

Walking Retreat in Andalucia



Highlights

Snow-capped mountains, sleepy pueblos, sun, sea and citrus groves: Andalucia is rightly considered one of Spain's most magical regions. Fall under its spell on this week long walking retreat!

Once the hub of Islamic influence in Europe (thanks to its proximity to neighbouring Morocco), Andalucia is like nowhere else in Europe. Combining the ceaselessly Spanish – bullfighting, tapas and sombreros – with the magically Moorish – Alhambra, Spain's most iconic building, can be found in the southern hills – the autonomous community is a cultural goldmine. Add to this a landscape as beautiful as it is diverse, with rolling green hills, whitewashed villages, forest, beach and the mighty Sierra Nevada, and you have all the makings of travel perfection!

This week's walking retreat is the perfect way to discover the landscape and culture of Spain's most southern and sunny region. Specially selected for beauty and historic significance, the daily walks cover a variety of routes and terrains. One day it's the stunning Al Mijara range on the old mule trail to Granada, the next it's the whitewashed villages of the Cujula river valley. You'll follow the route of sultans to the Alhambra palaces of Granada, and even go a wild food walk to find herbs and plants for the pot! There's terrific food and fine local wines throughout, and there's even the option of yoga and pilates to stretch your well-used muscles!

Is it for me?

Fine food, spectacular scenery and the salubrious Spanish sun – this is without doubt one of the most relaxing retreats we've come across! The walking isn't particularly demanding – the three long walks cover an average of 18km – so no need to be super-fit or uber-equipped. What's more, it's equally suitable for singles, couples and families as there's a load to do, from wild adventuring to poolside reclining. In fact, it's difficult to imagine someone feeling ill at ease at The Orange Grove, though those who are attracted to Andalucia for its nightlife might be better off heading to the coast; although there are bars in cosmopolitan Competa a short drive away, this trip is very much about getting away from crowds and discovering the true culture of this fascinating region.

Accommodation

The Orange Grove is a fantastic base from which to explore the surrounding country and its culture. Nestled in a fertile river valley amidst groves of olive, orange and almond, the farmhouse can accommodate families and groups of between four and nine people, with two double bedrooms and two large twins (all en suite). Outside you'll find a pool and a mountain-fed stream where you can take a dip, and there are also a number of hammocks and chill-out areas dotted about the place. In addition, the farm boasts an extensive organic garden, so you can expect some excellent home cooking. The food of Andalucia is a heady mix of Spanish and Moorish; garlic, rosemary, thyme, oregano and mint are favourite flavourings for the region's excellent seafood and pork products, while other staples include breads, olive oil and wines (including the famous vino de Jerez, otherwise known as 'sherry').

Itinerary

This holiday can be enjoyed as either a guided or a self-guided trip and can be moulded to your individual requirements. This is a sample itinerary;

Saturday, Day 1: Arrive at the Orange Grove. Enjoy a welcome drink and relax and unwind before dinner – a

Prices from

674 GBP (8 days) per person

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variety of local tapas and a chance to sample some of the region's wines.

Day 2: After breakfast you'll be transferred to the stunning Al Mijara range for a walk on the old mule trail to Granada with picnic lunch. (Distance 18km, time 5 hours.) For dinner, enjoy some Andalucian specialties and Spanish wines.

Day 3: After breakfast you head to the Cujula Valley from the lovely small white village of Canaillas de Albaida crossing the Rio Cajula several times, then ending back in Canaillas with a descent of the Roman road. Lunch in Canaillas de Albaida. (Distance 16km, time 5.5 hours). For dinner it's a Moorish Andalucian menu - traditional Spanish food with an Arab influence served with a selection of Spanish wines.

Day 4: After breakfast there's the option of pilates on the terrace, then some unguided walking to explore the surrounding countryside or relax by the pool. Packed lunch provided or a light lunch by the pool. The evening meal includes a demonstration of how to prepare an authentic North African tagine with all the trimmings and a wine tasting.

Day 5: After an early breakfast you'll take the route of sultans to visit the majestic city of Granada and the Alhambra palaces. Lunch is at a favourite restaurant in Granada. The evening meal is a variety of local tapas and wines.

Day 6: Today's walking explores the Al Mijara range with the most spectacular views across to the horizon of the sea. (Distance 20km, Time 6 hours.) For dinner, enjoy some more Andalucian specialties and Spanish wines.

Day 7: Today there's an optional yoga class before breakfast, then a guided walk and talk on local wild herbs and their culinary and medicinal uses. There will then be a lunch prepared using the herbs and flowers foraged for you to taste and enjoy. Tonight's dinner is at the wine museum restaurant in Competa, where you can sample the local muscatel wines, buy local products and enjoy the atmosphere.

Day 8: Saturday

After breakfast you'll say goodbye before being transferred to the airport.

Details

Price details

The guided walking retreat costs 780 for the week. If you decide to opt for the self-guided option, the price will be 560 euros. This includes breakfast, packed lunches when required, Map, directions and advice on various walks as well as a complementary (one) evening meal at the Orange Grove.

Available

Sep—Jun

Typical Duration

1 week

Comfort level

Refined (boutique or luxury accommodation and food)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed