

Spain

FOR SENIORS



www.spain.info



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Front Page: Casa de las Conchas, Salamanca .
 Photo: World Heritage Cities
 Back: Asturias.

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INTRODUCTION

Spain has everything you need to guarantee the best holiday ever: good weather, fascinating culture, friendly people, delicious cuisine... come and discover the attractions and enjoy incredible experiences. Here you can spend a few unforgettable days surrounded by nature and exploring towns and cities with a **thousand years of history**.

You'll love the cuisine, with the Mediterranean diet as its flagship. There are **tapas** and **traditional dishes** for you to try in each region, as well as **exquisite modern cuisine** prepared by internationally renowned chefs.

Spain is an ideal destination both for those looking for peace and tranquillity and those seeking adventure. Just take your own time: relax in the thermal spa, play golf or enjoy **active tourism** on a route through natural surroundings. Whatever your sport or hobby, you can do it here.

In Spain there is **incomparable natural wealth**: Spain is the country with the most UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the world, there are fifteen national parks and countless highly protected areas.

For enjoying the sunshine, the sea and the sand you'll find really beautiful **beaches** with all modern comforts. Over 600 beaches are authorised to fly the Blue Flag for quality.

The **wonderful climate** here means you can travel at any time of the year. Spain is one of the warmest countries in Europe, with over 3,000 hours of sunshine a year.



Come to Spain, a country that is friendly, safe and welcomes all kinds of visitors with open arms. We're here to help you discover its main attractions.

Leisure and **fun** are guaranteed. If you'd like to take home a souvenir, you could find something in one of the handicraft markets or perhaps you prefer a luxury article from a store selling the top brands. You could go to the opera or attend an event at one of the many festivals. Choose your destination and any of the innumerable cultural activities on offer.

THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES TO BE ENJOYED IN SPAIN



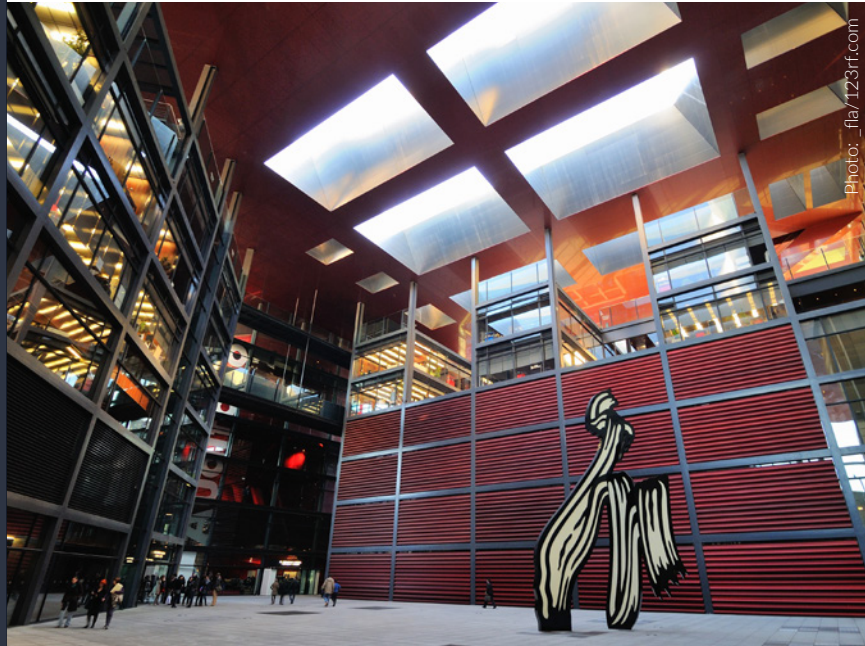
Photo: Visions Of America LLC/123rf.com

YOU CAN REALLY FEEL THE CULTURE

We have an extraordinary, thrilling cultural heritage. Take one of the amazing historical routes in mainland Spain or visit one of our 15 World Heritage Cities. Discover the legacy left by the different cultures that have passed through the country, along with exquisite cuisine, and thousand-year-old festivals and traditions.

MUSEUMS

Spain has a network of over 1,500 museums with some of the best collections in the world. Here are some of the most famous, but there are many more. In almost every city and town you'll find minor museum treasures that are well worth a visit.



▲ REINA SOFÍA NATIONAL ART MUSEUM
MADRID

PRADO MUSEUM (MADRID)

One of the world's greatest art galleries for the quality and scope of its collection. Inside you'll find treasures by masters like Velázquez, Rembrandt, Goya and many others.

The best idea is study each painting and hall in detail. But if you really don't have much time, the museum's website will suggest a number of short itineraries so you don't end up missing the essential works.

📍 www.museodelprado.es

THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA (MADRID)

Very near the Prado, it houses works from some of the most important pictorial schools of Western art. The museum's collection reflects the tastes of its founders, the Thyssen-Bornemisza family, who have spent many years

building up a collection which includes prominent works by Raphael, Titian, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Rodin and Hopper, to name just a few from an impressive list of top-flight artists.

📍 www.museothyssen.org

REINA SOFÍA NATIONAL ART MUSEUM (MADRID)

This museum houses one of the finest collections of contemporary Spanish art, with important artists like Dalí, Miró, Gris and Tápies. This is where you can see the gallery's star exhibit, the *Guernica* by Picasso.

In the two buildings you'll find important works by artists from all over the world and in every imaginable format, with contributions by Kandinsky, Francis Bacon, Diego Rivera, Robert Delaunay and Yves Klein.

📍 www.museoreinasofia.es



▲ BILBAO GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM (BILBAO)

This spectacular titanium building designed by the prestigious architect Frank Gehry has become an icon of this Basque city. It houses a magnificent collection of contemporary art.

The outside of the building is a work of art in itself. The metallic reflective panels on the façade shine with different colours, depending on the time of day and the weather conditions. In the surrounding area there are gigantic sculptures like Puppy, the iconic floral dog by Jeff Koons which stands guard at the entrance to the museum. Inside, no two galleries are the same. There are large-format works alternating with others in a much smaller ones. This makes your visit a constant surprise.

📍 www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus



▲ NEOCUEVA - ALTAMIRA NATIONAL MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE
SANTILLANA DEL MAR, CANTABRIA

ALTAMIRA NATIONAL MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE (SANTILLANA DEL MAR, CANTABRIA)

Travel back in time to the prehistoric era. Discovered at the end of the 19th century, Altamira Cave in Santillana del Mar (Cantabria) was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. Its walls and ceilings preserve more than 260 paintings and engravings of bison, horses and deer which are 18,000 years old. It is regarded as the "Sistine Chapel" of cave art.

In order to preserve it in its original state as much as possible, visits to the interior of the cave are restricted. The best way of exploring this fabulous legacy of cave art is to visit the Neocueva, an exact three-dimensional replica of Altamira.

DALÍ THEATRE-MUSEUM (FIGUERES, GIRONA)

Discover the surprising life and times of Salvador Dalí in Figueres, the location for this temple to surrealism. Entering the museum is like looking through the keyhole into this brilliant artist's subconscious.

All the works have a double meaning, little secrets which are an essential feature of the experience of visiting the galleries without a pre-established route. Just let yourself go and look at it through the eyes of a child looking for games, symbols and dialogues between the different works created by Dalí.

www.salvador-dali.org/es/museos



MONUMENTS

Discover our incredible monumental heritage which includes some of the world's most extraordinarily beautiful historical marvels. Here are just a few of those with the most visitors.

► BASILICA OF LA SAGRADA FAMILIA
BARCELONA



THE ALHAMBRA IN GRANADA

The ancient citadel, fortress and place of residence of the Nasrid sultans, the Alhambra is Granada's supreme artistic treasure. A stroll round its fabulous palaces and gardens with their lovely fountains and pools will take you back in time to another era. And if you visit at night, you'll understand the true meaning of the word magic.

📍 www.alhambra-patronato.es

THE BASILICA OF LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

The first stone for this temple, located in the heart of Barcelona and the supreme example of Catalan Modernist architecture, was laid in 1882. It was a year later when the architect Antoni Gaudí returned to the project to which he would dedicate 40 years of his life. It is not yet finished, but the incomparable architecture and decorative features full of symbolism attract millions of visitors.

📍 www.sagradafamilia.org





▲ SANTIAGO CATHEDRAL
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

GREAT MOSQUE-CATHEDRAL OF CORDOBA

This architectural treasure in the lovely historic centre of the city of Cordoba is a symbol of the Muslim legacy in Spain. It is a veritable forest of columns and superimposed arches, domes, carved marble, mosaics, drawings... And in the centre, a surprising Christian cathedral.

📍 www.mezquita-catedraldecordoba.es

CATHEDRAL OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Located in Galicia, in the province of A Coruña, it is the final destination for thousands of pilgrims at the end of the Way of Saint James. It is one of the finest examples of Romanesque art in Spain, although its numerous extensions have left the imprint of other styles, like the Baroque of the Obradoiro, its monumental façade.

📍 www.catedraldesantiago.es



BURGOS CATHEDRAL

This essential visit for lovers of Gothic art is located in the historical old town in Burgos (Castile-León). Here lie the mortal remains of El Cid, the hero of the **Reconquista** in the 11th century. You'll be amazed by the elegance and beauty of its soaring towers with their Germanesque fretwork spires.

📍 www.catedraldeburgos.es

THE ALCÁZAR IN SEGOVIA

This 12th-century fortified palace built at the confluence of two rivers was the place of residence for Castilian monarchs. A moat with a drawbridge, a tower that looks like the prow of a ship, twin lancet windows, luxurious halls decorated by Mudejar artists, the weapons museum... It will make you feel like you're in a fairy-tale.

📍 www.alcazardesegovia.com



MAJORCA CATHEDRAL

A treasure of Gothic art, it was built over the city walls in Palma de Mallorca's historical old town. It has one of the most spectacular rose windows in the world: the "Gothic eye", with a diameter of over 13 metres. It was remodelled by Antonio Gaudí and contains a spectacular mural by the Mallorcan painter Miquel Barceló.

📍 www.catedraldemallorca.org



▲ THE ALCÁZAR IN SEGOVIA

THE BASILICA OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL PILAR

This Baroque cathedral, on the banks of the Ebro River in Zaragoza, is one of the most important centres of Marian devotion in the world. Inside you'll find real treasures including two frescos by the artist Francisco de Goya.

📍 www.turismodezaragoza.es



▲ THE GIRALDA
SEVILLE

ROMAN THEATRE IN MÉRIDA

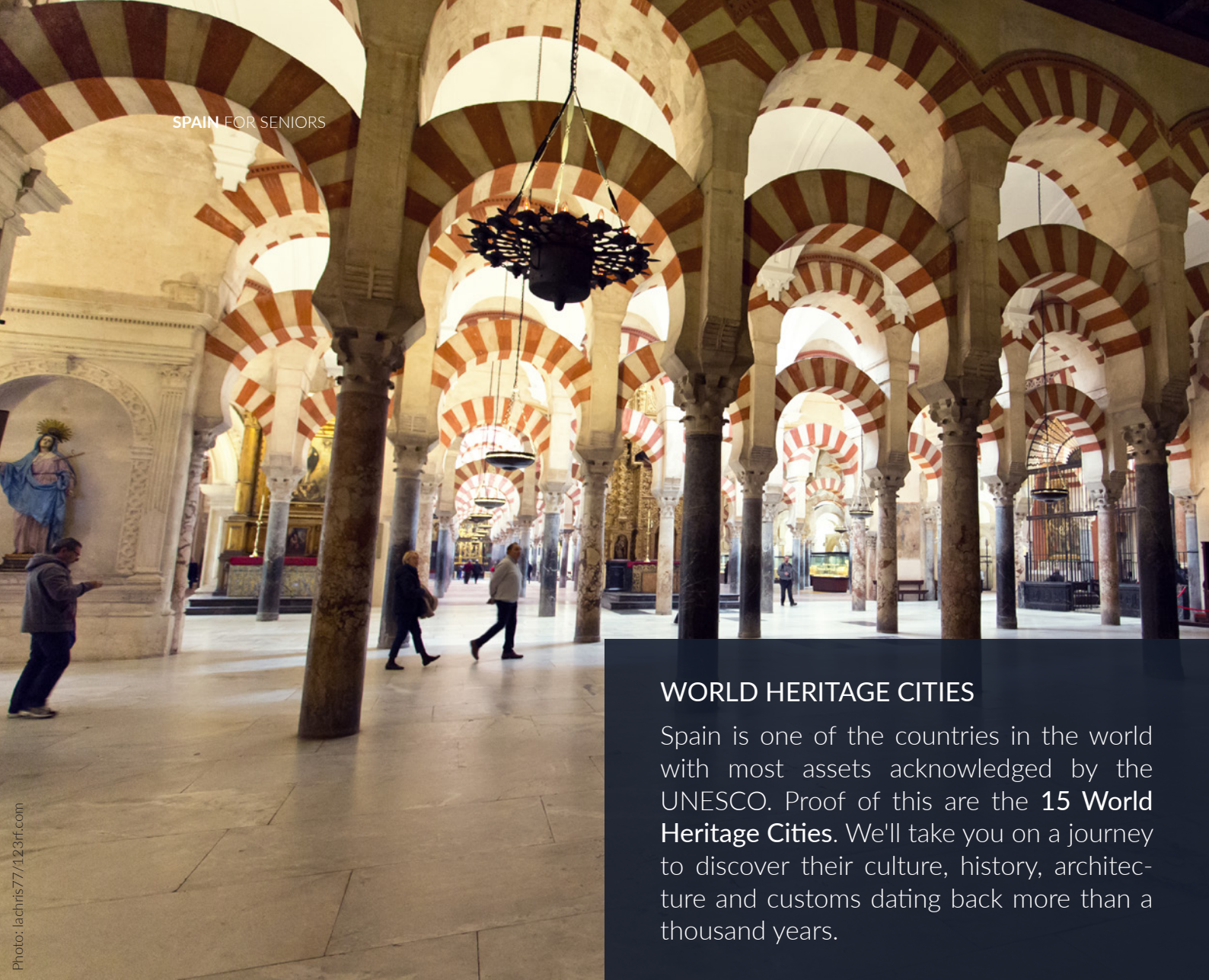
This theatre, in Mérida in the province of Badajoz, is part of an archaeological site that includes an amphitheatre and a Roman circus. What is the best way to learn all about it? On a warm summer evening during the International Classic Theatre Festival, you can attend a performance exactly like the Romans did over two thousand years ago.

📍 www.festivaldemerida.es

THE GIRALDA

What used to be a minaret for the Moorish mosque is now the bell tower for the Cathedral of Santa María de la Sede in Seville. It is 103 metres high and for more than 800 years it was the tallest structure in the city. Climb up the ramparts to the belfry where you'll have amazing views over the city.

📍 www.catedraldesevilla.es



WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

Spain is one of the countries in the world with most assets acknowledged by the UNESCO. Proof of this are the **15 World Heritage Cities**. We'll take you on a journey to discover their culture, history, architecture and customs dating back more than a thousand years.

Toledo, a city famous historically for the harmonious coexistence between Muslims, Jews and Christians, and **Salamanca**, renowned as the home of one of the oldest universities in the world, invite you to discover the history of our country through their streets and monuments. Visit the picturesque historical old town of **Cordoba** and discover its greatest treasure, the Mosque-Cathedral, one of the finest examples of Moorish art.

Ávila, (Castile-León) with its extraordinary city walls, and **Cáceres** (Extremadura), with its cobbled streets,

medieval fortress-houses and towers, will take you back to the Middle Ages. **Alcalá de Henares** (Region of Madrid), the birthplace of Cervantes, is the site of Europe's oldest open-air theatre, the Corral de Comedias, and in **Santiago de Compostela** (Galicia) you'll discover treasures in the Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque styles.

Other World Heritage cities not to be missed include **Úbeda and Baeza** (Jaén, Andalusia), with their incredible Renaissance palaces and churches, and **Cuenca** (Castile-La Mancha), where

THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
TO BE ENJOYED IN SPAIN

you'll see the astonishing Hanging Houses blending seamlessly with the natural surroundings.

The Roman legacy is alive and well in **Mérida** (Extremadura), **Segovia** (Castile-León) and **Tarragona** (Catalonia), where there are some of the best-preserved remains in mainland Spain. They have theatres, aqueducts and amphitheatres that will take you back in time.

You'll also find priceless cultural attractions in the islands. The streets in the city of **San Cristóbal de La Laguna** in Tenerife offer an insight into the origins of Latin-American town planning. Finally in the Mediterranean, **Ibiza** (Balearic Islands), was recognised by the UNESCO on account of its culture and biodiversity.

📍 www.ciudadespatrimonio.org



▲ SEGOVIA AQUEDUCT



SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA LAGUNA
TENERIFE

FESTIVITIES

Spain is a cheerful and open-minded country. We invite you to discover our customs and spend a few days sharing unforgettable festivities with us.

Easter Week is one of Spain's most authentic festivities, and one with centuries of tradition. Devotion, art and the solemn magic of the processions fill the streets in most of Spain's towns and cities.

Easter Week in Seville (Andalusia) deserves a special mention. The climax is the **Madrugá**, the night between Thursday and Friday when the Passion of Christ is recreated, and when thousands of people flock to join the procession that accompanies the religious images. You ought to sample the traditional desert at this time: **torrijas** (bread soaked in eggs and milk, the toasted and fried).

▼ EASTER WEEK
SEVILLE



▲ CARNIVAL IN TENERIFE

The spirit of religious fervour and devotion you'll see in Easter Week is in total contrast to the atmosphere during **Carnival** which takes place before Lent. These colourful festivities feature uninhibited high spirits and the freedom to say what you like, with parades full of fantasy and the rhythm of the music. Apart from the world-famous Carnival in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Canary Islands), the festivities are especially entertaining in Cadiz (Andalusia) and Águilas (Murcia).

During **Las Fallas** in Valencia, the whole city is devoted to its greatest festivity. During the week of 19 March, the city is filled with **ninots** (gigantic structures made of wood, cardboard and plaster, all based on socially critical humour) which end up as spectacular bonfires on the last night, called the **cremà**.

Festivities in honour of Patron Saints are a unique way of discovering the cultural wealth of the different regions and cities in Spain. You'll simply love the **Festival of Santiago Apóstol** (Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña), **San Isidro** (Madrid) and **La Mercé** (Barcelona).



ROUTES

Would you like to try a different way of discovering the history, culture, nature and gastronomy of Spain? Then these cultural routes are just the thing for you.

▲ WAY OF SAINT JAMES

One of the most renowned is the **Way of Saint James**, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993. It consists of a network of itineraries which each year attract hundreds of thousands of pilgrims for different reasons, spiritual, cultural or tourism. Apart from enjoying nature in all its splendour, on the different stages you'll find incredible monuments of great historical value and get to know so many people from different parts of the world.

📍 www.caminodesantiago.gal

Follow in the footsteps of Roman soldiers along the **Silver Way Route**, 800 kilometres across most of western Spain and dating back to time immemorial. It follows the course of an ancient Roman road that linked Seville (Andalusia) with Gijón (Asturias). You could take up the challenge and try some stages on foot or by bike, or enjoy the wonderful natural landscapes as you travel along by car on what is called the Silver Motorway.

📍 www.rutadelaplata.com



The **Routes of the Al-Andalus Legacy** are a fantastic option for cultural tourism and discovering Andalusia's Moorish past. These routes trace a historical line which unites a unique monumental heritage: The Alhambra in Granada, the final refuge of the Moors in mainland Spain, the Great Mosque in Cordoba, the Giralda in Seville and historical old towns of Moorish origin like Alcalá la Real (Jaén).

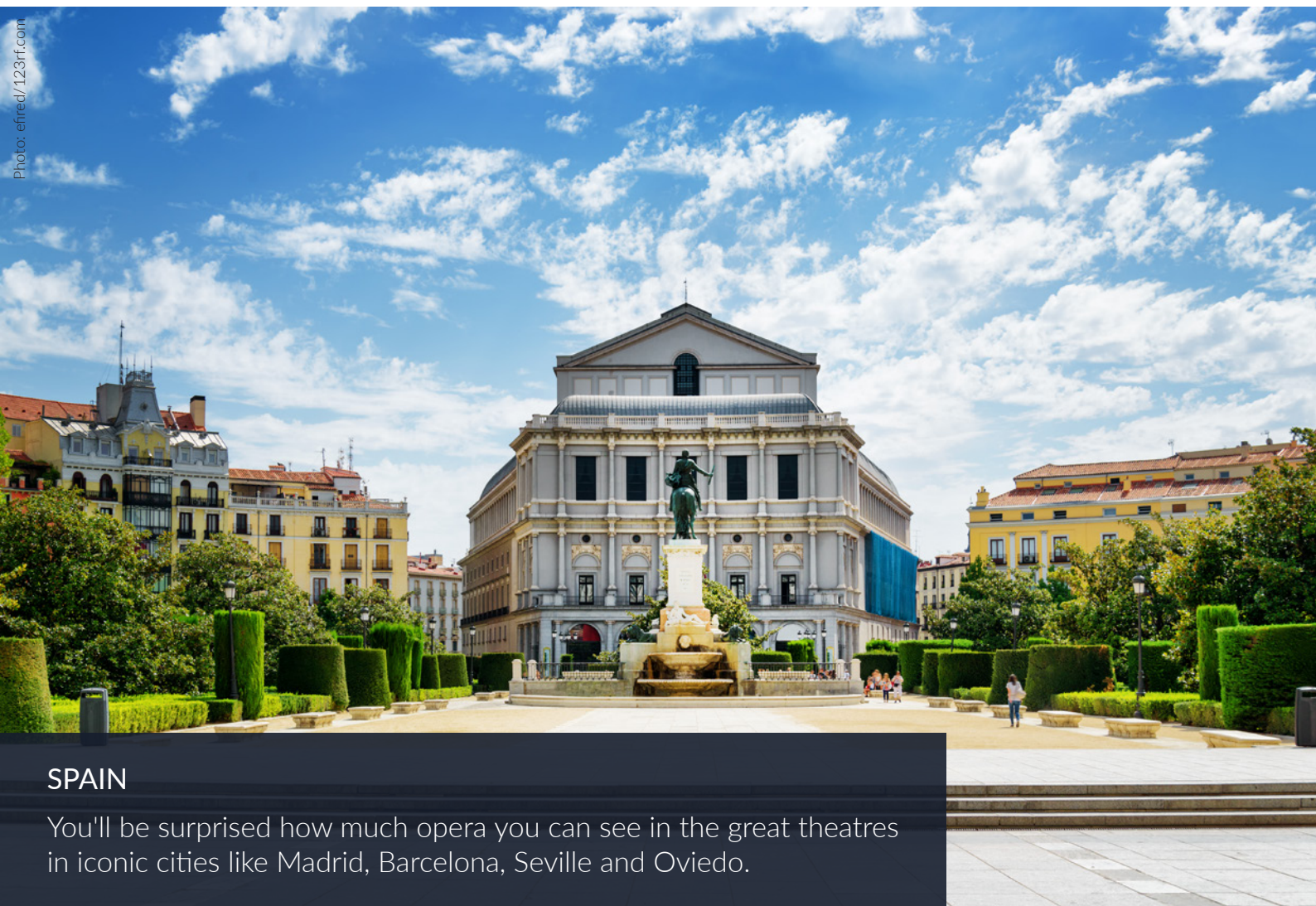
The **Don Quixote Route** will take you to places where this famous character created by Miguel de Cervantes had his knightly adventures. Follow his footsteps through centuries-old towns, ancient windmills, legendary castles, vineyards and wonderful areas of natural beauty in the regions of La Mancha, Aragón and Catalonia.

Lovers of history will be fascinated by the **Carlos V Route**, an enthralling voyage back in time in the towns he passed through after abdicating in 1556. The itinerary includes delightful places along the route from Laredo (Cantabria) where he disembarked with a full entourage to the beautiful Monastery of Yuste (Extremadura), where we retired after his historical 40-year reign.

📍 www.spain.info

The **Route of El Cid** is a cultural route through the interior and east of the country, through the lands conquered by El Cid Campeador, a legendary knight who was the inspiration for one of the most important works in Middle Age Castilian literature.

📍 www.caminodelcid.org



SPAIN

You'll be surprised how much opera you can see in the great theatres in iconic cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Seville and Oviedo.

▲ TEATRO REAL
MADRID

There are unique opera houses, like the **Teatro Real** in Madrid and the **Gran Teatre del Liceu** in Barcelona, two cultural temples full of art and history. The former, located facing the Royal Palace, is an ideal starting point for exploring the district called El Madrid de los Austrias. The latter is perfectly placed for a tour of Barcelona's famous Paseo de La Rambla, before or after the opera.

① www.teatro-real.com
www.liceubarcelona.cat

Visit the beautiful **Teatro Campoamor** in Oviedo, the scenario for the presentation of the Princess of Asturias Awards, or the wonderful **Teatro de la Maestranza** in Seville.

① www.operaoviedo.com
www.teatrodelamaestranza.es

You could also plan a tour and follow the whole opera season in cities brimming with so much art.

① www.españacultura.es



FESTIVALS FOR YOU TO ENJOY IN SPAIN

Spain's cultural agenda includes a wide range of internationally renowned festivals all through the year. Film, theatre, music and Flamenco, something to suit all tastes. In summer many of them are staged in the open air.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL IN MÉRIDA (BADAJOZ)

In July and August you'll get a chance to see a Roman Theatre founded in

16 BC coming back to life. An incredible setting for performing Greek and Latin works, but it's also open to the performing arts in general, including music and film.

📍 www.festivaldemerida.es

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL IN ALMAGRO (CIUDAD REAL)

Another landmark of classical theatre, this time set in the 400-year-old Corral de la Comedias open air theatre in



▲ ROMAN THEATRE IN MÉRIDA

the town. It also uses other historical venues here like the Old Renaissance University and the Patio de Fúcares. It takes place in July and attracts over 60,000 visitors each year.

📍 www.festivaldealmagro.com

SAN SEBASTIÁN FESTIVAL (GIPUZKOA)

Since 1953 it has been one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world: The photo-ops with actors and directors overlooking the bay in the city are

a classic feature. Glamour and the silver screen hand-in-hand.

📍 www.sansebastianfestival.com

GIJÓN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (ASTURIAS)

In November, film fans have a date in the city's streets and cinemas for a festival specialising in independent and signature films.

📍 www.gijonfilmfestival.com

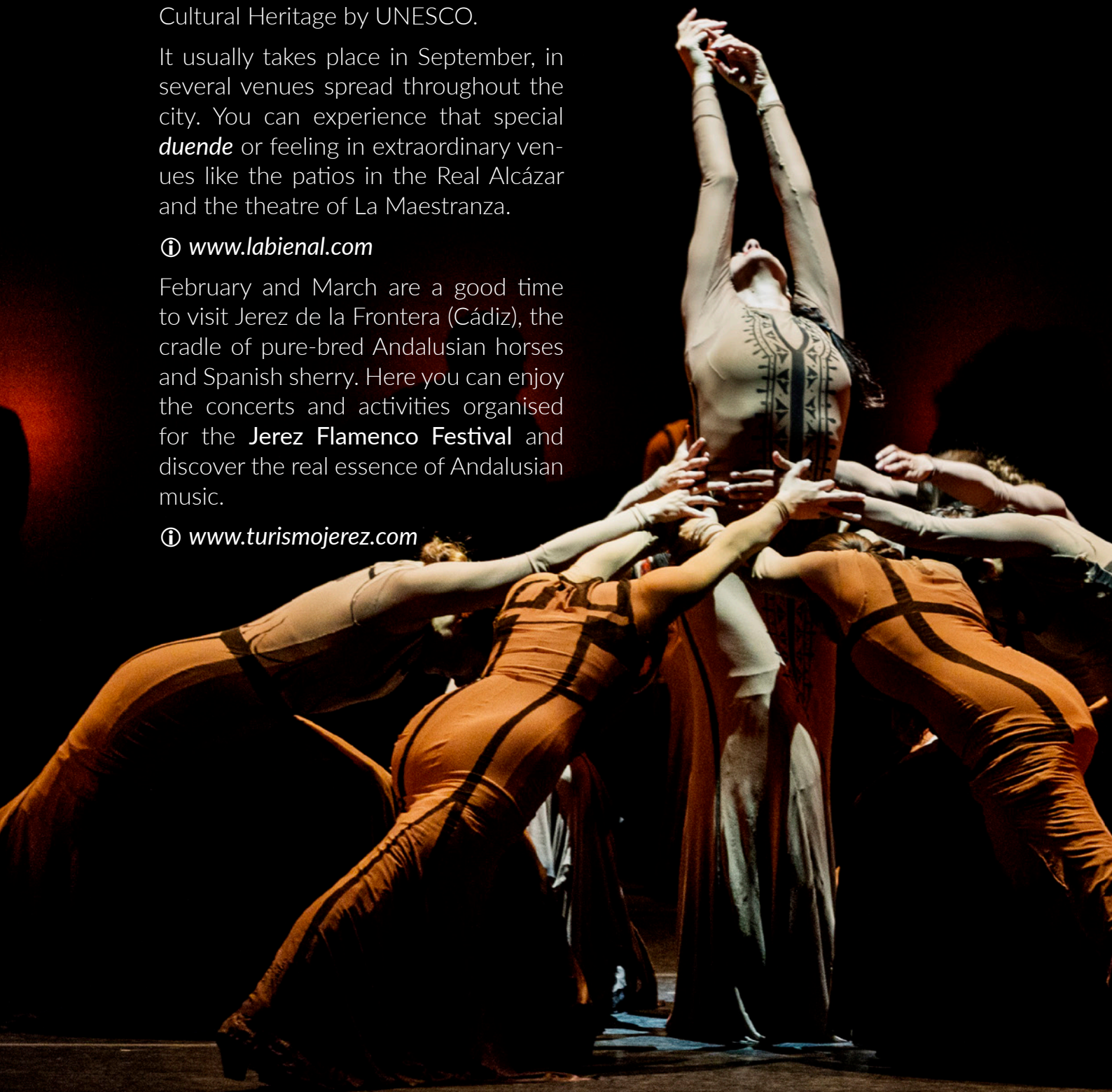
The magic of flamenco awaits you in a unique event held every two years in Seville: the **Flamenco Biennial**. This is the most important international event for this supremely Spanish art form, which has been declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

It usually takes place in September, in several venues spread throughout the city. You can experience that special *duende* or feeling in extraordinary venues like the patios in the Real Alcázar and the theatre of La Maestranza.

📍 www.labiennial.com

February and March are a good time to visit Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), the cradle of pure-bred Andalusian horses and Spanish sherry. Here you can enjoy the concerts and activities organised for the **Jerez Flamenco Festival** and discover the real essence of Andalusian music.

📍 www.turismojerez.com



THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
TO BE ENJOYED IN SPAIN

SAN SEBASTIÁN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

You can enjoy the biggest names in jazz during the second fortnight in July. You'll be able to see over 60 performances in a wide range of styles in venues like beaches, theatres, squares and the city's auditoriums like the Kursaal Centre and the Plaza de la Trinidad, the

main venue. The other venues have free concerts, in incredible places like the Playa de Zurriola, the San Telmo Museum and El Perlón, with views over the Bay of La Concha.

📍 www.heinekenjazzaldia.eus

▼ SAN SEBASTIÁN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL
VICTORIA EUGENIA THEATRE, SAN SEBASTIÁN



FOR THE CITY-DWELLING SENIOR

Tourism in Spain's cities is a thrilling adventure for people of all ages. Visit the best exhibitions in the world, thrill to a Flamenco show and travel back in time as you stroll through a medieval quarter... Here are a few suggestions.



▲ MADRID

MADRID

Spain's capital city has a vast cultural heritage and modern infrastructure which makes it easy to explore. You really shouldn't miss the *Paseo del Arte* or Art Walk with three of the best art

collections in the world, right next to each other: the **Prado Museum**, the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** and the **Reina Sofía Museum**.

THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
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You can purchase a *Paseo del Arte* combined ticket for all three on the websites or in the ticket offices of any of the museums. On this walk you'll also see the monumental fountains of Cibeles and Neptuno and be able to visit the Botanical Gardens.

Take a walk through the **Madrid de los Austrias**, the home of such representative monuments as the **Puerta del Sol**, the **Plaza Mayor** and the **Royal Palace**. When it's time to rest, sit down on a terrace with a vermouth or go to the San Miguel Market for a few *gourmet* tapas.

In Madrid there is a broad selection of theatres and venues for shows. The **Gran Vía** is a great place for seeing a musical or a theatre play.

📍 www.esmadrid.com



TRAIN FOR SENIORS



▲ GOTHIC QUARTER BARCELONA

BARCELONA

In this Mediterranean city, the capital of Catalonia, Roman remains and medieval neighbourhoods (like the famous Gothic Quarter) can be found alongside modern avant-garde buildings. A fantastic place for taking a walk. Here you'll find **La Sagrada Familia**, one of the city's icons, designed by **Antoni Gaudí** and the flagship of Modernism. This genius left his mark all around the city, with extraordinary works like the colourful **Güell Park** and the renowned **La Pedrera-Casa Milá** and **Casa Batlló** buildings, where light, colour and organic shapes blend together with wood, glass and stoneware.

This is a city that's open to the world: venue for international events and promoter of the latest trends. A simple walk along the Ramblas is enough to observe the **cosmopolitan** spirit of this city that attracts travellers from cultures around the world.

📍 www.barcelonaturisme.com

VALENCIA

This city on the shores of the Mediterranean has one of the largest historical old towns in Spain. It's the capital of the Region of Valencia, famous for its beaches and its exceptional climate, it's also home to one of the most extensive scientific and cultural complexes in Europe: the **City of Arts**

THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
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▲ VALENCIA

and Sciences. It is made up of six spectacular structures providing a range of activities relating to science, art, nature and technology.

You'll find traditional Valencia in the old town, with architectural gems like the **Lonja de la Seda Silk Exchange**. It is one of the most impressive civil Gothic buildings

in Europe, and includes such fascinating elements as the Hall of Columns and the Patio of the Orange Trees. Nearby you'll find the **Miguelete** as the bell tower of Valencia Cathedral is known. From the top, 50 metres up, you get an incredible panoramic view of the city.

📍 www.visitvalencia.com



▲ OLD TOWN
BILBAO

BILBAO

A Basque city which has been able to coordinate its rich industrial past with truly futuristic artistic trends. The **Guggenheim Museum** is the highlight of its architectural renewal, but there are many other examples: the entrances to the Metro designed by the architect Norman Foster, the Alhóndiga building restored by Philippe Starck and converted into the Azkuna Zentroa Cultural Centre, Calatrava's Zubizuri bridge... An aura of modernity which coexists in harmony with the **historical old town**, a maze of streets ideal for strolling about and trying some delicious **tapas** which they call **pintxos**.

📍 www.bilbaoturismo.net

SEVILLE

Located on the banks of the Guadalquivir river, the capital of Andalusia will captivate you with all the **joie de vivre** to be found in the busy streets and squares. The influence of the Moorish culture has left an especially beautiful mark on the historical old town. Visit the popular **neighbourhood of Triana**, with countless taverns and **tablaos** (establishments dedicated exclusively to Flamenco dance and singing), and ride in a horse-drawn carriage around the **Plaza de España** and the **María Luisa Park**, two of the city's most charming features. Your visit should also include the **Fine Arts Museum**, the **Alameda de Hércules** and the **Cathedral of Santa María de la Sede**.

📍 www.visitasevilla.es

▼ PLAZA DE ESPAÑA
SEVILLE



THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
TO BE ENJOYED IN SPAIN

FOOD

Spanish cuisine is famous all over the world. In the bars and restaurants you can try everything from **traditional recipes** to surprising **haute cuisine** creations. Organic cuisine, based on a model of sustainable production, is becoming more and more popular both in the home and on restaurant menus.

To try an original way of sampling quality Spanish cuisine you should make your way to an **urban market**. These historical facilities have reinvented themselves to provide unique gastronomic experiences. Stroll around the San Miguel Market in Madrid, the Boquería Market in Barcelona or the Central Market in Valencia, and you can enjoy a glass of wine while you sample a canapé or a gourmet **tapa**, listen to live music and mingle with the local residents. Beautiful to look at, and a treat for the palate!

SAN MIGUEL MARKET
MADRID





▲ FABADA ASTURIANA

TRADITIONAL CUISINE

Each region in Spain has a wide variety of irresistible, exquisite, traditional dishes. Everything from hearty stews like *cocido madrileño* and *fabada asturiana* to rice dishes like *paella valenciana* and the delicious **deserts and sweets** produced in each region. Try green vegetables in season, the fish from our seas and rivers prepared in a wide variety of ways, and **seafood**, a highly prized ingredient in Spanish cuisine. And surrender to temptation with the delicious **Iberian cured ham**, one of the great treasures in the Spanish larder.



MODERN CUISINE

You'll be amazed by the exquisite inventions of chefs like **Carme Ruscalleda**, **Juan Mari Arzak**, **Ferran Adrià**, **David Muñoz**, **Fina Puigdevall** and **Joan Roca**. These are just a few of the top Spanish chefs who have managed to transform cooking into an art. Inspired by traditional recipes and with the help of innovative techniques they have created unique dishes that will captivate your senses. Their ideas have become famous all around the world: Spanish chefs have **250 Michelin stars** between them.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

It is varied, tasty and good for your health. It has also been acknowledged by the UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage because it involves so much more than mere healthy food: it's a way of life that focuses on traditionally prepared ingredients, eating with friends and family, respecting the land and biodiversity, and preserving traditional fishing and farming activities. Virgin olive oil is one of the key ingredients. You can take part in a tasting and savour the real flavour of the Mediterranean.

WINE TOURISM

With nearly a million hectares of vineyards, Spain is one of the world's greatest wine producers and there are about 70 Designations of Origin. Apart from enjoying excellent wines in the bars and restaurants, it's a good idea to take part in the **grape-harvest festivals** that take place all over the country at the beginning of October.

Take one of the **wine routes** and visit ancient and avant-garde wineries, sleep surrounded by vineyards and discover the secrets of pairing wine and food with the help of expert sommeliers. These routes are ideal for lovers of gastronomic tourism.





SHOPPING

If you love shopping, Spain's the place for you. Here you'll find the best fashion labels, outlets selling top brands, and designer stores. There are also numerous traditional markets and antique shops. Cities like Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga are just a few of the places where you can enjoy a fantastic day out shopping. Here are a few of the most glamorous possibilities.

You'll be seduced by luxury in the Golden Mile in **Madrid**. In the heart of the Salamanca neighbourhood you'll find shops with the most prestigious brands, including the best Spanish companies and some of the cities most exclusive shopping centres.

In **Barcelona** you'll find the most distinguished *boutiques* in the Eixample district. On a stroll through broad streets and avenues like the beautiful Paseo de Gracia and the Avenida Diagonal

you'll see the best Spanish and international fashion.

You can enjoy all the magic of the Costa del Sol whilst you do a little shopping. You'll love the incredible shop windows in the famous Calle Larios in **Málaga** and the surrounding area, or you could visit Marbella for some first-class shopping. Make a note of the Avenues of Ricardo Soriano and Ramón y Cajal, and the Boulevard Príncipe Alfonso Hohenlohe.

CRAFTS

Discovering **local arts and crafts** is another form of tourism and you'll be able to find a really special souvenir. Visit workshops and small factories and see the creators in action.

Find incredible things like Toledo swords, traditional, hand-embroidered Manila shawls and wonderful pottery created in Seville's Triana neighbourhood or in the old town in Manises (Valencia).

► CERAMICS
SEVILLE



TAX FREE

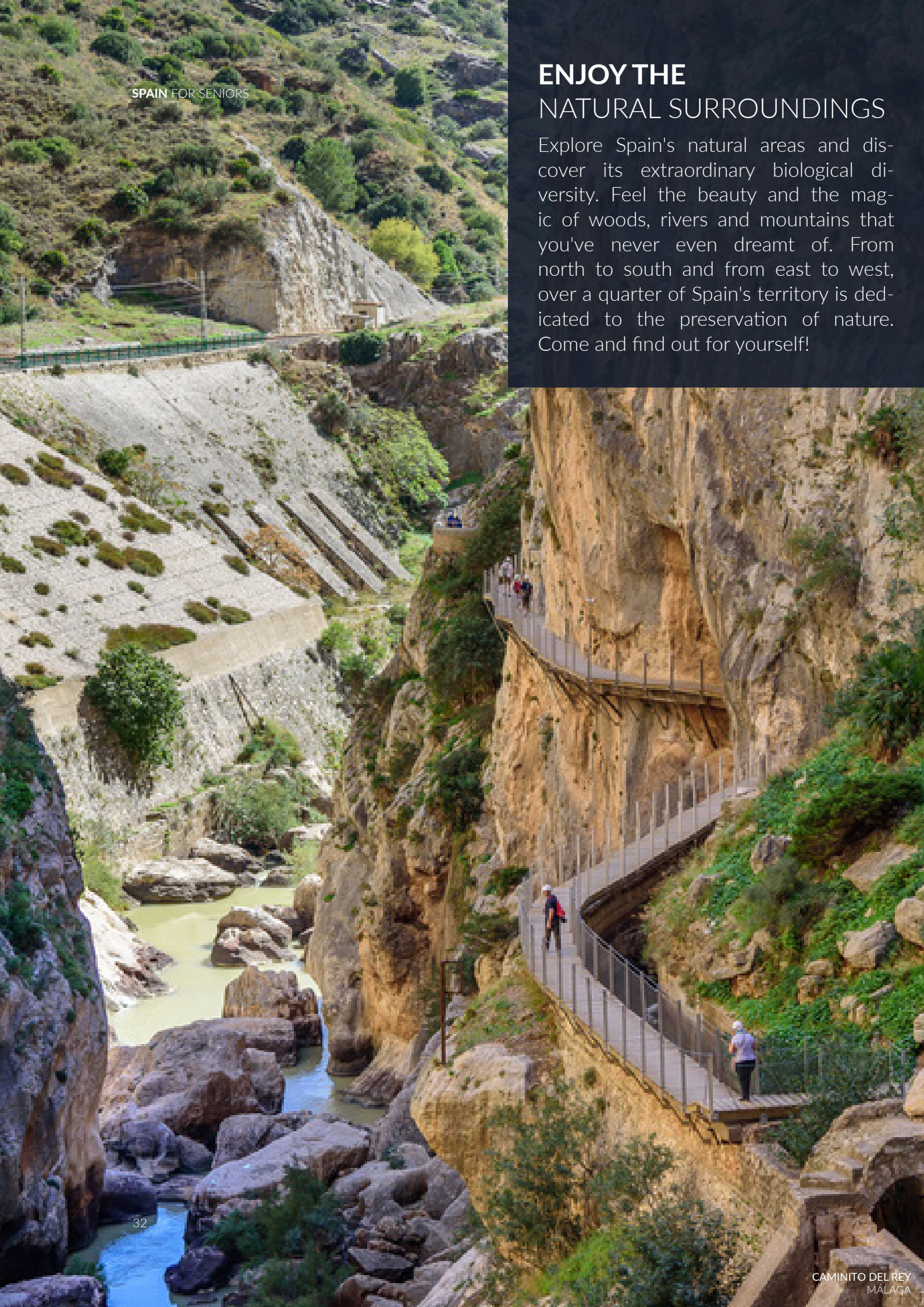
The advantages of shopping in Spain go beyond the quality and the variety of products. If you live outside the European Union, you can claim a refund on VAT.

All you need to do is show your passport and ask for a Tax Free invoice in the shop. You'll need to show your purchases and have the invoices stamped at customs (the stamp is valid for three months from the date of purchase), then request the refund amount from the managing company. They all have refund points at the main Spanish airports and borders. You can also ask for the VAT refund to be made to your credit card, by bank transfer, or by international bank draft.



ENJOY THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

Explore Spain's natural areas and discover its extraordinary biological diversity. Feel the beauty and the magic of woods, rivers and mountains that you've never even dreamt of. From north to south and from east to west, over a quarter of Spain's territory is dedicated to the preservation of nature. Come and find out for yourself!



HIKING

With over 60,000 kilometres of approved trails and a mild climate, Spain is one of the best destinations for practising this sport. Amazingly contrasting landscapes and a wide variety of accommodation enable you to make wonderful connection with unspoiled nature.

GREENWAY CYCLING ROUTES

Take the challenge of discovering Spain in a different and original way. Greenways are picturesque routes which follow disused railway lines and can be found throughout the country. Old, wooden railway sleepers have been recycled as kilometre posts and to construct railings. These trails, with gentle gradients and broad bends, are especially suitable for hikers, cyclists and people with reduced mobility.

📍 www.viasverdes.com

THE CAMINITO DEL REY

This 7.7 kilometre route takes you through the gorge of Los Gaitanes, in the heart of Málaga mountains, on pathways and over bridges up to 100 metres above the ground. This is an incredible experience. It isn't recommended for those without a head for heights or with mobility problems.

📍 www.caminitodelrey.info

EASTERN PYRENEES

There is an extensive network of trails leading to spectacular high-mountain lakes and through forests of fir and mountain pine. A privileged environment full of marvels like Monte Aneto,



Photo: Picos de Europa National Park

▲ SENDA DEL OSO GREENWAY CYCLING ROUTE
ASTURIAS

the highest mountain in the Pyrenees, and its thirteen glaciers.

📍 www.visitpirineus.com

HORSE-RIDING ROUTES

Discover Spain's natural treasures on horseback. Gallop through meadows and valleys, visit medieval villages... Choose one of the organised horseback routes in **Catalonia**, the **Balearic Islands** or **Castile-León** and enjoy the freedom you get from riding on the back of a horse. There are a large number of riding schools near some of the most beautiful and out-of-the-way corners of Spain.

Andalusia, where the purebred Spanish horse originated and fighting bulls graze, is the best place to learn how they breed these animals which have such a long-standing tradition in Spain.

The areas surrounding Seville, Córdoba and Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz) are the nerve centres for breeding these species and where you can learn about the daily routines of the horses and bulls from the breeders themselves.

EXPLORE THE NATIONAL PARKS

Take a trip through any of our 15 national parks and enjoy an unforgettable experience. Come and discover the **Picos de Europa**, the natural habitat of deer, wolves and bears, or extraordinary volcanic landscapes like **Timanfaya** and the **Teide** in the Canary Islands. Marvel at the beauty of **Las Tablas de Daimiel** and the **Cabañeros Park**, two unique ecosystems where you can observe a wide variety of birds and large mammals.

In the Pyrenees, in the **Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici** and **Ordesa y Monte Perdido** National Parks there are numerous historical trails, lakes and waterfalls, as well as charming villages nestling in exceptionally beautiful natural surroundings.

The **Sierra Nevada** is very near Granada and has two of the highest mountain peaks in Spain, Mulhacén and Veleta. An ideal destination for those who love the mountains and are looking to explore the picturesque white-washed villages in the Alpujarra region of Granada.

In Galicia you'll find the natural paradise of **Islas Atlánticas**. From high up at the Monte Faro lookout point you'll get beautiful panoramic views of the sea, the Arousa and Vigo estuaries and one of the most important colonies of seagulls in Europe.





OBSERVING LYNXES IN THE DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK (HUELVA)

Enjoy the incredible experience of tracking an Iberian lynx. It is the world's most threatened feline and its only habitat is the Iberian Peninsular where the population is recovering thanks to a programme of breeding in captivity and release into the natural environment. There are companies in Doñana and the Sierra de Andújar Nature Reserve which specialise in organising tours to observe animals in the wild.

BIRDWATCHING

Take your binoculars and get a closer look at the incredible variety of landscapes and birds. As it is located right in an important migratory corridor, thousands of birds choose Spain each year to breed and to rest.

There is a wealth of bird life in areas like the marshlands in **Huelva** and the mountains in **Extremadura**, **Navarre** and **Castile-León**. You'd be surprised how easy it is to observe birds of prey and forest and water birds just about anywhere in Spain.



▲ EL ROQUE DE LOS MUCHACHOS INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY
LA PALMA

STARGAZING

The incredible night sky in Spain provides some of the best conditions in Europe for stargazing. Explore the celestial dome from lookout points and observatories in astonishing natural surroundings.

Take a leisurely walk amongst the holm oaks under the stars in the **Monfragüe National Park** in Extremadura. Climb up to the Mirador del Castillo lookout point and watch the Milky Way in all its glory. Discover all the mysteries of the celestial

dome at the observatories in **Torrejón el Rubio** or **Portilla del Tiétar**. There is a wide selection of destinations, companies and accommodation specialising in astro tourism. Stargazing is possible with the naked eye, with no need for large telescopes or special equipment.

Atmospheric conditions on the island of **La Palma** make it one of the best places in the world for watching the stars. The absence of light pollution and the inherent climatic and atmospheric conditions



THERE ARE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES
TO BE ENJOYED IN SPAIN



▲ TENERIFE

led to its declaration as the world's first **Starlight Reserve**, acknowledging that clear night skies are a part of its natural heritage. Climb up to the **El Roque de los Muchachos International Astronomical Observatory** to enjoy an incredible experience. As the sun goes down, a blanket of clouds surrounds the island below the mountain peaks which gives you an amazing feeling of walking in the sky.

📍 www.fundacionstarlight.org

YOGA SURROUNDED BY NATURE

Find your mental, physical and emotional balance in a different way in the heart of nature. Enjoy yoga with the breeze caressing your face and the relaxing music of a waterfall in the background.

Here you'll find a wide selection of destinations, from **Lanzarote** in the Canary Islands to the **Sierra de Tentudia**, in the south of the province of Badajoz, where the conditions are ideal for making a profound connection with nature.

ENJOY THE SUNSHINE AND THE SEA

In Spain you'll find beaches for relaxing and swimming whenever you like. Lapped by the waters of the Mediterranean, the Cantabrian and the Atlantic, it has beaches to suit every possible taste: unspoiled, urban, family-friendly...



Beaches with the **Q for Quality** certifying the excellence of the water and beach sand can be found in ever greater numbers on the Spanish coasts.

▲ CANARY ISLANDS

Spain is one of the countries with the most **Blue Flags**: here you can enjoy the sunshine and the sea in the best possible conditions. There's no doubt we have one of the best coastlines in Europe.

Take advantage of travelling in the low season and forget about the hustle and bustle. The fantastic climate means you can enjoy the best destinations any time you like, with complete tranquillity and comfort.

There are countless options, including the **Canary Islands**, where there is sunshine and pleasant temperatures all year round, eight contrasting islands, with numerous unspoiled beaches where you can hide away, urban beaches with comprehensive services and friendly people.

The **Balearic Islands** are also idyllic. Surrounded by pine forests that go right down to the shore, rocky coves with crystal clear waters and white

sandy beaches in a turquoise sea, they will make an indelible impression.

The **Mediterranean coast** guarantees warm temperatures and equal measures of fun, recreation, peace and quiet. There are destinations like the Costa Cálida (Murcia), with average yearly temperatures of over 19° C. The beautiful waters on the Costa del Azahar (Castellón) and Valencia are a haven of peace.

📍 www.spain.info/es/que-quieres/destinos-playa

SPAS AND NATURAL SPRINGS IN SPAIN

Take a well-earned rest in a spa resort. There is plenty of accommodation all over Spain specialising in wellness, with everything you need to make that stress disappear. Some also have natural thermal springs and treatments using local therapeutic mud.

Both in winter and in summer, **Ourense** (Galicia) is an ideal Spa destination with options to suit all tastes. Apart from a wide selection of spas, the city also has free, thermal springs in extraordinary surroundings, the Miño River waterfront. A five-kilometre trail where you can hike or cycle, and relax in the medicinal mineral waters.

Here, for example, you can bathe in the **Muíño da Veiga natural springs**, next to an old watermill and where the water temperature is about 40° C.

📍 www.turismodeourense.gal

Reinvigorate your body on the banks of the Jalón River, in the **Alhama de Aragón thermal springs**, in the province

of Zaragoza. The spring waters have a temperature of between 28 and 32° C throughout the year, so in winter they are covered in steam creating a surprising atmosphere. Nearby there is a historical spa where they will advise on the most suitable treatments for your requirements.

📍 www.termaspallares.com

Discovered by the Iberians in 5th century BC and used by the Romans, the **Balneario de Archena** (Murcia) thermal springs are a delight. This modern complex has two large thermal pools with water jets, waterfalls and Jacuzzis, all in the incredible surroundings of the Ricote Valley.

The area also has three spectacular hotels and excellent spa facilities with a broad selection of therapeutic treatments. Treat yourself and recover your well-being.

📍 balneariodearchena.com

Very near Granada, at the foot of the Sierra de Tejeda you'll find the **Alhama de Granada Spa**, a magnificent centre built around monumental, 12th-century Moorish baths. The central room, where the spring rises, is an Almohad cistern with beautiful Caliphal arches and a domed roof, an extraordinary Andalusian historical heritage.

The treatment area is conveniently located in the same building as the accommodation. So you can enjoy this endless fountain of health from the medicinal springs in complete tranquillity.

📍 www.balnearioalhamadegrana.com



INTERRAIL FOR SENIORS, ANOTHER WAY TO TRAVEL AROUND SPAIN

Travel around Spain in your own time and as comfortably as possible on one of the **nine railway routes** available with Interrail and especially designed for seniors. Explore the country's different landscapes, culture and historical-artistic heritage with absolute **flexibility and numerous benefits** and discounts in each of the destinations in your itinerary, with journeys taking less than five hours.

You just need to buy any of the Interrail tours that include train bookings, with

stops in 25 cities. Travel through medieval Andalusia (Úbeda, Baeza, Jaén and Ronda) via World Heritage Cities or take the northern route (Bilbao, Santillana del Mar, Llanes, Oviedo and Santiago de Compostela). Whichever you choose, you can't go wrong.

Go to the www.interrail-tours.com/railtravel/spain website and prepare your route, book train seats and hotels, as well as complementary services like taxis, guided tours and luggage transfer.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

▲ TERMINAL 4 AT THE ADOLFO SUÁREZ MADRID-BARAJAS AIRPORT
MADRID

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTERING SPAIN

EU CITIZENS

The documentation required to travel to Spain varies according to your country of origin. If you're from the **European Union, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein**, you only need a valid passport or ID document.

OTHER COUNTRIES

You'll need your **passport** or a **valid visa** in the case of countries without any special treaties. You can also use a **residence permit** or a **long-term visa** issued by another EU country, or by Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. The maximum stay in Spain is 90 days. We recommend

you contact the Spanish Consulate or Embassy in your country to confirm these requirements before starting your trip. You can also check which countries require a visa on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, www.exteriores.gob.es.

TRANSPORT

AIRPORTS

In most Spanish airports there are airline companies offering connections to major cities all over the world. The airports offering the greatest number of international connections are **Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas, Barcelona-El Prat, Palma de Mallorca, Málaga-Costa del Sol, Gran Canaria, Alicante-Elche and Tenerife South**.

SPAIN FOR SENIORS

TRAIN

The Spanish National Railway Network (RENFE) links all the country's main cities and regions. The unquestionable stars of the system are the **AVE high-speed trains** which serve 25 tourist destinations, with Madrid as their main hub. To give you an idea: you can travel from Madrid to Valencia in only 95 minutes, or from Madrid to Barcelona in two and a half hours. As a tourist we recommend the **Renfe Spain Pass**, valid on all the long- and medium-distance AVE routes. The AVE network also has a **Renfe-SNCF** service that links Madrid and Barcelona with the main cities in France.

TOURIST TRAINS

Slow down, and enjoy the countryside and the good food on board one of these unique trains. You're sure to love the **Transcantábrico**. You'll discover Green Spain aboard a real railway gem: trains equipped with spacious suites with en suite bathroom, hydro sauna, turbo massage, steam bath and much more... You'll stop in unique destinations like Leon with its cathedral, the Peine de los Vientos sculpture in San Sebastián, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the coastal city of Santander, the Altamira Caves in Santillana del Mar, the Picos de Europa National Park in Asturias, and the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

Another option is the **Al-Ándalus train**, an opportunity to travel around different areas in mainland Spain on board a genuine palace on rails. You'll love the *belle époque* décor, the luxurious sleeping quarters and spacious saloon cars



from the 1920s and the mouthwatering cuisine. There are two itineraries to choose from, Andalusia or Extremadura.

📍 www.renfe.com/trenesturisticos

CRUISES

Spain is the gateway to the Mediterranean and one of the European countries with the greatest volume of cruise traffic. In addition to the stopovers in various places of interest, another popular option is cruise packages that combine stays on land. **Barcelona** and **Mallorca** are two of the destinations preferred by travellers for spending a few days before going back on board, or after completing their cruise. There are also other points on the Mediterranean coast that are common stopover places on cruise routes: **Ibiza, Minorca, Valencia** and **Málaga**.

VEHICLE HIRE

Travelling around Spain by car will make it easy for you to visit small towns and enjoy spectacular landscapes. You can book your car *online* and pick it up at the destination of your choice. If you're coming from a non-EU country you must have an **International Driving Licence**.

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL NETWORKS

In Spain there are **over 200 hotel chains with more than 4,000 hotels**, not including the thousands of independent establishments and rural accommodation. Rates vary according to the category of the hotel (from 1 to 5 stars) and the season.

Take advantage of the benefits, packages and special offers that the different chains have for the over-55s, with features like all-inclusive and special services.

PARADOR HOTELS

Spain has an extensive network of Parador Hotels which are ideal for rest and relaxation and enjoy all mod cons. They are located in delightful historical buildings with up-to-date facilities and blend perfectly with their picturesque surroundings. You can enjoy unforgettable experiences in palaces, monasteries, convents and castles. These places are not only interesting from the point of view of tourism, but also offer excellent gastronomic options, with all the best in traditional and modern cuisine. They ensure the highest quality standards and comfort for travellers, with discounts for the over-60s.

📍 www.parador.es

THE SPANISH DAY

Shop opening-times are very flexible, department stores and shopping centres stay open all day from 10 am to 10 pm in most cities.



TOLEDO PARADOR HOTEL

Spanish **mealtimes are rather later** than in other countries. Breakfast tends to be between 8 and 10 am. Lunch is served from 1 to 3.30 pm. Dinner in Spain is usually served from 8.30 to 11 pm.

CLIMATE

Spain is one of the warmest countries in Europe, with **over 3,000 hours of sunshine a year**. The predominant climate is temperate Mediterranean, which ensures dry summers and winters with even temperatures. The weather in the **north tends to be rainier** and with mild summers. The **Canary Islands** have an excellent climate with year-round sunshine and an **annual average temperature of 22°C**. In areas at higher altitudes like the **Sierra Nevada** and the **Cordillera Cantábrica** mountains it often snows from early winter to late spring.

📍 www.spain.info



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