

# Cycling Safaris

## Andalucia - Seville to Granada 2010



This fantastic week of cycling week combines 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 and some gentle riding days.

Peaceful rides through quiet plantations of orange, avocado, olive, cotton and sunflowers offer a glimpse of rural life in Andalucia's colourful valleys bordering the historic Guadalquivir River. The evenings are spent immersed in the historic and cultural elements of the cities and small villages en-route. A particular highlight is the culinary delights to be had such as the wide range of local 'tapas' dishes, wines, Sherries 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 a nightly cultural/heritage tour of each destination we arrive to - providing you with a complete insight into every stop 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. 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 suspiciously placed in its centre!

At Granada, our final destination and arguably one of Europe'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 plazas reminiscent of Moroccan souks in the Albaizan district plus much more.

Between these inspirational cities are 4 nights in lovely small rural towns of Roman and Moorish origins including a 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 pine forests where an optional cave visit offers glimpses of Palaeolithic man's existence 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, 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 too!
- ❖ 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 the freedom!
- ❖ Groups vary from a minimum of 4 to a max of 16. Larger tour groups can be accommodated to.
- ❖ You need only 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

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

Hotel Murillo

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. €15-20 one way to hotel). Be sure to ask for the meter rate. Alternatively there is a bus service (*Los Amarillos*) from Seville airport every hour (approx. €2.50) to the *Prado bus station* in the centre of Seville city (approx. 10 minute walk from the Hotel Murillo).

### DAY 1 Sunday Seville

Tour leader meets group in hotel lobby at 1900 hours - Orientation and easy walking tour of central Seville and Barrio Santa Cruz. Welcome group dinner. If you are interested in seeing Seville's main highlights (i.e., Cathedral and Alcazar Palace), please try to organize this before meeting the group.

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

After breakfast we have a 30 minute minibuss or local coach shuttle to Carmona town to begin ride (we avoid riding out of Seville due to heavy traffic). 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. Optional 10 km extension to the pretty Baroque village (Penaflo). Evening guided walk of medieval town and its historical origins. Group dinner in hotel tonight provided.

**Level: Easy - mostly flat**

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

Ride Palma del Rio to Cordoba through open countryside containing poppies, cotton and avocados. The historic Sierra Morena lowlands flank the valley Guadalquivir providing much wealth and prosperity throughout Andalucia's turbulent history. 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.

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

**DAY 4      Wednesday      Cordoba to Zuheros de la Sierra      58 km / 36 miles**

Prior to setting off this morning we are free to visit the famous Mezquita Mosque of Cordoba - made famous for becoming both a Catholic Cathedral and a Mosque in the same building - the Mosque was the original structure however! Today's ride (the longest of the week) offers us our first taste of hilly landscapes as we approach Subetica National Park and its stunning green forests, waterfalls and unique limestone craggy peaks. Group dinner is provided in hotel tonight.

**Level: Moderate / Challenging at times / Our biggest day due to length and variety of terrain**

**DAY 5      Thursday      REST DAY**

Your rest day is located in one of Andalucia's most charming white villages - Zuheros. Famous in Moorish history as a small defensive strong-hold, this tiny hamlet offers pure nature, quiet village lanes and opportunities to get out on foot into the mountains, ride the famous Via Verde paths or simply relax in the serene village surroundings with a book and a tapas. Please see information below for further rest day options. Tonight dinner is not included but we recommend dining at the lovely plaza venta under the fortress.

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

Our ride today brings us through the rolling olive groves towards the mountains surrounding the famous Vega de Granada. Today's route takes in a busier road for part of the day followed by a lovely rural lane and even a section of the Via Verde historical route. Our stay at Alcala la Real (The Royal) is marked by a visit of this once regal town's Moorish Fortress grounds as well as a light walk through the city itself. Group dinner is provided at the hotel.

**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 set on high valleys, cliff walls and along pretty rivers. 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 high above the hustle and bustle of New Granada. Today we picnic along a pretty lakeside where bathing can be carried out.

**Level: Moderate / Challenging moments - guided support for entering Granada**

Tonight we are guided through the lanes of Granada's exotic Albaizan district and Moroccan Quarter visiting lovely plazas and capturing the beauty of the Alhambra Palace at night from one of the city's most spectacular miradors. Tonight dinner is not included but we normally have a final group farewell celebration in one of the city's lovely open plazas. This evening your tour leader(s) will also depart the tour.

Please note - your leader is always available to assist with onward travel advice, translations and highlights / ideas for visiting Granada. Additionally, if you plan to visit the Alhambra (which is a must do!), remember to book your tickets by credit card well in advance - this can be done through the Alhambra Website at: <http://www.servicaixa.com>. 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.

## DAY 8      Sunday      TOUR END

Guests are free to depart this morning after breakfast from Hotel Los Tilos in Granada / *no transport included.*

### Rest Day Options

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.

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

### REST DAY ACTIVITY OPTIONS (self guided)

- *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*
- *Cycle the Via Verde routes*
- *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*

### TOUR PRICE

€995.00 per person sharing  
€1,095.00 for single occupancy

### TOUR DATES

April 28 – *Easter date, please add €90 supplement for this date.*  
May 2, 23  
September 19  
October 3, 17

### 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)

### WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

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

**Meals** – Meals are generally taken within your hotel (and sometimes in the villages). Dinners (4 included) normally include a choice of starters, main courses, a light dessert and a drink of your choice. Breakfasts are traditionally Spanish and simple, and include coffee/tea, juice, toast and sometimes fruit (*very light for some, so you may wish to supplement with fruit / snack later in the morning!*). With regard to your lunches there are a number of village and countryside Inns on route where you can sample some authentic Spanish cooking. We are happy to organise picnics on route for the group.

**Dinners** – (includes 4 total) not included on the rest day and final night.

**Transport** – A sag wagon is available on days (or part of days) if you do not wish to cycle. Airport transfers are not included but our leaders are happy to assist with route advice.

**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, meals, transport and the riding go smoothly. This person also deals with the general well being of our guests, 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 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.

**21 speed touring bike and helmet** – see below for more details.

**Exclusions:** Airport transfers to Seville / from Granada at tour end  
Entry fees to monuments, 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>VILLAGE:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
<b>Sunday:</b>	<i>Hotel Murillo</i>	Seville	(34) 954 216 095
<b>Monday:</b>	<i>Hotel El Castillo</i>	Palma Del Rio	(34) 957 645 710
<b>Tuesday:</b>	<i>Hostal La Fuente</i>	Cordoba	(34) 954 487 827
<b>Wed &amp; Thu:</b>	<i>Hotel Zuhayra</i>	Zuheros	(34) 957 694 693
<b>Friday:</b>	<i>Hotel Zacatin</i>	Alcala La Real	(34) 953 580 568
<b>Saturday:</b>	<i>Hotel Los Tilos</i>	Granada	(34) 956 266 712

**HOTEL MURILLO** – Named after Seville’s most famous 17<sup>th</sup> century painters, this hotel is conveniently located in a quiet area of Barrio Santa Cruz – close to all major sites and with a fine blend of modern comfort with Andalus decor.

**HOTEL EL CASTILLO** -A new style hotel situated across from a leafy park area and only a minutes walk from Palma's charming Baroque quarter. All rooms are cosy and with modern conveniences.  
**HOSTAL LA FUENTE** - This charming family run hotel is beautifully decorated with a leafy open patio set in the walled area of the Juderia (old quarter)of Cordoba.

**HOTEL ZUHAYRA** - Zuhero's charming Inn that is built in the centre of this ancient hamlet. All rooms are of traditional Andaluz décor with a friendly welcoming staff for our 2 night stay!

**HOSPEDEJERIA ZACATIN**-A true Arabic town enhanced by the Conquistadors where little has changed! This cosy, new family run hotel has charming rooms right in the centre of town surrounded by tapas bars and a great local vibe.

**HOTEL LOS TILOS** - Situated directly on the famous Plaza Bib Rambla of Granada. This lovely hotel offers simple, clean rooms - some with spectacular views of Granada and a superb buffet breakfast.

*Please note - hotels subject to change depending on availability / group size. At times we also utilize village guesthouses and neighbouring hotels.*

## BIKE AND FITNESS

We use a number of types of bicycle models to suit your needs. Most of our bikes are 'hybrid' models. 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 front and seat suspension, a wide range of gears (21 speed), comfortable saddles, optional toe clips, aluminium frames and quality 'Shimano' components. At times we also use lightweight mountain bikes with 'slick' tyres for road-riding. Like our hybrid models, many riders favour this style of bike for its comfort and riding security.

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 is really no need for any extra baggage on your bikes as the support van is always within 30 minutes of the riders and does plenty of sweeps on route.

Please let us know in advance if you require any of these EXTRAS - otherwise they will NOT be included with the bikes (*these come at no extra charge*)

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

The general rule on active holidays is to enjoy yourself. Sure there is physical exertion involved but you wouldn't have chosen this excursion 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 at home 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:** 276 km (over 5 days riding, if rest day is taken)

**Level Rating:** Days 1-2 Easy (mostly flat valley riding with gentle ascents)

Day 3 Moderate - Difficult moments (long day with final 2 km climb)

Days 4-6 Moderate to Difficult at times (some rolling / climbs)

## 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 snacks 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) (note - travellers cheques can be an expensive burden in Spain!)

## Telephoning from 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.

## 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):

### 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 now available on this website).

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 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: [www.alsa.es](http://www.alsa.es)

Spanish train company website:

<http://www.bahn.de/international/view/en/index.shtml> or [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es)