

# Amorous Andalusia

LITTLE MOMENTS OF PURE PERFECTION AWAIT NEWLYWEDS IN SOUTHERN SPAIN, WHERE COSMOPOLITAN GLAMOUR MELTS SEAMLESSLY WITH ANCIENT TREASURES.

Not much has changed in the passionate province of Andalusia over the past few centuries – and this is a good thing. The birthplace of bull fighting and Flamenco dancing is still awash with white-washed villages, olive groves and citrus trees, sherry barrels and sun-drenched beaches, modern art and Roman ruins – proof that in spirited Spain, it is impossible to be too romantic.

## CÓRDOBA

Córdoba was one of Europe's biggest cities a thousand years ago when it was the vibrant capital of Islamic Spain, a centre for education and commerce. Now, the whole town centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, replete with stone laneways, gold-stone buildings and serene courtyards.

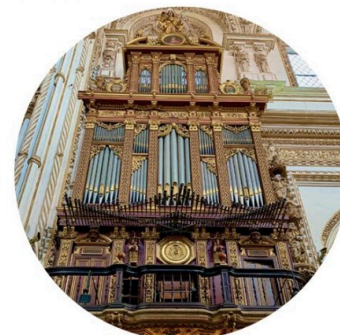
**WHAT TO DO:** First stop – the beautiful Mezquita – once a mosque, then a cathedral and now a museum – the showpiece of the city, one of the world's most exquisite examples of Islamic architecture. Of the city's many palaces, Palacio de Viana is one of the finest, a Renaissance gem with a dozen or so patios filled with plants.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Restaurante Puerta Sevilla serves cocina tradicional, the real deal – lovely ham, perfect sea bass, fresh artichokes and soothing salmorejo, a cold tomato and bread soup.

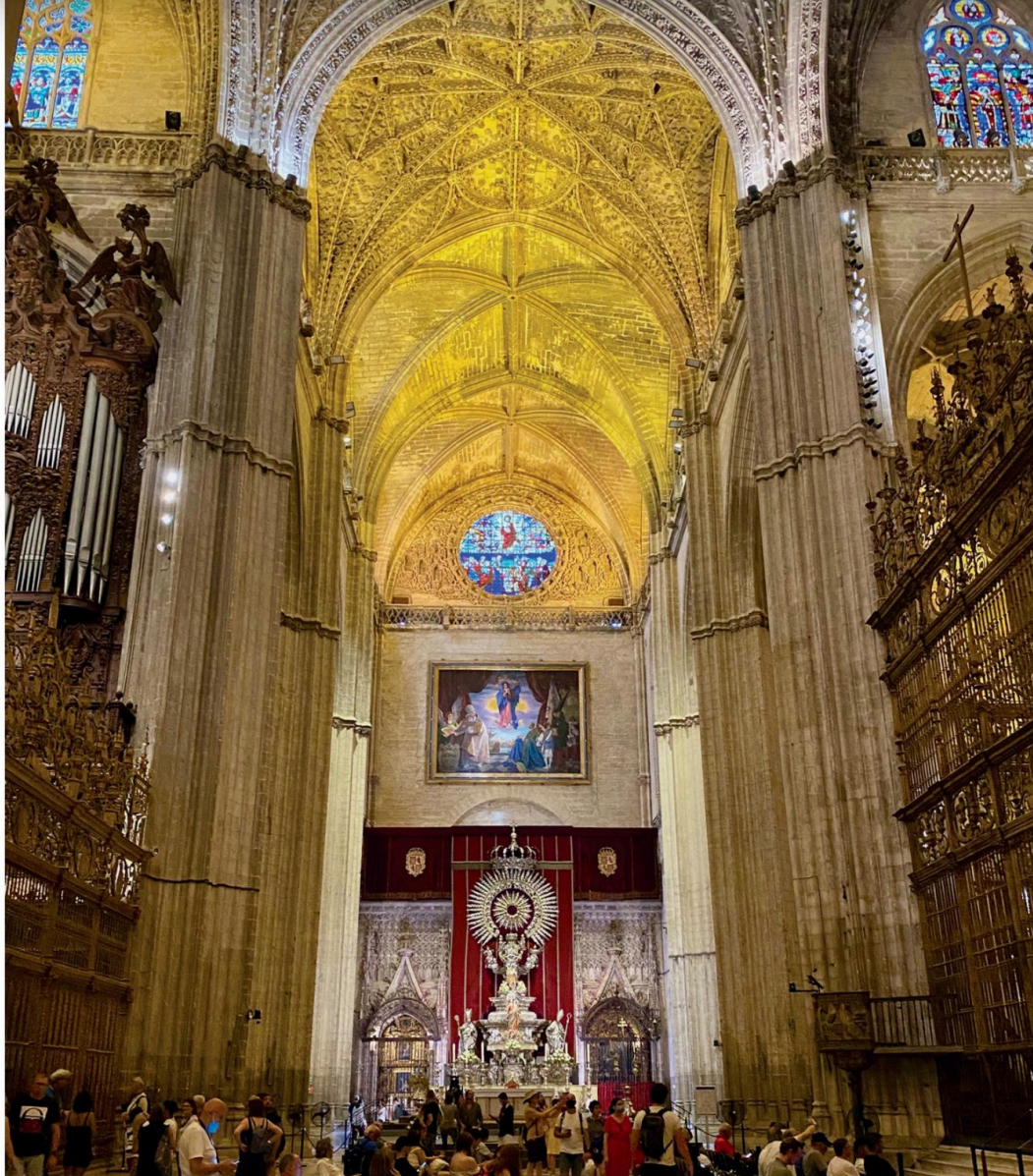
[puertasevilla.com](http://puertasevilla.com)

**WHERE TO STAY:** Hotel Hospes Palacio del Bailío is a modern delight in a historical building with elegant rooms and Roman-style baths in the lower-level spa.

[hospes.com/en/palacio-bailio](http://hospes.com/en/palacio-bailio)  
[turismodecordoba.org/tourist-offices](http://turismodecordoba.org/tourist-offices)



Photography by Doug Wallace. Bottom left: istockphoto.com



## SEVILLA

“So famous, so unknown” is the tagline for this town, once a Moorish capital, now a living museum. Check out its winding laneways, tiny tapas bars, Baroque churches and Flamenco clubs.

**WHAT TO DO:** Tour the world’s largest Gothic cathedral, which houses the remains of Christopher Columbus. Then head to the many sections of Real Alcázar, a spectacle of both Christian and Islamic architecture, and a location for *Game of Thrones*. Wander up the Metropol Parasol – better known as Las Setas, translated to The Mushrooms – for a dazzling view of the city.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Stop into historic sweet shop Confitería La Campana for traditional cakes. Set the evening aside for the inventive menu at Restaurante Desacato, a modern environment to counterbalance all the antiquation.

[restaurantedesacato.com](http://restaurantedesacato.com)

**WHERE TO STAY:** Make the Hotel Las Casas de la Judería de Sevilla your central home base, getting lost in the little nooks and crannies that surround the rooftop pool. Nightcap it in the grand Piano Bar.

[lascasasdelajuderiassevillacom](http://lascasasdelajuderiassevillacom)  
[vistasevilla.es/en](http://vistasevilla.es/en)



## ROAD TRIP TIPS

*Driving in a foreign country always draws a few challenges into the holiday equation. But provided you're equipped with the rules of the road, a little patience and a crack navigator, your journey should roll right along.*

Obtain an international drivers license before your trip (available at CAA), and familiarize yourself with all the local traffic signs and laws. Have an emergency plan should you need it. This includes roadside service, health insurance information and emergency telephone numbers.

Spring for the extra, no-fault car-rental insurance. Pre-wrap your head around the insurance you already carry through your credit card, and whether or not that will suffice in your destination.

Plan your route in advance – and heed the speed limits at all times. You don't know what's around the next corner: Be wary of cyclists, slow-moving campers, farm equipment and the like. Everyone shares the road in Europe, even the sheep.

If you can, avoid the busy times of day on the road. Try to reach your hotel parking lot before rush hour begins, particularly in cities with very narrow streets. And no driving at night, please!



## CÁDIZ

A centre for trading since 1100 BC, Cádiz is one of Europe's oldest cities. Once a jumping-off point for exploration abroad, it has a fascinating naval history to discover – when you're not lounging at one of many beautiful beaches.

**WHAT TO DO:** Sun-worshippers congregate at Playa de la Caleta to enjoy the sand and surf, the sun still in the sky past 8 P.M. The promenade at Playa de la Victoria on the newer strip of town also beckons with cafés and bars. The city's yellow-stone Cathedral is a Baroque-Neoclassical icon. Climb the east tower for a superb view. Twenty minutes inland, the town of Jerez de la Frontera is a cradle of the sherry-making industry. Relax with a leisurely lunch and a tour of Las Bodegas Osborne, one of Spain's top sherry distilleries.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Try the tasting menu at Restaurante El Faro to get a sense of the authentic regional seafood specialties – with the wine pairing, of course. [elfarodecadiz.com](http://elfarodecadiz.com)

**WHERE TO STAY:** Parador de Cádiz has a long list of amenities, immense views of the bay and an exceedingly slick rooftop pool. [parador.esandalucia.org/en/provincia-cadiz](http://parador.esandalucia.org/en/provincia-cadiz)



## RONDA

This exquisitely beautiful mountaintop city is set above the spectacular El Tajo Gorge. The bridge between the Moorish old town and the 15th-century “new” town delivers views that are breathtaking beyond words. Practically every street is a romantic photo op.

**WHAT TO DO:** Simply, etch the scenery onto your mind, strolling the parks and promenades, and along the three bridges that span the 100-metre-deep gorge. Check out the terraces at Casa del Rey Moro, where an ancient stairway leads to the river below. Take care of souvenir shopping at El Pensamiento toy store.

**WHERE TO EAT:** Book lunch on the terrace overlooking the gorge at Hotel Montelirio, take a break at Toro Tapas Ronda, then spend the evening in the plaza by the south city gate at Restaurante Almocábar.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Incredible balcony views await from your chic room at Hotel Catalonia Reina Victoria. Awesome pool, too. [cataloniareinavictoria.com-hotel.com](http://cataloniareinavictoria.com-hotel.com), [andalucia.org/en/ronda](http://andalucia.org/en/ronda)

