

*A Custom Designed Itinerary to
Spain
By
IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS*

IQOTC REF: F705158

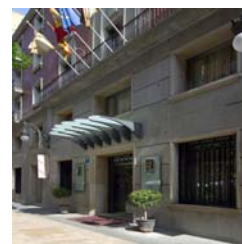
DAY 1: BARCELONA/SITGES. Upon arrival at the Barcelona airport you are met and privately transferred to Sitges, a lovely seaside town about 45 minutes outside of Barcelona. Here you will check into the **Calipolis Hotel**, a first class hotel with a great location in the town center, overlooking the beach. NOTE: The Sitges stay could be replaced by a stay in Barcelona.



DAY 2: BARCELONA. This morning you are met at your hotel by a driver and English-speaking guide and taken to Barcelona for a full day of sightseeing. There are many things to do and see in Barcelona, but if you are interested in food, you may want to go and take a peak at the newly renovated Santa Catarina Market in the Old Town, where you'll also find wine bars and tapas restaurants. The Old Town and the Gothic districts are where you'll find century old food shops! In the late afternoon, you are dropped off at the Avis counter at the Barcelona airport where you will pick up your rental car. Return to Sitges for overnight.



DAY 3: SITGES/VALENCIA. Today we include a visit of the Cordoniu cellars, producer of Spain's famous Cava sparkling wine and the Torres Winery, winner of the Best European Winery award by the Wine Enthusiast in 2006. Please ask your hotel for directions and best logistic to travel to those two wineries from Sitges. You will then drive south to Valencia, where you'll check into the **Vincci Lys Hotel** for 2 nights. The four star Hotel Vincci Lys has a great location in the center of town and offers comfortable modern accommodations.



DAY 4: VALENCIA. Valencia is the third largest city in Spain, and its seaside area is getting a face lift! The construction of The Art and Science Centre has turned sleepy Valencia into a major European destination. This vast culture and leisure complex consists of several white buildings boasting a futuristic architectural style and reflecting in large expanses of turquoise water. It comprises various items of equipment related to the arts, science and nature. Buildings not to be missed include the Océanogràfic (Europe's largest maritime centre), the Hemisfèric (audiovisual shows), the Principe Felipe Science Museum, the Arts Palace and the Umbracle Garden. About eight miles south of Valencia, you may want to visit the Parc Natural de L'Albufera, a nature reserve of pine forest and freshwater lakes attracting a colorful range of migratory birds. Maybe take a boat ride on the lake?



DAY 5: VALENCIA/GRANADA. Today you'll have over 300 miles to drive to Granada. There isn't a lot of sightseeing to do en route. Maybe stop in the Murcia area for a break. This region is famous for its agriculture. It mostly grows tomatoes. Upon arrival in Granada, check into your hotel, the **Palacio de Santa Paula**, for 2 nights. Located in the old town area of Granada, it is the result of a very careful and well-thought-out refurbishment of the old Convent of Santa Paula and maintains the old cloister. You can enjoy the pleasure of resting in a luxurious hotel in this unique building, one of the key monuments of the historical downtown area of the city.



DAY 6: GRANADA. The main attraction in Granada is the Alhambra. We include 4 pre-reserved tickets for admission. The Alhambra is an ancient palace and fortress complex of the Moorish monarchs of Granada, occupying a hilly terrace on the south-eastern border of the city of Granada. It was the residence of the Muslim kings of Granada and their court, but is currently a



museum, exhibiting exquisite Islamic architecture. It also features exquisite gardens. We include pre-reserved tickets for admission in order to avoid the long lines. You are staying near the Alhambra, an entire hilltop settlement that includes private dwellings, shops, convents and a 16th century palace. In the city proper, you must visit the Cathedral, with its impressive façade and paintings by Alonso Cano. The old city center around the cathedral is a maze of narrow one-way streets. It contains the Alcaiceria, a reconstruction of a Moorish bazaar that burned down in 1843.

DAY 7: GRANADA/CORDOBA. Travel approximately 150 miles to Cordoba today. Maybe stop in Jaen and travel up to the Castillo de Santa Catalina, now a parador, for a beautiful view of the Sierra and the olive groves? Upon arrival in Cordoba, check into **Palacio del Bailio** for 2 nights. Built between the 16th and 18th centuries this traditional Andalusian estate has been meticulously restored and finely balanced with contemporary design. Original detailing such as wrought-iron balcony railings, terracotta tiles, Moorish decorative elements and a lavishly painted ceiling have been artfully combined with understated modern touches. Rich fabrics and textures in champagne and copper tones are offset by dark walnut wood and light polished marble floors throughout the interiors – solid slabs of black stone from Cordoba lead to the gardens outside.



DAY 8: CORDOBA. A full day to explore Cordoba. Cordoba was founded by the Romans and due to its strategic importance as the highest navigable point of the Guadalquivir River, it became a port city of great importance, used for shipping Spanish olive oil, wine and wheat back to



Ancient Rome. The Romans built the mighty bridge crossing the river, now called "El Puente Romano". But Cordoba's hour of greatest glory was when it became the capital of the Moorish kingdom of El-Andalus, and this was when work began on the Great Mosque, or "Mezquita", which – after several centuries of additions and enlargements – became one of the largest in all of Islam. When the city was re-conquered by the Christians in 1236, the new rulers of the city were so awed by its beauty that they left it standing, building their cathedral in the midst of its rows of arches and columns, and creating the extraordinary church-mosque we see today.

As well as the unique mosque-cathedral, Cordoba's treasures include the Alcazar, or Fortress, built by the Christians in 1328; the Calahorra Fort, originally built by the Arabs, which guards the



Roman Bridge, on the far side of the river from the Mezquita, and the ancient Jewish Synagogue, now a museum. Cordoba's medieval quarter, once the home of the Jewish community, is called "La Judería", a labyrinth of winding, narrow streets, shady flower-filled courtyards and picturesque squares such as La Plaza del Potro. In early May, homeowners proudly festoon their patios with flowers to compete for the city's "most beautiful courtyard" contest.

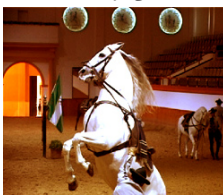
DAY 9: CORDOBA/SEVILLE. Your next destination is about 100 miles away, in Alcala de Guadaira, about 6 miles from Seville. Here you will check into the **Hacienda Boticaria**, a hotel set in a traditional Andalusian building, in beautiful countryside. It features a spa, a golf course, and of course, horse back riding nearby. The hotel is surrounded by courtyards and wonderful gardens. NOTE: The stay at the Hacienda could be replaced by a stay in Seville.



DAY 10: SEVILLE. We suggest a full day of sightseeing in Seville. Here you will want to visit the old city; with the Cathedral and the Giralda Tower (you can climb the steps inside the tower for a magnificent view of the city.) Very close by is the Royal Mudéjar Palace, known as the Alcazar, with its beautiful gardens. Stroll around the Santa Cruz quarter, with its cramped streets, flowered balconies, richly decorated facades, hidden patios...this is where you'll find plenty of tapas restaurants and local shops.



DAY 11: JEREZ. Today we suggest an excursion to Jerez. Jerez is horse country, and we include tickets for a visit of the famous Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Arts, and performance of the "Dancing Horses" today. Jerez is also famous for producing sherry and we include a sherry and tapas tasting at a local bodega.



DAY 12: SEVILLE/MADRID. Drop off your vehicle rental at the Seville rail station and board the fast train to Madrid. First class tickets and reserved seats included. Upon arrival in Madrid, you are met and transferred to your hotel the **Gran Fenix**. The Fenix is a beautifully renovated five star hotel in a great location right in the heart of the famous Paseo de la Casatellana, in front of the Plaza Colon and within walking distance of shops and boutiques. This evening make your way to Corral de la Pacheca in time for a Flamenco dinner-show.



DAY 13: MADRID. This morning, you are met at your hotel by a driver and an English-speaking guide and taken on a half day sightseeing of the city. Madrid has many broad avenues and attractive plazas. The Puerta del Sol is in the heart of Madrid and is the point from which all road distances are measured. The Plaza Mayor, a pedestrian square surrounded by arcades, is the heart of Hapsburg Madrid and formerly the setting for bullfights and auto-da-fes. The Palacio Real, former home of the Bourbon monarchs, is well worth a visit. Here you'll see the impressive throne room and banqueting hall, as well as other opulently decorated rooms. The Prado Museum, one of the foremost museums of the world, is famous for its masterpieces of Spanish painters such as El Greco, Velasquez and Goya. Afternoon at leisure for last minute shopping!



DAY 14: DEPART. You are met in your hotel lobby and transferred to the Madrid airport in time for your flight home.

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