

Abercrombie & Kent



IBERIAN ODYSSEY: SOUTHERN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Dreamy one moment and fiery the next, proud neighbours Spain and Portugal offer a smorgasbord of cultural delights.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, Spain, Portugal



13 days from AU\$22,250 pp



Private

Journey Overview

Dreamy one moment and fiery the next, proud neighbours Spain and Portugal offer a smorgasbord of cultural delights. From the passion, history and romance of Southern Spain, witness sensual flamenco performances and marvel at Gaudi's sublime architecture. Then, be taken on a sensory journey by the enchanting citrus-scented squares of Andalusia and the baroque streets, lively bars and cultural haven that is Portugal. Wherever your journey takes you, prepare to discover a little pocket of Iberian bliss.

- Marvel at the whimsical modernist designs of Gaudi in Barcelona, with their marvelous spiral stairways, catenary arches, honeycomb gates, gargoyles, and tree-inspired columns
- Immerse yourself in the great artistic pedigree of Madrid, viewing works by Spain's three greatest painters, Goya, Velazquez and El Greco
- Travel back through time to the Nasrid Dynasty at Grenada's awe-inspiring Alhambra, the greatest medieval Muslim palace in the world
- Be moved by the raw emotion, fire and flare of a traditional flamenco show at a world-class theatre in Seville
- Wander the winding streets of Porto, with its medieval relics, soaring bell towers, extravagant Baroque churches and stately Beaux-Arts buildings



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Barcelona

Arrive in Barcelona to a warm welcome from your A&K Guardian Angel, who will accompany you to your accommodation for assisted check-in.

Barcelona, the vibrant heart of Catalonia, is a city where history seamlessly merges with avant-garde artistry. From its iconic architecture, notably the surreal landmarks of Antoni Gaudí, like the breathtaking Sagrada Família and the whimsical Park Güell, to the bustling atmosphere of its lively streets and sun-soaked beaches, Barcelona is a tapestry of culture and creativity.

El Palace Barcelona

Day 2: Barcelona

Wake in the cultural heart of Spain, where you'll spend the morning exploring the genius of Gaudi, one of the world's most celebrated avant-garde architects. Via his works, your expert guide will take you on a journey through Gaudi's complex personality, telling stories of the savant and how he fused nature and geometry to become a master of his mind-bending craft. From the famed Sagrada Familia Basilica to the Parc Guell — where you'll have a panoramic view of the city — to the Casa Mila, marvel at spiral stairways, catenary arches, honeycomb gates, gargoyles, and tree-inspired columns.

This afternoon, wander through the Gothic cathedrals and chapels, medieval choir stalls and shady cloisters of the old city. Step back into the 14th century at the Santa Maria del Mar Church, to absorb the purest form of Gothic architecture in the country, before visiting the Picasso Museum. Stroll through the part-Gothic, part-Roman palace, where some of Picasso's very first works are housed.

El Palace Barcelona | Meals: B

Day 3: Barcelona - Madrid

Journey to Madrid via the high-speed AVE train; meet your Madrid-specialist A&K Guardian Angel, and transfer privately to your hotel. Located in the heart of the city, the exclusive Relais & Châteaux Hotel Orfila is the perfect location from which to explore Madrid's extensive cache of art galleries and restaurants.

Madrid is unquestionably one of the richest culinary capitals in Europe. This evening, you may choose to join a local connoisseur for a tapa bars tour (additional cost) where you will be introduced to some of the best tapas in the city. Either sit down and enjoy a variety of *raciones* in one place, or, like the locals, stroll between several establishments.

Hotel Orfila | Meals: B

Day 4: Madrid

Few cities can boast an artistic pedigree quite as pure as Madrid. Don your walking shoes and take to the Prado Museum — one of the most important art museums in the world — with your expert guide. Feast your eyes out works by Spain's three greatest painters, Goya, Velazquez and El Greco, together with superb collections of works by Flemish, Italian and European masters. You'll also admire some of the city's most striking sites. Soak in the atmosphere, with a dose of vibrant people-watching at the bustling square of Puerta del Sol, once the eastern gate of the city. Continue to the 17th-century Plaza Mayor, where you'll meander down narrow cobblestoned streets to find colourful shops and boutiques, many housed in ancient ateliers and workshops. The remainder of your day is at leisure.

Alternatively, you may like to discover the most historic neighbourhood in Madrid, Los Austrias. Uncover all secrets of the great monarchs who once lived among its monuments, churches and palaces on an historical walking tour with your expert. Sample culinary delights at Mercado de San Miguel, one of Madrid's oldest and most beautiful markets, then continue to the lavish Royal Palace. The palace is home to an extraordinary 2,800 rooms, which hold truly remarkable treasures, from superb tapestries and paintings to beautifully ornate clocks and Stradivarius violins (additional cost).

Hotel Orfila | Meals: B

Day 5: Madrid - Cordoba - Granada

Journey to Granada on the high-speed AVE train, via Andalucian beauty, Cordoba. Meet your expert local guide who'll take you wandering between Cordoba's wrought-iron balconies and lamps, potted plants, overhanging trees, golden-stone buildings, verdant interior patios, and quaint hidden plazas. Meander whitewashed medieval streets in the old Jewish quarter to learn how these ancient peoples prospered under Muslim rule. Explore the gigantic and hypnotic Mezquita, one of the greatest Islamic buildings in the world, and uncover a trove of UNESCO-listed monuments that tell the story of Roman, Arabic, Islamic, and Christian conquerors. The colossal structure's striking corridors, numerous arches, intricate golden mosaics, and rows of Roman columns are a sight to behold.

After lunch at leisure, transfer by private vehicle through spectacular countryside to Granada. Arrive at your 19th-century palace hotel, with the evening at leisure.

Hospes Palacio de Los Patos / Meals: B

Day 6: Granada

Today you'll travel back through time to the extraordinary construction of the Nasrid Dynasty — the last of the Muslim dynasties in the country — at UNESCO World Heritage site, the Alhambra. This awe-inspiring site is the best example of a medieval Muslim palace in the world, with its delicate Arabic carvings, bright and vivid tiles, and its breathtaking views of the Albayzn. The Alhambra spans nearly 26 acres, with more than a mile of walls and 30 towers. Your outstanding historical guide deftly steers you to the best vantage points with the most intriguing artworks as they tell of the military families who once graced the Alcazaba, the sultan and his kin who occupied the many palaces, and the court officials who lived in the Medina. Finish at the sumptuous gardens of the Generalife, once a summer palace and country estate where kings came to escape the affairs of the palace. The rest of the day is at your leisure.

Hospes Palacio de Los Patos / Meals: B

Day 7: Granada - Seville

Continue west with your driver today to the seductive city of Seville. In these sunny Andalusian streets, you'll find a rhythmic Flamenco soul alongside aristocratic mansions, tapas bars and orange trees, and endless Moorish motifs. Arrive at Hotel Alfonso XIII in the historic quarter of Santa Cruz, where you'll live in luxury on the doorstep of the Alcazar Palace and the Seville Cathedral. The rest of your day is at leisure.

Alternatively, you might choose to take the scenic route through the Andalusian countryside to the charming town of Antequera (additional cost). Often referred to as the 'Florence of Andalucía', explore the medley of stunningly preserved architecture, ranging from Roman baths and Moorish castles to Renaissance fountains, 19th-century bullrings and more than 30 stunningly preserved Spanish-Baroque churches. The main event is the ancient burial mounds — The dolmens — a series of megalithic stone tombs dating from the Neolithic era, which have earned UNESCO World Heritage status. Your guide will impart insights on how these mysterious mausoleums were engineered by farmers 6000 years ago, pointing to a robust society with deep-rooted religious commitments. Continue to Seville with your evening at leisure.

Hotel Alfonso XIII | Meals: B

Day 8: Seville

This morning, don your walking shoes and take to the soulful streets of Seville with your expert guide. You'll discover how diverse influences over time have shaped the city into the vibrant melting pot you see today. Begin at Seville's masterpiece, the awe-inspiring Cathedral & Giralda, one of the world's largest Gothic cathedrals and a veritable treasure trove of art, with notable works by Zurbarán, Murillo, Goya and others. The main event is the original 104-metre-tall Islamic minaret, the top of which offers sensational views over the city.

Continue to the Real Alcazar where you'll uncover the hidden corners of the oldest European palace still in use today. With exquisite Islamic, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic and Mudéjar designs and art works, a walk through the palace is a chance to awaken the senses and hone your architectural prowess. Finally soak in the atmospheric web of tiny streets in the Barrio de Santa Cruz, many of which are lined with lively tapas bars, colourful tiled benches, and squares bursting with Sevillian life.

No visit to Seville would be complete without an immersion in the mesmerising art of Flamenco. This evening, let yourself be moved by the raw emotion, fire and flare of a traditional flamenco show.

Hotel Alfonso XIII | Meals: B

Day 9: Seville - Lisbon

Today you will journey by air to Portugal's cinematic city of Lisbon. Surrounded by seven dramatic hills that overlook the Rio Tejo cradle, Lisbon's panorama of cobbled alleys, white-domed cathedrals and Roman Moorish ruins create a captivating visual crafted over centuries.

Arrive to meet your Guardian Angel who'll assist you with arrival, accompany you to your hotel, and assist you with check-in. After settling in, perhaps take to the terrace with its stunning view over Lisbon's skyline and the Tagus river.

Bairro Alto Hotel | Meals: B

Day 10: Lisbon

Wake in Lisbon, a bohemian and inspiring city, where tradition meets rebellion at every corner. This morning, join your driver and guide, and discover the highlights. From the fascinating Alfama Quarter, which dates back to the 5th century, to the Baixa, with its grand 18th-century plazas, sun-drenched cafés and narrow cobblestone lanes — you'll discover how each district has its own distinct personality. Wander the Belém district with its sprawling manicured gardens, expansive riverside squares and Manueline-style monuments, and explore the UNESCO-listed monastery. Top it off with a taste of Lisbon's famous tart, the scrumptious Pastéis de Belém. This afternoon is at leisure. Discover Portugal your way, with some on-the-spot planning from your Guardian Angel.

Alternatively, you may like to choose from one of the following tours:

Art lovers might opt for a Lisbon art tour. Travel back through 5,000 years of history and discover the private collection amassed by the fascinating Calouste Gulbenkian, an Armenian oil magnate and philanthropist. This is by far one of the country's most outstanding private collections of art and the man behind the museum is just as intriguing. Admire masterpieces by Rembrandt, Renoir, Monet and Van Dyke, as well as exquisite René Lalique jewellery (additional cost).

Further afield, visit the UNESCO World Heritage town of Sintra. With its rippling mountains, fertile forests and glittering palaces, Sintra is like a page torn from a fairy tale. The centre, Sintra-Vila, is strewn with pastel-hued mansions folded into luxuriant hills that cascade down to the blue Atlantic. Immerse yourself in 19th-century Romantic architecture and learn all about the former Kings and aristocrats who once called this stunning town home. Don't forget to try the famed local *queijadas*, a delectable Portuguese cheese tart (additional cost).

This evening is an opportunity to savour Lisbon's vibrant gastronomy with your Guardian Angel, who knows all the most authentic haunts. You'll hop from place to place, enjoying vibrant city life and lively conversation with a real local. Starting with an apéritif, some fine cheeses and smoked hams, you'll move on to a selection of petiscos, before indulging traditional desserts at a selection of Lisbon's most esteemed restaurants (additional cost).

Bairro Alto Hotel | Meals: B

Day 11: Lisbon - Porto

Head northward with your driver to edgy-yet-opulent Porto, which rises scenically from the banks of the Rio Douro. On route, make a stop in Portugal's once-medieval capital Coimbra where, an atmospheric city steeped in history. On summer nights, the haunting notes of the guitarra and the baritone voices of fado singers echo off the old stone walls. Stretch your legs as you wander around its dark cobbled lanes and monumental cathedral and listen in as your guides shares insider secrets at the prestigious university library. After a lunch at leisure, continue onto pop-up-Porto. Settle into your luxury hotel, which once housed the Dalai Lama and Bob Dylan. We recommend heading up to the Scarlett Brasserie and Wine Bar for dinner, the perfect destination for gourmet foodies.

Hotel Infante Sagres | Meals: B

Day 12: Porto

Wake in the port city, a colourful town full of medieval relics, soaring bell towers, extravagant Baroque churches and stately Beaux-Arts buildings. Porto is also a bright hub of arts and culture, with superb museums and galleries, and Michelin-starred restaurants. This morning, follow your guide to Ribeira, Porto's most famous neighborhood. Narrow lanes take you past tall and slender townhouses, some covered in colourful tiles and pastels, all the way down to the river. Stop in at the opulent 19th-century Stock Exchange Palace and the St Francis Church, before crossing over the river for a port wine tasting at one of the famous riverside lodges.

This evening, you might choose to embark on an exhilarating motorbike sidecar tour to see the highlights of Porto all lit up at night. A brilliant twist on the traditional night tour, cruise down glamorous avenues, discovering the beautiful coastal city as the sun goes down and the lights twinkle off the water. Wind through Virtudes, with its artistic feel and sunset views, and Clérigos, with its towering bell tower, before cruising along the river toward the ocean. Toast the evening with a sundowner, and afterwards ask your guide to drop you at one of Porto's finest restaurants for a dinner at leisure (additional cost).

Hotel Infante Sagres | Meals: B

Day 13: Depart Porto

Transfer privately to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map



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 Orfila, 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 sparkingly 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.

Barrio Alto Hotel, Lisbon



There's no doubt that Bairro Alto is one of Lisbon's most luxurious hotels. Named after the lively and fashionable Bairro Alto district in the heart of downtown, the boutique hotel overlooks Luis de Camões - Lisbon's main square - in a restored 19th century building resplendent in primrose yellow, with wrought iron balconies and stunning views of the Rio Tejo. The location is ideal for exploring Lisbon's creative district; nestled in a central spot, it's the perfect place from which to discover the rest of the city. The arty neighborhood of Bairro Alto is a pretty jumble of cobbled alleyways, home to countless galleries, trendy restaurants and live music spots.

Inside, the hotel's décor is a juxtaposition of glamorous urban style with traditional architecture and furnishings from Portugal. The spacious rooms and suites are full of light and colour; our favourite rooms are the Mansard rooms in the fifth floor, making use of the unique attic space with slanted ceilings and wooden beams: perfect for a romantic getaway. Beautifully outfitted in Ralph Lauren wallpapers, the Mansard rooms have Virginia Mota watercolours and Nuno Cera photographs adorning the walls. In total there are 55 spacious guestrooms, including four suites. For the ultimate peace and quiet, we recommend the rooms that face onto sleepy Flores Street.

On the top floor a breezy terrace peers down over the city with fantastic views across the red rooftops. It's the perfect place to relax with pre-dinner cocktails. The sophisticated atmosphere of Café Bar has become a hot spot for locals with live music and DJ sets at the weekends; each of the bar's three floors has a different personality, from cosy and intimate Mezzanine, to the cosmopolitan ground floor and the relaxing Igloo Lounge. Located on the ground floor is the highly acclaimed Flores Restaurant, a typical bairro kitchen specialising in traditional Mediterranean cuisine. Light lunches,

sandwiches and snacks, including the famous Caesar Salad, can also be enjoyed at the terrace.

Why we like it

- Luxury boutique hotel in the heart of Lisbon
- Located between the bohemian Bairro Alto and cosmopolitan Chiado districts
- Amazing city views from the top floor terrace, over the Rio Tejo
- A stone's throw from the area's famous theatres, churches, museums and bakeries
- Tram 28 handily stops right outside the door

Hotel Infante Sagres, Porto



The Hotel Infante Sagres is the most exclusive luxury hotel in Porto, not far from the impressive City Hall, the UNESCO World Heritage area and the vibrant art district. The stunning Neo-Baroque property feels like an opulent private residence and, over the years, has welcomed personalities such as the Dalai Lama and Bob Dylan. From the wrought iron staircase set against stained-glass windows to striking modern furnishings and artworks, it's a feast for the senses.

Downstairs, the public rooms celebrate turn-of-the-century opulence, with crystal chandeliers, wood panelling and antique chairs, while the bedrooms offer a more pared-back take on luxury. Guests will find features that draw on Porto's Moorish history in the guest rooms, and a four-poster bed plus heritage highlights in the exclusive suite.

The historic property also features a sundeck, with a plunge pool and sun loungers. Do not leave without stopping by Hotel Vogue Café, offering coffee and cocktails in an elegant environment, and the newly opened Scarlett Brasserie & Wine Bar.

Abercrombie & Kent

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