

TOGETHER WE TRAVEL!



solo connections





Best of Spain & Portugal
20 Days
Fully Hosted
07 – 26 October 2024

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Madrid
- Prado Museum & Royal Palace
- Salamanca
- Porto & Duoro Valley
- Lisbon
- Monastery of Jeronimos, Cascais & Cabo da Roca
- Merida & Roman Theatre
- Seville
- Alcazar, Giralda Tower and Flamenco Show
- Marbella & Malaga
- Picasso Museum & Granada
- And much more!

INCLUDES:

- **Flights** Return Economy Class including Taxes from Brisbane/Sydney/ Melbourne or Perth*
- *Business class upgrades available on request*
- **Private single room** in quality accommodation
- **Meals** as per itinerary 17 Continental Breakfasts/ 1 Lunch/ 17 Dinners
- Sightseeing Tours, Entrance fees and Transfers as per itinerary
- **Tour Host**– travels with group from/ to Brisbane
- **English Speaking Local Guides**
- **English Speaking Coach Driver**

EXCLUDES:

- Any meals, tours, flights, excursions or transfers other than mentioned above or in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature i.e. laundry, drinks, phone calls,
- Portorage, Tipping/Gratuities other than stated above
- Visas (*if applicable*) and Travel Insurance

From \$15,718* per person

Terms and Conditions apply. Economy class airfare with Emirates. *Airline Taxes included to the value of \$240. Tour requires a minimum number of passengers to operate. Solo Connections reserves the right to amend all hotels, airlines, restaurants and tours for an equal substitute at any time. Beverages, additional meals, hotel mini bars, laundry, phone calls, any items of personal nature not included. Tours subject to availability. Further booking conditions apply, please check all prices, availability and other information with your travel agent at time of or before booking. Package cancellation fees apply. Denise Marie Falsay trading as Solo Connections. ATAS Accredited A11424. ABN 92 582 582 996



Day 1 - 2: Monday, 07 – Tuesday, 08 October 2024
Brisbane – Madrid via Dubai

D

Early this evening, passengers departing from Brisbane, you will meet your Tour Host and fellow travellers at Brisbane International Airport for flights to Madrid, transiting in Dubai on the way. *Interstate passengers, you will meet the group in Dubai.*

We arrive at Madrid airport, on Tuesday. After collecting our bags and clearing customs & immigration we will be transferred to our hotel to check in.

The rest of the afternoon is free at leisure to rest after the long flight. Your Tour Host will be on hand for anyone that needs assistance. Early evening we will make our way to a local restaurant, near the hotel, for dinner

Accommodation: Catalonia Gran Via or similar (3 Nights)

Day 3: Wednesday, 09 October 2024
Madrid

CB-D

Madrid shines as an inclusive metropolis, embracing people from diverse backgrounds across the globe. Beyond its renowned museums, bustling streets adorned with an array of shops, and restaurants offering global cuisines, Madrid captivates with its serene historic enclaves. Wanderers are enchanted by its timeless charm, encountering traditional family-operated taverns steeped in centuries of history, where locals gather for convivial conversations over drinks. Madrid's authenticity is unparalleled, embodying a warm welcome and embracing diversity, establishing itself as undeniably one of Europe's most captivating cities.

This morning following breakfast we meet a local guide for a morning city tour of Madrid. This tour will take us to view some of the main sights of the city, such as Plaza Mayor, Puerta del Sol, Mercado de San Miguel, and more.

We will return to the hotel and have the afternoon free at leisure to either relax or explore further. Your tour host will be on hand to assist and for anyone that would like company.

After time to refresh we will meet and go out for dinner to a local restaurant.

Day 4: Thursday, 10 October 2024
Madrid

CB-D

Enjoy breakfast before boarding the coach for a full day city tour. Today's excursion will include visits to both the Prado Museum and the Royal Palace.

In the afternoon we will stop at Retiro Park. The Buen Retiro Park, or simply El Retiro is one of the largest parks of the city of Madrid, Spain. The park belonged to the Spanish monarchy until 1868, when it became a public park. One of the most famous features of El Retiro Park is its Crystal Palace, a remarkable glass pavilion and conservatory. Near the park's north entrance is Retiro Pond, featuring a colonnade and monument honoring King Alfonso XII.

Early evening we will make our way to a local restaurant for dinner.

- Best of Spain & Portugal -



Day 5: Friday, 11 October 2024
Madrid - Salamanca

CB-D

After breakfast this morning we check out, board the coach and will be transferred to Salamanca, North West of Madrid, and a part of the Castile and León region.

Salamanca, steeped in history tracing back to the Celtic era, boasts exquisite sandstone architecture and is renowned for the prestigious Universidad de Salamanca. Established in the 1100s and evolving into a pivotal intellectual hub during the 15th-16th centuries, the university remains a catalyst for the city's vitality, enriched by its diverse international student community.

Upon arrival we will check-in to our overnight hotel and have some free time to explore before making our way out to dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Artheus Carmelitas Salamanca or similar (1 Night)

Day 6: Saturday, 12 October 2024
Salamanca – Porto via Ciudad Rodrigo

CB-D

Checking out following breakfast we board the coach for our journey into Portugal. We first travel west to Ciudad Rodrigo and enjoy some free time to explore the town. Ciudad Rodrigo, a quaint cathedral city nestled near the border of Spain and Portugal, captivates visitors with its charming Old Town and well-preserved 12th-century city walls. Within these historic ramparts lies the Cathedral de Santa María, showcasing intricate Gothic and Romanesque doorways. The 14th-century Castillo de Enrique II has been transformed into a hotel, while The Palacio de los Aguila has been repurposed as a heritage center, inviting visitors to delve into the region's rich history and culture.

At an agreed time we reboard the coach and continue into Portugal and arrive at Porto. There will be time to check in, relax and refresh before coming together for dinner in the hotel.

Accommodation: Vila Gale Centro or similar (3 Nights)

Day 7: Sunday, 13 October 2024
Porto

CB-D

Porto, situated along the northwest coast of Portugal, is famed for its elegant bridges and esteemed port wine industry. Within the medieval Ribeira district, visitors are charmed by narrow cobbled streets meandering past historic merchants' homes and inviting cafes. The gothic São Francisco Church stands out for its opulent baroque interior adorned with intricate gilded carvings, while the grand 19th-century Palácio de Bolsa, once a bustling stock market, stands as a testament to architectural splendor, designed to allure potential European investors.

After breakfast today we are joined by a local guide for half day city tour. We will visit the main sights of the city before returning to the hotel to have the afternoon free at leisure. We can use that time to relax or venture out for more exploring with your tour host.

Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant.



Day 8: Monday, 14 October 2024
Porto

CB-L-D

Today after breakfast we are off for a full day excursion to the stunning Douro Valley which could as easily be called the Enchanted Valley, such is the beauty and magic that its landscapes offer.

The Douro Valley stands as the exclusive region worldwide authorized to produce the renowned "port wine." A visit here unveils the remarkable dedication required for the traditional port wine-making process. Over generations, farmers meticulously transformed the landscape, sculpting vast terraces on the hillsides to optimize grapevine growth, leveraging both water sources below and sunlight above. Even today, the production of port wine remains a testament to unwavering passion, with grapes meticulously hand-picked and crushed in the age-old tradition — by foot! Moreover, the Douro River claims the title of the Iberian Peninsula's largest river by discharge. Originating near Duruelo de la Sierra in Spain's Soria province, it charts a winding path southward before flowing westward through the northern reaches of the Meseta Central in Castile and León, ultimately traversing northern Portugal.

Our local guide first takes us to a local winery for a tour and tasting, then we board a river cruise from Peso de Regua to Pinhao. A traditional Douro Valley lunch is also included for us.

We return to Porto late afternoon, have time to freshen up and then meet for dinner in the hotel.

Day 9: Tuesday, 15 October 2024
Porto – Lisbon via Obidos

CB-D

After breakfast this morning we will check out, board the coach and make our way to Obidos.

The medieval town of Óbidos, nestled within the picturesque landscapes of Portugal, stands as a timeless gem, captivating visitors with its rich history and unparalleled charm. Encircled by sturdy castle walls dating back to Moorish times, Óbidos exudes an enchanting atmosphere, transporting visitors to a bygone era of knights and royalty. Cobblestone streets wind their way through the town's labyrinthine layout, lined with whitewashed houses adorned with colorful flower boxes, evoking a sense of whimsy and romance at every turn. Within the town's fortified walls lie hidden treasures waiting to be discovered, from historic churches and quaint artisan shops to cozy cafes serving delectable local delicacies. With its well-preserved medieval architecture and idyllic setting, Óbidos beckons travelers to step back in time and immerse themselves in the enchanting beauty of Portugal's past.

Enjoy some time to explore the town before we continue on to Lisbon where we will check into our accommodation and have time to relax before making our way out to a local restaurant for dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel Florida or similar (3 Nights)



Day 10: Wednesday, 16 October 2024
Lisbon

CB-D

Lisbon, the coastal capital city of Portugal, sprawls across hilly terrain, offering breathtaking vistas that showcase its rich history and scenic beauty. Atop the imposing São Jorge Castle, visitors are treated to panoramic views that span across the charming old city with its pastel-colored buildings, the glistening waters of the Tagus Estuary, and the iconic Ponte 25 de Abril suspension bridge. A short distance away, the National Azulejo Museum showcases five centuries of exquisite decorative ceramic tiles, offering insight into Portugal's artistic heritage. Just beyond Lisbon's borders lies a stretch of Atlantic beaches, stretching from Cascais to Estoril, where visitors can unwind and soak up the sun against the backdrop of the sparkling ocean.

This morning following breakfast we are joined by a local guide for a half day city tour in the Belem area. We'll view the Torre de Belem, the Monument to the Discoveries, and enter the Monastery of Jeronimos. We also visit the famous Casa Pastels de Belem to try a Pastel de Nata (Portuguese Custard) tart. We then return to our hotel and have the afternoon is free at leisure to relax or explore further. Your tour host will be on hand for assistance.

This evening we have dinner at a local restaurant, followed by a Fado show. Fado, the soulful folk music originating from Lisbon's quaint neighborhoods, has served as the city's poignant soundtrack since the mid-1800s. Often likened to the Lisbon blues, Fado melodies resonate with a haunting beauty, weaving tales of lost sailors, shattered dreams, and poignant romance. With its melancholic strains and emotive lyrics, Fado captures the essence of Lisbon's cultural heritage, evoking a profound sense of longing and nostalgia in listeners worldwide.

Day 11: Thursday, 17 October 2024
Lisbon

CB-D

Today after breakfast our coach awaits to transport us to Cascais, a town historically renowned as the summer retreat for Portuguese nobility. Today, Cascais seamlessly blends its distinguished cultural heritage with the modern-day desires of discerning tourists seeking a premier holiday destination. With its elegant ambiance and picturesque surroundings, Cascais invites visitors to indulge in a harmonious fusion of tradition and contemporary allure, promising an unforgettable escape filled with sophistication and charm.

We'll enjoy free time to explore this coastal town with its cobbled streets, glorious beaches, lively bars, lavish villas and imposing fort.

At a designated time, we begin our journey back to Lisbon, passing through Cabo da Roca for a brief photo opportunity at the westernmost point of Portugal and mainland Europe. This iconic landmark offers a stunning backdrop for capturing memorable moments against the dramatic coastal scenery, marking the culmination of our exploration before returning to Lisbon.

Returning to our hotel we have the afternoon free at leisure before dinner at a local restaurant.



Day 12: Friday, 18 October 2024
Lisbon – Merida via Evora

CB-D

After breakfast, we check out from Lisbon hotel and embark on our journey eastward towards Mérida.

Along the way, we make a stop in Évora for a guided tour of this historic town. Nestled within the city's picturesque historic center, the ancient Roman Temple of Évora, also known as the Temple of Diana, stands as a testament to the city's rich heritage. Nearby, the imposing Gothic structure of the Cathedral of Évora, with its whitewashed houses as a backdrop, offers a glimpse into the city's medieval past, its construction dating back to the 12th century.

Following our exploration of Évora, we continue our journey to Mérida and check in to our overnight accommodation.

Later in the evening, we come together to enjoy a delightful dinner at the hotel, recounting the day's discoveries and anticipating the adventures that lie ahead.

Accommodation: Hotel Velada Merida or similar (1 Night)

Day 13: Saturday, 19 October 2024
Merida - Seville

CB-D

Following breakfast and check out, we embark on a half-day tour of Mérida accompanied by a knowledgeable local guide.

Our exploration will include a visit to the remarkable Roman Theatre, a testament to Mérida's rich history. Founded by the Romans in the 1st century B.C., Mérida serves as the capital of western Spain's Extremadura region. Highlights of the ancient city include the well-preserved Teatro Romano, boasting a double tier of columns framing its stage. Additionally, we'll marvel at the ancient Puente Romano, a magnificent 792-meter bridge spanning the Río Guadiana, which connects to the Alcazaba, an Islamic fortress dating back to the 9th century, built atop Roman walls.

On conclusion of our insightful tour, we journey southward to Seville.

Upon arrival and check-in at our accommodation, we'll have some free time to explore at our own pace before reconvening for dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel abba Sevilla or similar (2 Nights)



Day 14: Sunday, 20 October 2024
Seville

CB-D

Enjoy breakfast this morning before a local guide join us for a half day guided tour. Seville is the capital and largest city of the Spanish autonomous community of Andalusia and the province of Seville.

One of today's highlights will be a visit to The Alcázar of Seville, officially called Royal Alcázar of Seville. This historic royal palace was formerly the site of the Islamic-era citadel of the city, which began in the 10th century and then developed into a larger palace complex by the Abbadid dynasty and the Almohads. After the Castilian conquest of the city in 1248, the site was progressively rebuilt and replaced by new palaces and gardens. In 1962 the Alcázar was used as a set for the movie Lawrence of Arabia. It has also been used in the movies Kingdom of Heaven, The White Princess as well as for part of the fifth season of the popular Game of Thrones series.

At the conclusion of the tour we will return to our hotel and have the afternoon free to explore further at our own leisure. Your tour host will be on hand for company and guidance.

This evening's dinner will be lively affair as we dine and watch a local flamenco show at a local restaurant.

Seville has long been considered the epicenter of flamenco. Flamenco's once horrible reputation among Spanish elites during the 19th and 20th centuries was because historically, performances were associated with the ostracized Gypsy (Roma) population in Spain, and they took place in seedy urban areas. These days the gypsy community is alive and well in Seville and are an important part of the city's cultural fabric and history.

Day 15: Monday, 21 October 2024
Seville – Malaga via Marbella

CB-D

Following check out and breakfast we board the coach and are off to Malaga today.

Our first stop takes us to discover the charming old town of Marbella. Nestled in the renowned resort area of Spain's Costa del Sol, Marbella epitomizes the allure of the Andalusia region, with the majestic Sierra Blanca Mountains providing a stunning backdrop to 27 kilometres of pristine Mediterranean beaches, adorned with villas, hotels, and world-class golf courses. To the west of Marbella's historic center lies the illustrious Golden Mile, home to prestigious nightclubs and coastal estates, leading to the opulent Puerto Banús marina. Here, luxury yachts grace the waters, while upscale boutiques and chic bars line the waterfront, creating an atmosphere of sophistication and glamour.

We continue to Malaga and check into our accommodation.

This evening's dinner will be at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Sercotel Tribuna Malaga or similar (3 Nights)



Day 16: Tuesday, 22 October 2024
Malaga

CB-D

Málaga, situated on the southern coast of Spain's Costa del Sol, beckons with its skyline adorned by high-rise hotels and resorts overlooking golden sandy beaches. Dominating this modern vista are two imposing hilltop fortresses, the Alcazaba and the Gibralfaro ruins, remnants of the city's Moorish past. Amidst this architectural tapestry stands the soaring Renaissance cathedral, affectionately nicknamed La Manquita ("the one-armed lady") due to the curious absence of one of its towers.

This morning, following breakfast, we embark on a half-day tour of Málaga with a local guide, immersing ourselves in the city's rich cultural tapestry.

Our itinerary includes a visit to the Picasso Museum, a must-see destination for art enthusiasts. Housed in the city of Picasso's birth, this museum offers a comprehensive insight into the life and works of the renowned master. Remarkably, the museum's establishment in 2003 marked the culmination of over 50 years of planning. The impressive collection, comprising over 200 works, was generously donated and loaned by Christine Ruiz-Picasso, wife of Paul (Picasso's eldest son), and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (Picasso's grandson). While the collection meticulously traces the artist's extraordinary career, there are notable gaps, particularly in the representation of Picasso's 'blue' and 'rose' periods. Nonetheless, the museum stands as a testament to Picasso's enduring legacy and artistic brilliance.

Upon returning to our hotel the remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure before we have dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 17: Wednesday, 23 October 2024
Malaga

CB-D

Following breakfast today our coach will transfer to Granada where we will be joined by a local guide for a half day tour.

Granada, nestled in the foothills of the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains, boasts a rich heritage of medieval architecture dating back to the Moorish era, with the iconic Alhambra as its crowning jewel. Perched atop a sprawling hilltop, this magnificent fortress complex epitomizes the splendor of the Nasrid dynasty, featuring opulent royal palaces, tranquil patios, and shimmering reflecting pools. The enchanting Generalife gardens, adorned with cascading fountains and lush orchards, offer a serene oasis of beauty and tranquility, providing visitors with a glimpse into the grandeur of Granada's Moorish past.

After our tour concludes we will enjoy some free time to explore Granada before returning to Malaga.

Freshen up at our hotel before we make our way out to dinner at a local restaurant.



Day 18: Thursday, 24 October 2024
Malaga - Madrid

CB-D

This morning after enjoying breakfast we will check out and be transferred to the train station. We board the train, sit back, relax and enjoy the passing scenery to Madrid.

On arrival in Madrid, we are met and transferred to our hotel to check in where the remainder of day is free at leisure for last minute souvenir shopping, a bit more exploration or simply some down time.

This evening we will come together for a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Catalonia Gran Via or similar (1 Night)

Day 19 & 20: Friday, 25 – Saturday 26 October 2024
Madrid – Brisbane via Dubai

CB

This morning, we gather for one last breakfast together before bidding farewell to our accommodation and make our way to Madrid airport to check in for our flights.

As we journey homeward, we carry with us cherished memories of unforgettable moments shared with newfound friends, all while exploring the Best of Spain and Portugal.

Interstate passengers will say farewell to the tour host and group in Dubai.