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## 2015 SPAIN and PORTUGAL Version 1 – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014

DAY 1 Fri 12 June **Madrid** After arriving in Madrid check in at the **Hotel Paseo del Arte, Calle Atocha 123, Madrid** from 1400 on. You may choose to relax in the hotel or do some sightseeing in the capital of Spain - a centre of commerce, art and history. We are staying for 2 nights at the Hotel Paseo del Arte in Madrid

DAY 2 Sat 13 June **Madrid** This is a free day to explore Madrid. For art lovers there are 3 of the world's most famous art galleries in Madrid: **Museo del Prado, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza** and **Centro de Arte Reina Sofia**. The **Palacio Real** and **Plaza Mayor** are also "must see" items. The Old Town is full of narrow streets crammed with fascinating shops and restaurants. Tonight we have dinner in a tapas restaurant **B D**

DAY 3 Sun 14 June **WALK 1 Toledo – Old Town 3 km Grade 2** After breakfast we will have a short drive to **Toledo**, a splendid Medieval city, with its mixture of Catholic Spain and Moorish culture. We plan a 2 hour walking tour taking in the magnificent **Cathedral, the Plaza de Zocodover, the Alcazar and Toledo's old Jewish quarter**. After lunch in Toledo we head west towards Portugal. We will be staying for 3 nights at the Pousada de Estremoz. **B D**

DAY 4 Mon 15 June **Evora** A short drive from Estremoz is World Heritage listed Evora. **WALK 2 Evora – City Walk 4 km Grade 1** This locally guided walk will take us to all the most interesting sights including the town walls, the **Temple of Diana, the Praca do Giraldo and the Church of St. Francisco**. The rest of the day will be free to wander around this beautiful walled town. **B**

DAY 5 Tue 16 June **Estremoz and Vila Vicosa** Today we will explore the Alto Alentejo area around Estremoz, one of the famous "marble" towns of this region. A short drive away from Estremoz is another marble town, **Vila Vicosa** where we could have lunch, before heading to the walled village of **Monsaraz**. In the late afternoon, we will explore the megaliths near Guadalupe 15 km west of Evora. Constructed about 5000 years ago, they are Portugal's equivalent of Stonehenge. We can then look forward to relaxing by the pool on our return to our luxurious pousada. **B**

DAY 6 Wed 17 June **Belem** After a late breakfast we will drive north west to the capital of Portugal, **Lisbon**. Our lunch stop will be historic Belem with its famous **Tower** and the UNESCO listed **Mosteiro dos Jeronimos**. Belem was the starting point of Vasco da Gama's famous expedition. After lunch we will move to our hotel in the centre of Lisbon. We are staying for 2 nights at the Hotel Lisbon Plaza. **B**

DAY 7 Thu 18 June **Lisbon** A free day to explore Lisbon. It is an easy city to walk around or use public transport. You could start by strolling down the Avenida da Liberdade to the commercial centre - **Baixa**, set out in a rectangular grid pattern following the Great Earthquake of 1755. To the west lies the stylish districts of **Bairro Alto** and **Chiado**, the centre of Lisbon's café culture. They can be reached on foot or by elevator. From Praca Luis de Camoes I would catch tram no. 28 for a fascinating ride back down into the city and up to the **Alfama** and the **Castelo de Sao Jorge**. The views over the city and waterfront are magnificent. The Alfama is the old Moorish quarter of Lisbon and can provide an exotic walk back down to Baixa. After dark, one should definitely head to a **Fado** club. **B**

DAY 8 Fri 19 June **WALK 3 Sintra 5 km Grade 2** After checking out of the hotel, we have a short drive to Sintra, the site of the summer palace of Portuguese royalty. These cool and thickly vegetated hills contain a number of interesting palaces, castles and gardens. Our first stop will be the **Palacio Nacional da Pena**, a fabulously eccentric palace. After exploring the palace our downhill walk continues to the **Castelo dos Mouros**, a ruined Moorish citadel, before winding down to the town of Sintra. After lunch, we may have a look at the **Palacio Nacional de Sintra**. We will then head to the westernmost point of mainland Europe, **Cabo da Roca** - high above the rugged Atlantic coast. Then we have a short drive to **Palmela**. We are staying for 2 nights at the Pousada Castelo de Palmela. **B D**



Palacio Nacional de Sintra

DAY 9 Sat 20 June **Palmela and Setubal** The morning will be spent mainly on the water in the estuary of the **Rio Sado** on board a traditional Portuguese fishing boat. We hope to see dolphins and sail near the Arrabida National Park. We will then drive south to Alacer do Sal for lunch and a chance to explore this picturesque fishing town. **B**

DAY 10 Sun 21 June **WALK 4 Arrabida National Park Grade 2** This morning we plan, after checking out, to do a locally guided walk in this national park on the **Setubal Peninsula**. The park extends for 35km through hills and beaches displaying a variety of Mediterranean vegetation, birds and animals including deer and boar. A picnic lunch featuring local cheeses, meats and salad is included. We will then set off south across the **Alentejo** towards the **Algarve** and our next pousada in Tavira. We will be staying for 3 nights at the Pousada Convento de Graca in Tavira. **B L**

DAY 11 Mon 22 June **Relaxing in Tavira** Half way through the tour, this will be a day off in the small seaside town of Tavira. No driving and nothing on the agenda. The pousada in **Tavira** is the perfect place to unwind after a long, late breakfast in the cloisters. The rooms are comfortable and the pool inviting. If you can drag yourself away from the 'convent' you could stroll down to the river and stop at a café or sit in the park before returning to the pousada for 'siesta'. Life moves at a gentle pace in Tavira! Dinner in the pousada's restaurant would be a memorable end to a relaxing day. **B**

DAY 12 Tue 23 June **Tavira** Time to explore Tavira and its surrounds. After hiring bikes we will cycle 3km past salt pans to Posto de Guarda Fiscal (this is optional as you can travel in our vehicle if you wish). Then we will take a short boat trip across to **Ilha de Tavira**, with its famous beach (bring your cossies if you wish to have a swim). Back to town via boat and bikes we could stop at the town market before crossing the **Ponte Romana**. Other places worth visiting include the **Castelo** and the 16<sup>th</sup> Century **Igreja Misericordia**. After lunch we could drive 12km to **Cacela Velha**, a charming village on the coast. **B D**

DAY 13 Wed 24 June **Sevilla** No need to hurry away this morning as the border with Spain is not far way. We will arrive in **Sevilla** for lunch before checking into our hotel. We will be staying for 2 nights at the Hotel Petit Palace Santa Cruz in Sevilla **B**



Alcazar - Sevilla

DAY 14 Thur 25 June **Sevilla** Sevilla is an exciting city and this is sure to be a busy day. Our hotel is right in the 'old town' so we can walk to most things. Sevilla is the capital and largest city in **Andalucia**, and the centre of flamenco and bull-fighting in Spain. Three of the most significant buildings in Spain are here: **the Alcazar, the Cathedral and the Giralda** – you are likely to spend a few hours exploring these architectural gems. The **Barrio de Santa Cruz** is full of tapas bars, cafes and restaurants and is a great place for lunch or dinner. A flamenco performance is included tonight.. **B D**

DAY 15 Fri 26 June **Cordoba** Today we will set off east towards Cordoba and finally Granada. Just under 2 hours drive away from Sevilla, **Cordoba** is sophisticated and friendly. The big attraction here is **the Mezquita**, one of the most magnificent of all Islamic buildings. It lies in the centre of the old medieval town, all of which is UNESCO listed. There are plenty of places for lunch in the old town before exploring the **Juderia** with its 14<sup>th</sup> Century **Sinagoga** and **Museo Julio Romero de Torres**. Late in the afternoon we will make the 2 hour drive south-east to Granada. . We will be staying for 3 nights at Hotel Las Almenas, Granada **B**

DAY 16 Sat 27 June **WALK 5 Sierra Nevada 5km Grade 3** Not far from Granada lies the Sierra Nevada, Spain's highest mountain range. We are heading for the **Alpujarras** region in the southern foothills. This beautiful area was once settled by Berbers and we will visit villages unlike any others in the country. Just over 1 hour's drive from Granada we will arrive in **Pampaneira** for morning tea and a visit to the National Park office. A short drive (or a 20 minute walk) away is our starting point **Bubion**, from where we ascend 300m to the ridge line. From then on it is undulating, trending downhill, to the hamlet of Capilerilla and then **Pitres**. We will drive back to Bubion or Pampaneira for a late lunch before returning to Granada. **B**

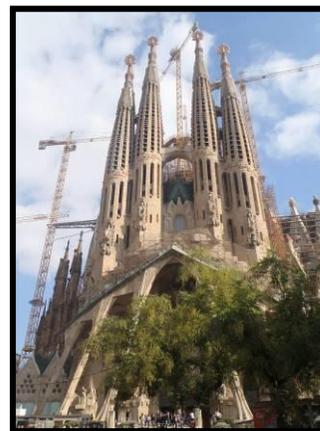
DAY 17 Sun 28 June **Granada – the Alhambra** If you thought the Moorish/Christian buildings of Sevilla and Cordoba were impressive, wait until you see **the Alhambra** in Granada. We will have pre-booked a private morning visit (before the crowds and the heat) to see the sublime **Palacio Nazaries**, the impressive **Alcazaba** and the wonderful gardens of the **Generalife**. We will walk down to Granada's old Muslim quarter – **Albayzin** for lunch and the chance to wander through the labyrinth of alleys and lanes. **B**

DAY 18 Mon 29 June **Granada to Barcelona** This morning we will fly from Granada to Barcelona and then transfer to our hotel in the city centre. The afternoon will be free to orientate yourself to this large, exciting city, the capital of **Catalonia**. After lunch we will visit Barcelona's world famous **Sagrada Familia**, Gaudi's imaginative, if controversial, church. A "Jump the Line" ticket and guided tour is included. We will be staying for 3 nights at Room Mate Emma - Barcelona – right in the centre of the bohemian Eixample district **B**

DAY 19 Tue 30 June **WALK 6 Barcelona – Tibidabo** (details TBA) In the morning before it gets too hot we plan to do a walk in the **Parc de Collserola**, a 6500ha forest park on the northern outskirts of the city. Another option is a stroll down **La Rambla** to the waterfront, followed by a cable car ride to the **Castell de Montjuic**. The nearby **Fundacio Joan Miro** is a must for lovers of surrealism. **B**

DAY 20 Wed 1 July **Barcelona** Our last day in Barcelona is yours to enjoy to the fullest. You could explore Barcelona Cathedral, visit the home of **Barcelona FC at Camp Nou**, stroll through the **Parc de la Ciutadella** or be thrilled by Barcelona's modernistic concert hall, **Palau de la Musica**. Art lovers will head for Museu Picasso and **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** while those who seek more inspiration from Gaudi, will want to visit **La Pedrera**. Of course, the shopping is exceptional in Barcelona. The big department stores (eg El Corte Ingles & FNAC) are centred around **Placa de Catalunya** while the big labels can be found on **Passeig de Gracia**. **Bulevard Rosa** and **Portal de l'Angel** are great for shoes and clothing. **B**

DAY 21 Thu 2 July **Tour ends in Barcelona 1000 B**



Sagrada Familia



Pampaneira - Alpujarras