



## Spain and Portugal Depart 26 August 2017

### 1. DAY 1 WELCOME TO MADRID

Your airport transfers depart from Madrid Airport to your hotel at 09:00, 11:00, 13:30 & 16:00. The rest of the day is at leisure to begin to get to know this stylish city. Later, join your Tour Director for a warm Welcome Reception and the opportunity to mingle and get to know each other over a delightful evening of dinner and wine.

Hotel: Miguel Angel, Madrid

Welcome Reception and Dinner

### 2. DAY 2 THE OLD CAPITAL OF TOLEDO AND ON TO GRANADA

With a Local Expert, visit the the city of Toledo and join a master craftsman in a Damascene workshop for a personal insight into this ancient craft. Walk through the cobbled streets to visit the Church of Santo Tomé, housing El Greco's famous painting, 'The Burial of the Count of Orgaz'. Continue to Granada.

Hotel: Vincci Albayzin, Granada

Buffet Breakfast, Three-course Dinner with wine, plus tea or coffee

### 3. DAY 3 THE ALHAMBRA PALACE AND SEVILLE, CITY OF CARMEN

'There is no pain in life so cruel as to be blind in Granada', cries the inscription on the walls of the Alhambra. Bathed in morning light, the Alhambra Palace awaits: a fantasy of stone-cut lace, arabesque gardens and fountains, built as a citadel by the Moors in the 13th century. With a Local Expert, you will also visit the exotic water gardens of the Generalife, the royal summer residence. Relax here in the sunshine and enjoy the fine views over the town and its three verdant hills, before embarking upon a scenic drive to Seville. A Local Expert will guide you through the maze of narrow lanes and shady squares of the Santa Cruz Quarter. Emerge by the huge walls of the fabulous Alcazar. You will see La Giralda, the former minaret of the Great Mosque, but now the cathedral bell tower. Enter the immense 15th century cathedral, the final resting place of Christopher Columbus and enriched with the spoils of the New World. At night, enjoy the flavours of Andalusia and share in the passion of Spain's most fiery region at a flamenco show and dinner.

Hotel: Ayre Sevilla, Seville (Executive Rooms)

Buffet Breakfast, Signature Evening



#### **4. DAY 4 FREE TIME IN SEVILLE**

(Relaxed Start) This is a free day, so take your time to bask in the city's romantic aura. Or you might like to join an optional experience to Cordoba for a visit to the magnificent Mezquita, an 8th century mosque with a Christian church built inside it?

Hotel: Ayre Sevilla, Seville (Executive Rooms)

Buffet Breakfast

#### **5. DAY 5 THE PLAINS OF THE ALENTEJO TO LISBON**

(Relaxed Start) Pass through the oak forests where black Iberian pigs are bred for the famous Spanish hams. Stop in Jabugo for an insight into the history and curing process of jamón Ibérico. The subtle differences will be revealed with a delicious tasting. Then venture across the wide Alentejo Plateau to Lisbon.

Hotel: Turim Saldanha, Lisbon

Buffet Breakfast

#### **6. DAY 6 LISBON AND THE AGE OF THE DISCOVERIES**

(Relaxed Start) During your stay, a guided panoramic tour takes you along the avenues of the Lower Town and beneath the hilltop Bairro Alto to the Terreiro do Paco, the finest square in the city. Visit the Belem Quarter from where sailing ships set forth to discover unknown lands. Visit an old patisserie that has managed to hold on to the secret recipe of Portugal's finest pastry for over 100 years and enjoy a tasting of the famous 'Pasteis de Belem'. See the Monument to the Discoveries and the more ancient Belem Tower - a fortress originally set in the middle of the river, but now left high and dry on the riverbank. Next, visit Jeronimos Monastery with its beautiful Manueline architecture. Enjoy free time in the afternoon. Perhaps join an optional experience to the beautiful town of Sintra which was the summer residence of the Kings of Portugal?

Hotel: Turim Saldanha, Lisbon

Buffet Breakfast

#### **7. DAY 7 HOLY FATIMA AND GOLDEN SALAMANCA**

Drive into the green hills north of Lisbon to visit Fatima, the most celebrated place of pilgrimage in Portugal. Visit the Basilica commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary to three children in 1917. Then cross the border back into Spain and continue to Salamanca, famous for its golden stone buildings.



See the handsome arcades of the Plaza Mayor and the Puente Romano across the River Tormes – 15 of its 26 arches date from the time of the ancient Romans.

Hotel: Alameda Palace, Salamanca

Buffet Breakfast

#### **8. DAY 8 OLD CASTILE, TO ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA AND ON TO MADRID**

Cross the rock-strewn hills of Castile, towards the city of Avila, still entirely enclosed within 11th century walls and unique in Europe. Walk within the ancient city before returning to Madrid for sightseeing. Here, a Local Expert takes you along the Gran Via and through the Puerta del Sol. You'll see the statue of Don Quixote in the Plaza de España, Royal Palace and Cibeles Fountain. In the evening, bid farewell to your new-found friends with a lively Celebration Dinner at a local restaurant.

Hotel: Hesperia Madrid, Madrid

Buffet Breakfast, Celebration Dinner

#### **9. DAY 9 MADRID OF THE BOURBONS**

In the morning, a Local Expert will guide you along the noble avenues past the Cibeles Fountain and down the Gran Vía to the statue of Don Quixote in the Plaza de España. Cross the Puerta del Sol and continue to the Prado Museum, housing works by Velázquez, Goya, Titian, Botticelli, Rubens and others. You will then have free time to relax at a cafe or shop in the boutiques.

Hotel: Hesperia Madrid/Barcelo Torre, Madrid

Buffet Breakfast

#### **10. DAY 10 OVER THE GUADARRAMA MOUNTAINS TO SANTIAGO**

Venture through the Guadarrama Mountains to the infinite horizons of Old Castile. Some of Spain's most fashionable white wines are produced in the Rueda region, so stop for a tasting. Continue past the impressive Castillo de la Mota, conquered by Queen Isabella and on to Santiago de Compostela, where the tomb of the Apostle St James was miraculously discovered in the Middle Ages.

Hotel: NH Collection, Santiago de Compostela

Buffet Breakfast, Dinner with Wine



### **11. DAY 11 SAINTLY SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA**

(Relaxed Start) In the morning, become acquainted with some of Europe's finest historical buildings with a Local Expert. The monumental square, Spanish Plaza del Obradoiro, is pure grandeur in granite. Look up from the steady trickle of present-day pilgrims to the cathedral façade - an ensemble of soaring towers, arches and windows, festooned with architectural frills. Once through the 'Gateway of Glory', you're privy to the same vision that has greeted pilgrims since the Middle Ages. The faithful can pass behind the ornate high altar to touch the giant 13th century gilded effigy of St. James. Follow the steps of the pilgrims on The Way of St. James, then indulge in some free time to explore the narrow streets and old squares.

Hotel: NH Collection, Santiago de Compostela

Buffet Breakfast

### **12. DAY 12 ALONG THE COSTA VERDE TO OVIEDO**

(Relaxed Start) Get your cameras ready for a scenic drive along the Costa Verde. This Green Coast of Asturias is one of Spain's most beautiful, named after the colour of the sea and the pine and eucalyptus trees that line the shore. Your route reveals glorious coastal vistas before turning inland to the modern town of Oviedo. A Local Expert will show you the 9th century churches built when the city was the capital of Christian Spain. Visit the church of San Julian covered with 1,000-year-old wall paintings and the cathedral in the stately square of Plaza Alfonso II. Round off the day with an introduction to Northern Spain's drink of choice in the 'Boulevard of Cider'.

Hotel: Barcelo Cervantes/NH Oviedo Principado, Oviedo

Buffet Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

### **13. DAY 13 PICTURESQUE SANTILLANA DEL MAR AND ON TO SANTANDER**

See the unique Roman bridge in Cangas de Onís as you head into the foothills of the Picos de Europa, a National Park encompassing spectacular mountain and gorge scenery. Visit the holy cave of Covadonga, a shrine to Pelayo, who achieved the first Christian victory over the Moors in 722. Enjoy views of the Costa de Cantabria while journeying to Santillana del Mar, arguably 'the most beautiful village in Spain.' Stroll through the rustic cobblestone streets admiring stone houses decorated with carved, heraldic symbols and reach the delightful church square. After time to explore, drive to the sophisticated beach resort of Santander.



Hotel: Eurostars Real/Eurostars Santander

Buffet Breakfast

#### **14.DAY 14 BILBAO, COSTA VASCA AND SAN SEBASTIÁN.**

(Relaxed Start) In nearby Bilbao, admire the striking modern architecture of the Guggenheim Museum, one of the world's most spectacular buildings. Now a pleasant drive along part of the Costa Vasca, dotted with small coastal fishing villages. Pause in Zumaia, at the mouth of the Urola, where you can see El Ratón, the mouse-shaped rock. Continue to San Sebastián, pearl of the Cantabrian coast, set on its shell-shaped bay. The city harbour is filled with fishing boats and pleasure crafts, so you can enjoy a number of sporting activities on its large sandy beach. Spain's northern Basque country has evolved into the best place to eat in the Western world. Discover the city's rich gastronomic tradition in the old city's pintxos (tapas) bars and be sure to try the local Txakoli wine.

Hotel: Barcelo Costa Vasca/Mecure Igueldo, San Sebastián

Buffet Breakfast

#### **15.DAY 15 SAN SEBASTIÁN SIGHTSEEING**

(Relaxed Start) In the morning, admire the beauty of San Sebastián on a guided walking tour of the Old Quarter. See the numbered balconies of the Plaza de la Constitución, a reminder of the days when bullfights were held in the square. Ascend Monte Igueldo for beautiful views of the town and La Concha Bay. The afternoon is free to stroll along San Sebastián's boardwalk. Maybe partake in an excellent dinner with drinks in a restaurant in the heart of Lo Viejo (Old town)?

Hotel: Barcelo Costa Vasca/Mecure Igueldo, San Sebastián

Buffet Breakfast

#### **16.DAY 16 PAMPLONA AND ON TO BARCELONA**

Your first stop is in Pamplona, famous for the 'Running of the Bulls' festival. Perhaps take a stroll to the famous Estafeta Street before moving on past the famous Rioja wine producing region? Continue to Barcelona, the vibrant capital of Catalonia, a land that retains its own distinctive language, culture and traditions.

Hotel: Hilton Barcelona

Buffet Breakfast



### **17.DAY 17 BARCELONA, CITY OF GAUDI**

Wake up ready to embrace the city's artistic heritage. Join a Local Expert in the heart of the Gothic Quarter and walk through the Roman gate to tour the narrow lanes and old squares. Next, head along the Passeig de Gràcia, adorned with elegant wrought-iron street lamps and the most flamboyant Modernist buildings. Continue through the Eixample district for a visit inside Gaudí's extraordinary masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia Church. See its giant, tree-like pillars and spectacular vaulting. The afternoon is at leisure. In the evening, raise your glass at your final Celebration Dinner with wine at a local restaurant.

Hotel: Hilton Barcelona

Buffet Breakfast, Celebration Dinner

### **18.DAY 18 DEPART BARCELONA**

After breakfast departure transfers arrive at Barcelona Airport at 07:00, 09:00 & 11:00.

Buffet Breakfast

