



ELITE RECOMMENDS

ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE / CÓRDOBA

SEPHARAD SPAIN

A JOURNEY THROUGH SPAIN'S JEWISH HERITAGE

The Jewish community in Spain has a long and rich history that stretches back some 2,000 years to Roman times when Jews left Jerusalem and dispersed throughout the world. One of the largest contingents of Jews settled in the land of Sepharad (or Sefarad) as Spain was called in Hebrew language. For centuries, this Sephardic community thrived through times of peace and prosperity. It also endured periods of oppression and prosecution. Today, the vibrant Jewish heritage of the Iberian Peninsula has been rediscovered. Throughout Spain, a revival is underway of Sephardic neighborhoods, medieval synagogues and Jewish cultural events.

The confluence of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cultures in this region provides a fascinating journey into the past. This guide will introduce you to the Spanish Jewish sites of prominent cities like Barcelona, Girona, Seville, Jaen, Córdoba, Toledo, Segovia, Cáceres, Ávila, León, Oviedo and Palma. Even beyond the existing cities notable for their Jewish heritage, discoveries of Jewish importance in Spain are still being made to this day, such as in Lorca, where a well-preserved synagogue—visible at the Lorca Parador hotel—is being excavated, and pieces of more than 50 rare glass synagogue oil lamps have been unearthed.

Now more than ever, these cities of Sephardic Spain are welcoming guests to explore their vibrant architecture, art, grand hotels and festivals, as well as some of most distinctive fine food and wine in the world. For more information about the country's rich Jewish heritage, visit www.spain.info.





CITYSCAPE BY NIGHT



MAIMONIDES STATUE / TIBERIADES SQUARE



CALLE PAÑUELO / JEWISH QUARTER



JEWISH ARTIFACTS / CASA DE SEFARAD MUSEUM

PHOTOGRAPHY: AYUNTAMIENTO DE CÓRDOBA (MAIMONIDES STATUE, SYNAGOGUE INTERIOR)

CÓRDOBA

For many traveling through Spain, Córdoba is a short resting stop along the way to another destination. But this UNESCO World Heritage site, with its magnificent monuments and treasured Jewish quarter, has an air of grandeur and is worthy of a longer stay to absorb its rich history and culture. For hundreds of years, from 800 to 1200 AD, Córdoba experienced a “Golden Age” when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in relative peace. During a period of tolerance under the rule of the Islamic caliphate, Córdoba grew into one of the most significant centers of Jewish learning in the world. The cobblestone network of the Judería (or Jewish quarter) spread out from this city’s most famous site—the grand mosque with its amazing architectural detail. At Calle Judíos stands one of the most significant synagogues in Spain with its courtyard, vestibule and large prayer room largely unaltered. Built in 1315, the temple features Hebrew inscriptions combined with finely detailed arabesque motifs. Surrounding structures are suspected to be public baths and a Talmudic school.

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza de las Tendillas, 5 - 3ª planta, 14002, Córdoba; 34-957-491-677; turismo@cordobaturismo.es; www.cordobaturismo.es



SYNAGOGUE INTERIOR / CALLE JUDÍOS



LOBBY LOUNGE / PARADOR DE CÓRDOBA



PLAZA DE JUDÁ LEVÍ / JEWISH QUARTER



SWIMMING POOL / PARADOR DE CÓRDOBA

GETTING THERE

In the heart of Andalusia, Córdoba lies just 1 hour and 45 minutes from Madrid by high-speed train.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | A mile outside the city, **Parador de Córdoba** is a four-star luxury hotel built in the ruins of a Moorish summer palace. In the warmer weather, guests dine near the lovely gardens (where the first palm trees in Europe may be found) and enjoy the spectacular pool. The décor combines Arabic and Andalusian influences. Large rooms with terraces afford panoramic views. *Avda. de la Arruzafa, 37, 34-957-275-900; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Nearby the **Casa de Sefarad** museum, **Casa Mazal** brings Sephardic traditions to the dining table. The kitchen prepares foods with Turkish, Andalusian, Italian and North African elements form a matzah-based lasagna called *minas* to honeyed eggplant fritters and Syrian lentil salad. Since 1908, **Bodegas Campos** has been preparing some of the best local cuisine.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | In the heart of the Judería, the **Casa de Sefarad** museum is devoted to the Sephardic-Judaic tradition in Spain with a focus on music, domestic traditions and female intellectuals. Beyond the Jewish quarter, historic sites include the **Roman Bridge** that extends over the Guadalquivir River. At one point Córdoba was said to have more than 400 baths, and today many take a break from touring to relax in the Hammam Arabic baths, which recreate the ones used in the Moorish era.

Outside of the Old City, **Plaza del Cristo de los Faroles** offers a very peaceful atmosphere; many go as it's getting dark to view the Christ-adorned lanterns, candles and flowers. Just outside of Córdoba are the vineyards that produce the prized Pedro Ximenez grapes used to make the sweet wines of the region. In the northern part of the province is the **Pedroches Valley** with the biggest oak forest in Europe, home to the famed Iberian pig.

FESTIVALS | As in many Spanish cities, **Holy Week** leading up to Easter is a time of celebration, ritual and display. The **Patio Festival** in early May opens up private homes so the public can view the hundreds of plants that residents care for on their patios. In spring, the festivities, music and food of the **Crosses Festival** arrive, when crosses are set up in public squares and decorated with flowers. In July, Córdoba becomes guitar city when its **Guitar Festival** attracts enthusiasts of the instrument from around the world. In June, the city's botanical garden hosts the **International Sephardic Music Festival**.