

# Cycling Safaris

## Andalucia - Seville to Granada 2018 Guided Tour

Guide in support van | 280 km / 170 miles | 7 nights / 8 days



This diverse riding week blends Andalucia's three monumental gems; *Seville*, *Cordoba* and *Granada* with some of Spain's finest rural landscapes and pleasant backwaters where little has changed. A one-of-a-kind cycle experience that caters to both lovers of history, art and romanticism and those seeking harmony with nature, fresh Andalusian air, great food and wine and some outstanding riding days.

Diverse rides through plantations of orange, avocado, olive, cotton and sunflowers offer a glimpse of rural life in Andalucia's colourful valleys bordering the historic *Guadalquivir* River. Our evenings are spent immersed in the historic and cultural elements of the cities and small villages on route. A particular highlight is the culinary delights to be had such as the wide range of local 'tapas' dishes, wines, Sherris and fresh nuts, berries and fruits growing wild throughout the region.

Your enthusiastic leader is on hand to guide you through Andalucia's secret delights and will introduce you to the true 'Andaluz' its eccentric people and vibrant customs! As a bonus, your trip leader offers nightly cultural/heritage tours of each destination we arrive to - providing complete inside every step along the way.

Experience the magnificence of *Seville* with its wonderful Cathedral housing the tomb of Columbus and an original Mosque tower; the charming *Barrio Santa Cruz* that inspired the opera *Carmen* and the sheer power of the Alcazar Fortress. At night feel the vibrancy of Seville's flamenco roots, or simply be part of the energy and get lost in the labyrinth of lanes and alleys in the old town.

In *Cordoba*, once capital of the Western world, your leader will guide you on a historic tour of the old Jewish quarter and throughout the famous 'patios' with their wonderful floral displays and ceramic tiles. A stay in Cordoba would not be complete without touring possibly the most beautiful Mosque in the world, the Mezquita, with an enormous 16th century Cathedral constructed in its centre!

At *Granada*, our final destination and arguably one of Spain's most exotic cities with its snow peaked backdrop and the imposing Alhambra Palace in the foreground, we venture deep into Moorish culture and explore the lanes and courtyards of the *Albaizan* - reminiscent of Morocco's medina culture - and of course the wonderful bohemian vibe that resonates around the city day and night.

Between these inspirational cities are 4 nights in lovely, small provincial towns of Roman and Moorish origins including 1 night in the birth place of California's namesake *Palma del Rio* and another in the classic 'white village' of *Zuheros* - nestled snugly against a backdrop of steep, mountainous crags and oak forests teeming with flora and fauna and where Palaeolithic man existed 25,000 years ago.

Overall, this unique itinerary has something for everyone and every level of interest and ability. Classic moments such as flamenco evenings, wine tasting, tapas tours, spring wild flowers and village fiestas make up only part of this holiday. If there is something of interest going on, we'll make sure to be part of it - and in Andalucia, there is never a dull moment!

### General Details:

- ❖ You ride, we look after all other logistics and provide back up support too - including shuttles, repairs, and the extra push!
- ❖ Our routes are "unguided" in the sense that you are free to ride at your own pace. We provide the route information and have a daily support vehicle on the road but otherwise enjoy your freedom to explore!
- ❖ Groups vary from a minimum of 4 to a max of 16. Larger tour groups can be accommodated, too.
- ❖ You only need to carry water, snacks and route information. We look after the baggage shuttles.
- ❖ Worried about over-exerting yourself? No need, we have alternative routing days and even "ride along" moments in our comfortable 'sag wagon'.

## TOUR ITINERARY

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### Tour Meeting Point: **Sunday (day 1), 19:00 hours**

Hotel Murillo Reception (Seville)  
C/ Lope de Ruedo, 7 y 9  
Barrio de Santa Cruz, Seville  
Tel. (34) 954 216 095

**Getting to your hotel** - Transfer from Seville Airport to Hotel Murillo by taxi (metered - approx. €30 one way to hotel). Be sure to ask for the meter rate. Alternatively there is a bus service from Seville airport every hour (approx. €3-€4) to the Prado bus station in the centre of Seville city (approx. 7 minute walk from the Hotel Murillo).

### **DAY 1            Sunday            Seville**

Tour leader meets group in hotel lobby at 1900 hours - Orientation and easy walk in central Seville and Barrio Santa Cruz (pending how much group has already visited of city). If you are interested in seeing Seville's main highlights (i.e., Cathedral, Plaza España and the Alcazar Palace), please try to organize this before meeting the group. Tonight dinner is provided and the trip leader will go over all aspects of the journey and teach you some essential Spanish survival phrases too! Hotel Murillos (Dinner included)

**DAY 2      Monday      Carmona to Palma del Rio      49 km / 30 miles**

After breakfast we arrange for you a 30 minute minibus *or* local coach shuttle (group numbers pending) to Carmona town (*we do this to avoid riding out of Seville due to heavy traffic*). At Carmona, we spend a short time wandering through exquisite lanes absorbing the medieval and Baroque quarter, the Moorish Fortress and market place. Our first ride - *Carmona to Palma del Rio* is on quiet secondary roads in open agricultural landscapes once ruled by both Moorish and Christian empires. Passing fields of citrus, cotton, sunflower and a number of classical 'Fincas' or traditional Spanish farmsteads adds great flavour to the day. There is an optional 10 km extension to the pretty Baroque village (*Peñaflor*). Evening guided walk of Palma's medieval center and its historical origins. Tonight we stay in the enchanting *Monasterio San Francisco*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Monastery adorned with courtyards and gardens with a swimming pool. It was here in the 1500's the Franciscan monks gave *California* its modern names (*Las Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, etc*).

**Riding Level: Easy - mostly flat with some undulations in first 20 km**

**DAY 3      Tuesday      Palma del Rio to Cordoba      58 km / 36 miles**

Ride Palma del Rio to Cordoba through open countryside where poppies, cotton and avocados line the roadside. The historic *Sierra Morena* lowlands flank the valley Guadalquivir providing much wealth and prosperity throughout Andalusia's turbulent history. Soon after passing the imposing *Almodovar* medieval castle, you arrive at the beautiful city of Cordoba. This afternoon we take a guided walk of Cordoba's Juderia, Patios and Craft Works before our dinner in one of Cordoba's traditional patio restaurants. A must see is the 9<sup>th</sup> century Mezquita (Cathedral) that is one of the earth's most awe inspiring architectural feats!

**Riding Level: Easy / Moderate - mostly flat / some hills in the second half.**

**DAY 4      Wednesday      Cordoba to Zuheros de la Sierra      61 km / 37 miles**

Today's ride (the longest of the week) offers a variety of hilly landscapes as we approach *Subetica National Park* and its stunning green forests, waterfalls and unique limestone craggy peaks. Here are long, quiet stretches of rural road with very little signs of habit. Vast plains reminiscent of Spain's *Don Quixote* heritage are encountered! Lunch stop is in the shaded park of *Castro* village - followed by a ride to the region's most famous olive producing center - *Baena*. Here we can visit the family run organic cold olive press of Nuñez Prado before our final few km to Zuheros. Dinner is included tonight.

**Riding Level: Moderate / Challenging at times / Our biggest day for length and mixed terrain**

**DAY 5      Thursday      REST DAY (Zuheros mountain village)**

Your rest day is located in one of Andalusia's most charming white villages - *Zuheros*. Famous in Moorish heritage as a small but formative strong-hold, it's surrounded by outstanding mountain scenery and an exquisite cliff hanging square backed with a fortress and mosque. This tiny hamlet offers unspoilt nature, quiet village lanes and options to explore the national park. Or, you can ride the famous *Via Verde* paths or simply relax in the serene village surroundings with a book, vino and tapas. *Please see information below for further rest day options*. Tonight dinner is not included but we recommend dining at the main square where hearty, local meats, produce and cheese are on offer.

**DAY 6      Friday      Zuheros to Alcala la Real      50 km / 31 miles**

Our ride today encounters rambling olive groves leading into mountains surrounding the famous *Vega de Granada* - essentially foothills to the Sierra Nevada. A large portion of riding is on the *Via Verde* (a 19<sup>th</sup> century olive oil train line), with a perfect gradient. It is now a famous cycle route for southern Spain. We later pass a series of small villages in *Jaen Province* before climbing a historic pass to what could be our first glimpse of the impending *Sierra Nevada* range that backdrops Granada itself. Our stay at *Alcala la Real* (The Royal) is marked by an optional visit of this once regal town's Moorish Fortress as well as an informative walk through the old town itself. Dinner is included tonight.

**Riding Level: Moderate - rolling with regular hill sections and a big climb over a pass towards the end.**

**DAY 7      Saturday      Alcala la Real to Granada      57 km / 35 miles**

Our final riding day as we pass through *Jaen Province's* Sierra ranges and into the great valley (vega), that contains Granada itself. Beautiful countryside marked by olive and almond groves perched on high valleys, cliff walls and along pretty rivers and reservoirs. Our final ride to the heart of Granada offers inspiring views of the snowy Sierra Nevada peaks and with luck we capture a view of the *Alhambra Palace* set above the hustle and bustle of new Granada. Today we picnic near a pretty lake where a refreshing dip is on offer. This evening we are guided through the lanes of Granada's brooding *Albaizan District* visiting enchanting courtyards and capturing the beauty of the Alhambra Palace at night from one of the city's most spectacular *miradors*. Dinner is not included but your leader will normally accompany you on a *Tapas* style tour of some great local haunts! Later this evening your trip leader will say adios but not before he / she offers any onward travel advice, translations and further ideas for visiting Granada.

**Riding Level: Moderate with some extended climbs on good gradient. Vehicle guided support for entering Granada to avoid becoming lost in the city boundaries.**

Please Note - If you plan to visit the *Alhambra Palace*, remember to book your tickets by credit card well in advance - this can be done through the official Alhambra website: <http://www.alhambra-patronato.es/index.php/Bienvenido/1+M5d637b1e38d/0/> Without a booking, it is possible to queue up first thing in the morning at the Alhambra (08:30) for limited tickets - though not advisable as you may be in a very long line.

**DAY 8      Sunday      TOUR END**

Guests are free to depart this morning after breakfast from Hotel Dauro in Granada / *no transport included*. Onward travel from Granada is straight forward and plentiful. Bus companies leave for all major destinations and the train service will connect you to Madrid, Seville, Barcelona and beyond. International flights are also available from Granada to Spanish and limited European destinations.

**Rest Day Options (self guided)**

Zuheros is a fantastic village for those who appreciate natural outdoor settings. Because we spend time in 3 bustling cities on this tour, we've chosen the quiet backwaters of Zuheros for our rest stop. With a stunning mountain backdrop containing forests, caves, walking paths, waterfalls and more, we are certain you will enjoy this friendly village and charming hotel.

For others, some wish to return to *Cordoba* city and explore this beautiful city more extensively. There are comfortable modern coach connections direct from the village to and from Cordoba - easily making the city a valid day visit.

Please see our list below for some ideas - your trip leader will be on hand to help with recommendations as well:

- Walks in the Subetica National Park (30 min to full days)
- Bird watching
- Cave visit (cave of the bat / 1 hour guided tour - excellent!)
- Organic Olive Press tour in Baena (if we don't do it on the bike tour day)
- Cycle the Via Verde routes (your bike is available to you on the rest day)
- Further visits to Cordoba for shopping, exploration (local bus trip)
- Relaxing in the village or surrounding countryside
- Guide treks, rock climbing, caving courses
- Day trips to surrounding towns



## 2018 TOUR PRICE

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€1,340.00 per person sharing  
€1,500.00 for single occupancy

## 2018 TOUR DATES

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May 13  
September 16  
October 7  
November 4

***Please note:** Other requested dates are available for 2 pax (please contact us in the office for the pricing) and any group over 4 pax at the normal published price. Subject to hotel availability.*

## WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

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**Lodgings** - 7 nights' quality en-suite accommodation in charming village or city hotels and guesthouses. Rooms are based on double sharing with single supplements available (single rooms can be small in comparison to doubles).

**Meals** - Meals are generally taken within your hotel (*and sometimes in the villages*). Dinners (3 included) normally include a choice of starters, main courses, a light dessert and a drink of your choice. Breakfasts are traditionally Spanish and normally light buffets with a wide variety of choices. With regard to lunches there are a number of village and countryside *Inns* on route where you can sample authentic Spanish cooking. We are also happy to organise picnics on route for the group with fresh local breads, produce, meats, cheese, etc..

**Dinners** - (includes 3 total) The first night (*Seville*) is the welcome dinner, followed by dinner on day 4 in *Zuheros*, and one dinner in *Alcala la Real*.

**Transport** - A sag wagon is available on days (or part of days) if you do not wish to cycle. Our vehicles are modern vans with plenty of space for bikes, luggage and passengers if need be. Airport transfers are not included but our leaders are happy to assist with route advice and options.

**Guide Service** - We provide an experienced guide during the riding days who drives the support vehicle. With larger groups, two guides may be present - one driving and one cycling. The guide ensures that hotel, baggage transfers, meals, transport and the riding go smoothly. This person also deals with the general well being of our guests, their safety and looks after bike maintenance and keeps a close watch on road conditions and any route information / changes. Please note that the sag wagon / support vehicle is generally with the group throughout the day providing full mechanical support and back-up to the riding group.

**Trip Notes and Map:** We provide detailed route information and maps so that you can cycle at your leisure. Our route notes are updated at least twice a year and have been measured by both vehicle and GPS systems.

**21 speed touring bike and helmet:** See below for more details. Please note, it is law in Spain that helmets must be worn on bicycles. For your safety, we strongly suggest you wear a helmet on tour.

**Exclusions:** Airport transfers to Seville / from Granada at tour end  
Entry fees to monuments  
Some dinners and all lunches

**ACCOMMODATION – Please note that confirmation in these places is subject to availability**

Below are brief descriptions of the lodgings for your riding holiday week. Should anyone wish to contact you while riding, you will find the contact details:

<b>DAY:</b>	<b>HOTEL NAME:</b>	<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
<b>Sunday:</b>	<i>Hotel Murillo</i>	<b>Seville</b>	<b>(34) 954 216 095</b>
<b>Monday:</b>	<i>Monasterio San Francisco</i>	<b>Palma Del Rio</b>	<b>(34) 957 710 183</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b>	<i>Posada de la Vallina</i>	<b>Cordoba</b>	<b>(34) 954 498 750</b>
<b>Wed &amp; Thu:</b>	<i>Hotel Rural Zuhayra</i>	<b>Zuheros</b>	<b>(34) 957 694 693</b>
<b>Friday:</b>	<i>Hotel Torrepalma</i>	<b>Alcala La Real</b>	<b>(34) 953 581 800</b>
<b>Saturday:</b>	<i>Hotel Dauro</i>	<b>Granada</b>	<b>(34) 958 225 181</b>

**1<sup>st</sup> Night - HOTEL MURILLO (2 star Superior)** – Named after Seville’s most famous 17<sup>th</sup> century painter, this hotel is conveniently located in a quiet area of Barrio Santa Cruz – close to all historic sites, superb tapas bars and offers modern comfort with Andaluz décor, style and charm. (Free Wifi) <http://www.hotelmurillo.com/>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Night - MONASTERIO SAN FRANCISCO (3 star Boutique / Heritage)**- One of our heritage hotels for your vacation! The Monastery is a grandiose estate and comes adorned with open courtyards, rich flora, a swimming pool and a history that cannot be matched. It was from here the Franciscan Monks set up colonies in California – giving the region its namesake such as San Francisco, Las Angeles and more! (Free Wifi) <http://www.intergrouphoteles.com/es/hotel-monasterio-de-san-francisco-palma-del-rio-cordoba.html>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Night - POSADA DE LA VALLINA (3 star Boutique)** – This charming 17<sup>th</sup> century manor is situated across the lane from the imposing Mezquita Mosque in the heart of Cordoba. With it’s lovely arches, marble, woodwork and inner courtyard the Posada is a quiet hideaway from Cordoba’s busy historic quarter. (Free Wifi) <http://www.hhposadadevallina.es/index.php?lang=en>

**4-5<sup>th</sup> Nights - ECO HOTEL ZUHAYRA (2 Star Superior Eco Hotel)**- Zuhero’s highest rated hotel is a charming Inn that is situated in the heart of this ancient hamlet. All rooms are of traditional Andaluz décor with a friendly welcoming staff for our 2 night stay! Enjoy the views reaching across the Cordoba plains or relax in the quiet patio area with a favourite book. (Free Wifi) <http://www.zercahoteles.com/hzuhayra.htm>

**6<sup>th</sup> Night - HOTEL TORREPALMA (3 star town center)** - A true Arabic town enhanced by the Conquistadors where little has changed! This comfortable 3 star modern hotel is situated right in the centre of town surrounded by tapas bars and a great local vibe. (Free Wifi) <http://www.hoteltorrepalma.com/?idioma=eng>

**7<sup>th</sup> Night - HOTEL DAURO (3 Star city center)** - Situated in the old city center the Dauro presents all possibilities for enjoying the high energy of Granada. Tapas bars, great shopping and charming pedestrian lanes with colourful courtyards are just out the door. (Free wifi) <http://www.hoteles-dauro.com/index.html?lang=en>

*Please note – hotels subject to change depending on availability / group size and / or late bookings.*

## WHAT TO BRING

- \* Comfortable cycling clothing – shorts, shoes, gloves etc
- \* A set of light waterproof clothing (usually not needed between June 10 and Sept 1)
- \* Hat, sunglasses and bathing suit
- \* OPTIONAL – personal cycle helmet and gel seat (helmets are provided at no extra cost)  
e-bike for additional €100 (on request only)

## BIKE AND FITNESS



### BH (Spanish Made) Hybrid Touring Series

<http://bhbikes-us.com/>

21 speed Shimano components, aluminium male/female frame options, front suspension, rear support rack, (not shown) water bottle and front carry bag

We use a number of bicycle models to suit your needs. Most of our bikes are 'hybrids'. These bikes are designed for road touring and are also suitable for light trail riding and dirt/gravel roads. Many of our hybrid bikes have light front suspension, a wide range of gears (21 speed minimum), comfortable saddles, aluminium frames and quality 'Shimano' components.

At times we can also provide lightweight mountain bikes. Generally all bicycles have a rear pannier rack and a small soft bag on the handlebars (*big enough to carry a poncho / rain coat and a light snack*). All bikes also have a water bottle holder and a single water bottle. There's no need for extra baggage on your bike as the support van is always within 30 minutes of the riders and makes plenty of sweeps during the day (*on guided tour programs only*).

Please let us know in advance if you require any of our FREE EXTRAS – otherwise *they will not be included* with the bikes:

- \* Toe clips (*indicate with or without strap models*)
- \* Gel seat pad

It is now possible to book an E-bike for a supplement of €100.

### Fitness and Pre-Trip Preparation

The general rule on active holidays is to enjoy yourself. Sure there is physical exertion involved but you wouldn't have chosen a bike tour if you weren't aware of this fact! On the other hand, a bit of mental and physical preparation could help you enjoy your week even more. We suggest that you put in some riding time in the weeks building up to your holiday – even on a stationary bike. Try to get out for some hours on the weekends on varied terrain and if possible on hills, not that any of our excursions are overly strenuous - it's simply a good idea to put in a few miles beforehand!

### Total Distance:

280 km (over 5 days riding, if rest day is taken)

### Level Rating:

Days 1-2      Easy to Moderate (mostly flat valley riding with gentle ascents)  
Day 3          Moderate to Advanced moments (long day with final 2 km climb option)  
Days 4-5      Moderate to Advanced at times (mostly rolling / occasional longer climb)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Personal Money

Outside of the meals not included in your holiday price, you may wish to have some Euros for other purposes. This could include visits to taverns for tapas and beverages or extra drinks during/after dinner, local souvenirs, and the bus/train journey on the rest day and any sites you may visit.

Exchanging money between your currency and the Euro is easy. Some options are:

- *To buy or bring Euros from your bank at home*
- *Use your normal bankcard here in Spanish bank machines (good rates of exchange and low charges)*
- *Buy Euros from banks and moneychangers here in Spain (poorer rates of exchange)*
- *Pay with your credit card (used everywhere)*  
*(Important note – travellers cheques are now a burden in Spain)*

### Telephoning and Internet in Spain

Credit Cards may be used for International calls or a Spanish Phone Card can be purchased for a certain value. Additionally, you can access an International Operator by dialling 025 from any phone. INTERNET wifi (wireless) is frequently available in hotels and cafes throughout the region. Most hotels have wifi connections as well – almost always in the reception but not always in rooms.

### Flights

We encourage our guests to arrange their flights / arrivals to and from Seville, Granada or Jerez Airport. If arriving into Malaga or any other location, there are fast and efficient transport options to reach Seville.

### Transport Connections to Seville (pre tour)

Airport transfers to the Hotel Murillos (first night) are not included on this tour due to the fact that many participants arrive to Seville from other Spanish destinations. For airport arrivals, we recommend you take the easy and economic airport city bus transfer that arrives to the Prado bus station. This bus station is a short 7 minute walk to the Hotel Murillos in the Barrio Santa Cruz. A private taxi shuttle from the airport direct to the hotel is approximately 30 euros total (ask for the meter / metro) official rate.

### Airports

Seville, Jerez and Granada have more and more regular international arrivals.

### Train

There are fast connections from Madrid (2.5 hours), Malaga (2.5 hours) and all major Spanish centres. Booking can be done easily and far in advance using [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es) website (English option available).

Granada is a good arrival point and a fast train or bus can be taken to Seville from here (this works well if you need to return home from Granada after tour). Seville's train stations *Sevilla Santajusta* and *Sevilla San Bernardo* are both close to the hotel (5-10 min taxi ride), but the *Santajusta* is a bit closer. In Seville it doesn't really matter because the hotel location is quite central to everything.

### Bus

Many bus connections direct to Seville from all major centres (Madrid, Malaga, Jerez, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Granada, etc.)



### **Transport connections from Granada (post tour)**

Getting to/from Granada is easy and cheap, trains travel to Seville, Madrid, Malaga and further afield (see [www.renfe.com](http://www.renfe.com)). Buses go to Malaga on the hour and take 1 hr 40 min. making getting to the airport very easy. Bus connections are also fast and reliable to Madrid and Alicante.

Spanish bus companies websites: <http://www.avanzabus.com/web/default.aspx?lang=en>  
<http://www.alsa.es>

Spanish train company website: [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es)

Jerez, Seville and Granada occasionally have inexpensive flights from the UK and Ireland. Gibraltar Airport is a bus ride away from Seville (2 hours approximately - arriving to La Linea, next to Gibraltar)