18th century in order to install artillery. The Castle has been frequently occupied by both Muslims and Christians. The most memorable siege took place when Guzmán el Bueno observed the death of his son at the hands of the Muslims, who took the boy hostage in their final effort to take Tarifa. Guzmán was not to lose his beloved town by any means. The last of the sieges suffered by the city and by the Castle occurred in 1812, when Napoleon's troops could not overcome Tarifa's tenacious resistance.

OTHER SITES

- Plaza Santa Maria – Moorish style square with rose gardens and tiled benches
- Baelo Claudia (Bolina) Roman Ruins – closed on Mondays
- Punta Marroqui – the most southerly point in the European mainland and the narrowest point on the Straits of Gibraltar where you can see the African coast.



LOCAL CULTURE

Have a kebab. Like many Middle Eastern countries, kebab shops are all over Tarifa. You can choose between pollo (chicken), ternera (meat), or mixto (mixed). The added bonus is they're cheap!

The locals like to people watch in the Paseo Alameda (gardens). A lovely spot to sit and rest under the palm trees and you can find many cafes and restaurants here too.

Try an extreme sport, or come watch the championships. Known as the kite-surfing capital of Europe, there are plenty of schools to try out the sport. If it's not your thing, come back in early July when Tarifa plays host to some of the best kite-surfers in the world.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

March-April – months of Semana Santa (Holy Week)

Kite surfing Championships – first week in July.

National Festival of Folk Music – 1st two weeks of August

Fiestas de la Virgen de Luz – 1st Sunday in September lasting 1 week; they party and eat all night long wearing traditional outfits and parade horses in the town.

TRAVEL TIPS

Check the fees before setting up camp. Many of the campgrounds in the area charge per plot, tent, car, person, and animal (five costs into one!). Sometimes it can be cheaper to stay at a hostel instead.

You can see or visit Africa! Standing on the beaches of Tarifa, you can see Morocco which is only a short 15 kms away! If you're feeling adventurous, hop a ferry to Tangiers, Morocco.

TRANSPORTATION

By car: takes about 1 hour, 30 minutes. Visit www.viamichelin.com for driving directions. You may also inquire at the MWR Traveler desk for information regarding discount GPS rentals.

By Train: www.renfe.es

By Bus: www.tgcomes.com

Ferry info: www.frs.es

FOR MORE INFO...

Oficina Municipal de Turismo (tourism office) - Paseo de la Alameda s/n.

Websites: www.aytotartifa.com, www.tarifaspain.net



TOLEDO "City of three cultures"

Once the capital of Spain, this city still retains a sophisticated ambiance characteristic to many great European cities. The city is a world heritage site and is known as a "city of three cultures" because the Arabs, Christians and Jews lived side by side behind its walls. The buildings and winding streets contained within the old city walls hold hundreds of years of history, and the River Tajo which runs alongside the city adds to its charm and beauty.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Alcazar

Hours of Operation: Tues-Sun 1000-1330 & 1600-1730

Only in the Capilla Mozárabe can you attend an ancient Visigoth Mass (in Mozarabic). This fortified palace stands on the site of former Roman, Visigothic, and Muslim fortresses. It was damaged by fire and almost destroyed during the 70-day siege during the Spanish Civil War, but was rebuilt and is now a military museum.

Cathedral

Hours of Operation: Jun-Sept 1030-1300 & 1530-1900 daily; Oct-May 1030-1300 & 1530-1800. The Cathedral, built between 1226 and 1492, is the most interesting gothic building in town. Here you can see its collection of paintings, including works of *El Greco*, *Goya*, and *Van Dyck*, and the famous 16th century *Juan de Arfe*, which is part of the Corpus Christi procession.



Iglesia de Santo Tomé

Hours of Operation: Daily 1000-1845 (1745 in the winter); closed Dec 25 & Jan 1st.

This chapel is home to El Greco's most famous piece, *The Burial of Count Orgaz*, which supposed includes his son Jorge Manuel in the foreground and El Greco himself.

Hospital de Tavera

Hours of Operation: Mon-Sat 1000-1830; 1000-1400 Sun

This museum, which houses many of El Greco's famous artwork, started out as a hospital in the early 16th century.

OTHER SIGHTS

- **Casa Museo de El Greco (El Greco's House)** - Decorated as a typical home from the artist's time in the 19th century. There is a museum next door that houses several paintings.
- **Monasterio de San Juan de Los Reyes** - Franciscan monastery on the edge of the city where the Catholic Monarchs Fernando and Isabel had planned to be buried. After conquering the Moorish kingdom of Granada, they decided to be laid there instead.
- **The Gate of El Sol** - the principal gateway into the walled city of Toledo and originally built in the 11th century.
- **Puerta Nueva de Bisagra** - built in the 16th century as Toledo's new gate.
- **Plaza de Zocodover** (Zocodover Square) is the main square of Toledo; a great place to rest after visiting the Alcazar; also where you can catch the bus or tourist train.
- **Synagogue of Santa Maria la Blanca** - this synagogue is considered a symbol of the cooperation of the three cultures since it was built in Christian territory by the Islamic for the Jewish to use; it is now a Catholic church
- **Convent of Santo Domingo El Antiguo** - view El Greco's coffin in the crypt or buy sweets from the nuns

LOCAL CULTURE

Immerse yourself in El Greco. Many of El Greco's ("The Greek") work can be found in Toledo. There are several works at the cathedral, the famous *The Burial of Count Orgaz* at Santo Tomé, Hospital de Tavera, Museo de la Santa Cruz.

Take a day trip to Segovia or Ávila. Toledo is a great base for making day trips to several other important Spanish cities, or car touring this historically rich area. Check out the aqueducts of Segovia, the fortified walls of Avila or simply driving the landscape of Don Quixote. The old cities of Segovia and Ávila are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Obsessed with windmills? Go to Consuegra. A short hour drive from Toledo is the village of Consuegra. The town's 12 windmills are called the "cresteria manchega" because of its rooster-like appearance from an aerial view. The village also has a castle, Franciscan convent, olive oil factory and more.

Toledo is known for its production of iron, especially of swords, and the city is still a center for manufacturing knives and other steel items.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The feast of Corpus Christi – the Thursday on the 9th week after Easter; Easter and Holy Week; the Feast of the Assumption (Aug 15) - on this day you can drink from the cathedral's well water which is supposed to have miraculous qualities.

TRAVELER TIPS

Wear comfortable shoes since you can walk for hours exploring the narrow streets of this medieval city.

As in any touristic city, be careful of bag snatchers and pickpockets.

TRANSPORT

By Car: Approximately 5.5-7 hours driving time. The route may include toll roads. Choose the best travel route for yourself on the ViaMichelin website at www.viamichelin.com.

By Train: There are no direct trains to Toledo from Andalucía. By train, the route will take you from Sevilla's Santa Justa station via Madrid to Toledo on a regional train. The AVE train from Madrid to Toledo runs several times a day and takes approximately 30 minutes. 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.

By Airplane: The major Spanish airlines, Iberia and Spanair, fly from several airports in Andalucía to Madrid. Their websites are www.iberia.com or www.spanair.com. From Madrid Barajas airport, the easiest way to Toledo is by train. See above for additional information on trains to Toledo.

FOR MORE INFO...

Toledo Tourism Office: www.toledo-turismo.com

Cathedral: www.architoledo.org

Church of Santo Tome: www.santotome.org

Hospital de Tavera: www.fundacionmedinaceli.org



Torremolinos

This municipality on the Costa del Sol of the Mediterranean is immediately to the west of Málaga in southern Spain. Torremolinos was a poor fishing village before the growth in tourism began in the late 1950s, and also the first of the Costa del Sol resorts to develop. When the Moors conquered Spain they introduced the mills from which the town takes its name (meaning "Tower of the Mills"). However, at the time the population was reduced, the tower was built by the Nasrid rulers of Granada. After the fall of Granada, the town was subjected to North African pirate attacks and by an Anglo-Dutch flotilla during the War of Spanish Succession and almost entirely destroyed. The mills and city were rebuilt in the early 20th century, but the mill industry started to decline in the 1920s. It was replaced by an increasingly flourishing tourist interest starting from 1928, especially due to English visitors.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Beaches of Torremolino: Bajondillo, Playamar (most popular), Carihuela and Los Alamos. Between Playamar and Bajondillo beach are 4 entrances to the town center.

Aqualand waterpark

This aquapark is just 10 minutes from the center and provides a whole day worth of water fun including water rides and slides. There is plenty to do for the tots including a mini park all in one swimming pool with mini slides and a mock castle. The highest Kamikaze water slide in Europe is also here at 22 meters high.

Paseo Marítimo de Torre del Mar (Seafront Promenade)

The town's star attraction is the seven-mile-long boardwalk or "promenade" that parallels the town's Mediterranean coastline, separating a line of hotels from the stretch of ocean that lies between Spain and Morocco.

Theme Parks - some of the most popular family tourist attractions are their theme parks: Crocodile Park, Selwo Marina, Tivoli World, Sea Life Center.

Calle San Miguel - this beautiful little street lined with small shops and cafés.

LOCAL CULTURE

Visit the barrio de La Carihuela nestled just steps away from the promenade. This is the original fishing village of old Torremolinos, and it is still famous for the pescaíto frito (small fried fish).

The Spanish Ballroom Dancing Championships is an important annual event in Torremolinos which takes place in October in the Congress Palace.

The weekly market is held every Thursday morning at the back of the town hall on Calle Horacio Lengo.

TRANSPORTATION

By Car: Approximately 3 hours drive time. Visit www.viamichelin.com for directions.

FOR MORE INFO...

Tourist Office: Plaza Pablo Picasso, opened Mon-Fri 0900 – 1330.

WEBSITE: www.andalucia.com/torremolinos



UBRIQUE: Known for their leatherwork

Ubrique is a charming small town on the route of the Pueblos Blancos (white villages). The town sits in a valley in between the Sierra de Grazalema and Los Alcornocales Natural Parks. Ubrique has been producing leather goods since Roman times. You are sure to find some of the finest leather goods in the world in a city where leather is art! Not only is Ubrique beautiful and tranquil, but it is also a town with a long and interesting history which stretches over many periods and empires.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Ubrique shopping

Most of the leather shops are located in the center of the city on Doctor Solis Pascual and Avenida Espana streets. *Hours: M-F 1000-1400 & 1700-2000' Sat 1000-1400; Sun and holidays closed.*

La Plaza (main plaza in Ubrique)

Visit the city's main plaza bordered by a church and the town hall. See the older population relaxing on benches and feeding the birds near the old city fountain.

Hiking trips

Hike the free access walk from Ubrique, through the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park to the next white village, Venaocas. For a hike mixed with history, take a walk through history (Paseos con Historia). Both hikes are offered at the local Tourist Office. (See information below)

OTHER SIGHTS

- Wander the narrow streets of Fuentezuela, Guindaleta, Sanjurjo, and Saucos.
- Hike up to the Mirador (lookout) for a bird's eye view of the city.
- Tour the upper section from Convent of Capuchinos to Plaza Colon for beautiful corners, such as Fuente de los Nueve Canos, the Iglesia de San Antonio (church) and the Penon de la Becerra.
- Ocuri Roman Ruins – located 1 km from Ubrique and 2 km west of Benaocaz, close to junction with A373, a small road on the right with a sign "Consortio Bahia de Cadiz". Open weekends 10-2 with midday guided visit. See the village, baths and well preserved temple.

LOCAL CULTURE

A meal with a view. For a good meal with a great panoramic view, visit the Restaurante Plaza at the new bullring. It is located at Avenida Jesulin de Ubrique, s/n. They serve great garlic dishes and delicious chocolate mousse.

TRAVEL TIPS

Wear comfortable shoes. Because of its strategic location, the town is full of hills and steps. Be sure to bring a camera and plenty of euros for shopping!

TRANSPORT

Driving: Approximately 1 hour

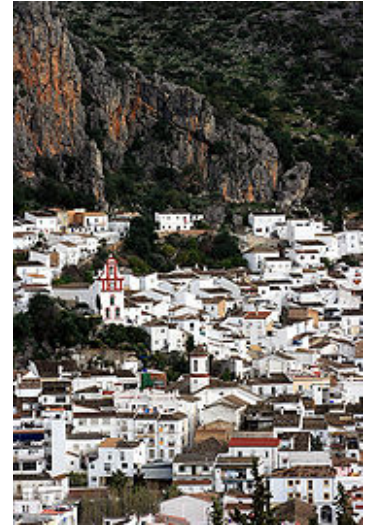
Visit www.viamichelin.com for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for GPS rentals.

FOR MORE INFO...

Ubrique Tourism Office: Avenida Moreno de Mora, 19 Ubrique 11600

(Located at the far end of Doctor Solis Pascual, just over the small bridge crossing the stream and on the right hand side)

Phone: 956-46-4900 or 956-92-2975



Valencia: Spain's Capital of Cool

Valencia is Spain's third largest city and dates back to 138 BC when the Romans founded the city of "Valentia" on the banks of the River Turia. The Arabs established networks of irrigations and developed the paper, silk and leather industries. In 1238, the Christians took the city from the Moors and it became part of the Catalan kingdom of Jaime I. Valencia was the last city to stand up against General Franco before the country fell into 40 years of dictatorship. In the recent century, it was best known for its flooding disasters until the River Turia was diverted in the late 1950s. The former riverbed has now become part of the city's extensive municipal parks system.

In recent years, Valencia has become Spain's "Capital of Cool" along with a few other European cities such as Vienna, Amsterdam and Zurich. It has revitalized its harbor area, added a Formula One urban track and continues to create Valencia as a destination of culture.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Ciudad de las Artes y de las Ciencias (City of Arts and Sciences)

Hours of Operation: Varies on individual museum but most are open Sunday-Saturday 1000-2000 or slightly longer.

L'Hemisfèric offers hourly 3-D shows from 1100-2000.

Sprawling futuristic complex designed by Valencian-born architect Santiago Calatrava on what use to be the River Turia. New additions to the complex have included an amphitheater, an indoor theater and a chamber-music hall. The area is comprised of:

- **Museu de las Ciències Príncipe Felipe** (Prince Philip Science Museum) – Filled with lasers, holograms and simulators, this is a hands-on science museum.
- **L'Hemisfèric** (Hemispheric Planetarium) – Designed like a human eye, it offers a 3-D virtual voyage on an IMAX screen.
- **L'Oceanogràfic** (Oceanographic Park) – Take a submarine ride through a coastal marine habitat.
- **Palau de les Arts** (Palace of Arts)

Cathedral de Valencia

*Hours of Operation: Monday-Saturday: 1000-1730 & Sundays: 1400-1730 *Note: These hours can change based on holidays, special masses, etc.**

This unique cathedral is built on the site of a former mosque, contains a mixture of architectural styles and is home to many artistic treasures. Some of the treasures include a purple agate vessel once said to be the Holy Grail, two famous paintings by Goya and the left arm of St. Vincent who was martyred in Valencia in 304.

Valencia Institute of Modern Art (IVAM)

Hours of Operations: June-August: Tues-Sun. – 1000-2200; Sept.-May: Tues.-Sun. – 1000-2000

This museum is home to modern and contemporary pieces with several exhibits focusing on the evolutionary process of art. There is a permanent collection of avant-garde works, European Informalism, pop art and photography.



OTHER SIGHTS

- **Museo de Bellas Artes** (Museum of Fines Arts) – Since Valencia was a thriving center of art in the 15th century, this museum is considered one of the best in Spain.
- **Plaza del Ayuntamiento** – Baroque plaza containing the city tourist office and a museum on the history of Valencia.
- **Plaza de Toros** (Bull Ring & Museum) – One of the oldest rings in Spain. The museum has bullfighting memorabilia including bulls' heads and matadors' swords.
- **Cripta de la Carcel de San Vicente Martir** (Crypt of St. Vincent) – Supposed prison of martyred St. Vincent. It's an unimpressive crypt but there's a 25-minute documentary of the St. Vincent's life and gory death.

LOCAL CULTURE

Try paella valenciana! Rice is at the heart of Valencian food so it's not surprise that Spain's famous dish, paella, originated here. The valenciana is made with chicken and rabbit but you can also ask for paella *con mariscos*, or seafood paella.

Take part in Las Fallas festival! Every March, Valencia and the surrounding area celebrate Las Fallas by burning wood effigies. Typically these effigies are political figures or current pop culture icons. See Traveler Guide Las Fallas for more information.

Hit the beach! Check out Valencia's beautiful azure water that butts up against the cream-colored sand. During the summer, the beaches of Las Arenas, La Malvarossa and Salér are packed with people and umbrellas. There is wide boardwalk that parallels its large beach which is ideal for walks or bike rides.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Las Fallas – March 12-19; *Semana Santa* – Week prior to Easter Sunday; *Fiesta de San Vicente Ferrer* – Sunday after Easter; *Festival of Corpus Cristi* – early June; *Día de San Juan* – June 24; *Feria de Julio* – July; *Tomatina in Buñol* – last Wednesday of August; *Día de la Comunidad* – October 9.

TRAVELER TIPS

Purchase the Valencia Tourist Card. If you plan on seeing a lot of the sights, this is the card to purchase. It can be purchased for 1, 2 or 3 days based on your visit. The card provides free entrance or discount to several museums, entertainment, restaurants and cafes in addition to free public urban transport. You can purchase at tourist information offices and several hotels around the city.

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.

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.

By Airplane: The major Spanish airlines, Iberia and Spanair, fly from several airports in Andalucia to Valencia. Their websites are www.iberia.com or www.spanair.com.

FOR MORE INFO...

Valencia Tourism Office: www.turisvalencia.es
 Ciudad de las Artes y Las Ciencias: www.cac.es
 Cool Capitals: www.coolcapitals.com
 Valencia's Institute of Modern Art (IVAM): www.ivam.es3
 Valencia Tourist Card: www.valenciatouristcard.com



Vejer de la Frontera “A glimpse of the Moorish past”

This historic village is enclosed by fortress walls. The picturesque town is perched high on a limestone headline, and it's most stunning feature is the Arab-Andalusian architecture.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Iglesia del Divino Salvador

Built on the site of an ancient mosque, this church has two distinct architectural styles reflecting the two different building phases: Visigothic and Mudejar.

Fortress Walls and Arches

The city walls are still intact with four entrance gates: Arco de la Villa, Arco de Sancho IV, Arco de la Segur, and Arco de Puerta Cerrada. The fortress was once used to keep out Barbary Pirates.

Plaza de Espana

The main attraction of the Plaza de España is the beautiful tiled fountain. This is a great meeting place with many cafes and bars.

Corbijada statue – This statue is of a woman covered in black in such a way that the only visible part of her body is her eyes (a tradition of Muslim origin).

OTHER SITES

- **Convent of the Monjas Concepcionistas** – this church has a Renaissance style façade, a spherical dome, and vaulted crypts of the founders.
- **The mirador (lookout)** outside the city gate Arco de Puerto
- **The Arab castle** from the 11th century – the highest spot in the old village
- **The Jewish quarter**
- **The Arch of Segur** – arch with an inner face which preserves a segur (axe), symbol of the judicial power in Rome.
- **Palacio del Marques de Taron** – home to the House of Culture and municipal tourism office.



LOCAL CULTURE: Vejer is a town proud of its Moorish past. The “cortijado” is a dress worn by Vejer’s women until as late as 1939. It looks similar to a cross between a berka and nun’s habits.

Walking through the Historical-Artistic Complex of Vejer you will be able to find several workshops where you can purchase souvenirs and possibly see the craftsmen doing their work.

Steeped in Arab traditions, Vejer is famous for its honey and traditional clay water jugs.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Carnival (early Feb) - celebration held in the purest "Gaditano" spirit, with shows & masquerades.

Holy Week (late March) this intimate and somber celebration is held within the unique narrow streets.

El Toro Embolao (Easter Sunday) – during this celebration, two bulls are turned loose to run the streets from the Plazuela to the Avda. San Miguel.

Spring Festival (end of April) horse and cattle market.

Romería al Santuario de Ntra. Señora de la Oliva (May 7th) grand religious festival.

Velada de la Oliva - the festival of the Patroness takes place with a procession through the streets on the 15th of August.

TRAVEL TIPS

There are some steep climbs so wear comfortable shoes for walking.

There is a large carpark at the top of the hill before entering the city. Park here as the streets become small and difficult to navigate.

Vejer is mere minutes from some of the best and most unspoiled beaches in Spain: Caños de la Meca, Conil, Zahara, Bolonia (a large beach with Roman ruins) as well as extensive pine forests within the National Park.

TRANSPORT

Driving: Approximately 1 hour

Visit www.viamichelin.com for driving directions. You may also inquire at the Traveler desk for information regarding GPS rentals.

FOR MORE INFO...

Vejer de la Frontera Tourism Office:
Avda. Los Remedios, 2. C.P.

Website: www.turismovejer.com

GPS Locator: **36°15'4"N 5°57'58"W**

