

## SPAIN: ANDALUCIA – RONDA & THE SIERRA DE GRAZALEMA

8-day / 7-night **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walk in the mountains of Southern Spain

**VALUE TOUR**



The Sierra de Grazalema is an “undiscovered” green oasis in a mountainous area of southern Spain with picturesque whitewashed villages such as Grazalema, Montejaque and the lovely city of Ronda. It is a landscape ideal for walking with marvellous limestone outcrops and rock sculptures where vultures nest, deep gorges among the cliff tops and open farm and woodlands.

In these exquisite natural surroundings, encounter *pueblos blancos* with exotic Moorish names like Zahara de la Sierra and Cortes de la Frontera, which recall centuries of fluctuating borders between the Arab and Christian kingdoms. Plan your walking day so that you reach a village where you can replenish your energy with *tapas* and local *vino* perhaps on an outdoor terrace. Continue through unspoilt countryside painted in earthy tones, with brilliant white buildings punctuating the soft grey-green of olive groves, cork oak woods and Spanish silver firs. And, at the end of the week, you reach the city of Ronda, one of the prettiest in Andalucia, with its intriguing mix of Moorish and European architecture and its iconic bridge spanning a deep gorge.

**Dates:** Departs daily January to mid-June and September to December

**Cost from:** **\$830** per person twin share. Single room supplement from \$455

**Includes:** 7 nights' accommodation in simple but comfortable 1- or 2-star family run village hotels and guesthouses, and in a good 3-star hotel in Ronda on the last night - all with en-suite bathrooms and breakfast; transfers Ronda bus station - Grazalema on Day 1 and Benaocaz - Villaluenga on Day 5; luggage transfer on days 3, 5 and 7; detailed route descriptions and maps; 24-hour telephone assistance.

**Not included:** Transport from last accommodation and other local transport, other meals, personal expenses, gratuities, arrival and departure transfers (on request at extra cost, please ask when booking).

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate walks of 3 to 6 hrs. Walking routes are from 7km to 18km, with a daily ascent / descent of @ 250m to 650m. On some days there is a choice of routes. In summer, warm temperatures can make the walking seem more difficult. Walks follow wide unsealed tracks and footpaths, with the occasional section on surfaced tracks or tarmac roads.



**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

## Suggested itinerary:

### Day 1 Arrive in the Sierra de Grazalema

Plan to arrive in the beautifully situated whitewashed village of Grazalema by mid-afternoon. Take a bus (at own cost) from Málaga to Ronda, then transfer from Ronda bus station to Grazalema (included). You spend two nights in Grazalema, in a simple but clean and comfortable inn.

### Day 2 Circular walk from Grazalema

walking @ 5 to 9km, 3 to 4½ hours

On the first day of walking, you have a choice between two short circular routes. Both walks afford lovely views of a striking combination of red earth tones adorned by green vegetation. In the afternoon, you have time to explore the small shops in the village and have refreshments on an outdoor terrace. Overnight in Grazalema.

### Day 3 From Grazalema to Benaocaz

walking @ 12km, 5½ hours

Today's route is through classic limestone landscapes among nearby *cortijos*, traditional farmhouse complexes situated across the countryside. Traverse lovely green oak woods and characteristic Mediterranean shrubs on your way to Benaocaz, an untouched 'white village' with well-preserved historical remains dating back to Roman times. The village sits perched on a hill, with lovely views all around. Stay two nights in Benaocaz.

### Day 4 Circular walks from Benaocaz

walking @ 7km, 3 hours + 6km, 2 hours

There are two walks today, both from and back to Benaocaz. In the morning, walk a circuit along a historic footpath to reach a nesting site for Griffon vultures, with lovely views across the hills and plains. In the afternoon, walk along an old Roman road to the lively town of Ubrique, known for its leather and traditional leather products – there is even a Leather Museum here! Return to Benaocaz for your second night there.

### Day 5 From Benaocaz to Montejaque

walking @ 18km, 6 hours

Start with a transfer to Villaluenga del Rosario. From Villaluenga del Rosario descend to Llanos del Republicano, a valley where the river disappears into a deeply carved limestone sink. Amidst the greyish-white limestone cliffs of the Sierra de Libar and Sierra del Palo, wander through striking rock formations sculpted by wind and rain to reach the small village of Montejaque, last of the *Pueblos Blancos* on your route, and stay for two nights.

### Day 6 Choice of walks from Montejaque

walking @ 8 or 13km, 3½ or 5 hours

Choose between two splendid walking routes. The first is a beautiful circular route via El Hacho peak, following wide gravel tracks through the Río Campobuche valley, woodlands and olive orchards. Or, walk to the Cueva de la Pileta, a cave with surprising stalactites and prehistoric cave paintings, via Benaoján, one of the prettiest of the 'white villages', followed by a steep ascent on goat trails to the cave. There is no circular route possible here, so either retrace your steps, or arrange a taxi to meet you at the cave (paid locally).

### Day 7 From Montejaque to Ronda

walking @ 11.5km, 5 hours

A route following an ancient cobbled path and then through fields and small family farms to reach the city of Ronda, where a spectacular bridge spans the deep river gorge, which literally divides the city into two. Accommodation is overnight in Ronda. The historical Moorish quarter is well worth a visit.

**Day 8 Tour ends** Your walking tour ends after breakfast in Ronda.



**Outdoor Travel** offers walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided, centre-based or inn-to-inn, in many parts of Europe including pilgrimage routes in France and Spain such as the **Camino de Santiago** or **Way of St James** from Le Puy to Santiago, the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrims' *Road to Rome* in Italy, the **Camino Portuguese** from Porto to Santiago or walks in England, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy or Austria.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:**

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