

# CULTURE

# Spain



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Cover: Consuegra, Toledo  
Back cover: Interior of the Great Mosque of  
Córdoba



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# INTRODUCTION

Immerse yourself in a culture with an ancient history and thrill to Spain's artistic riches.

Discover the Arab legacy in the **Alhambra in Granada**, marvel at the mediaeval riches of **Avila** or **Cáceres** and experience what it was like to be a Roman at the **aqueduct in Segovia** or in the **Roman theatre in Mérida**. Spain is the country with the third most assets with the UNESCO World Heritage designation, and **Spain's World Heritage cities** are living proof.

Are you an art lover? Spain has over **1,500 museums** and some of the most important collections in the world. You can see everything from classical art in the **Prado Museum** in Madrid to the avant-garde in the **Guggenheim Museum** in Bilbao. In almost every city and town you'll find minor museum gems that are well worth a visit.

If you're interested in learning all about Spain's traditions and popular culture, come and experience our **fiestas**. You're sure to love the **April Fair**, the **carnival** and the **Fallas bonfire festival**. And there's much more!

Very few countries can boast such a quantity and quality of music, theatre and film festivals. You can experience them in all their intensity wherever you go in Spain. Some of the events not to be missed include the **San Sebastián International Film Festival**, the **FIB in Benicàssim** and the **Almagro International Classical Theatre Festival**. If you're visiting in summer you'll find a whole range of ideas to enjoy in the open air.

Get ready for a trip that will stimulate your senses.

## ▼ THE ALHAMBRA GRANADA



Spain is the perfect destination for enjoying culture. Come and discover it.



# CITIES

Spain is home to a vast cultural heritage. Discover it by visiting our cities and unique destinations.

## MADRID

Come and browse Madrid's different neighbourhoods –you'll see how **intercultural the city is**. Discover the **Las Letras neighbourhood**, once home to great writers of the Golden Age of Spanish literature. If you want to see where the aristocracy lived in the 19th and 20th centuries, head for **Chamberí**. In the quarter known as **Madrid de los Austrias** you'll see the spectacular Royal Palace and the Almudena

Cathedral. Another idea is to spend some time in **Lavapiés**, a melting pot of different cultures and traditions, and **Chueca**, the capital's gay-friendly neighbourhood par excellence.

Spend some time in its **museums**: in Madrid you'll find some of the best –not only in Spain, but the whole world. In addition to art galleries like the **Thyssen-Bornemisza**, the **Reina Sofía** and the **Sorolla** museums, there

▼ THE ALMUDENA CATHEDRAL AND THE ROYAL PALACE  
MADRID





are several themed exhibition spaces like the **Museum of the Americas**, the **Railway Museum** and the **Lope de Vega Museum**. Good places to mingle with local residents are the **art and culture centres** like the **Matadero** and **La Tabacalera**. If you're visiting with **children**, two fun options are the **Madrid Planetarium** and the **Natural Science Museum**.

And what about a night out at the **cinema** or **theatre**? You'll always find several versions of Broadway musicals playing in town.

Near the city you can continue discovering marvels. In **Aranjuez** you can visit the **Royal Palace** and wander through its lovely gardens. Another recommended visit is to the monastery of **San Lorenzo de el Escorial** in the mountains to the west of Madrid.





## BARCELONA

Immerse yourself in this cosmopolitan Mediterranean city with its multitude of possibilities.



Its urban layout contains **Roman remains**, **mediaeval neighbourhoods** and some fine examples of the **20th-century avant-garde movements**.

The capital of Catalonia is the epitome of the **modernist** city. Here you can see some of the greatest architectural achievements of **Antoni Gaudí**, like the **Sagrada Família**, a universal symbol of the city. Climb its towers to see Barcelona from the heights. In the centre of the Eixample, in the Passeig de Gracia, you'll see the surprising **Casa Milà**, known as "La Pedrera", a building whose every line is undulating; the **Casa Batlló**, with its unusual and colourful facade; and the **Casa Vicens**, clad in spectacular green and white tiles.

▼ CASA BATLLÓ  
BARCELONA





Wander around the **Güell Park**, another wonderful place to enjoy Gaudí's interplay of nature and architecture.

But on your route you'll see much more than works by Gaudí. You'll marvel at the **Modernist ensemble of Sant Pau** and the **Palau de la Música** by the architect **Lluís Domènech i Montaner**.

Barcelona is home to large and small museums waiting to be discovered, such as the **National Art Museum of Catalonia** and the **Dalí House Museum**. You'll find interesting exhibitions, workshops and activities in cultural centres like the **CaixaForum**.

Travel just a few kilometres outside the capital to find other fascinating cities. In **Girona**, for example, you'll see over 2,000 years of history in its two fortified enclosures: the **Força Vella** and the mediaeval extension. In **La Garrotxa** you'll find attractive natural landscapes and mediaeval villages. The **Seu d'Urgell** in Lleida will surprise you with its attractive historic centre and its Romanesque cathedral. The Roman legacy also awaits you in **Tarragona**, the site of the first Roman military foundation outside the Italian peninsula. Its circus and amphitheatre are two examples of its valuable monumental heritage.

▼ MNAC  
BARCELONA



▼ GIRONA  
CATALONIA







▲ CITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
VALENCIA

## VALENCIA

You'll find traces of the remote past in the old town centre and be amazed by its avant-garde buildings.

You can marvel at the cathedral in the Gothic style, with its distinctive bell tower known as **El Miguelete**.

Take a visit to the **Silk Exchange**, in the heart of the historic centre, one of the loveliest Gothic-style civil buildings in Europe. Make sure your visit includes the **Palau de la Generalitat**, the **Palau de la Música** auditorium and the **Valencia Institute of Modern Art (IVAM)**.

The **City of Arts and Sciences** is one of the largest scientific and cultural complexes in Europe. You'll be fascinated by the avant-garde design of its buildings such as **L'Hemisfèric**, a screening room in the shape of an eye, and **L'Oceanogràfic**, the largest aquarium in Europe.

This city with all its contrasts is the essence of the Mediterranean.



▲ EL MIGUELETE  
VALENCIA

From Valencia you can easily reach other charming places such as **Buñol**, **Requena**, **Xàtiva** and **Sagunto**, with its Roman theatre.



## SEVILLE

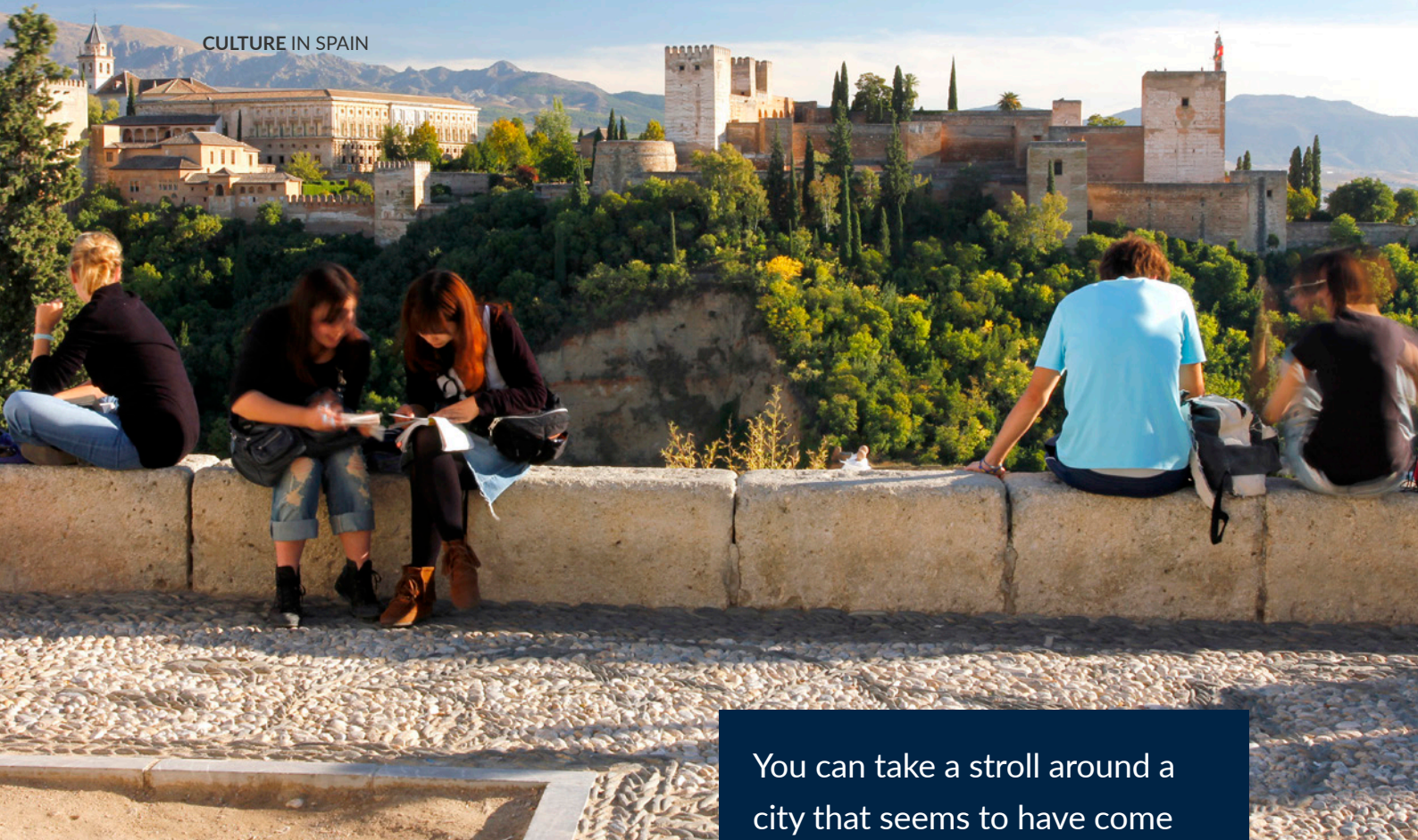
Discover Seville, a city steeped in history. You'll marvel at its **cathedral**, once a **great mosque**. Climb up to its minaret, **La Giralda**, and you'll be treated to some unforgettable views of the city. Wander around the **Plaza de España** square, the **Real Alcázar Palace in Seville** and the **María Luisa Park**. And if you really want to experience its culture in depth, you'll find great works of classical and avant-garde art at the **Museum of Fine Arts** and the **Andalusia Contemporary Art Centre**.

To witness the profound devotion and folklore of Seville, the best time to visit is in **Easter Week** to see the passion and solemnity of its processions, or during the **April Fair**, when you can enjoy music, food and dancing in its mar-quees.

Some destinations we can recommend on your route near Seville include **Carmona**, **Osuna** and **Écija**. Another destination you can't afford to miss is **Córdoba**, where you can walk around its picturesque historic quarter and visit its greatest treasure, the Great Mosque, one of the towering examples of Muslim art. **Cádiz** invites you to enjoy its carnival and stroll around its wonderful old city, a maze of narrow alleyways and tiny squares set in ancient neighbourhoods.







You can take a stroll around a city that seems to have come straight out of the *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*: Almost eight centuries of Arab presence have left a rich legacy from the time of **Al Andalus**.

## GRANADA

An ancient citadel, fortress and the place of residence of the Nasrid sultans, the **Alhambra** is Granada's supreme cultural treasure. You can tour its magical palaces and gardens like the ones in the **Generalife**, with its lovely fountains and pools.

And you can wind up your tour at **Granada Cathedral**, the **La Cartuja monastery** and the **Science Museum Park**.

Another place to visit near Granada is **Málaga**, the birthplace of **Pablo Picasso**. In the museum that bears his name you can learn more about the life and work of this brilliant painter. This bright and lively city is full of charming sites like the **Alcazaba** fortress and the **Gibralfaro castle** with its fabulous views.



## BILBAO

If you want to see an example of **urban transformation**, this is the city to visit. The greatest exponent of its renewal is the **Guggenheim Museum**, a spectacular titanium building designed by the architect **Frank Gehry**.

You can also visit other buildings in this architectural treasure trove, like the **Conference Centre**, **Santiago Cathedral**, the **Euskalduna Auditorium** and the **metro**, designed by **Norman Foster**.

If you want to make the most of your visit to northern Spain, very close to Bilbao you'll find the beautiful cultural cities of **San Sebastián**, **Santander** and **Vitoria**.



## SALAMANCA

Immerse yourself in culture in Salamanca. Discover the **oldest university in Spain** and the third oldest in Europe. Its impressive buildings are in the Renaissance style. You can take a leisurely walk around the **old town** and explore its magnificent monuments with their historic legacy.

Visitors won't want to miss its cathedrals, the **Casa de las Conchas**, the **Clerecy**, the **Las Dueñas convent** and the **Plaza Mayor square**.

Just a few kilometres outside Salamanca you'll come to **Avila** and **Segovia**; **Valladolid**, with its lovely Renaissance quarter; and **Zamora**, home to an important Romanesque legacy.

PLAZA MAYOR SQUARE  
SALAMANCA



SEGOVIA AQUEDUCT  
CASTILE-LEÓN



ZAMORA  
CASTILE-LEÓN



## SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Discover the cultural treasures of the capital of Galicia, a **cosmopolitan and multicultural city**. Its historic centre is one of the loveliest in Spain and has been designated a World Heritage city by the UNESCO.

The **cathedral of Santiago de Compostela** is the finest example of Romanesque art in Spain and the ultimate destination on the **Way of Saint James**, a pilgrim route travelled every year by thousands of people from all corners of the world.

Wander around its historic quarter. The **collegiate church of Santa María la Real del Sar**, the **Museum of the Galician People**, the **Hostal de los Reyes Católicos** (today converted into a Parador hotel), the **Casa do Cabildo** and the **Galician Contemporary Art Centre** (GAC) are all well worth a visit.

If you have any time left, head for the beautiful towns of **Vigo**, **Orense** and **Portomarín**.

► SANTIAGO CATHEDRAL  
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA







## TOLEDO

Discover the legacy of the **Christian, Arab and Jewish cultures** in one of the Spanish cities with the greatest profusion of monuments. A visit to the historic quarter of Toledo is like walking through an open-air museum with a range of different artistic styles. Churches, mosques and synagogues rub shoulders with palaces and fortresses. Here you can visit the **El Greco Museum** and marvel at some of the artist's greatest works. You'll also find works by the great painter in the **Cathedral Museum**.

Near Toledo there are other towns and villages with valuable monuments such as **Talavera de la Reina, Ocaña** and **Oropesa**.



Photo: March Jucha/123rf

▲ **CONSUEGRA CASTLE**  
TOLEDO



# MUSEUMS

In Spain you'll find one of the most extensive offers of museums in the world: there are over 1,500 museums and museographic collections. Here are just a few of the most important.

## PRADO MUSEUM (MADRID)

This is the busiest in Spain, receiving almost three million visitors a year and one of the most important art galleries in the world. It contains the most extensive collection of Spanish painting anywhere, as well as major collections of European art.

Here you'll find treasures like *Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez; *The nobleman with his hand on his chest* by El Greco; and *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch.



PRADO MUSEUM  
MADRID



## REINA SOFÍA NATIONAL ART MUSEUM (MADRID)



One of the largest museums in Europe, with a magnificent collection of contemporary art. The jewel in the museum's crown is the **Guernica** by **Pablo Picasso**, one of the icons of modern art and of Spanish history. You'll be captivated by its collection of paintings featuring works by artists such as **Miró**, **Dalí**, **Tàpies**, **Juan Gris**, **René Magritte** and **Chillida**.

## THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA MUSEUM (MADRID)



Take a trip through Western painting from the 13th century to the most important 19th- and 20th-century movements. On its walls hang paintings by **Titian**, **Rubens**, **Rembrandt**, **Caravaggio**, **Cézanne**, **Manet**, **Van Gogh**, **Picasso**, **Klee** and **Kandinsky**.





## GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM (BILBAO)

The building's avant-garde architecture is a magnificent setting for contemplating a collection of key works of **contemporary art**. Here you'll find artists of the stature of **Mark Rothko**, **Jorge Oteiza**, **Ives Klein** and **Jacques Lipchitz**, to name just a few.

## DALÍ THEATRE-MUSEUM (GIRONA)

Discover the surprising life and times of **Salvador Dalí** in the lovely coastal city of Figueres and the town of his birth. You'll have a chance to see his works from his beginnings as an artist until the time he became one of the foremost representatives of **Surrealism**.







## ALTAMIRA NATIONAL MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE (CANTABRIA)

Discover the jewel in the crown of Spanish **cave art**. The paintings in the Altamira cave are **18,000 years old**. You'll be able to see an exact replica of the most important parts of the cave, as access to the original is restricted for conservation reasons.



## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMAN ART IN MÉRIDA (BADAJOZ)

Travel back in time and discover how the **Roman civilisation** left its imprint on this city founded by the Emperor Augustus in 25 B.C.



## NATIONAL SCULPTURE MUSEUM (VALLADOLID)

If you want to see a magnificent example of the best of Spanish **sculpture** from the Middle Ages through to the 19th century, this is the place for you. You'll be able to follow the development of **religious imagery**, with a particular focus on polychrome carving.

▲ NATIONAL SCULPTURE MUSEUM  
VALLADOLID

## NATIONAL UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM (MURCIA)

Would you like to see a collection of objects found at various **underwater sites**, including amphorae, platters, mallets and amulets?

Some of the highlights on display in the museum are a series of **elephant tusks** with **Phoenician inscriptions**, the only ones of their kind in the world.

These are some of the most famous, but there are many more. Other

museums well worth visiting include the **Lázaro Galdiano** and the **Sorolla** museums in Madrid; the **IVAM** and the **Príncipe Felipe Science Museum** in Valencia; the **MACBA** and the **Joan Miró Foundation** in Barcelona; and the **Museum of Fine Arts** in Seville.

## PICASSO MUSEUM (MÁLAGA)

This museum was set up in response to the artist's wish that his work should be present in Málaga, the city of his birth. Here you can see the **permanent collection** of 200 works signed by the artist.



# CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

MUSAC  
LEÓN

Photo: villorejo99/123rf.com

You'll find the avant-garde architecture in Spain truly surprising. Famous architects such as **Frank Gehry**, **Renzo Piano**, **Jürgen Mayer** and **Santiago Calatrava** have all chosen this country as a showcase for their work.

The **Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao**, designed by the American architect **Frank Gehry**, is a distinctive symbol of the city. You'll be amazed by the colour transitions as the natural light falls on the **titanium** facade, and its reflection in the estuary. One interesting fact about its design: you won't find a single flat surface. On the outside, you'll be greeted by **Jeff Koons'** floral sculpture entitled **Puppy**.

The majestic **City of Wine**, by the same architect, can be seen in Elciego (Álava). This complex encompasses a **winery** over 150 years old and an **avant-garde building** that appears to rise out of the ground like a vine to merge with the landscape. During your visit you can enjoy a wine tasting and even spend the night, as it houses a hotel and two restaurants, a wine therapy spa and a conference centre.

The **Castile-Leon Museum of Contemporary Art (MUSAC)** is one of the main attractions in the city of León. This original space in the **shape of a cube** won the Mies van der Rohe architecture prize in 2007. One of its most spectacular features is its **multicoloured glass facade**, a reference to the stained-glass windows in León cathedral.

In the Plaza de la Encarnación square in Seville you'll find the "**Seville Mushrooms**" (or **Metropol Parasol**) by the German architect **Jürgen Mayer**. This is the largest wooden structure in the world, and its five tiers contain the **Antiquarium**, a produce market and a raised square that serves as a venue for different events. Its walkway-viewing platform offers amazing views over the city.

Would you like to see a building located on a platform overhanging the sea? You'll find it in Santander Bay, and it's the work of the Italian architect and Pritzker prizewinner **Renzo Piano**. The **Botín Centre** operates as a cultural space: go up to the roof for some unique views over the city.





# WORLD HERITAGE

Spain is home to a priceless cultural heritage. Proof of this is the fact that Spain is one of the countries with the most World Heritage sites on the planet. In addition to Santiago de Compostela, Toledo and Tarragona... We'll take you on a tour of some of the most outstanding.





▲ PARADOR HOTEL IN ALCALÁ DE HENARES  
MADRID



▲ INTERIOR OF THE GREAT MOSQUE IN CÓRDOBA

## DISCOVER SPAIN'S WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

If you're interested in Spain as a cultural destination, then the best option is to explore its World Heritage Cities. They are of immense architectural, artistic and cultural value. Whichever destination you choose, you can't go wrong.

### ALCALÁ DE HENARES

This is the birthplace of Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, where visits include the writer's house, Europe's oldest open-air theatre, and the origins of the Complutense university.

### AVILA

Sights not to miss are the spectacular mediaeval city walls dating from the 12th century and several valuable churches and Renaissance palaces.

### BAEZA

Discover all the monuments in this fine example of civil architecture and of Renaissance and urban design in 16th-century Spain.

### CÁCERES

Wander around this enchanting city and you'll see the imprint left by many different civilisations.

### CÓRDOBA

This is the place to see the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the historic centre, one of the finest examples of the legacy of Al Andalus.

### CUENCA

Its fortified historic centre and its unusual "hanging houses" perched on the cliff blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings.





▲ HANGING HOUSES  
CUENCA



LOS MILAGROS AQUEDUCT  
MÉRIDA

## MÉRIDA

Discover a city that flourished during the Roman Empire, where you can walk amid numerous archaeological remains, especially including its majestic theatre, amphitheatre, and Roman circus.

## SALAMANCA

Stroll around this Spanish Renaissance city par excellence. When you see the richness of its historic heritage, you'll understand why it was declared European City of Culture in 2002.

## SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LA LAGUNA

The streets in this picturesque city on the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands will take you back to the past. Its model colonial layout includes an imposing cathedral and a multitude of stately homes from the 17th and 18th centuries.



SALAMANCA CATHEDRAL



## SEGOVIA

Wander through the alleyways in its old town and discover its famous Roman aqueduct, one of the best conserved in Europe. Other sites not to miss are the cathedral and the imposing Alcázar fortress.

## ÚBEDA

The town is home to one of the most sensational Renaissance sites in Europe. Take your time to explore all its palaces and towers.

## IBIZA

The old part of the Balearic city of Ibiza, known as **Dalt Vila**, has been designated a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO. You can walk along the **Renaissance walls** that encircle it, whose original purpose was to defend it from attack by the Turks in the 16th century.



▲ CHAPEL OF EL SALVADOR  
ÚBEDA, JAÉN





## MONUMENTS AND SITES WITH THE WORLD HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Here you'll find a full range of options: everything from civil buildings such as the **architectural site of Mérida**, through to religious monuments like **Burgos Cathedral** and the **Basilica of Nuestra Señora del Pilar** in Zaragoza.

Would you like to travel back in time? Come and see the lovely **Suso Monastery** in San Millán de la Cogolla (La Rioja), inside whose walls some anonymous monk penned the first

words in Spanish. Or travel back to prehistoric times in places like the **Atapuerca site** (Burgos). You have so much to choose from.

You can visit the **Alfajería Palace**, a treasure from the Arab era in the heart of Zaragoza; the **cathedral**, the **Alcázar** and the **Archive of the Indies** in Seville; the **Mudéjar architecture** of Aragon; and the **Roman walls** in Lugo. The possibilities are endless.



BURGOS CATHEDRAL



# FESTIVITIES AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

In Spain you'll find popular festivities at any time of the year. Some, like the Sanfermines bull-running festival, are famous all over the world. You can also discover unique traditions such as flamenco or tapas by experiencing them at first hand. Come and enjoy Spain by taking part in its fiestas.

## FESTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST INTEREST

Spain has over 30 festivities that have been declared to be of international tourist interest. Which one will you choose? Here are some tips to help you decide.

### CARNIVAL

In February the streets in Spain are filled with colour and high spirits: it's carnival time! Come to the carnival in **Santa Cruz de Tenerife**, one of the most famous of all. The spectacular costumes on display at the gala for choosing the carnival queen will take your breath away. The carnival in **Cádiz** is a chance to have fun with its "comparsas", "coros" and "chirigotas" (sarcastic and critical songs and ditties sung by various musical bands). In the region of Murcia you'll find the **Águilas carnival** with its traditional tossing of eggshells (eggs filled mostly with confetti), and "cuerva", a drink that awakens the spirit of carnival.

### LAS FALLAS BONFIRE FESTIVAL

Come and join in with the fun and high spirits you'll find in March in Valencia's most important festivity: the Las Fallas bonfire festival. Around 800 **allegorical plywood and papier mâché structures** go on display in the streets of the city, and are then **set on fire**. The smell of gunpowder, the music bands and the parades with everyone wearing regional dress guarantee a great atmosphere during the celebrations.







▲ EASTER WEEK IN SEVILLE

## EASTER WEEK

The arrival of spring coincides with **Easter Week**, one of the most ancient and spectacular events in Spain, a combination of religious fervour, tradition and art. Wherever you choose to experience it, you're sure to find it very moving. One of the best-known Easter Week commemorations can be seen in **Seville**. Its famous "**Madrugá**" is a passionate procession of carved images like Jesús del Gran Poder borne aloft through the streets of Seville.

Notable examples in the Castile-León Region include the Easter Week commemorations in **Avila, León, Medina del Campo, Medina de Rioseco, Palencia, Salamanca, Valladolid** and **Zamora**. One common feature is the artistic worth of their carved figures. Another singularly beautiful event is the Palm Sunday procession in **Elche** (Alicante) where thousands of people carry palm fronds plaited into attractive shapes.

## APRIL FAIR

Seville in April is synonymous with fun at any time of the day. Its fairground and its marquees fill with music, laughter, food,

and glasses of dry sherry or "**rebujito**" (manzanilla wine with fizzy lemonade). Don't go without trying the typical "pescaíto frito" (fried fish platter) or the delicious fried doughnuts known as "buñuelos", and make sure to see the spectacular **parade of horsemen and women and horse-drawn carriages**.

## SANFERMINES BULL-RUNNING FESTIVAL

From 6 to 14 July, Pamplona becomes one continuous festivity, where the protagonist is unquestionably the **bull**. The danger and excitement of the **bull-running** goes hand-in-hand with the high spirits and fun to be found in the streets at all hours of the day and night. Drinking, dancing, street parties and open-air concerts, parades, fireworks and much more. There's guaranteed fun for all.

## LA TOMATINA FESTIVAL

This fun "battle" of tomatoes takes place in the town of Buñol in Valencia. Come and take part in this fun-filled free-for-all held on the last Wednesday of August.



## CULTURAL TRADITIONS

In addition to these activities, Spain is home to some **age-old cultural traditions**:

### FLAMENCO

Come and visit a “tablao” or flamenco club: you're sure to be captivated by the show. You'll thrill to the **throaty voices** of the flamenco singers accompanied by the sound of the **guitar** and **clapping**. The footwork known as the **zapateo** and the dancing are guaranteed to make an impression. Experience the characteristic passion of this traditional and popular form of artistic expression, declared a part of Spain's intangible world heritage.

### THE CASTELLS

You'll be amazed to see how these impressive **human towers** rise high in the sky, some with as many as six to ten tiers. This typical **Catalan cultural tradition** is over 200 years old and is passed on from one generation to the next.

### TAPAS

Take up a healthy Spanish custom: **going out for tapas**. It's an ideal way to experience Spanish culture and savour the best of popular cuisine in **miniature portions**. In every town and city in Spain there are bars specialising in tapas. You can try everything from the unbeatable acorn-fed ibérico **ham** and the traditional **potato omelette**, through to dishes from haute cuisine.







# FESTIVALS

If you love theatre, music or film, you'll be thrilled to see the calendar of festivals on offer in Spain.

## ▲ MÉRIDA CLASSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

### THEATRE

Take a seat in a Roman theatre and enjoy a spectacular setting under the stars at the **Mérida Classical Theatre Festival**, the oldest in Spain and the most important of its kind. It takes place in July and August. Another summer event not to be missed is the **Almagro International Classical Theatre Festival**, dedicated to 16th- and 17th-century theatre. It takes place in July in this historic city in La Mancha.

### MUSIC

Are you a jazz lover? Come in November and visit one of the oldest festivals in Europe: the **Granada International Jazz Festival**. Or is your thing more pop, rock, indie or electronic? Then come to the largest international festival in Spain, the **FIB in Benicàssim** in Castellón. This is a chance to enjoy great music outdoors, as it takes place in July.

If you're keen on international pop and rock, the best idea is to visit Bilbao in the first fortnight of July and take part in **Bilbao BBK Live**. Also during this month you can take a journey to **Ortigueira Festival** in A Coruña, where the genuine sounds of the Celtic music are played.

### FILM

Enjoy the seventh art and all the accompanying glamour at the **San Sebastián International Film Festival**, one of the most prestigious in Europe. Legendary stars like Audrey Hepburn have walked its red carpet.

To really immerse yourself in Spanish film, the best idea is to travel to southern Spain in April or May for the **Málaga Festival**. And if you're a fan of fantasy, you'll love the **Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival**.



# CULTURAL ROUTES

Choose one of the most stimulating ways of exploring Spain: set out on a cultural route.

## THE SILVER ROUTE

Pull on some sturdy boots and set out on this route that **links the north and south of Spain** and follows in the footsteps of the Roman troops of old. If you prefer, you can do it by bike or on a motorbike.

The route joins **Seville with Gijón**: on your way you'll pass through a number of historical sites such as **Mérida, Cáceres, Béjar and León**.

▼ ROMAN ROAD  
MÉRIDA





## THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES



Travelling the Way of Saint James is a thrilling and unforgettable adventure. This is a different way to **discover northern Spain** by taking one of several itineraries whose **ultimate destination** is the cathedral in **Santiago de Compostela** in Galicia, the site of the tomb of Saint James the Apostle.

To obtain the **Compostela**, the document awarded to everyone who has travelled the Camino for religious or spiritual reasons, you'll need to do a minimum of 100 kilometres on foot or on horseback and 200 by bike.

## ROUTE OF DON QUIXOTE

Would you like to follow the route of the main character in the famous novel by **Cervantes, Don Quixote**? It will take you through ancient villages, along historic trails, past the famous windmills, and through the natural spaces described in the book.

Some of the points of interest on the route include **Toledo, Campo de Criptana, El Toboso, Almagro, Campo de Calatrava** and **Argamasilla de Alba**.







# FILM TOURISM

▲ INTERIOR OF THE REAL ALCÁZAR PALACE  
SEVILLE

Spain is a film destination, and in many cities you'll find itineraries related to the seventh art. To discover these locations, the best idea is to sign up for a guided visit.

In the **desert of Almería**, the setting for a multitude of Westerns, you can follow the footsteps of Clint Eastwood (and visit the old film studios). Two major super-productions have also been filmed in its **Alcazaba** fortress: *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *Never say never again*.

If you're a film buff you have to go to **Seville**: princess Amidala walked through its Plaza de España square in *Star Wars*. Its **Alcázar** fortress and the **ruins of Itálica** were the locations chosen for key scenes at the climax of *Game of Thrones*. The hit series has been filmed in location in a

number of places in Spain, like **Girona**, **Almería**, **Peñíscola** and **Las Bardenas Reales** in Navarre.

In **Castile-La Mancha** you can follow a route dedicated exclusively to the Spanish filmmaker **Pedro Almodóvar**. If you'd like to discover some beautiful natural landscapes that have been used as film sets, you can take the **Llanes de Cine** route in Asturias, or set out on the **Ruta del Cine** route in **Comillas** in Cantabria.

The desert and lunar landscapes of **Fuerteventura** (Canary Islands) have been the setting for films such as *Exodus* by Ridley Scott and *Allied* by Robert Zemeckis. And the south of the island was chosen by the *Star Wars* team to shoot some of the new episodes in the saga.



# PARADOR HOTELS

**Parador hotels** are much more than just accommodation. They are a different way of experiencing the magic of Spain. These are distinctive establishments located in natural or historic sites of outstanding beauty. Many of them are veritable architectural treasures, including former castles, palaces, monasteries and

**convents.** Others were built more recently. In all of them you'll find quality, comfort and personalised service.

There are currently **over 90 Parador hotels** in Spain. If you like the idea of experiencing history up close, this is the option for you. Find the one for you at [www.parador.es](http://www.parador.es).



▲ PARADOR HOTEL IN CARMONA  
SEVILLE



# THE 10 BEST-KEPT SECRETS IN SPAIN

Spain is a country full of treasures and secrets. Here are 10 cultural gems that are waiting for you to discover them.



▲ PALENCIA CATHEDRAL

## FUENTE DEL REY FOUNTAIN IN PRIEGO DE CÓRDOBA

You'll marvel at its baroque style. It's formed by three elongated pools and 139 spouts. If you look closely at the central figure you'll see Neptune and Amphitrite on a horse-drawn chariot.

## INFANTADO PALACE IN GUADALAJARA

Visit the former residence of the Dukes of Mendoza. Construction began in the mid-15th century in the Gothic style and it was adapted one century later to conform to Renaissance tastes. You'll notice numerous Mudéjar details.

## PALENCIA CATHEDRAL

They call it "the undiscovered beauty". Notice its exterior in the flamboyant Gothic style, and on the interior you'll see Isabelline, Plateresque and Renaissance elements.

## ZENARRUZA MONASTERY IN VIZCAYA

This national monument in Euskadi was a key stopping point on the Way of Saint James during the Middle Ages. Highlights include its 15th century church in the Renaissance Gothic style and its lovely cloister.

## ALCÁZAR DE LA PUERTA DE SEVILLA IN CARMONA

Discover this structure begun by the Carthaginians in the 9th century B.C. and continued by the Romans. Its numerous treasures include the keep, the Torre del Oro tower and the Courtyard of the Cisterns.

## ZAMORA CATHEDRAL

If you want to learn more about Romanesque architecture in Spain, this is one of the finest examples. You'll find numerous works of art awaiting you on its interior.





▲ ZAMORA CATHEDRAL

### CHURCH OF SAN CLEMENTE DE TAÜLL IN LLEIDA

This impressive church was built between the 11th and 12th centuries. It is one of a series of Romanesque churches in the Vall de Boí valley with the UNESCO World Heritage designation.

### ASTORGA EPISCOPAL PALACE IN LEON

You'll think you're looking at a fairytale castle, with its battlements, peepholes and even a moat around the whole monument. This modernist building in the neo-Gothic style was designed by the architectural genius Gaudí and currently houses the Los Caminos Museum.



▲ EPISCOPAL PALACE  
ASTORGA

### CISTERCIAN ABBEY IN CAÑAS IN LA RIOJA

Come and see one of the first abbeys to be founded in Spain and its delightful Gothic church. The convent has been inhabited since 1170 by enclosed nuns.

### CLOISTER IN SAN JUAN DE DUERO IN SORIA

Discover this example of mediaeval Christian architecture. Its arches reveal the different architectural tendencies that could be seen in Spain at that time: Romanesque, Gothic and Muslim.



▲ CLOISTER IN SAN JUAN DE DUERO  
SORIA





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