

# HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



## PARADORES & POUSADAS

APR 4–18, 2024

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**ITINERARY:** Lisbon, Portugal / Queluz / Evora / Mérida, Spain / Carmona / Seville / Cordoba / Ronda / Granada / Úbeda / Toledo / Madrid

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Eight nights' accommodations in distinguished historic lodgings
- National Palace of Queluz, Portugal
- Lisbon sightseeing, including Belém
- Evora, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Roman ruins at Mérida
- Moorish Toledo
- Tour of Cordoba, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Seville and its renowned Catédral
- Granada's Alhambra and Generalife Gardens
- Three-night stay in sophisticated Madrid
- Madrid sightseeing, including Prado, Plaza Mayor, and Royal Palace

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** Level 3

## SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner*

### THURSDAY, APRIL 4 DEPART FROM HOME CITY

Depart your home city for Lisbon Portugal.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 5 ARRIVE LISBON

Arrive in the Portuguese capital and transfer to your hotel. As guests' arrival times vary, there are no group activities planned during the day.

Tonight, gather for a welcome dinner.

Overnight: *Corinthia Hotel Lisbon* (D)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 6 LISBON / QUELUZ

This morning's city tour includes the Jerónimos Monastery, a masterpiece of Manueline architecture and the place where, in 1497, Vasco da Gama and his crew spent their last night in prayer before leaving on their historic journey around Africa's Cape of Good Hope; iconic Belém Tower; and the Monument to the Discoveries commemorating Portugal's storied explorers.

Next, visit the National Palace of Queluz, the former residence of Portuguese royalty now used for state occasions.

After returning to Lisbon, the remainder of the day is at leisure to explore as you wish, perhaps with a visit to a local club offering Portugal's haunting, traditional Fado music.

Overnight: *Corinthia Hotel Lisbon* (B)

## **SUNDAY, APRIL 7 LISBON / EVORA**

Leaving Lisbon this morning, travel through the rolling hills of the agricultural Alentejo district, with its bountiful fields of wheat, fragrant vineyards, and stands of olive and cork trees.

After stopping for lunch outside the fortified hilltop town of Monsaraz, arrive in Evora, capital of the Alentejo, in the late afternoon.

Your pousada, a restored 15th-century convent, is one of the most beautiful lodgings in Portugal and the country's finest pousada.

Overnight: *Pousada dos Loios* (B, L, D)

## **MONDAY, APRIL 8 EVORA**

Your morning walking tour of Evora introduces you to the many charms of this architectural gem—a university town, prosperous regional capital, and UNESCO site thanks to the many relics of its Roman and Moorish heritage. The tour includes a Roman temple; the Cathedral of Evora, built in the late 12th century; Giraldo Square, one of Evora's primary town centers; and the Church of St. Francis, home of the Chapel of Bones.

Sample Alentejo wines at a local winery, and then the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy this "Golden Age" city as you wish.

Overnight: *Pousada dos Loios* (B, D)

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 9 EVORA / MÉRIDA, SPAIN / CARMONA**

Today, travel east through countryside peppered with the ruins of fortresses and castles to the Spanish border town of Mérida. Once the capital of ancient Lusitania (Latin for the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal), Mérida boasts outstanding Roman ruins.

There's time to explore and eat lunch on your own before continuing to Carmona and your parador, a restored 14th-century Arab fortress built on the site of the medieval castle of Peter of Castile.

Overnight: *Parador de Carmona* (B, D)

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10 CARMONA / SEVILLE**

This morning, visit splendid Seville, Moorish capital of Spain's Andalusia region and city of beauty and romance. This is the place that inspired Carmen and Don Giovanni; where fragrant orange trees and flower-bedecked balconies delight the senses; and home of the renowned Cathedral, the world's largest Gothic building.

After a tour that includes the Alcázar palace, noted for its signature mudéjar (Moorish) architecture, and the Arab quarter, the afternoon is free to explore independently.

Return to Carmona late afternoon and dine at your parador this evening.

Overnight: *Parador de Carmona* (B, D)

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 11 CARMONA / CORDOBA**

Today, visit the cultural gem of Cordoba. First the capital of Roman Spain, then of Moorish Spain, Cordoba features some of the country's most important monuments, including the Old Quarter built around the magnificent Mezquita mosque. It was here that the Moors ruled from the 8th to the 11th centuries and fostered a culture of learning and religious harmony known the world over.

Your walking tour takes in many of the highlights, including the atmospheric Old Quarter with its narrow, winding streets, whitewashed houses, and the revered Mezquita Mosque-Cathedral. With more than 500 columns and graceful arches, the Mezquita incorporates Roman and Gothic elements into its architecture. Cordoba also is home to Andalusia's only synagogue to survive the expulsion of Spain's Jews in the 15th century.

After touring these and other highlights, you have free time to explore on your own.

Late this afternoon, return to your parador in time for dinner.

Overnight: *Parador de Carmona* (B, D)

## FRIDAY, APRIL 12 CARMONA / RONDA

Leaving Carmona this morning, travel south to tiny Ronda, one of Spain's oldest and most aristocratic towns. It's set high in the mountains with whitewashed houses clinging improbably to the edge of El Tajo Gorge—500 feet deep and 300 feet wide.

Your parador is Ronda's original town hall.

Overnight: *Parador de Ronda* (B, D)

## SATURDAY, APRIL 13 RONDA

In the morning, take a walking tour of Ronda; highlights include the graceful cathedral of Santa Maria Mayor in the town's Old Quarter; two 17th- and 18th-century bridges; and the Casa de Mondragon, which legend holds was once home to Moorish kings.

Return to your parador for a special tapas lunch.

The rest of the day is free for independent exploration.

Overnight: *Parador de Ronda* (B, L)

## SUNDAY, APRIL 14 RONDA / GRANADA / ÚBEDA

Continuing your journey, travel today to Granada, the former stronghold of Moorish Spain set in the foothills of the snowcapped Sierra Nevada.

The city's undisputed highlight is the Alhambra, the extraordinary palace of Spain's last Moorish rulers. Sprawled across a hilltop above the Darro River, the Alhambra commands breathtaking views of the city below, as you see on your afternoon tour of this splendid citadel.

Also visit the Granadian-style Generalife, the palace's acclaimed gardens.

Later in the afternoon, travel north to Úbeda and your next parador, where you dine tonight.

Overnight: *Parador de Úbeda* (B, D)

## MONDAY, APRIL 15 ÚBEDA / TOLEDO / MADRID

A highlight is in store today as you visit Toledo, capital of medieval Spain. Declared a Spanish National Landmark, the city is little changed visually from its 16th-century days as a subject for the artist El Greco. Toledo boasts an incomparable hilltop setting overlooking the Castilian plains and surrounded on three sides by the Tagus River.

After lunch on your own, you will see Toledo's most important sights on a guided tour, including the massive Gothic Cathedral begun in 1226 and not finished until 1493; and the Sinagoga del Tránsito, erected in 1357 with imported cedars from Lebanon, just as Solomon requested when constructing the First Temple in Jerusalem.

Your tour of Toledo concludes with a stop at Santo Tomé, home of El Greco's most famous painting, *The Burial of Count Orgaz*.

Continue to Madrid, arriving late afternoon.

Dinner tonight is on your own; perhaps to dine late as the Madrileños do.

Overnight: *Wellington Hotel* (B)

## TUESDAY, APRIL 16 MADRID

Your morning tour of this monumental and dignified capital city includes vast Plaza Mayor, in the heart of Old Madrid; the Moorish medieval district; and opulent 18th-century Palacio Real (Royal Palace), with its 2,800 rooms.

Then, sample some of Madrid's specialties over a lunch of tapas.

Your tour ends at the Prado, one of the world's greatest museums, displaying treasures by Spanish masters Goya, El Greco, and Velazquez.

The remainder of the day is free for independent exploration in this most cosmopolitan city. Well known for its "foodie" culture, Madrid offers a bounty of restaurants for dinner on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Wellington Hotel* (B, L)

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17**

### **MADRID**

Today is at leisure to enjoy the Spanish capital as you wish, perhaps to stroll along the city's broad boulevards; see Picasso's famed painting *Guernica* at the Reina Sofia Museum; poke around the weekly El Rastro Market; visit the renowned Thyssen-Bornemisza museum; or simply take in the vibe at a local café.

Tonight, bid "Adios" to Spain and your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *Wellington Hotel* (B, D)

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 18**

### **DEPART FOR U.S.**

We transfer to the airport this morning for our connecting flights to the U.S. *B*

Please note: This trip involves considerable walking up hills or stairs, and on uneven or cobblestone streets. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to its fullest.