



Andalusia is the birthplace of flamenco.

EXPLORATION

Unspoiled Spain

Marvel in the wonders of Andalusia.

| by Doug Wallace |

HILLSIDE VILLAGES PAINTED ENTIRELY white, olive trees heavy with fruit, buildings that span civilizations, late-afternoon tapas and farm-to-table dining under the stars. On a road trip through Córdoba, Seville, Cádiz and Ronda, my itinerary was all this and more, thanks to my travel advisor who helped map out my trip across Andalusia.

Córdoba

The city of Córdoba was at one time an important European metropolis, and it's still one of the most beautiful. Explore hidden alleyways, tranquil courtyards and ancient gold-stone buildings.

The Mezquita-Catedral de Córdoba, a mosque-turned-cathedral-turned-museum, is a marvellous example of Islamic design. Be sure to take in the sprawling Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos, where King Fernando and Queen Isabel first met Christopher Columbus.

Bonus tip: download a map app to your mobile device, so you can wander the narrow lanes carefree.

🍷 Where to dine

For an authentic food experience, grab a table at Restaurante Puerta Sevilla, which takes pride in its traditional Andalusian dishes, from superb seafood and fresh artichokes to tender ham—all simple yet so satisfying.

🏠 Stay here

Las Casas de la Judería delivers romantic rooms across five former palaces, with interiors that mirror the buildings' architectural essence.

Seville

The birthplace of the hypnotic flamenco dance, soothing Seville teems with amazing architecture, lively tapas bars and romantic promenades in the sunshine.

Take time to sightsee at the Moorish palace complex Real Alcázar and the nearby Catedral de Sevilla, the world's

largest Gothic cathedral.

The modern Metropol Parasol is worth the trek up for the staggering scenes of town.

🍷 Where to dine

The stylish Desacato takes traditional cuisine and turns it on its head, serving dishes that lean heavily on the element of whimsy.

🏠 Stay here

Check into Corral del Rey, a converted 17th-century palace complete with rooftop bar, chic furnishings and a huge art collection.

Cádiz

With a fascinating naval history and a relaxing beach-going present, Cádiz is as vibrant as the flamenco songs that sing its praises.

When you're not sunning yourself on the Playa de la Caleta or strolling the strip at Playa de la Victoria, get a fascinating history lesson at the Catedral de Cádiz and the Roman theater.

🍷 Where to dine

Find traditional fare at Restaurante El Faro de Cádiz, a culinary delight unsurprisingly headlined by the seafood. Bonus tip: sip a glass of dry sherry instead of wine.

🏠 Stay here

The new Casa Cánovas in Old Town is a chic converted manor house, close to many of the city's top sights and laced with luxury trimmings.



Top: Córdoba's Calleja de las Flores; tomato salad with brine shrimp in Cádiz.

Below: a view of the El Tajo gorge and the Puente Nuevo in Ronda.



Ronda

Breathtaking, romantic Ronda—the birthplace of modern bullfighting—is a small city built on a mountaintop overlooking El Tajo gorge, the biggest of the whitewashed towns.

Wander the various bridges, parks and promenades, drinking in views of the 325 feet below. There is a Roman part of town and an addition that dates from the 1700s. You can also tour one of Spain's oldest bullrings.

Where to dine

Restaurante Almocábar, just outside the south city walls, turns out regional dishes from family recipes—right through to the second dessert.

Stay here

They practically had to drag me out of the pool at Hotel Catalonia Reina Victoria, which overlooks the gorge. 

