

NIU
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

The Northern Illinois University Alumni Association
Presents

Highlights of Southern Spain and Madrid

March 12 – 21, 2020

\$3,995 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Day by Day Itinerary

Thursday, March 12 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)

We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this evening by scheduled service of Iberia Airlines of Spain on the overnight transatlantic flight to Madrid, Spain.

Friday, March 13 – MADRID / GRANADA (I,HD)

As the sun begins to rise on the Iberian Peninsula we arrive in Madrid and continue by connecting flight to Malaga. On arrival, we'll meet our Tour Escort who will accompany us on vacation. Leaving the airport, we'll follow the Mediterranean coastline as we make our way to Granada, beautifully situated at the foot of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada Mountains in the heart of Southern Andalusia.

Saturday, March 14 – GRANADA (B)

Granada is a brilliant jewel of Moorish architecture, as we'll see on our tour of the fabled Alhambra, a compound of palaces, a fortress and lush gardens built in the 14th century where magical use of space, light, water, and decoration characterize the delicate craftsmanship. We'll also visit the Generalife, the country estate of the Nasrid kings, complete with fountains, tropical gardens, and picturesque vistas high above the city. This afternoon we'll travel across the city to visit the Albaicin, the former Moorish town with gypsy dwellings. One of the most charming things about visiting the Albaicin is wandering the cobbled streets; tucked away into narrow alleys and quaint squares are some of the oldest and most traditional shops. We'll visit Cerámica Fajaluzá where the ceramic plant pots and bowls, typically white with a blue and green design, have been made since 1517. Our tour will come to an end as we return to the old city center where we'll see the Cathedral of the Incarnation and visit the Royal Chapel built to enshrine Ferdinand and Isabella. Following our tour, the remainder of the day is at leisure to sightsee Granada's two main squares, the Plaza Bib-Rambla and the Plaza Nueva.

Sunday, March 15 – GRANADA / RONDA (B,HD)

This morning we depart Granada and travel through the market town of Antequera, as we make our way to Ronda, perhaps the most spectacularly located city in the Andalusian Mountains. Afternoon sightseeing will introduce us to the Old Town where we'll visit the church of Santa Maria la Mayor, one of the most important sacred monuments of Ronda, and Casa Don Bosco, a modernist palace built at the beginning of the 20th century. Then we'll cross over the Tajo Gorge to arrive in the New Town that is home to the pedestrian precinct where we'll visit the Plaza de Toros, the second oldest bullring in Spain. Due to its history, architecture, character and beauty, it is recognized as one the most monumental bullrings in existence.

Monday, March 16 – RONDA / SEVILLE (B,L,RD) **(Jerez de la Frontera)**

After breakfast we depart Ronda and continue our journey across Andalucía to Jerez de la Frontera, located midway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cádiz Mountains. Jerez's extraordinary geographical location means that

the city enjoys the very best fresh local produce, ideal for making its world-famous Sherry, Brandy and Vinegar. Alexander Fleming said, "If penicillin can cure those that are ill, Spanish sherry can bring the dead back to life." We'll soon find out, as we enjoy a tour of the Williams & Humbert Bodega, followed by a Sherry tasting. Afterward, it's time to sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery as we travel to Seville, the capital city of Andalusia that stands on the banks of the Rio Guadalquivir. Tonight, we'll enjoy an evening of dinner and entertainment with a superb selection of Flamenco and regional dancing.

Tuesday, March 17 – SEVILLE (B)

Our day will begin with an introductory tour of Seville. Among the treasures that we'll see are the Barrio de Santa Cruz, a warren of white alleyways and patios that have long been the most picturesque corner of the city. Here, we'll visit the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the See, one of the largest and richest gothic Cathedrals in Christendom, unmatched in its abundance of artistic treasures, not to mention its great Giralda Tower, Seville's most prominent landmark. We'll also visit the 14th century Alcazar with its Moorish Palace and lovely gardens and see the Archives of the Indies, the building that houses all of the famous drawings of the New World including letters by Columbus and Queen Isabella. We'll end our tour by traveling to the El Arenal district where we'll visit the Plaza de Toros de la Maestranza, Seville's 18th century bullring, and the riverfront dominated by the Moorish Torre del Oro. Enjoy an afternoon of leisure along the tree-lined promenade beside the Paseo de Cristobal Colon.

Wednesday, March 18 – SEVILLE / MADRID (B,HD) **(Cordoba)**

This morning we depart Seville and travel to the charming city of Cordoba, the halfway point of the Guadalquivir, where the wheat lands and olive groves of the southern Campina plains meet the ranches and farmland of the Sierra de Cordoba plateau to the north. The heart of Cordoba is the old Jewish quarter and a walk through this area provides the sensation that little has changed since the 10th century when Cordoba was one of the greatest cities in the Western World. We'll visit the Mezquita that dates back 12 centuries. The walls of the Great Mosque hide more than 850 arches and pillars of granite, jasper, and marble that support the roof, creating a dazzling visual effect. We'll also see the Mihrab, a richly ornamented prayer niche that once held a gilt copy of the Koran, the Cathedral featuring an Italianate dome and the Torre del Alminar bell tower that offers a fine view of the city. This afternoon we depart Cordoba aboard an AVE high-speed train bound for the capital city of Madrid. We'll find that a cosmopolitan air reigns in this fun-loving city as we enjoy a panoramic introduction that will take us through Old Madrid, featuring the Puerta del Sol and Plaza Mayor, Bourbon Madrid, home to the Royal Palace, and discover contemporary Madrid, as we travel along the Gran Vía, one of the most fashionable avenues in the world.

Thursday, March 19 – MADRID (Toledo) (B)

Today we begin with a visit to the Imperial City of Toledo. Built on a hill and surrounded on three sides by the Tagus River, the city is a National Monument reflecting various styles of architecture ranging from the Moorish and Gothic to the Renaissance, dating from the 15th and early 16th centuries. We'll begin with a visit to the Church of St. Thomas that has on display the most famous of El Greco's paintings, "The Count de Orgaz." In addition, we'll briefly view the lavish Primate Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo and Santa Maria la Blanca Synagogue. Toledo is also famous as the center of damascene. We'll learn of this time-honored Moorish tradition with a visit to a local workshop and watch the artisans inlaying gold or silver threads into black steel used to decorate plates, earrings, bracelets and large pendants. On our return to Madrid, the remainder of the day is at leisure. Enjoy shopping around the Puerta Del Sol, an area where craftsmen can still be found, or in the fashionable shops along the Gran Via. Life in Madrid is extremely pleasant, relaxed and unhurried, so you may prefer to simply enjoy an afternoon at one of the outdoor cafes on the Plaza Mayor.

Friday, March 20 – MADRID (Avila & Segovia) (B,RD)

Today we journey northwest of Madrid to Avila, Spain's highest provincial capital, a quiet walled-in town that has a warring and mystical background. The ancient town walls were built in the 11th century and are punctuated with 88 sturdy turrets on which storks can be seen nesting. The mysticism comes from Saint Theresa of Jesus who was born here, and our tour includes a visit to the Convent of St. Theresa built within the walls on the site of her home. Following our visit to Avila, we'll set our sights on Segovia, the most spectacularly sited city in Spain. Segovia is Spain at its best; twisting alleyways, the highest concentration of Romanesque churches in all of Europe, and pedestrian



streets where no cars are allowed, all surrounded by the city's medieval wall. We'll tour the famous Alcazar, source of inspiration to Walt Disney, see the world-renowned Roman Aqueduct, the largest and best preserved of its kind anywhere and the gothic 16th century imposing Segovia Cathedral.

Saturday, March 21 – MADRID / CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we travel to Madrid's Barajas International Airport in preparation for our return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our *Highlights of Southern Spain and Madrid* that will last a lifetime and new friendships made along the way!

***** Welcome Home *****

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled service of Iberia Airlines of Spain.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach and scheduled rail service with accompanying Tour Escort.
- Accommodations in first-class hotels.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portorage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotels.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes and fuel surcharge of \$460 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; luggage handling at airports; gratuities to the motor coach driver(s), Tour Escort, and Step-on Guides; travel insurance; and meals other than those stated above.



TOUR CONDITIONS

Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated, and additional charges will be assessed.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is very important and can be purchased through USI Travel Insurance Services. This insurance is designed to cover you and your trip investment from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and personal effects loss, and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 21 days (Plus and Elite Options) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Pre-existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver, and 2) Optional Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (Elite Option). If you wish to take advantage of the special above provisions, you must enroll within 21 days of the date your initial trip deposit is received. Contact Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387.

RESPONSIBILITY

THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and/or any travel agency and/or supplier of services pursuant to or in connection with this itinerary shall not be responsible or become liable for any delay incurred by any person in connection with any means of transportation; nor for any loss, damage or injury to person or property by reason of any event beyond the control of any agency or supplier, or occurring without the fault or negligence of such agency or supplier. The right is reserved to substitute the airline to be used; the type of aircraft; and to alter the dates of the tour; the tour routing; or to cancel the trip if a minimum number of bookings is not reached for either the air or land portion of this itinerary. The right is also reserved to substitute hotels for other hotels in available categories. Further, the right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain at any time any person as a participant on any tour or to cancel any tour. No refund will be made for voluntary absence from the tour unless arrangements are made at the time of booking. The schedules contained herein are subject to change without notice. All rates are based on current Tariff and Exchange rates in effect at the time of the printing of this itinerary and are subject to adjustment without prior notification in the event of changes therein or in changes in the number of participants on which the rates are based. The carriers concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. The passage contract in use by carrier concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the carrier and the purchaser of this tour.

**For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815-753-1512
or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation**

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

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