Abercrombie & Kent

JOURNEY AROUND SPAIN

Get an intimate impression of this extraordinary country visiting its most iconic spots and discovering its warm and friendly culture, imposing palaces, remarkable art works, a colourful history and mouth-watering food.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Europe, Spain

14 days from AU$29,755 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Get an intimate impression of this extraordinary country visiting its most iconic spots and discovering its warm and friendly culture, imposing palaces, remarkable art works, a colourful history and mouth-watering food. You'll travel at a leisurely pace through stunning sun-drenched landscapes with plenty of time to soak up the atmosphere in the vibrant, buzzing cities.

Journey Highlights

- Admire the striking architecture of Gaudí in Barcelona
- Taste the finest sherries in a Jerez bodega
- Savour San Sebastián's tasty pintxos on an insider's gourmand experience
- Explore the famous vineyards of the Rioja
- Attend an equestrian performance at the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Barcelona

Welcome to the Catalan capital, Spain’s second city, and transfer to your grand neoclassical hotel.

El Palace Hotel

Day 2: Barcelona

Today your morning sightseeing tour of Barcelona reveals the masterpieces of Catalonia's most famous architect, Antoni Gaudí: the Casa Mila with its wave-like façade; the impressive but still unfinished La Sagrada Familia basilica which is expected to be complete in 2026, 100 years after the great architect’s death and Parc Güell, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is one of his most colourful creations.

See Barcelona from a different perspective this evening when you take to the streets in a motorcycle side car (additional cost). See the illuminated city highlights as you cruise down Barcelona’s wide avenues and narrow back streets passing more of Gaudí’s highlights on the way to Montjuic Hill where you will spot the Olympic stadium and toast the city lights below. Wind your way through seaside Barceloneta, the Gothic Quarter and the Born district before returning to your hotel.

El Palace Hotel | Meals: B

Day 3: Barcelona

Venture into the true heart of the old city - the medieval Gothic Quarter – where narrow, labyrinthine streets and quiet squares are quite distinct from the rest of the city. Your guide introduces you to the magnificent 13th century Barcelona Cathedral, notable for its fine Gothic chapels, medieval choir stalls and shady cloister. Step inside the Picasso Museum, where some of the painter's earliest works are housed in the remarkable setting of a part-Gothic, part-Roman palace. See a vast body of work that connects the great artist with Barcelona. This afternoon is at leisure.

El Palace Hotel | Meals: B

Day 4: Barcelona – Madrid

Travel by rail west to the Spanish capital. Discover this vibrant, sophisticated city with a privately guided walking tour including the Palacio Real or spend some time admiring the treasured artworks of the famed Museo del Prado, widely considered the richest collection of European art from the 12th to the early 20th century.

Spend a fun evening like a true local, exploring some of Madrid's most celebrated tapas bars with a local connoisseur who will introduce you to some of the best tastes in the city (additional cost). Either sit down and enjoy a variety of *raciones* in one place, or, like the locals, stroll between establishments savouring individual delicacies along the way.

Hotel Orfila | Meals: B

Day 5: Design Your Day Madrid

Plan your day to suit. Take yourself into the Spanish countryside to Toledo, 70km south of Madrid, a fortified city dating from Roman times, when it was the capital of Visigothic Spain. Visit the 6th century cathedral, and the church of Santo Tomé, where you will see El Greco's most recognised work, "The Burial of the Count of Orgaz". Also visit the 14th century El Transito Synagogue and tour the House and Museum of El Greco. Or, travel through the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range to explore one of Castile y León's most enchanting cities, Segovia, on foot. Take in the marvellous Roman aqueduct and the pretty narrow streets and visit the Alcázar, which appears like the archetypal fairy-tale castle with its gabled rooves, turrets and crenellations. After lunch continue to the sumptuous royal palace of La Granja de San Ildefonso with its delightful gardens and elegant rooms.

Or discover another Madrid neighbourhood on a mouth-watering food tour of Barrio de las Letras, the 'literary quarter'. A local will help you navigate your way to their favourite bars and restaurants pausing to savour homemade churros at a chocolatería, taste the freshest produce at market stalls and meet the vendors, sample tasty Spanish cheeses and padrón peppers and wash it all down with a crisp Albariño, or two. Or explore a lesser visited part of Madrid between the Castellana and Recoletos boulevards. Admire the attractive mid-19th century streets around the María Guerrero Theatre, lined with some of the capital's hippest boutiques, old vinotecas, bars and fusion restaurants. Visit famous workshops, where luthiers still produce violins and guitars in the traditional way. Step inside one of the modern galleries, or the 'Museum of Romanticism', a wonderful time capsule of 19th century aristocratic life. Round off your adventure by sampling tapas in one of the pavement cafes near the charming Plaza Dos de Mayo.

Hotel Orfila | Meals: B

Day 6: Madrid – Córdoba – Granada

Transfer with your Guardian Angel to the Madrid railway station for the train to Cordoba, one of Spain's oldest cities. You are met and accompanied on a walking tour through the flower-filled streets of the Jewish Quarter which includes the Mezquita, built between the 8th and 10th centuries and considered to be one of the most extraordinary buildings in all of Europe. In the 1520s, a Christian Baroque nave was constructed in the heart of the mosque, which fortunately is so large that the unity of the building was not destroyed by this resplendent but anomalous addition. After lunch at leisure, transfer through spectacular countryside to Granada.

Hospes Palacio de Los Patos | Meals: B

Day 7: Granada

The Alhambra is the most perfect example of a medieval Muslim palace in the whole world. Experience this World Heritage Site in the hands of an outstanding local guide; learn about the place of the Nasaries, the Court of Myrtles and the Court of the Lions. Just up the hill, discover the sumptuous gardens of the Generalife, a smaller palace which, in the early 20th century, was restored to its former glory in the days of the last Arab kings of Granada, before the city fell to the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492.

This afternoon is at leisure to explore Granada on your own. Perhaps visit the district of the Albaizín, which is also a World Heritage Site. This is the quite separate Moorish town on the opposite side of the valley to the Alhambra, rising up the hill in a maze of whitewashed streets and alleys, filled with former palaces, convents and churches.

Hospes Palacio de Los Patos | Meals: B

Day 8: Granada – Ronda – Seville

Depart Granada this morning and transfer to Seville. Stop en route in Ronda where you are free to explore on your own for the rest of the morning. Situated on a rocky outcrop high above the River Guadiaro, Ronda is famous for its position and views. It is built around a ravine over 100 metres deep and 65 metres across, dividing the old Moorish town from the "new town" which came into being after the Christian Reconquest of 1485. Stroll the narrow streets and visit the Plaza de Toros (bullring), one of the oldest in Spain. Continue the journey to Seville and your hotel.

Alfonso XIII Hotel | Meals: B

Day 9: Seville

This morning explore the historic heart of Seville. Visit the 15th century Cathedral, one of the most breathtaking in all of Christendom, and see La Giralda, Seville's most famous monument. The Moorish tower was erected as a minaret in the 12th century. Visit the Alcazar, a magnificent 14th century Mudejar palace that is one of the oldest royal residences in Europe still in use. Take the time to wander through the Barrio de Santa Cruz with its maze of narrow streets, whitewashed houses, small squares and flower filled patios. The afternoon is at leisure.

Alfonso XIII Hotel | Meals: B

Day 10: Seville – Jerez – Seville

Venture south of Seville this morning into the Andalucian countryside to Jerez de la Frontera, famous worldwide for its sherry and brandy, as well as for its horses. Begin your day briefly exploring the old town, the 'casco antiguo', which dates back to Moorish times with an 11th century fortress. At midday, visit the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art to see either a dressage show or training (subject to schedule). Round the day out at one of the many sherry bodegas, or cellars, for a tour and a tasting of this renowned dry 'fino' wine. Return to Seville at the end of the afternoon.

Alfonso XIII Hotel | Meals: B

Day 11: Seville – Bilbao – San Sebastián

Transfer to Seville airport for the flight north to Bilbao where you are met and escorted into the city to visit the world-famous Guggenheim Museum (additional cost). The building itself needs no introduction, the scale and beauty of the Frank Gehry designed titanium structure never fails to make an impression. Outside, Jeff Koons' "Puppy" wears a coat of flowers and inside, the vast hall containing the sculptures specially created for the museum by Richard Serra is a highlight.

Afterwards travel east along the coast to San Sebastián, Spain's culinary capital. After settling into your elegant hotel, set out with a local guide on an insider's pintxos tour. Pintxos are the Basque Country's answer to tapas and San Sebastián is famous for this style of eating. The city is jam-packed with pintxos bars and your expert guide will take you to a selection of the best from traditional haunts to chic nouveau Basque bars. From fresh prawns and wild caught squid to succulent veal and pork tenderloin, the pintxo hunt changes nightly and always features a mix of bites and thirst-quenching cider, beer and local wines.

Hotel Maria Cristina | Meals: BD

Day 12: San Sebastián

First head out of town to the fishing village of Getaria to visit the Balenciaga Museum dedicated to the great haute couture designer Cristobal Balenciaga, who was born in the village, before strolling through the town and around the port. On the hills above overlooking the sea are several of the most important vineyards producing, in tiny quantities, the "txacolí" so beloved of the Basques. It is very dry, low in alcohol and slightly 'pétillant'. You may like to enjoy a fish lunch before returning to San Sebastián for an afternoon at leisure. Remainder of the day is at leisure.

Hotel Maria Cristina | Meals: B

Day 13: San Sebastián – Rioja – San Sebastián

Explore the Rioja wine region today, famed for its hilltop medieval towns and fantastic scenery. Start at the beautiful Marqués de Riscal winery where you meet your local guide. The history and traditional methods used at Marqués de Riscal contrast to the stunning titanium waves and cathedral-height ceilings of the hotel designed by Frank Gehry. In contrast don’t miss one of the last remaining wineries inside the walled hilltop town of Laguardia, which has changed little in hundreds of years. Wander through the cobbled streets and stop for lunch before visiting this winery where the grapes are still trodden by foot. Finish your day in the capital of La Rioja, Logroño, known for its beautiful cathedral, where you can sample tapas and wine on the famous Laurel Street before transferring back to San Sebastián.

Hotel Maria Cristina | Meals: B

Day 14: San Sebastian – Bilbao

Transfer to Bilbao Airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map

Bilbao
San Sebastian
PORTUGAL
Madrid
Barcelona
SPAIN
Córdoba
Seville
Granada
Ronda
ARRIVE/DEPART
AIR
RAIL
ROAD
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Accommodation

El Palace Hotel, Barcelona

A well-known city landmark, El Palace Hotel has been through all of the remarkable events which have affected Barcelona during the last century. All rooms are carefully decorated, with high ceilings and large windows. The décor is elegant, with classic furnishings and neutral tones lending a comfortable feel. All rooms benefit from the most modern equipment such as air-conditioning, satellite TV, direct telephone, Wi-Fi internet access, safe and mini-bar.

The Nineteen Restaurant opens all day offering tapas dishes and the option of afternoon tea. At The Garden buffet breakfast is served each morning. The Winter Garden Restaurant offers a roof garden and serves an a la carte or set tasting menu and there is also a cocktail bar.

Why we like it

- Grand luxury hotel in the heart of Barcelona
- A hotel rich in architecture and history
- Close to Las Ramblas and the city's main attractions
- Mayan Luxury Spa with a Temazcal Sauna

Hotel Orfila, Madrid

Hotel Orfila hotel is located in a tranquil residential area, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. A former 14th Century Palace, the hotel is brimming with beautiful antique furniture, sumptuous fabrics and intriguing artefacts. There are just 20 individually-designed and elegant rooms and 12 spacious deluxe suites. The hotel's restaurant, Jardin de Orflila, serves delicious and innovative international dishes accompanied by a brilliant wine list- we loved the sake steamed Crayfish and the sour and spicy Castilla Soup. Within walking distance of the Prado, Thyssen-Bornemisza and Reina Sofia museums, as well as some of Madrid's most exclusive shops, Hotel Orfila is a wonderful and charming base from which to explore this fascinating city.

Why we like it

- This beautiful 14th Century palace was transformed into a hotel in 1999.
- A member of the Relais & Chateaux collection.
- Situated in an exclusive residential area of Madrid.
- Just 32 individually-designed rooms and suites
- Within walking distance of the Prado Museum, Old Madrid and the Golden Mile.

Hospes Palacio de Los Patos, Granada

This striking 19th century palace manages to perfectly marry old and new Spain within its cool and calm alabaster walls. Inside the design is distinctly modern with light-filled spaces and natural materials – stone, glass, metal – creating a surprisingly warm environment. Set in two buildings (the older building features gorgeous period features) you'll find 42 rooms with special touches, like Doric columns, domed ceilings and pretty views.

There's a small pool that's for posing rather than swimming, with comfortable white loungers for relaxing under the Andalucían sun. Los Patos restaurant serves international dishes with flavours of Granada and it also serves impressive cocktails. Bodyna Spa has a Jacuzzi, sauna and vapour bath, plus massages and treatments.

Why we like it

- Charming old-meets-new design
- Bodyna Spa with Turkish bath, dry sauna and thermal pool
- Garden views from Los Patos restaurant

Hotel Alfonso XIII, Seville

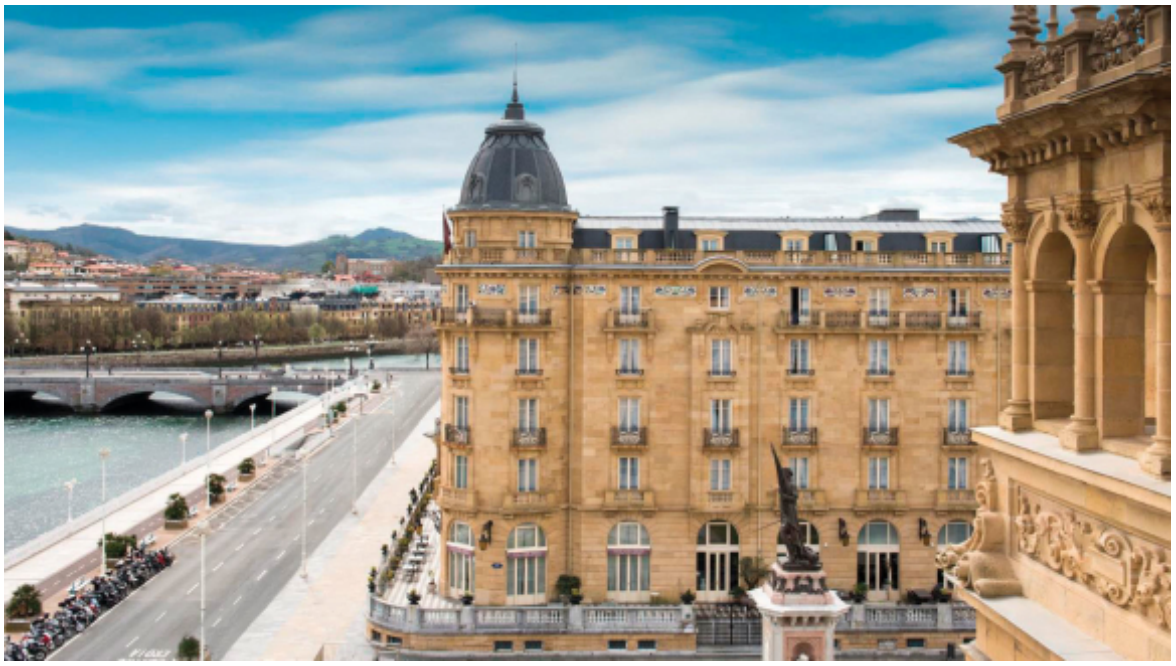
The Hotel Alfonso XIII was created in unique Andalusian style for the Exhibition of the Americas in 1928 and was opened by King Alfonso XIII. Since then it has been the home in Seville of Royalty, Heads of Government, film stars and every other important visitor to the city. The iconic Alfonso XIII is an unique landmark which embodies the hospitality, aesthetic genius and traditional harmony of life that characterises Seville.

It is located in the historic centre near the banks of the Guadalquivir and only a few minutes from the Royal Palace of the Alcázar, the Cathedral, the Plaza de España and the delicious flower filled Barrio Santa Cruz. The Hotel Alfonso XIII features 151 rooms all tastefully decorated in Moorish, Castilian and Classic styles all sparklingly renovated in the multimillion dollar refurbishment completed in 2012. The San Fernando restaurant offers traditional Spanish and European cuisine, the Bodega Alfonso, which has a charming terrace overlooking the gardens, offers tapas; and the newly created Taifas, set under the trees, a fusion of Andalusian and contemporary cuisine.

Why we like it

- A Luxury Collection Hotel in the heart of Seville.
- 151 renovated guestrooms reflect different eras of Spain's past.
- The outdoor swimming pool, surrounded by beautiful gardens, is the perfect spot for basking in the Andalusian sun.
- Within walking distance of international fashion houses, exclusive boutiques and quirky delicatessens.
- See the city from an authentic horse-drawn carriage ride or cycle the streets by bike.

Hotel Maria Cristina, San Sebastián



The Hotel Maria Cristina is situated in the heart of charming San Sebastian, known for its impressive beaches, fascinating culture and the legendary International Film Festival. This classically styled hotel has an ideal central location overlooking the Urumea River and close to many of the city's beaches, including our favourite, Zurriola Beach, with its less crowded sands and great surf.

Surrounded by beautiful gardens, Hotel Maria Cristina exudes the glamour of bygone era. Regal pastel shades accentuate the classic architecture and is complimented by the original chandeliers and 19th century portraits that still remain. Choose from Classic, Deluxe or Premium rooms or opt for one of the luxurious suites with their own private terrace overlooking the city.

Begin your morning with a delicious buffet breakfast at Easo Restaurant, before heading out to experience San Sebastian's charm; visit the maze of alleyways in the lively neighbourhood of Parte Vieja, stopping at one of the many cafés to sample some traditional Pinxtos. Follow this with a gentle hike up Monte Urgull for breath taking views before retiring back to the hotel to relax with a refreshing sundowner at Dry Bar.

Why we like it

- Located in the heart of the beautiful Basque region.
- Opened in 1912 and recently restored, the Hotel Maria Cristina is part of San Sebastian's history and culture.
- Lavish Belle Époque interior filled with soaring columns.
- 136 spacious rooms and suites
- Royal Suites feature a terrace with panoramic city views

Dates & Pricing

From $29,755 per person twin share (low season) and from $34,470 per person twin share (high season). Solo travellers on request.

As this Tailor Made Journey can be personalised to your specific requirements, it is not available for online booking. Depending on your preferred dates and arrangements, final pricing will vary.

Please call A&K on 1300 851 800, send us a **booking enquiry** to book this journey or contact your travel advisor.

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