

SPAIN & PORTUGAL in 2003

PORTUGAL

On June 8: Arrive Lisbon

8 AM: Arrive at **Portela International Airport** which is about 7miles north of the center of Lisbon and our hotel. **We are on the same plane that Tauck is using.** We are going to catch their ride to our Hotel. (A taxi costs 18 Euro's and takes about 15 minutes to get to the hotel. Taxi information is on its window in both English and Portuguese. If you really want to travel cheap you can catch the Aerobus #91 for 2 Euros.)

10 AM: Arrive at [Hotel Tivolia](#), a 5 Star Hotel in downtown Lisbon, where we spend June 8 and 9'th. Located on Av. da Liberdade 185, it is a couple of blocks from the **Natural History Museum** and about a half mile from the **Rio Tejo**. The morning is at our leisure.

2:15PM: Enjoy an afternoon city sightseeing tour of Portugal's capital. Learn about the "Period of Great Discoveries," when Portuguese explorers ventured into previously uncharted waters and discovered new continents. See **Mosteiro dos Jeronimos**, the **Tower of Belém** and the **Discoveries Monument**, where the caravels (15th-century sailing vessels) departed. [Click here for a VERY detailed tour of Lisbon.](#) I suggest you take a copy of it with you on the Tauck sightseeing and circle the items you want to re-visit tomorrow when we have the afternoon to ourselves. Also see the LISBON IN DAY link below.

Evening: Tauck has a welcome reception and dinner.

Portugal's history goes back to the Celts, who settled the Iberian Peninsula around 700 BC. The region soon attracted a succession of peoples and was colonised by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Visigoths. In the 8th century, the Moors crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and commenced a long occupation that introduced their culture, architecture and agricultural techniques to Portugal. But resistance to the Moors grew and they were finally ejected during the 13th century.

In the 15th century, Portugal entered a phase of overseas expansion due to the efforts of Prince Henry the Navigator. Mariners set off to discover new trade routes and helped create an enormous empire that, at its peak, extended to India, the Far East, Brazil and Africa. This period marked the apogee of Portuguese power and wealth, but it faded towards the end of the 16th century when Spain's Felipe II claimed the throne. Although Spanish rule lasted only a few decades, the momentum of the empire declined over the following centuries.

At the close of the 18th century Napoleon sent expeditionary forces to invade Portugal but they were forced back by the troops of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. During the 19th century the economy faltered and republicanism took hold. National turmoil led to the abolition of the monarchy in 1910 and the founding of a democratic republic.

Portugal's democratic phase lasted until 1926, when a military coup ushered in a long period of dictatorship under António de Oliveira Salazar. His reign came to an end in 1968 when he sustained brain damage after falling off a chair. Anachronistic attempts to hold onto colonies in the face of nationalist independence movements resulted in costly wars in Africa and led to the Revolution of the Carnations, a bloodless military coup on 25 April 1974.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Portugal underwent some painful adjustments: the political climate vacillated between right and left, and the economy suffered from wrangles between government and private ownership. The granting of independence to Portugal's African colonies in 1974-75 resulted in a flood of over 500,000 refugees into the country. Entry into the European Community (EC) in 1986 restored some measure of stability, which was buttressed by the acceptance of Portugal as a full member of the European Monetary Union in 1999. Portugal's last overseas territory, Macau, was handed over to the Chinese in 1999. The governing Socialist Party was returned to power in elections in

October 1999 despite a campaign overshadowed by events in East Timor. Jorge Fernando Branco de Sampaio was returned as President in parliamentary elections in January 2001.

June 9: Sintra / Cascais / Estoril

7 AM: Breakfast (provided by Tauck)

9 AM: We are on the bus to explore some of the country's most colorful and picturesque destinations surround Lisbon. **Sintra**, designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, was the summer retreat of the royal family. The town of **Sintra** lies immediately north-west of Lisbon and was long favoured by Portuguese royalty and English nobility (Lord Byron was mad about it) as a summer destination. Its appeal is still evident today, with its thickly wooded setting, romantic gardens and ramshackle glamour. Dominating the town are a number of palaces and ruins, including the **Palácio Nacional de Sintra**, an interesting amalgam of Manueline and Gothic architecture, and the **Palácio Nacional da Pena**. Just outside the town are the rambling **Monserate Gardens**, while further out is the **Convento dos Capuchos**, a tiny 16th-century hermitage enclosed in forest, with cells hewn from rock and lined with cork.

We will visit the 14th-century Royal Palace, then continue through **Cascais**, a fishing village where gaily colored boats speckle the bay. Return to Lisbon via **Estoril**, a beautiful international resort on the Portuguese Riviera.

1 PM: In the afternoon we are free to explore Lisbon. Start with this Web Site - [LISBON IN A DAY](#) This is a GREAT site with LOTS of pictures (so it takes a while to download.)

Lisbon stands on the banks of the Rio Tejo. The city's low skyline, unpretentious atmosphere and pleasant blend of architectural styles conspire to make it a favourite with many visitors. Most of the daily activity is centred in the lower part of the city.

Portugal's architecture is renowned for its Moorish and surrealist flourishes, culminating in the development during the 16th century of the Manueline style characterised by the extravagant use of twists, turns, spirals and nautical themes for

decoration. Finest attraction is the **Mosteiro dos Jerónimos**. Construction began about 1502 and was completed towards the end of the century. It is the principal remnant of Manueline architecture found in the city. Nearby is the **Torre de Belém**, a Manueline-style tower which stands in the Rio Tejo, and is probably the most photographed monument in Portugal.

Lisbon has a number of attractive museums: the **Museu Nacional do Azulejo** (superb displays of decorative tiles. The most striking craft is the making of decorative tiles known as azulejos, a technique the Portuguese learnt from the Moors. Portugal's rich literary tradition also has its origins in the 16th century), the **Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga** (houses the national collection of works by Portuguese painters); and the immense **Museu Calouste Gulbenkian** (considered the finest museum in Portugal, with exhibits of paintings, sculptures, carpets, coins and ceramics from around the world.)

Other places of interest are the districts of **Baixa** and **Alfama**. Here you'll find some of the city's oldest and most rewarding sights: anarchic cobbled streets, squares and alleys; markets and craftspeople; and colourful buildings and brooding castles.

7 PM: We are on our own for dinner.

Portuguese food is cheap, delicious and served in gut-expanding portions. Classic Portuguese meals include **sardinhas assadas** (charcoal-grilled sardines), **pastéis de bacalhau** (cod fishcakes) and **caldo verde** (a soup of cabbage and potatoes). Seafood dishes such as **linguado grelhado** (grilled sole) and **bife de atúm** (tuna steak) are appetising staples. Meals can be washed down with Portugal's good-quality wines (vinhos) or port - the drink synonymous with Portugal.

Lisbon has a wide range of budget accommodation and cheap eateries, mostly found in the central parts of the city.

A favorite restaurant is **Zeno**, at the Docas. Although it is relatively expensive by Portuguese standards, it serves extremely good food and delicious wines, in a superb location with outstanding service. A very funky bar downstairs and live music upstairs makes it a very enjoyable evening in a pleasant atmosphere.

promote its rational use. The Ria Formosa Natural Park forms the exquisite backdrop for many of the outdoor activities offered by Hotel Quinta do Lago, from bird watching and nature walks to horse riding and a variety of water sports, either on a series of lagoons or in the sea nearby.

The Hotel Quinta do Lago is situated within one of the largest and most luxurious golfing resorts in Europe. There are three championship courses within Quinta do Lago itself, and seven more within easy reach - a true paradise for golfers who enjoy the challenge of quality golf courses in beautiful surroundings and making Quinta do Lago one of the most comprehensive golf hotels in the world.

7 PM: Dinner (Tauck).

SPAIN

At the crossroads between Europe and Africa, the Iberian Peninsula has always been a target for invading races and civilisations. The Romans arrived in the 3rd century BC but took two centuries to subdue the peninsula. Gradually Roman laws, languages and customs were adopted. In 409 AD, Roman Hispania was invaded by a massive contingent of Germanic tribes and by 419 a Visigothic kingdom had been established. The Visigoths ruled until 711, when the Muslims crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and defeated Roderick, the last Goth king.

By 714, the Muslim armies had occupied the entire peninsula, apart from the mountainous regions of northern Spain. The Muslim occupation of southern Spain (which the Spanish called Al-Andalus) was to last almost 800 years. During this period, the arts and sciences prospered, new crops and agricultural techniques were introduced and palaces, mosques, schools, gardens and public baths were built. In 722, at Covadonga in northern Spain, a small army under the Visigothic king Pelayo inflicted the first defeat on the Muslims. Symbolically, this battle marked the beginning of the Reconquista, the reconquest of Spain by the Christians.

By the end of the 13th century, Castilla and Aragón had emerged as Christian Spain's two main powers, and in 1469 these two kingdoms were united by the marriage of Isabel, princess of Castilla, to Fernando,

heir to the throne of Aragón. Known as the Catholic Monarchs, they united all of Spain and laid the foundations for the golden age. In 1478, they established the notoriously ruthless Spanish Inquisition, expelling and executing thousands of Jews and other non-Christians. In 1482, they besieged Granada, and 10 years later the last Muslim king surrendered to them, marking the long-awaited end of the Reconquista.

Spain developed an enormous empire in the New World, following Columbus' arrival in the Americas in 1492. Gold and silver came flooding into Spanish coffers from Mexico and Peru as the conquistadors claimed land from Cuba to Bolivia. Spain monopolised trade with these new colonies and became one of the most powerful nations on earth. However, this protectionism hindered development of the colonies and led to a series of expensive wars with England, France and the Netherlands.

When Louis XVI was guillotined in 1793, Spain declared war on the new French republic, but was defeated. In 1808, Napoleon's troops entered Spain and the Spanish Crown began to lose its hold on its colonies. Sparked by an uprising in Madrid, the Spanish people united against the French and fought a five-year war of independence. In 1813, the French forces were finally expelled, and in 1814 Fernando VII was restored to the Spanish throne. Fernando's subsequent 20-year reign was a disastrous advertisement for the monarchy. During his time, the Inquisition was re-established, liberals and constitutionalists were persecuted, free speech was repressed, Spain entered a severe economic recession and the American colonies won their independence.

The disastrous Spanish-American War of 1898 marked the end of the Spanish Empire. Spain was defeated by the USA in a series of one-sided naval battles, resulting in the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, Spain's last overseas possessions. Spain's troubles continued during the early 20th century. In 1923, with the country on the brink of civil war, Miguel Primo de Rivera declared himself military dictator and ruled until 1930. In 1931, Alfonso XIII fled the country, and the Second Republic was declared, but it soon fell victim to internal conflict. The 1936 elections saw the country split in two, with the Republican government and its

supporters on one side (an uneasy alliance of communists, socialists and anarchists, who favoured a more equitable civil society and a diminished role for the Church) and the opposition Nationalists (a right-wing alliance of the army, the Church, the monarchy and the fascist-style Falange Party) on the other.

The assassination of the opposition leader José Calvo Sotelo by Republican police officers in July 1936 gave the army an excuse to overthrow the government. During the subsequent Civil War (1936-39), the Nationalists received extensive military and financial support from Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, while the elected Republican government received support only from Russia and, to a lesser degree, from the International Brigades, made up of foreign idealists. Despite the threat of fascism, England and France refused to support the Republicans.

By 1939, the Nationalists, led by Franco, had won the war. More than 350,000 Spaniards had died in the fighting, but more bloodletting ensued. An estimated 100,000 Republicans were executed or died in prison after the war. Franco's 35-year dictatorship saw Spain isolated by economic blockades, excluded from NATO and the UN and crippled by economic recession. It wasn't until the early 1950s, when the rise in tourism and a treaty with the USA combined to provide much needed funds, that the country began to recover. By the 1970s, Spain had the fastest growing economy in Europe.

Franco died in 1975, having earlier named Juan Carlos, the grandson of Alfonso XIII, his successor. With Juan Carlos on the throne, Spain made the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The first elections were held in 1977, a new constitution was drafted in 1978, and a failed military coup in 1981 was seen as a futile attempt to turn back the clock. In 1982 Spain made a final break with the past by voting in a socialist government with a sizeable majority. The only major blemish on the domestic front since has been the terrorist campaign waged by separatist militant group ETA, which is trying to secure an independent Basque homeland. During 30 years of terrorist activity, ETA has killed over 800 people.

In 1986 Spain joined the EC (now the EU) and in 1992 Spain announced its return to the world stage, with Barcelona hosting the Olympic Games, Seville hosting Expo 92 and Madrid being declared European Cultural Capital. In 1996 Spaniards voted in a conservative party under the leadership of the uncharismatic José María Aznar, an Elton John fan and former tax inspector. In March 2000 he was re-elected with an absolute majority; his success has been attributed to the buoyant state of the Spanish economy, which has experienced 4% annual growth since Aznar came to power.

June 11: Andalucía

7AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

Spend the morning in Algarve. Ladies can do some shopping, take a long walk along the sea or simply relax by the pool.

Noon: Lunch

1PM: It's off to **Andalucía**, Spain's storied southern province of white-washed villages, tourist resorts, gypsies, flamenco and vast olive groves. **Seville, Granada** and **Córdoba** were the pinnacles of civilization some 1,000 years ago and have fascinated travelers ever since. Arrive in the romantic provincial capital **Seville**, a remarkable blend of old-world charm and modern-day elegance.

We spend **two nights** at the [Hotel Alfonso XIII](#). **You have to see this place to believe it!** We are staying in a Spanish Palace. The Hotel Alfonso XIII was commissioned by the king of Spain in 1928 to be **Europe's most luxurious hotel**. It embodies the tradition, hospitality, aesthetic genius, and harmony of life that characterizes Seville. The Alfonso XIII has served royal families, heads of state and innumerable personalities from all over the world. The hotel is located in the historical city center, near the banks of the Guadalquivir river and only minutes away from the Cathedral, The Plaza de España, the Toro del Oro and the Reales Alcazares.

7PM: Dinner and traditional **flamenco performance** are provided by Tauck.

The guitar was invented in Andalucía in the 1790s when a sixth string was added to the Arab lute. It

gained its modern shape in the 1870s. Spanish musicians have taken the humble guitar to dizzying heights of virtuosity and none more so than Andrés Segovia (1893-1997), who established classical guitar as a genre. [Flamenco](#), music rooted in the *cante hondo* (deep song) of the gitanos of Andalucía, is experiencing a revival. **Paco de Lucía** is the best known flamenco guitarist internationally. His friend El Camarón de la Isla was, until his death in 1992, the leading light of contemporary *cante hondo*. In the 1980s flamenco-rock fusion (aka gypsy rock) was developed by the likes of Pata Negra and Ketama, and in the 1990s Radio Tarifa emerged with a mesmerising mix of flamenco, North African and medieval sounds. Bakalao, the Spanish contribution to the world of techno, has its headquarters in Valencia.

June 12: [Seville](#)

7AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30AM: We take a short tour of the [many attractions of Seville](#), one of the most exciting cities in Spain, with wonderful parks and gardens, Muslim monuments, flamenco, bullfights and a large and lively student population. Expo 92 brought the city into the international spotlight. If you really want to experience Seville at its best, try to come for *Semana Santa* (the week before Easter) or for the *Feria de Abril* (in April) - a truly unforgettable experience.

We will walk to [Seville's immense cathedral](#) is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as having an area greater than any other in the world and get a look at the interior's wealth of art, relics, architecture, the sarcophagi of kings and cardinals, as well as the supposed tomb of Christopher Columbus and visit the former Jewish quarter. This immense structure is primarily Gothic, though the work done after its central dome collapsed in 1511 was mostly in Renaissance style. The climb to the adjoining tower, known as the Giralda, is well worth the effort for the great views of the city. Check out the Alcázar, a magnificent palace dating from the Moorish times of Spain; and the Archivo de Indias, which houses over 80 million pages of documents dating from 1492 through to the decolonisation of the Americas.

Afternoon and Evening: We are on our own to explore Seville as we please. Other attractions are

the [Parque de María Luisa](#), which has a maze of paths, garden beds, pretty little patios, fountains and shaded lawns; the Museo Arqueológico, which has an interesting collection of broken statues and bronze tablets; and the rather kitsch Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares; the site of the 1929 Spanish-American Exhibition, the Tobacco Factory of Carmen fame, [Murillo Gardens](#), Macarena district, and exhibition pavilions from Expo '92.

Seville is known for its excellent cuisine. Its typical dishes are relatively simple to prepare, but extraordinarily tasty. Some of the best known are: **Gazpacho**, the famous cold "soup", a vegetable-cream made of tomato, cucumber, paprika, garlic, olive-oil, vinegar and bread; **Pescadito frito**, fish turned around in flour and fried in olive-oil; **Huevos a la Flamenca**, a fried egg in a sauce of tomato and **Chorizo** (a spicy typically Spanish sausage); **Cocido Andaluz**, a "hot-pot" made of chick-peas and different vegetables; **Rabo de Toro**, a ragout of bull's tail.

Seville is the very heart of Andalusian culture, the center of bullfighting and Flamenco music. We should take time and have a few "tapas", those typical "small spanish dishes", and a glass of Sherry wine in one of the probably thousands of bars in this city.

The bars of this city offer so-called Tapas, "mini-dishes" for the small hunger. Each local has its own "house-specialities", but some recipes you will find almost everywhere: **Huevas**, fish-eggs either with mayonnaise or Sauce Vinaigrette, **Pinchos Morunos**, very spicy spits of meat, **Pavías de Pescado**, marinated fish fried in olive-oil, **Caracoles**, snails in a tasty sauce, **Jamon**, cured ham, and of course the fantastic olives of the region. The great local wines, **Jerez** (sherry), **Manzanilla** and **Montilla** are a perfect match to all those dishes.

The traditional sweets are mostly of Moorish influences and are prepared often with honey, but also with wine. Very well known are **Torrijas** and **Llemas de San Leandro**.

The inhabitants of Seville are said to be "living in the street", which means a typical Sevillano never enters his flat unless he is eating or sleeping. So a lot of ambience around the clock is guaranteed in this city.

Barrio Santa Cruz :Many of the locals in this traditional part of town close around midnight, but until then we can find many typical bars offering delicious "Tapas" and regional wines.

The Modern Center: **AVOID** Specially around Iglesia del Salvador and in the area of Alfalfa. It is crowded with locals and large groups of youngsters using streets and squares as an extension of their favourite bar.

Park of Maria Luisa : Here we can find nice summer terraces, many of them in the old pavilions of the Exposition of 1929, close to the Theater Lope de Vega. Many locals play dance music, and the party takes until the early morning.

Along the River : The fashionable places are here and also along the river, specially close to the territory of EXPO '92. Again many of them are "open-air", and have a really lively ambience.

June 13: Ronda

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We journey into the mountains to the spectacular town of **Ronda**, renowned as the home of **modern bullfighting**. Set high on a plateau divided by the **Tajo Gorge**, the views from the city are incredible. In the middle of the bizarre mountain range Serranía de Ronda, at the edge of a canyon of a depth of 120 meters, it is certainly a most incredible place. A sightseeing tour explores Ronda's compelling heritage, which is reflected amidst its fine architecture that includes Moorish and Roman remains. We see what is considered Spain's oldest bullring, the **Plaza de Toros**, built in 1784 entirely of stone in neoclassical style by the same architect. Here legendary bullfighter Pedro Romero founded the "Escuela Rondeña", the Rondanian School of bullfighting, opposing the Sevillian School.

Great writers, as Rainer Maria Rilke, Gustav Doré and Ernest Hemingway were inspired to write about this impressive town, many civilizations formed its history, and Ronda is conserving this legacy carefully. Several prehistorical findings around Ronda document this region's early history. The

most important are **Cueva de la Pileta**, a cave with splendid wall-paintings, and Dolmen de Chopo. Close to Ronda rests the Roman settlement **Acinipo**. The amphitheater is particularly well conserved.

Izn-Rand Onda, as Ronda was called by the Moors, was one of the major towns in Mussulman Spain. The Arabian bathes, the bridge **Puente Viejo** and two small palaces, **Casa del Gigante** and **Casa de Mondragón** still remain. The most outrageous building of this time is the monastery **Colegiata de Santa Maria la Mayor**, built on top of a Moorish mosque.

Although Ronda has was important in older historical periods, one of its most impressive monuments is the more recent **Puente Nuevo** , the "new bridge", spans the Tajo river at a height of almost 325 feet. It looks like an old Roman aquaduct, but was built in 18th century by architect José Martin de Aldehuela.

Noon: Lunch in Ronda (Tauck)

1:30 PM: Travel southward to the coast and our resort in **Marbella**. We spend two evenings at the [Westin La Quinta Golf Resort](#). a brand new golf resort in the midst of Marbella's valley of golf. Immersed in splendid natural surroundings, it is near the Costa del Sol beaches of Andalusia and the shopping and nightlife of cosmopolitan Puerto Banus and Marbella. Every room opens to a private balcony, ideal for enjoying fairway views of the La Quinta Golf & Country Club with its 27 hole championship course and a Golf Academy.

7PM: Dinner (Tauck).

June 14: Marbella

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We journey to **Gibraltar** where, if weather permits, we'll glimpse the African continent and the famous silhouette of the Rock of Gibraltar. There are a few minor border formalities before entering the "Rock," a British territory for nearly 300 years - Gibraltar played a strategic role during both world wars. We will drive along the **Costa del Sol** before returning to Marbella for time at leisure.

Lunch and afternoon: We are on our own to enjoy the amenities of the Westin La Quinta Gold Resort.

June 16: Córdoba

Fifteen miles of beautiful beaches stretch between Guadalmina and Cabopino. The many small bars, Chiringuitos, located at the seaside offer the possibility to alternate to sunbathing with enjoying of the delicious regional kitchen and fish-specialities that could not be fresher. Watch the many beautiful yachts anchor in Marbella. We can even rent a yacht ourself. Its size is limited only by Terry's wallet.

Puerto Banus is the meeting-point of the jet-set in Marbella. Besides the most beautiful yachts, we will find elegant shops and the best restaurants with shining white buildings contrasting with the dark blue sea. **Plaza de los Naranjos**, the geographical central, is also the center of life both day and night. A nice square, in typical Andalusian style with some Moorish influences, its name is derived from the many orange-trees growing there. POints of interest are the 15th century Renaissance fountain, the 16th century town-hall and the 17th century **Casa del Corregidor**. From here we can walk through the narrow streets between white houses with balconies decorated with flowers and then onto Avenida del Mar, a beautiful promenade along the sea.

Old Roman ruins are found in Marbella. The settlement of **Villa Romana** in Rio Verde is from 2nd century, the **Roman Thermal Spas** are from 3rd century. In Vega del Mar the 4th century Basilica dates the earliest epoch of Christianity. More attractions are the ruins of a 9th century **Moorish fortress**, the 16th century church **Iglesia de la Encarnación** and the **Bazán Palace**. In its interior is the **Museum of Contemporary Spanish Engravings**, the most important in all Spain, with works of Picasso, Dalí, Miró and Tapies. The **Archaeological Museum**, with interesting objects from Roman, Visigothic and Paleochristian epochs is at the **Plaza de los Naranjos**.

The most interesting of Marbella many beautiful parks is **Arrollo de la Ripresa** with its Bonsai-Museum, the most important collection of those "micro-trees" in all Europe. The **Park of Alameda** is a botanical garden with many very rare plants. In Parque de la Constitución has typical Mediterranean flora, alternating with buildings of Moorish style.

7PM: Dinner (Tauck).

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We take a beautiful drive through some of Spain's most beautiful scenery; view olive groves that seem to stretch from horizon to horizon. **Córdoba** was influenced by the Moors who arrived early in the 8th century, followed by years of prosperity; it was known as a meeting place for the world's learned. In 11th century it was one of the most important capitals in Europe. People of the most different cultures and religions - Jews, Muslims and Christians - were living peacefully together, and important philosophers, scientists and artists emerged from here. We have a walking tour of the town through the charming former Jewish quarter, the **Judería**. It is said that if a traveler to Spain would only have time to see the **Mezquita Cathedral**, the journey would have been worth it! A lively town, in the best Andalusian tradition and a town of Flamenco and bullfighting, it is one of the most attractive destinations in southern Spain.

11 AM: We arrive at [Hotel Conquistador](#) located in the heart of the historic and artistic centre of the city, in the middle of the old Jewish Quarter, a two-minute walk from the Palace of Congress, five minutes from the commercial and business area. I think this hotel was picked for its location, NOT for its elegance.

Afternoon and Evening: We are on our own for lunch and dinner to explore Cordoba as we please.

British author Gerald Brenan called **La "Mezquita,"** the third-biggest Arabian mosque in the world with an extension of 23.000 square meters, the most beautiful and original building of all Spain. It initiated the Califal style, which combined Roman, Gothic, Byzantine, Syrian and Persian elements and was the starting-point of all Arabian-Hispanic architecture of the centuries. Caliph Abderramán I. built the colossal hall, consisting of 11 naves with 110 columns, the capitals of which were taken from old Roman and Byzantine buildings. Above there is a second row of arcs, then an architectonic novelty, creating a unique ambience of light and shadow.

Abderramán II. added 8 more arcs in 833, with columns of white marble taken from the Roman

amphitheater of Mérida. Alhakem II built in 961 the minaret, Mihrab, and the Kliba with its cupola of entangled arcs in 961, both being among the major attractions today. The last and most important enlargement was made in 987 by caliph Alamanzor, doubling the original size of the mosque and adding columns of blue and red marble. As the enlargement could be made only towards West, the river Guadalquivir in the South and the palace of the caliph in the East being very close, the mosque of Cordoba is the only one that doesn't have the Mihrab as its central point. The other particularity is that it is not orientated towards Mecca, but towards Damascus - perhaps because of nostalgic feelings of Abderramán I., who expressed in his poetry how much he was missing the mosques of his hometown.

When the Christians reconquered Cordoba in 1236, they consecrated the mosque to be the **Christian cathedral**. In 13th century the first modifications were made and the Royal Chapel, Capilla Real, was added. In 1523 the Catholic Church and King Charles V. put through against the will of the town's administration to build a Christian cathedral inside of the original mosque. Works took 234 years, so the original Gothic style is combined with Baroque and Renaissance elements. Remarkable are the Cardinal's Chapel and its treasure, including a monstrance of Enrique de Arfe, an ivory crucifix of Alonso Cano and important sculptures and paintings. In the interior of the **Archiepiscopal Palais** rests of the palace of the epoch of the Goths, which later on became Alcazar Califal, palace of the Arabian caliph. This palace was abandoned when the court changed to Medina-Azahara, but served again as residence to the kings of Taifas. The door **Puerta del Puente** was originally part of the Arabian walls, but later on modified in Renaissance-style.

The Roman bridge over Guadalquivir river, **Puente Romano**, consists of 16 arcs and once formed part of the Roman Via Augusta. A monument to San Rafael, the town's patron, was added in the central part of the bridge in 17th century. The Arabian fortification at the southern end of Puente Romano, the **Torre de Calahorra**, originally consisted of two towers connected by an arc. The third tower was added in 14th century.

Along the river are remains of Moorish mills, most important being the **mill of Albolafia**, pumped water up to the gardens of the Alcazar.

The Palace of the Christian Kings, **Alcazar de los Reyes Cristianos**, built in 1328 by Alfonso XI, was residence until the reconquest of Granada. Here was kept prisoner the Moorish caliph Boabdil. Remarkable Arabian baths, Roman mosaics and a sarcophagus of of marble from 3rd century are in the interior of the palace. Three of the originally four towers at the corners of the Alcazar can be seen today: the **Torre de Los Leones**, the oldest, which forms the entrance to the palace, the octagonal **Torre del Homenaje**, and the round Torre del Rio. The fourth tower, **Torre de la Vela**, was destroyed in 19th century.

Fortification-walls and the **Door of Seville**, with a monument to the poet **Ibn Hazm** are at the Eastern limit of the gardens.

La Judería, the Jewish quarter, goes back to the time of the Romans and Goths. It was always an important cultural and intellectual center. Monuments remind us of the most important sons of Cordoba: Roman philosopher Séneca, Arabian philosopher Averroes, and Jewish philosopher Maimonides. Also here is one of the few synagogues existing today in Spain. It was built in 1315. Nearby is the **Bullfight-Museum**.

Traditional artisany and, in summer, Flamenco performances are in the Zoco. Other attractions are the **Chapel of in Bartolomé** in Gothic-Mudejar style, the **Casa del Indiano**, and the 11th century minarets which form part of **Iglesia de San Juan** and **Convento de Santa Clara**. Old Arabian baths are in Calle de Comedias.

Archaeological Museum is inside a Renaissance palace and is specially interesting for the old-iberian **Lion of Nueva Cartella**, the **Roman Head of Drusus**, the visigothic **Treasure of Donjimeno** and the **Arabian Bronze-Stag of Medina Azahara**. The **Museum of Arts** is inside the old Hospital de la Caridad de los Reyes Católicos. It has an important collection of paintings and sculptures, of Zurbarán, Murillo, Goya, Sorolla and Mateo Inurria. The **Museum of Julio Romero de Torres** is dedicated to this painter, who is known specially for his pictures of the Woman from Cordoba. The **Palace of Viana**

has an extraordinary collection of furniture, tapestries, porcelains, ceramics and paintings and a cynegetic library of 7000 volumes. The building itself impresses with its 14 courtyards and beautiful gardens.

The **Plaza de las Tendillas**, the central square in town has a clock that sounds like a guitar, **Plaza de la Corredera** is where in 17th century bullfights took place, and **Plaza del Potro** is known from Cervante's Don Quijote.

An old Roman Temple rest in Calle Claudio Marcelo, and, in the North-East of the town, more Roman ruins are close to the Tower of Malmuerte.

June 17: Sierra Morena Mountains

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We journey to **Montoro**, a small town whose white-washed houses cling high to the hills along the banks of the revered Guadalquivir River. Here is the 12th century churches of Santa Maria de la Mota with remains of Roman and Visigothic epochs, and 15th century church of San Bartolomé. Nearby Almodovar has an impressive castle in gothic Mudejar style.

We continue by yellow roads through the remote **Sierra Morena** mountains, dividing **Andalucía** from **Castilla-La Mancha**.

Noon: We arrive in [Almagro](#) for lunch (Tauck) and a walking tour to **Plaza Mayor**, one of Spain's most architecturally unique town squares, because of this perfectly preserved center of town. Almagro was a hub during La Mancha's Age of Chivalry. On both sides of the plaza are 85 Roman columns supporting green-framed 16th-century buildings. The **Corral de Comedias** theatre stands virtually as it was built in the 16th century, with wooden balconies on four sides and the stage at one end of the open central patio. During the golden age of Spanish theater - the time of playwrights Calderón de la Barca, Cervantes, and Lope de Vega - touring actors came to Almagro.

3PM: We spend the evening in Almagro's historic [Parador de Almagro](#), formerly a Franciscan monastery. The Convent of San Francisco, built by the Dávila de la Cueva family in 1596, is located in a historical-artistic position of great interest, which

offers the traveller the opportunity to discover the most beautiful parts of this town and the natural spaces surrounding it, among which stand out the Tablas de Daimiel. The inner rooms are welcoming with an elegant, peaceful air, with the 14 inner courtyards, the splendid garden and the swimming pool standing out from the ensemble. The bedrooms, installed in the former monastic cells, also offer peace and quiet. Rooms are simply furnished to maintain the atmosphere of the convent. Beautiful galleries, wood and latticework complete the inner atmosphere.

7PM: Dinner (Tauck). In the restaurant the traditional recipes of La Mancha are accompanied by Arabic influences, among which can be mentioned "pisto manchego" (fried vegetables), "migas" (fried breadcrumbs), the cod dishes "mojete" and "tiznao" and Almagro aubergines.

June 18: Consuegra / Toledo

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We head to [Consuegra](#), the region where Cervantes' fearless knight **Don Quixote** de la Mancha jostled with windmills. The epitome of Don Quixote country, Consuegra - the ancient Roman town of Consaburum - is famous for an age-old custom of pottery-making (the potters' or alfares' studios line Madridejos Road), as well as confectionery, a legacy of Moorish times. During most of the year the town itself is fairly drab. Once a year, however, on the last Sunday of October, known as the Dia de la Rosa del Azafran, or Saffron Rose Day, it blossoms into a colorful fiesta. An elected Dulcinea de La Mancha (the damsel of Don Quixote's dreams) presides over a joyful celebration of singing and dancing, when the local girls traditionally display the jewelry that they have bought with their earnings from the wine harvest.

Dominating the town is the ruined 12th century castle and a string of thirteen windmills. The castle once belonged to the Knights of St. John and was originally built from the ruins of a nearby Roman circus; the windmills are only 200 to 300 years old, post-Cervantes. It's hot up here, but the powerful view and the hard windy silence make for a profound picnic of flavorsome local cheese - made from sheep's milk and aged for a minimum of seven

months - washed down with refreshing zurra or cueva, a petillant mix of wine, fizzy water, sugar, sliced lemons and bananas. From on high, the village, with its sun-bleached, light-red roofs, lies at your feet and you have a splendid view of the wide Manchegan plain shimmering in the heat like a sort of dreamworld between hallucination and reality, and, beyond, the Toledo mountains glistening like hammered gold from the sunlight slanting in from the south.

Soon we arrive in **Campo de Criptana**, a cluster of white houses and above and behind them a line of windmills, their sails wide open to the sky and any winds that might be passing. There's a rich simplicity, a single purity to the landscape hereabouts - to the craggy, penurious hills and the cubist houses sheathed in white light like a sort of celestial glow. Pretty, yes, but even the most diligent search will not turn up anything more interesting than a small church and library. The windmills, in both fact and publicity value, overshadow everything else, for we have arrived at the setting of Don Quixote's famous bout with the "monstrous giants."

At that moment they caught sight of some thirty or forty windmills, which stand on that plain, and as soon as Don Quixote saw them he said to his squire: 'Fortune is guiding our affairs better than we could have wished. Look over there, friend Sancho Panza, where more than thirty monstrous giants appear. I intend to do battle with them and take all their lives. With their spoils we will begin to get rich, for this is a fair war, and it is a great service to God to wipe such a wicked brood from the face of the earth.'

Lunch: (Tauck) and a **walking tour of Toledo** one of Spain's most magnificent historical monuments. It's an intact medieval city of narrow winding streets perched on a small hill above the Río Tajo. The city is crammed with fascinating museums, galleries, churches and castles. We will visit the **Church of Santo Tomé** to see The Burial of the Count of Orgaz, perhaps El Greco's finest painting, and a synagogue in the Jewish quarter.

The dominant Alcázar has been the scene of military battles from the Middle Ages right through to the 20th century. The awesome cathedral, in the heart of the city, harbours glorious murals, stained-glass

windows and works by El Greco, Velázquez and Goya. Other attractions include the city's two synagogues, the Iglesia de Santo Tomé (which contains El Greco's greatest masterpiece, The Burial of the Count of Orgaz) and the Museo de Santa Cruz. Archaeologists working on Toledo's Carranque recently uncovered a 4th-century Roman basilica, Spain's oldest.

4 PM: Arrive at the FIVE STAR [Hotel Occidental Miguel Angel](#) .where we spend the next three nights.

7 PM: Dinner (Tauck)

June 19: Madrid

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We sightsee [Madrid](#), which grew from a ninth-century Arab fortress into the cosmopolitan capital of Spain. We'll see the [Royal Palace](#), [great squares](#), [Neptuno and Cibeles fountains](#), [Gran Vía](#) and **Paseo de la Castellana**.

Afternoon and Evening: We are on our own to explore Madrid and provide our own lunch and dinner.

Madrid may not have the glamour or user-friendliness of Barcelona, but what it lacks in style it more than makes up for in substance, with a remarkable collection of museums and galleries, beautiful parks and gardens and wild nightlife.

The most fitting place to start getting to know Madrid is at **Puerta del Sol**. Sol, as it is known to locals, is not much more than a huge traffic-junction-cum-bus-stop, but it's as central as you can get. Although Madrid is an enormous metropolis, the region which is of most interest to travellers is confined by **Campo del Moro** in the west and **Parque del Buen Retiro** in the east. The most exciting street is **Gran Vía**, but **Plaza Mayor** is the true heart of Madrid.

In addition to the Museo del Prado, the **Casón del Buen Retiro** houses an excellent collection of 19th-century Spanish art. For one of the best art history lessons we'll ever get, check out the **Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza**, a private assembly of paintings from

Titian to Pollock. The **Museo de la Escultura Abstracta**, has an interesting collection of abstracts by some of Spain's better known modern sculptors, including Chillida and Miró. The beautiful Real Jardín Botánico, near the Prado, is a good spot to recover from an art overdose.

For the little bit of interior decorator in everyone, the **Palacio Real**, for a lesson in what can happen when we give ourselves free rein - we'll see some of the most elaborately decorated walls and ceilings imaginable. If we've ever got stuck renovating a house, take heart in the stark and cavernous **Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Almudena**. It opened to the public in 1992 after only 110 years under construction.

Madrid is the home of the world's largest bullring, **Plaza de Toros Monumental de las Ventas**, and is one of the best places to [see a bullfight \(corrida\)](#) - if we're so inclined. On a Sunday morning, we can snaffle a bargain at El Rastro, one of the biggest flea markets we will ever see in Ribera de Curtidores. This is said to be the place to go if you want to buy your stereo back, so watch your pockets and bags.

The epicentre of Madrid's nightlife is **Plaza del Dos de Mayo**, in the area known as Malasaña.

Since Philip II made Madrid the capital of Spain, numerous recipes and influences from all the regions of the country entered in its kitchen. Today it is practically impossible to say which dishes are original, and which are imported. [Today Madrid offers more a Spanish than a regional kitchen](#). The dishes that are called **madrileño** in Spain, are mainly hotpots, as the well-known Cocido Madrileño with chick-peas. Among regional specialities have to be named the delicious **asparagus from Aranjuez** and the very typical **Sopa de Ajo**, a soup of garlic. There are many dishes of lamb and veal, but - perhaps a bit surprising considering its geographic location - Madrid is a real paradise for the lovers of any kind of fish. It has the second biggest fish market in the world (behind Tokyo), and as well in shops as in many Restaurants you will find an ample selection and extraordinary quality.

Ideally fitting to such a meal are the young and aromatic wines from the region, Vinos de Madrid. To

finish our dinner in a very typical way, try a cup of **Anisado de Chinchón**, anisette schnapps.

Traditional sweets are the **Roscós de Santo**, which are made specially for for the Festival of San Isidro.

June 20: Madrid

7 AM: Breakfast (Tauck)

8:30 AM: We tour the [Museo del Prado](#), considered one of the greatest art galleries in the world. Our guides will concentrate on the Spanish School of painters such as El Greco, Velázquez, Goya and Murillo. Other art museums in the area have private collection of Baron von Thyssen-Bornemisza or the Reina Sofía featuring Picasso's monumental painting Guernica.

Afternoon and Lunch: We are on our own to examine more of Madrid.

We start our walk in **Barrio de la Morería**, where the Moors had their law-court, and arrive from here to three squares which characterize the medieval Madrid: **Plaza de la Paja**, the commercial center of this epoch, **Plaza de San Andrés** and **Plaza de Cruz Verde**. Of particular interest are the Mudejar-style buildings, as the church of **San Nicolás de los Servitas**, the tower **San Pedro el Viejo** and finally **Casa de los Lujanes** at Plaza de la Villa.

"El Madrid de los Austrias" is how Spaniards call the part of the city that was blooming when Spain belonged to the Habsburg-Empire. Under King Charles I, at the same time Charles V of the German Empire and the first of his family to reign Spain, the importance of Madrid grew, but it was Philip II who made it the capital. To visit the buildings of this epoch, mainly in Renaissance- and Baroque-styles, is perhaps among the most impressive Madrid has to offer: Our tour starts at **Puerta del Sol**, in the very center of town. Passing through some narrow streets we arrive to the **Descalzas Reales**, to the **Monastery de la Encarnación**, **Palacio de Uceda**, and, through **Calle Mayor**, to **Plaza de la Villa**, a beautiful square with interesting buildings: **Casa de la Villa**, **Casa Cisneros** and **Tower of Lujanes**. Just behind there is one of the best-known and most impressive squares of Madrid, **Plaza Mayor**, with **Casa de la Panadería**, an old bakery, and **Casa de la Carnicería**, an old butchery, as mayor attractions. In the center of the square there is a statue of Philip III.

Other buildings worth visiting in this part of town are the **Cathedral of San Isidro**, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and **Casa de Lope de Vega**, the house of the famous writer, located in a street named after another great man of this genre, Calle Cervantes.

When the Bourbon family took over the Spanish crown, Madrid grew to its actual importance. **The Royal Palace**, Palacio Real, was built in that epoch. To have a walk through through the Bourbons' Madrid we should start again at **Puerta del Sol**, where we find the remarkable old post.office, **Casa de Correos**. Walking along Calle Alcalá, one of the most important boulevards of Madrid, we arrive to **Casa de Postas**, another old post-office, and **Real Casa de Aduanas**, the Royal Customs Office. In the **Academy of Arts** there is a café with extraordinarily beautiful decoration - maybe a reason to interrupt our sightseeing-trip for a moment, although not only our cup of coffee but alone to enter costs money here. Having taken some refreshment, now we will be in the mood to visit the **Oratorio del Caballero de Gracia**, a chapel that is considered a masterpiece of neoclassic architecture. Where the streets Calle Alcalá and Gran Via cross, we find the splendid 18th century baroque church **Iglesia de San José**, and later, at the crossing with Cibeles there is the **Palace of Buenavista**, built 1777 for the Duke of Alba. From here we may either continue on Calle Alcalá and arrive to the triumphal arch of **Puerta de Alcalá**, or follow Paseo del Prado with its beautiful fountains of **Cibeles**, **Apollo** and **Neptune**, the **Botanical Gardens** and the **Astronomical Observatory**.

In the 19th century many parts of Madrid were modified fundamentally, specially by Joseph Bonaparte, who after his brother Napoleon had conquered Spain took over the government and wanted to build in the center of Madrid a wide boulevard in the style of Paris' Champs Elysées. The square **Plaza de Oriente** with the **Teatro Real**, Madrid's opera house, were created then. His projects were stopped by Napoleon's final defeat. From **Plaza de Oriente** we pass (once more) Puerta del Sol and arrive to **Calle del Prado**, with the **Palacio de Congresos**, **Teatro de la Zarzuela** and **Banco de España**. We visited Museo del Prado in the mornming. Close to it, is certainly the most beautiful park of Madrid. Here we may have relaxing walks or do some boating on its central lake. The most

interesting buildings are the **Crystal Palace** and the **Velazquez Palace**.

At **Paseo de la Castellana** we find the most impressive works of the 20th Century: The beautiful gardens **Jardines del Descubrimiento** at Plaza de Colón, with a big statue of **Christopher Columbus**, who by the way is called Cristobal Colón in Spanish. **Centro Cultural de la Villa** is a cultural center that organizes concerts and other performances each night. More up the Castellana there are several interesting examples of modern architecture: **Torres de Colón**, **Edificio de la Unión y el Fenix**, **Bankunión**, **La Adriatica**, **Compañía de Seguros de Occidente**, **La Caixa**, and the **Palace of Congresses and Expositions**. The **Open Air Sculpture Museum** is certainly worth visiting as well.

Among the more interesting works from between 1980 and 1990 are the **Fish Market of Puerta de Toledo**, the redesigned **Train Station of Atocha**, the **Centro de Arte Reina Sofia**, the **Windsor-Tower**, erected over the base of other buildings, the **Torre Picasso** by Japanese architect Yamasaki of a height of 150 meters, **Edificio Sollube** and the impressive **Torre Europa**. Worth a visit is certainly also Madrid's bullring, "**Las Ventas**", one of the most important and traditional in the country, with an elegant Neo-Mudejar-style facade .

Close to it, in the beautiful gardens of **Parque del Oeste** with its outstanding collection of roses, La Rosaleda , we find a monument which is less than typical for Madrid, but absolutely worth visiting: the **Templo de Debod** is an old-egyptian temple, which was presented to the city by the Egyptian government and was rebuilt here.

7 PM: Farewell dinner (Tauck)