



ANDALUSIA: POST-CONGRESS CULTURAL TOUR

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER — SUNDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2016

POINTS OF INTEREST

Andalusia, Spain's southernmost region and one of its largest, is bordered by Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha to the north and Murcia to the north-west. Andalusia has a population of 6.8 million people, many of whom reside in the cities of Seville, Córdoba and Granada, which are collectively referred to as Andalusia's "Golden Triangle." Stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean, Andalusia's long coastline is home to some of the richest and most varied flora and fauna. Andalusia's landscapes include wetlands rich in bird life, grooves of olive trees, lush forests and snow-capped peaks. Of Andalusia's total land area, some 17% has been designated as national parks or nature reserves, contributing to the protection of the region's unique biodiversity.

The Romans made their first forays into Andalusia in 206 BC, attracted by its natural riches. They ruled for almost 700 years until the Western Roman Empire crumbled and was replaced by the Visigoths. The Moors followed, flourishing first in Córdoba, then in Seville and, towards the end of their 800-year rule, in the Nasrid kingdom of Granada.

After the fall of Granada to the Christians in 1492, Spain entered an era of expansion and prosperity. The conquest of the New World made Seville one of the most affluent cities in Europe, but much of this

wealth was squandered on wars by the Habsburg kings. Modern Andalusia began in 1982 when Sevillian Felipe Gonzales came to power and this area became an autonomous region.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POINTS OF INTEREST

Native to the Iberian Peninsula is an ancient horse breed, the Andalusian, which has existed for thousands of years. Historically, it was used as both a war horse and as a gift to aid in Spanish diplomacy. Andalusian horses are a strong, agile, and intelligent breed, popular among Spanish nobility. The Duke of Newcastle in 1667 described the Andalusian as "the noblest horse in the world, the most beautiful that can be. He is of great spirit and of great courage and docile; hath the proudest trot and the best action in his trot, the loftiest gallop, and is the lovingest and gentlest horse, and fittest of all for a king in his day of triumph." Today the athletic ability of the Andalusian can be seen in the bullring, in wide-ranging competitive events, and on working ranches.

The flamenco dance is both a visual and an emotive form of expression. Associated with the region of Andalusia, the most widely accepted theory for the origin of flamenco is that it is descended from the ancient dances of the Indian Hindus. Indian dances



La Mezquita, the Roman Bridge over the Guadalquivir River, Córdoba, Spain - PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN PAVONE



reached Spain as early as 500-250 BC, during the Greek times, as a means to entertain royals. This early dance was then influenced by the Moors, who arrived ~1000 years later, and subsequently by gypsies who brought dance and music styles from Pakistan and Persia. Today, flamenco is often mixed with classic Spanish dance or ballet.

MODERN ANDALUSIAN CITIES

SEVILLE

History

Seville, Andalusia's capital, lies on the east bank of the Guadalquivir River some 87 km (54 miles) north of the Atlantic Ocean and ~550 m (340 miles) southwest of Madrid. An inland port, the city has a rich heritage as a cultural center, as a capital of Muslim Spain and as a center for Spanish exploration of the New World. In the early 1500's Seville became prosperous after it was awarded a monopoly on Spanish trade with the Americas. During this period, Renaissance and baroque buildings were constructed and many artists and sculptors associated with Spain's artistic golden age (the late 16th to late 17th centuries) were based here. This influence is still seen in the city today. In the 20th century, the port was enlarged as an industrial and commercial center. Today Seville's economy is a mix of tourism, commerce, technology, and industry.

Alcázar of Seville

The Alcázar of Seville, often called the Real Alcázar, is an extensive and complex palace comprised of patios and halls in diverse architectural styles from various ages. It became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 and is one of the oldest European Royal Palaces still in use. The oldest sections, namely the front towers and walls, were built by the Emir of Córdoba and date back to 913 AD.

The royal gardens of Alcázar of Seville, with their vast array of fruit trees, horticultural produce, and flowers, served an aesthetic purpose for palace residents, and were an important food supply. Ponds, pools, and irrigation systems were used as water sources. The gardens are divided into a number of separate areas landscaped in different styles including French, Italian, and Arab sections.

Alfonso XII Hotel

The Alfonso XII Hotel (2 San Fernando 2, Seville, 41004, Spain (+34 95 491 70 00)) is located in the



Seville Cathedral or the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Spain. It is a Roman Catholic cathedral and is the largest Gothic cathedral and the third largest church in the world. Opened in 1528. PHOTOGRAPHER: IEVGENII FESSENKO

center of Seville, in the historic neighborhood of Santa Cruz, which was once the Jewish quarter, next to the Alcázar of Seville and the Cathedral.

Catedral de Santa Maria de la Sede

The Catedral de Santa Maria de la Sede is considered one of the largest in area of all Gothic churches. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, most of the cathedral was constructed from 1402 to 1506 on the site of a great mosque, which itself had been built on the site of an earlier Visigothic church. Santa Maria de la Sede is the cathedral's patron saint and sits at the high altar below a waterfall of gold. The cathedral houses many works of art, including paintings by Murillo. The bell tower, La Giralda, was built between 1172 and 1195. It is crowned by a bronze weather vane depicting faith.

Parque de Maria Luisa

The Parque de Maria Luisa, also called the "Park of Seville," is an urban oasis. All 38 hectares of the park are botanically diverse with over 3500 trees and almost 1000 palm trees. Created from the gardens of the palace of San Telmo, in 1893 it was given to the city by Princess Mari Luisa of Bourbon. Jean-Claude Forestier, park conservationist and director of the Bios de Boulogne in Paris, landscaped the park by combining elements of the Eastern promenade, the tranquility of courtyards, and the romantic landscape garden. The Ibero-American Exposition in 1929 added monuments, pavilions and other architectural and ornamental features that showcase a diversity of garden styles.



Duck Pond in the Maria Luisa Park. The Maria Luisa Park stretches along the Guadalquivir River in Seville, Spain. It is Seville's main green area. PHOTOGRAPHER: JOSER PIZARRO

Parque Natural de Doñana

The National Park of Doñana is the largest nature reserve in Europe, covering an area of 99 hectares (247,000 acres), and the only national park in Spain. In the 16th century, this area was set aside as hunting grounds for the Dukes of Medina Sidonia. Since its establishment as a National Park in 1969, it has been awarded UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status, received the European Council's Management Diploma, been declared a World Heritage Site, and was recognized as an important bird protection area (IBA). It has also been proposed to be included in the NATURA 2000 Network as a Site of Community Importance (SCI).

The park is located within the estuary of the Guadalquivir River and supports a variety of habitats such as coastal sand dunes, pine and oak forests, shrublands (maquis), and wetlands. The park is home to a diverse suite of flora and fauna, including the endangered Spanish lynx, imperial eagle, and abundant bird life. Some bird species visit the park on their seasonal migrations, while others arrive to breed, and some call Doñana their permanent home.

CÓRDOBA

History

Córdoba is strategically located at the highest navigable point of the Rio Guadalquivir, Andalusia's great river. This river has played an integral part in this city's history. Córdoba was the Roman provincial capital over 2000 years ago, shipping Spanish olive oil, wine and wheat back to Ancient Rome.

Alcazar del los Reyes Cristianos & Mezquita

Córdoba's golden age is associated with the Moors and the building of the Mezquita, or Great Mosque, which is often referred to as one of the world's greatest works of Islamic architecture. In the 10th century, the city was the western capital of the Islamic empire, rivaling Baghdad in wealth, power, and sophistication. Córdoba came under Christian rule in the 1200's. These new rulers built a cathedral within the mosque, the Alcazar, or Fortress.

Campos Bodegas

Campos Bodegas is located in the residential neighborhood of San Pedro. This restaurant was founded in 1908 as both a wine cellar and tavern. The menu offers classic Córdoba cuisine with ingredients from local vendors and from the restaurants' own orchard. The interior features classic Andalusian designs such as terracotta tile floors, wrought iron accents, and wood-beamed ceilings.

Jewish Quarter and Synagogue

Since the early 2nd century, Jews have been a central part of Córdoba's culture. The Jewish Quarter, declared a World Heritage Site in 1984, is a network of medieval streets with a Moorish flair. A statue of the great Roman philosopher, Seneca, forms the western boundary of this neighborhood, which reaches as far as Calle El Rey Heredia to the north-east and the Mosque to the south.

The Synagogue on Calle do los Judios (street of the Jews) was built in 1315 by Simon Majeb, and is the only synagogue in Andalusia to survive following the exile of the Jews from Spain in 1492. After the Jews were exiled, the Synagogue became a hospital, then, in 1588, a Catholic chapel.

Madinat Al-Zahra

The ruins of the Moorish city, Madinat Al-Zahra, are located just west of Córdoba, at the base of the Sierra Morena Mountains. The city came to an untimely end after only 70 years, due to a violent civil war. Many fragments of the palace-city have been excavated over the years and are now assembled in to-scale models. The museum on site houses the research and restoration efforts of this archaeological site.

Quebec-Labrador Foundation – U.S.
55 South Main Street
Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938
U.S.A.
978.356.0038 (Office)

Quebec-Labrador Foundation – Canada
606, rue Cathcart, bureau 341
Montréal, Québec H3B 1K9
CANADA
514.395.6020 (Office)