

# Mystical, Magical Spain

14 days / 12 nights

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only (James 1:22).* Spain is revered as a mystical center of the Church. The deep faith of St. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and the healing presence of Christ through Mary's apparitions at Fatima...all of these offer moments of healing and hope for today's pilgrim.

## **Day 1: USA to Madrid**

*Known as the mystical center of the Church, Spain offers hope and healing for its pilgrims.*

Our pilgrimage begins with an overnight flight to Madrid, Spain.

## **Day 2: Madrid Arrival**

*History is in a manner a sacred thing, so far as it contains truth; for where truth is, the Supreme Father of it may also be said to be (Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote, pt. II, III, 6, p. 479).*

Welcome to Madrid, the capital and largest city in Spain! Although we will find Madrid a modern city, we can't help but be captivated by its rich history, art and spirit. After arriving at our hotel, a little rest and relaxation might be in order. Or, for the more adventurous and energetic, suggested sights and walking trails can be provided upon request.

## **Day 3: Madrid & El Escorial**

*I sing of his elegance with words that groan, and I remember a sad breeze through the olive trees (Federico Garcia Lorca – best-known writer of modern Spain re some of the tragic events in his country).*

Some contend that the original name of Madrid was "Ursaria" ("land of bears") due to the high number of these animals found in the adjacent forests, which, together with the strawberry tree (madrño), have been emblems of the city from ancient times. We begin our day by visiting many of its remarkable landmarks including the Prado Museum which hosts one of the finest art collections in the world including important Spanish and Flemish paintings, classical statues purchased from Italy, medieval religious treasures and even some Romanesque frescoes. We will also explore Buen Retiro Park, founded in 1631, and the immense Royal Palace of Madrid. This afternoon we'll travel about 28 miles northwest to El Escorial, situated at the foot of Mt. Abantos in the Sierra de Guadarrama, a semi-forested, wind-swept place that owes its name to nearby piles of slag or tailings (*scoria*) from old iron mines. El Escorial, built by King Philip II to mark his victory over the French at San-Quentin in 1557, is not only a historical residence of the King (and famous burial site for most of the Spanish kings for the last five centuries) but also functions as a monastery, royal palace, museum, and school. The monastery contains important works of art by famous artists like El Greco and Velazquez, and in the Capitulary and the Sacristy Rooms, paintings such as *Joseph's Coat* by Velázquez, *The Last Supper* by Titian, or *The Adoration of the Sacred Host* by Charles II by Claudio Coello are on display. We continue our excursion to a striking memorial to those who died in the Spanish Civil War in the nearby Valley of the Fallen where we will see a basilica built into the mountain which contains the tombs of many soldiers from



both sides of the conflict. Toward day's end, we return to Madrid for dinner and overnight.

#### **Day 4: Toledo**

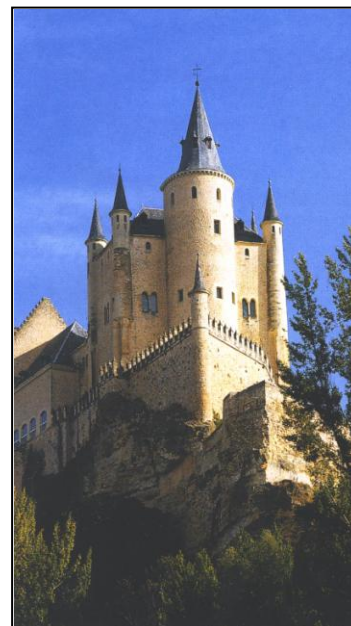
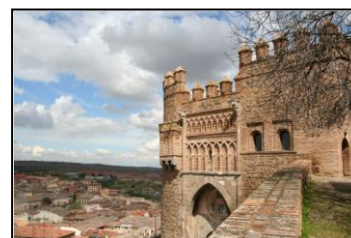
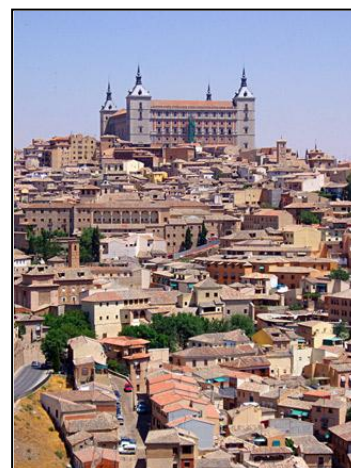
*By a small sample we may judge of the whole piece (Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote, pt. I, I, 4, p. 25).*

"Holy Toledo" isn't just a popular expression! This historic city and notable place of pilgrimage is about 42 miles southwest of Madrid. We'll begin our journey early this morning because we won't want to miss anything in this ancient capital that so inspired El Greco in the 16th century and that has remained relatively unchanged since his time. Old churches and houses fill the city where you can still stroll through streets barely wide enough for a man and his donkey. The great monuments left by the three monotheistic religions are most impressive although all are dominated by the Toledo Cathedral which is ranked among the greatest Gothic structures of Europe. Inside the cathedral are many important masterpieces including a spectacular baroque high altar and two paintings by El Greco. Other fascinating churches in Toledo include the Mezquita del Cristo de la Luz (Mosque of Christ of the Light), dated from the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the only surviving mosque in Toledo (out of ten), and the Church of San Román which has been deconsecrated and now houses the Museo de Arte Visigótico, a collection of Visigothic artifacts includes statuary, illuminated manuscripts, and gold and silver treasures. It is worth noting that "Holy Toledo" is the capital of the Catholic Church in Spain. We will have enjoyed a full, rich day as we return for dinner and another overnight stay in Madrid.

#### **Day 5: Segovia & Avila**

*The angel appeared to me to be thrusting the spear of fire into my heart and piercing my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and left me all on fire with a great love of God (St. Teresa of Avila).*

We travel north from Madrid through the mountains to Segovia, capital of Segovia Province. At this old and beautiful city, perched atop a long, narrow promontory, we will be treated to some magnificent sites including the Segovia Cathedral which was built in the 16th century and which was the last Gothic cathedral to be built in Spain. We'll also see the ancient, well-preserved Roman aqueduct built in the 1st century AD, and the ethereal fairy-tale spires of the Alcázar, or castle-palace, which is said to be the inspiration for Walt Disney's Cinderella castle. A bit outside the city, we will explore *Iglesia Vera Cruz* which was consecrated in 1208, and built by the Knights Templar to house a fragment of the True Cross. It has a unique 12-sided exterior, round nave, and Romanesque carvings and houses the mortal remains of Saint John of the Cross. Today's travels will also find us in Avila, birth place of St. Teresa of Avila and known for its medieval city walls. Constructed of brown granite in 1090, it contains eighty-eight towers and nine gateways that are still in excellent repair. A large part of the city now lies beyond their perimeter. We will visit the church where St. Teresa had frequent visions and ecstatic experiences. We will also see the Convent of St. Teresa, one of the main destinations for Catholic pilgrims to this area as it is the site that has been sanctified more than any other with the presence of Christ. The 17th-century convent was built after the canonization of St. Teresa over the house where she was born, and contains her relics, along with those of her friend St. John of the Cross, in a small museum. We will also enter Spain's



first cathedral constructed in spectacular gothic style. We will enjoy some time to leisurely explore Avila before resuming our journey to Salamanca for an overnight stay.

### **Day 6: Salamanca & León**

*Know this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience (James 1:3).*

We awaken in Salamanca, the Golden City, known both for its monumental sights and its great University. Founded in 1218, it is the oldest university in Spain and the fifth oldest in the western world. The university is, together with tourism, the economic engine of Salamanca. The beautiful Tormes river lies next to Salamanca and is crossed by a 500-foot long bridge with more than two dozen arches, fifteen of which are of Roman origin and the rest from the 1500s. We celebrate Mass in the famous old Romanesque Cathedral built in the 12th century, whose vault of the apse was frescoed by the early Renaissance painter, Nicolas Florentino. In the treasury is the bronze crucifix that was carried into battle before El Cid. After lunch, we make our way to the city of Leon for an overnight stay.

### **Day 7: León & Santiago de Compostela**

*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Psalms 116:15).*

With its rich history and beautiful art, León, which was founded as a military outpost, will captivate us as we spend the morning exploring its old-world charm and incredible spirit. We might even notice how the city glows because of the golden stone used in many of its monuments. The Universidad de León (University of León), founded in 1218, is one of the oldest in Europe. The old Leonese language, considered an endangered language and deriving directly from the Latin of the Middle Ages, is taught at the University. As of 2009, there were more than one hundred students studying this ancient language. Leon has two major cathedrals, one built in the Romanesque style: the Pantheon of St. Isidoro, which was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and houses the remains of St. Isidoro, and the other, called the “Leonina,” which belongs to the Gothic school and has beautiful stained glass windows. Long established customs include the Semana Santa (“Holy Week”), featuring numerous processions through the centre of the city. One called "Procession of the Meeting", acts out the meeting of three groups representing St. John, the Virgin Mary and Christ in the esplanade in front of the city's Cathedral. If time permits, we will visit the Santa Maria de Leon Cathedral, also called *The House of Light* or the *Pulchra Leonina*, and built on the site of previous Roman baths of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. After lunch, we will head for Santiago de Compostela where we will enjoy dinner and an overnight stay.

### **Day 8: Santiago de Compostela**

*Live as if you had to die tonight, work as if you had to remain forever in this world (Archbishop Bartolomé de Raxoi whose bust and motto can be found at the Paxo de Raxoi near the Cathedral of Santiago).*

Today we join the 1000-year old pilgrimage down the narrow streets of the city to the shrine of St. James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela known in English as the Way of St. James and in Spanish as the *Camino de Santiago*. The cathedral, built on the spot where the remains of the Apostle James were said to have been found, borders the main plaza of the old and well-preserved city. We will have much to ponder as we admire the beauty of the sculptures and



architecture, and pay tribute to his mortal remains. The remainder of the day is ours to visit the city. We might explore sites near the cathedral including the Praza do Obradoiro, the expansive square named after the workshops set up during the construction of the cathedral in the 11th century, the Colexio de San Xerome, witness to Santiago's status as a seat of learning since the late middle ages, and the Paxo de Raxoi – an elegant neoclassical palace and former seminary which today houses the regional government of Galicia. On the north side of the square is the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos, a Renaissance building commissioned by Isabella and Ferdinand in 1499 as a pilgrims' sanctuary. We enjoy dinner and another overnight stay in this beautiful place of pilgrimage.



### **Day 9: Pontevedra & Braga**

*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (Corinthians 13: 13).*

After enjoying a Cathedral Breakfast, we journey today to Portugal. While still in Spain, however, we'll stop at Pontevedra, an ancient town and medieval port described as a "definitive old Galician town." Here is where the Virgin Mary appeared to Sister Lucia and where Sister Lucia lived in a modest convent after the appearance of the Virgin Mary to her as child and her two cousins in Fatima. Just beyond the Portuguese border, we visit Braga, also an ancient city that had an important role in the Christianisation of the Iberian Peninsula. In the near surround, we'll visit *Bom Jesus do Monte*, a sanctuary and important site of pilgrimage whose name means "Good Jesus of the Mount." The work on the first chapels, stairways and church proceeded through the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its Baroque nature is emphasised by the zigzag form of its stairways. As pilgrims climb the stairs, it is said they encounter a theological program that contrasts the senses of the material world with the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, culminating with the scenes of the Passion of Christ and the temple of God, the church on the top of the hill. The presence of several fountains along the stairways gives the idea of purification of the faithful. Later in the day, we continue on for an overnight stay in the city of Coimbra.



### **Day 10: Coimbra-Fatima**

*Jesus wishes you to make me known and loved on earth (Mary's words to Lucia).*

Coimbra served as Portugal's capital during the High Middle Ages but it is best known for its university. Established in 1290, it is the oldest academic institution in the Portuguese speaking world and one of the oldest in Europe. This morning we will explore some of the beautiful buildings of this prestigious university, including its baroque library from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We will also visit the most important Gothic-style architectural work in the city: the Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha, founded on the left side of the river Mondego by Queen Elizabeth in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. We should also note that Coimbra is where Sister Lúcia came in 1947 to join the Carmelite order after leaving the Dorothean order, and it is here she died on February 13, 2005, at the age of 97. After lunch, we continue south on to Fatima for an overnight stay.



### **Day 11: Fatima**

*May Portugal never forget the heavenly message of Fátima, which, before anybody else she was blessed to hear. To keep Fátima in your heart and to translate Fatima into deeds, is the best guarantee for ever more graces (Pope Pius XII).*

We'll begin the day by celebrating Mass, after which we'll visit the Tombs of Francisco and Jacinta as well as other sites related to the miraculous appearances of Mary to the children. According to Lúcia's account, Mary exhorted the children to say the Rosary every day and reiterated many times that devotion to the Rosary was the key to personal and world peace. We will have time in Fatima for our own devotions and prayers at the Hungarian Stations of the Cross, consisting of fourteen small chapels along walkways leading to a marble monument of Christ on the cross. Towards evening, we will be treated to a wonderful dinner and show (show of the ancient kings and queens) at Ourem Castle originally built between the 12th and 13th centuries and situated at the top of the hill overlooking the city. The Castle of Ourém is also known as the "Castle of the Queen of the World" because the light that transported Our Lady to her apparitions at Fatima in 1917 was seen to form directly above the castle mount. The shrine of Fatima has played an important role in recent times. On May 13, 1967, Pope Paul VI prayed at the shrine with Sister Lucia, and Pope John Paul II credited Our Lady of Fátima with saving his life during the assassination attempt in 1981. He came to Fatima as a pilgrim on May 12, 1987, to express his gratitude, and the following day, he officially consecrated the human race to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin, as Pius XII had done before him. We will have much to prayerfully consider as we enjoy dinner and our last overnight in Fatima.



### **Day 12: Santarem**

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace (Portion of prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi).*

Not far from Fatima, on the banks of the Tajo river is Portugal's third largest city, Santarem, site of many notable churches including the Church of the Holy Miracle (*Igreja do Santissimo Milagre*) which contains a 13<sup>th</sup> century Eucharistic miracle on continuous display since 1269. The host is enshrined in its miraculous crystal pyx in a silver monstrance and placed on display atop a tabernacle. Four paintings and 16th-century glazed tiles depict the miracle. Although it has been more than eight hundred years since the desecration of the Holy Form, thousands pilgrimage to this humble church every year. In the early afternoon, we will arrive in Lisbon for an overnight stay.



### **Day 13: Lisbon**

*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:17).*

Today from an autobus, we'll enjoy a panoramic tour of this beautiful city, rich in art and architecture, and home to many saints. We will visit the famous Belém Tower, from which many of the great Portuguese explorers set off on their voyages of discovery, including Vasco da Gama, who, in 1497 departed for India. It also features the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Belém Palace, former royal residence and now occupied by the President of Portugal. As we view the Tajo River, perhaps we can imagine the old wooden vessels laden with riches during the greatness of the Portuguese Imperial Empire. Belém's other major historical



building is the Jerónimos Monastery. Built as a monument to Vasco da Gama's successful voyage to India, it was begun in 1502 and took 50 years to complete. The monastery contains the tomb of Vasco da Gama. Located in its wings are the National Archaeological Museum and the Maritime Museum. We will have time enough today to explore the wondrous sights of Lisbon before our last overnight stay.



**Day 14: Lisbon to the USA**

*We will let the power of the holy shrines, priceless relics, and spiritual marvels of Spain and Portugal settle over us, then like other pilgrims of other times, go back to our lives with renewed faith and readiness.*

We leave our hotel and head for the airport to return to the U.S.

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