

Spain: Andalusia, Córdoba & Granada

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Indulge in the sensory pleasures of Andalusia from its scenic vistas, iconic whitewashed villages, and mountain-ringed countryside to the temptations of gardens, vineyards, and olive groves. On your bike tour through Spain's sunny south, you'll explore magnificent palaces, poke through Roman ruins, and pause at local farms for delightful picnics. Feel a refreshing breeze as you pass mountain villages on a downhill glide, and listen for birdlife in a national park. Our carefully curated selection of accommodations ensures that you'll end each discovery-packed day in comfort and style.

Cultural Highlights

Join a local family for a picnic lunch on the banks of the Guadalquivir River.
Embark on a guided tour of Córdoba featuring a visit to the amazing Mezquita.
Roll through olive groves and vineyards along the Ruta del Vino Wine Road.
Watch for peregrine falcon as you follow the Via Verde rails-to-trails path through a nature reserve.
Experience the reverie—and perhaps fresh orange juice—of a former monastery.
Savor the true taste of Andalusia, from tapas, olive oil, and goat cheese to wine and sangria!
Roll through peaceful farms along a bike path leading to Luque Castle.
Enjoy a garden-fresh picnic lunch at a genuine *cortijo*, renowned for its olive oil.
Admire sweeping views from Zuheros, one of Andalusia's famous white villages.
Spin downhill past castles, Roman ruins, and mountain villages toward enchanting Granada.
Indulge your whims, perhaps with siestas, people watching at a café, or an Arab bath.
Explore the Alhambra Palace—Spain's #1 attraction and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain mixed with moderate hills and is ideal for beginner and experienced cyclists. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available for those who need assistance.

Tour Duration: 10 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 18 - 45

Average Cycling Time: 01:00 - 04:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Mar 70°/47°, Apr 73°/50°, May 80°/56°, Jun 88°/62°, Sep 90°/64°, Oct 78°/56°, Nov 68°/49°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Mar 1.4, Apr 2.2, May 1.5, Jun 0.5, Sep 0.8, Oct 2.2, Nov 3.2

DAY 1: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Seville

Depart from home and travel to Spain. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Seville / Transfer to Palma del Rio

Upon arrival at the Seville Airport (San Pablo Airport), meet your driver outside the customs area in your arrival terminal. The driver will be holding a VBT sign. Then, transfer by private car or van (about 60 minutes) to your Palma del Rio hotel.

The rest of the day is free to settle in, explore the city, and begin your Spain vacation. Choose a local restaurant for dinner on your own.

Please note: If you arrive early, your hotel room may not be available until 2:00 p.m. If you are early, you may store your luggage at the reception desk.

Please note: Due to Iberia Airline's limited flight service to Seville on Saturdays, some guests may fly from Madrid to the town of Jerez and then transfer by vehicle to our Palma del Rio hotel. This will avoid long layovers in Madrid's airport and allow you more time in Palma del Rio. Travel from Madrid on all other days of the week will be directly into Seville. Please refer to your air itinerary to determine which location will be your final destination.

For guests flying into Jerez: Upon arrival at the Jerez Airport, meet your driver outside the customs area in your arrival terminal. The driver will be holding a VBT sign. Then, transfer by private car or van (about 2 hours) to your Palma del Rio hotel.

Your hotel in Palma del Rio is Monasterio de San Francisco. As the name suggests, it was a Franciscan monastery built in 1492 by the VII Señor de Palma's orders. About 20 years ago, it was turned into a charming hotel that preserves the simplicity and tranquility of a monastery. The European discovery of America is part of the building's history, since the Franciscan monks founded American missions, took their language and customs to the New World, introduced the famous orange groves in California, and

opened the Mission de Palma del Rio in San Diego. Columbus spent time here before setting out for his journey, as the monastery was a strategic and powerful center of learning and culture. The cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego owe their names to the region's monasteries and holy places. Today, guests can drink the orange juice (when in season) from the garden's 65 orange trees, some of which are five centuries old.

VBT provides you with City Information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do in Palma del Rio.

Hotel: Monasterio de San Francisco

DAY 3: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Warm-up ride / Welcome reception

Meet your VBT trip leaders and the rest of the group at our Palma del Rio Hotel (Monasterio de San Francisco, Avenida Pio XII 35, phone +34 957 710183) at 10:00 a.m. Please ask at the hotel's reception desk for the exact location of today's meeting with your trip leaders. If your arrival at the hotel is scheduled later than 10:00 a.m. or if you are delayed, please contact the Monasterio de San Francisco hotel, and the staff will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders. If you plan to travel arriving to Palma del Rio by train, please note that taxi service is very limited in this small town. You may want to call the Palma del Rio hotel (phone +34 957 710183) and ask for assistance in arranging a transfer to the hotel. It may be best to arrange this transportation the day prior to your arrival to Palma del Rio.

This morning, your trip leaders will host an informative tour overview as well as a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a warm-up ride in the surroundings of Palma del Rio. You will be riding on the fertile lowland of the Guadalquivir River. Please be dressed in your biking garments when meeting the leaders as your warm-up ride immediately follows the safety talk and bike-fitting.

After the warm-up ride, you will have time for lunch on your own at the hotel or one of Palma del Rio's restaurants. Spend the remainder of the afternoon relaxing by the quiet swimming pool, strolling through the vegetable gardens, or exploring the town's sites. Ambitious riders may opt for an afternoon ride.

Tonight, gather with your trip leaders and travel mates for a welcome reception, including tapas and sangria, two of Andalusia's regional specialties. You'll learn about the history of Spain and Andalusia before dinner is served.

Hotel: Monasterio de San Francisco

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 40 km (8 – 25 miles)

Morning

Warm-Up Loop: 13 km (8 miles)

Afternoon

Sierra Morena Loop: 27 km (17 miles)

What to Expect: Your ride in Andalusia starts with an easy warm-up loop. You will cross the Genil River as you exit town. From there, you will see the fertile plain of the Guadalquivir River and pass a typical Andalusian farm called a *cortijo*. If you choose to ride after lunch on your own, cycle out of town toward the foothills of Sierra Morena, looping back down to the Guadalquivir River valley.

DAY 4: Home-hosted picnic lunch with local family

En route to Córdoba today, you'll ride up to the foothills of the Sierra Morena Mountain Range and the Parque Natural de Horanchuelos. Following the Guadalquivir River, you will make your way into the Campina Cordobesa-Córdoban countryside. Along the way, you'll stop at a typical Andalusian *cortijo*, where you'll meet a local family and enjoy a picnic lunch.

Later in the afternoon, you'll arrive at your beautiful and centrally located four-star Córdoba hotel. In the 11th century, this was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Europe. A developed system for running water and streetlights existed, along with vast libraries where Arabic, Latin, and Greek manuscripts were translated. Jews, Muslims, and Christians all coexisted in this cultural crossroads. Exceptional monuments like the Mezquita of Córdoba are a good representation of the blend of these different cultures. Famous sons of Córdoba include the philosophers Seneca (Roman), Averroes (Arabian), and Maimonides (Jewish). Córdoba has been inscribed in the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites since 1984.

Your hotel is a few steps from the Mezquita in the Judería—the charming Jewish district and the very heart of Córdoba. It consists of ancient, private homes from the 17th and 18th centuries, with lovely patios and fountains. The property was carefully restored in 2009.

Spend the rest of the evening at your leisure enjoying all the amenities of your hotel, or venture out and explore Córdoba's historic sites. Dinner is on your own this evening.

Hotel: Casas de la Judería

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 32.64 – 65.2 km (20 - 40 miles)

Morning

Palma to Posadas (short option): 32.6 km (20 miles)

Afternoon

Posadas to Lunch (medium option): 15.2 km (9 miles)

Posadas to Lunch and Córdoba (long option): 32.6 km (20 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride starts through Palma del Río and continues gently uphill toward Hornachuelos. You leave the Guadalquivir River plain behind as you bike along the borders of the Sierra. The ride is mostly easy but there will be some uphill cycling no longer than 1 kilometer (0.6 mile). By noon you approach the quiet town of Posadas for a break and join the van for the end of the short option. From here you will shuttle to our lunch location. If you continue cycling from the town of Posadas after your break, you'll cross the Rio Guadalquivir on an easy ride to the Cortijo el Temple for lunch. After lunch, you will shuttle to Córdoba or continue cycling on longer option that includes a series of hills to the outskirts of Córdoba. From the finish line, you will be shuttled to the hotel.

DAY 5: Explore Córdoba

After breakfast, meet your local guide and set out on foot. Start by visiting a nearby synagogue and then continue to the Mezquita.

Originally built as a temple, lighthouse, and warehouse, the Mezquita (mosque) was once the second-largest mosque in the world and later consecrated as a Christian church after Córdoba was captured by the Spanish in the 12th century. Today, it is considered one of the world's greatest examples of Moorish architecture. Around the Mezquita, you'll see the Alcazar de los Reyes Cristianos and the Archiepiscopal Palais, the Roman Bridge with its 16 arches spanning the Guadalquivir River, and the Jewish synagogue built in 1315 in La Judería. Córdoba is also an excellent place to shop for pottery, silver work, *abanicos* (fans), cotton and leather goods, embroidered *mantillas* (scarves), shawls, and wooden crafts. There is also an interesting Bullfighting Museum.

Take time on your own this afternoon to explore the many sites and shops of Córdoba. You might want to enjoy an ancient local tradition: an Arab bath in one of the nearby *hammams*. Immerse yourself in its warm waters, followed by a relaxing massage with essential oils.

Tonight, choose a restaurant for dinner on your own in Córdoba. You might visit a flamenco house in front of the Mezquita or one of the restaurants in La Judería, the Jewish district, where you can also taste local specialties like *caldereta de cordero*, ragout of lamb, or sausages such as *morcilla*, *cana de lomo*, and *salchicon de Pozo Blanco*. *Salmorejo* and *flamenquines* are the most famous Cordovan dishes. Arab influences can be found in the sweet *alfajores* and *pestiños* with almonds and honey.

Hotel: Casas de la Judería - Córdoba

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choice:

Non-Biking Day: Explore Córdoba

DAY 6: Ruta del Vino / La Via Verde / Wine & cooking demonstration

After breakfast, leave Córdoba and shuttle to the Cordillera Subbética and the Ruta del Vino wine road. As the name suggests, this hilly region is all olive trees and vineyards, producing and exporting excellent white wines and olive oils. One of the most renowned wines produced in this area is the Pedro Ximénez sweet wine, particularly recommended to complement local *postres* desserts. At lunchtime, stop at a beautiful *bodega* and taste locally produced wines with your meal.

Then, ride toward the Subbética mountain range, where you have the option of riding on the Via Verde rails-to-trails path. You may follow this trail to your hotel for the next two nights. Avid cyclists looking for some hills can opt for a more challenging route.

In the afternoon, arrive at the Hacienda Minerva. Dating to the end of the 19th century, it was found in ruins, restored, and turned into a hotel. The old machinery of the olive-oil mill still serves as part of the décor. Enjoy time to relax by the pool, book a massage, or indulge in the hotel's Arab baths (at additional cost – please ask your leaders to assist in booking massages and the Arab baths in advance of your arrival to the hotel). Later, learn how to make one of Andalusia's popular dishes. Dinner will be served in the dining room of the hotel, once the oil cisterns of the oil mill.

Hotel: Hacienda Minerva

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 23.3 – 54.8 km (12 – 33 miles)

Morning

Wine Road to La Primilla: 20.3 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Easy after lunch ride on the Via Verde: 12.8 km (8 miles)

La Primilla to Hacienda Minerva 19.2 km (12 miles)

La Primilla to Hacienda Minerva Plus: 34.5 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: You will take a bus from Córdoba to the Montilla-Moriles hills, one of the famous wine regions of Andalusia, and start riding from Espejo, passing several *lagares*, farms where grapes are grown and pressed. You will stay on rolling terrain in the morning with some hills, arriving at Lagar La Primilla for lunch and a wine tasting. After lunch, you can shuttle to your starting point on the Vía Verde rails-to-trails path, where you can expect a beautiful easy ride to your hotel. Or you can challenge yourself on the initial hills on the longer moderate ride to Hacienda Minerva.

DAY 7: Explore Zuheros / Organic picnic lunch / Olive-oil tasting

Today, you'll follow the bike path to Luque, passing peaceful farms, olive groves, and surrounding hillsides. As you pedal along the gently rolling path, keep your eyes open for a variety of birds, including two of the many protected species of this area: the peregrine falcon, symbol of the Natural Park of La Sierra Subbética, and the griffon vulture. Alternatively, you may cycle on a nearby paved road to Luque for additional mileage and a more moderate ride.

Near Luque, you'll stop at a *cortijo* for a picnic lunch made from local ingredients freshly picked in the garden of your host, Balbino. This *cortijo*, simply known as El Cortijillo is famous for its prize-winning organic olive oil.

After lunch, retrace your way to Hacienda Minerva on a scenic route, passing through the quaint whitewashed village of Zuheros. Built onto a rocky promontory, Zuheros is considered one of the most beautiful white villages of Spain. It is also known for its cheese, olive oil production, and castle with spectacular views. Here you can enjoy the scenery, take in views of the castle, and wander through its picturesque little streets.

From Zuheros you can take the easy Via Verde bike path back to the hotel or continue on a more challenging scenic route for additional mileage.

Back at the hotel enjoy time to relax before your small group gathers to learn about the olive-oil industry and why it is the main business in the area. See how olive oil is produced and the steps required for extra-

virgin olive oil.

Hotel: Hacienda Minerva

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 55 km (12 – 34 miles)

Morning

Via Verde to El Cortijillo (easy ride): 21 km (12 miles)

Via Verde to El Cortijillo (moderate ride): 31 km (19 miles)

Afternoon

After lunch ride to Zuheros and Hacienda Minerva: 12.5 km (8 miles)

Zuheros to Hacienda Minerva Loop: 24.3 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: An easy morning ride on the Via Verde bike path. Depart the hotel toward Zuheros and Luque for a beautiful and undulating ride through the Parque Natural de la Sierra Subbética. Additional mileage and moderate terrain before lunch is the alternate option. Enjoy a lunch stop at El Cortijillo and an organic home-hosted meal. The route takes you on a gorgeous ride up to today's highlight village, Zuheros, and then back down to the hotel. The afternoon ride includes a 1.2-mile (2-km) hill plus a few shorter climbs to reach the hilltop village of Zuheros. Alternatively, if you are looking for more mileage in the afternoon, after arriving to Zuheros you may opt for a longer ride back to the hotel. The longer ride not only offers additional mileage but some hills for a rewarding challenge.

DAY 8: Transfer to Granada

After breakfast, you will start your journey toward the enchanting city of Granada and the land of moving borders between Christians and the Andalusí Kingdom. Start your morning ride in the small town of Benalúa de las Villas, starting out on a gradual descent through a valley with the Sierra Nevada mountain range in the distance. Rolling through towns that were heavily fortified in the Middle Ages prior to the final conquest of Granada in 1492, you will pass Colomera with its castle. As you continue on the Ruta de las Fortalezas, you will find traces of Roman influence, including a 2,000-year-old bridge. Passing through little mountain villages, you can stop for lunch in one of the cafés at your leisure. Leaving the mountains behind, enter La Vega Granada's main valley and finish your ride in the quiet town of El Chaparral just outside the city.

This evening, join your trip leaders for a festive farewell dinner and sample some regional culinary delights.

Hotel: Hotel NH Collection Granada Victoria

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 24.7 – 62.54 km (15 – 39 miles)

Morning

Ruta de las Fortalezas to Olivares: 24.7 km (15 miles)

Afternoon

Olivares to El Chaparral: 22.8 km (14 miles)

Olivares to El Chaparral Plus: 37.8 km (23 miles) What to Expect: Your final ride takes you from the mountains north of Granada down to the Genil River lowlands. Start biking from Benalúa de las Villas down a mountain valley with the impressive Sierra Nevada mountain range as the backdrop. You will pass a 2,000-year-old Roman bridge and the towns of Colomera and Moclín with their Arab fortresses and Christian churches. The ride is gently rolling with a continuous descent into the Genil valley. For more avid riders, there will be a slightly longer, more challenging ride with a few more hills.

DAY 9: Alhambra Palace / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After your visit to the Alhambra Palace, the rest of the day is yours to explore. VBT provides you with City Information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do in Granada during your stay.

Hotel: Hotel NH Collection Granada Victoria

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10: Depart for home

After breakfast* this morning, you will transfer to the airport for your departing flight.** Please ensure that you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

*Please note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the front desk to verify when breakfast is served.

**VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your Transfer Reminder. VBT transfer times and

departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. Transfer times are about 30 minutes to the Granada airport or 90 minutes to the Malaga airport. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport is at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Monasterio de San Francisco (Days: 2,3)

Monasterio de San Francisco was a Franciscan monastery built in 1492 by the VII Señor de Palmas orders. It was transformed into a charming hotel in 1985, yet preserves the simplicity and tranquility of a monastery. The refectory is now a quiet reading room, the ancient vegetable garden still supplies the kitchen, and the patios are the same ones walked by the monks in silent prayer five centuries ago. Only the large swimming pool shaded by orange trees is a reminder of the modern world. Today, guests can still drink the juice of the garden's 65 orange trees, some of which are five centuries old. The hotel is not air conditioned but does offer WiFi throughout the premises.

Las Casas de la Juderia Cordoba (Days: 4,5)

Hotel Las Casas de la Judería is located a few steps from the Mezquita in the very heart of Córdoba. It consists of ancient, private homes from the 17th and 18th centuries with charming patios, gardens, and fountains. The property is air conditioned and beautifully restored, and exhibits a perfect blend of history and comfort. Free WiFi is also available.

Hacienda Minerva (Days: 6,7)

Located in the geographic center of Andalusia, this enchanting property is close to Sierra Subbética Park and the famous Via Verde bike path. The hotel is surrounded by centuries-old olive trees and faces the charming "white village" of Zuheros. This historic 19th-century farm has been lovingly restored. Its unique architecture is embedded in the landscape with all the modern comforts. The Hacienda has unique public spaces: a library with 10,000 books, a wine cellar, and a swimming pool. The hotel is not air conditioned but does offer WiFi throughout the premises.

Hotel NH Collection Victoria (Days: 8,9)

Enjoy an ideal location in the heart of Granada and an elegant ambiance during your stay at the Hotel NH

Collection Granada Victoria. The hotel is located near the Cathedral, Royal Chapel, and Alcaicería bazaar, in a bustling neighborhood of shops and restaurants. The Alhambra is just a 20-minute walk away. Savor traditional Mediterranean cuisine in the hotel's sunny restaurant or tapas at the bar. Your soundproof and air-conditioned room features a flat-screen TV, free WiFi, and private bath with rain-effect shower.