THE PRIVATE JET LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
ELITE TRAVELER



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.

ESPAÑA I need Spain



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.

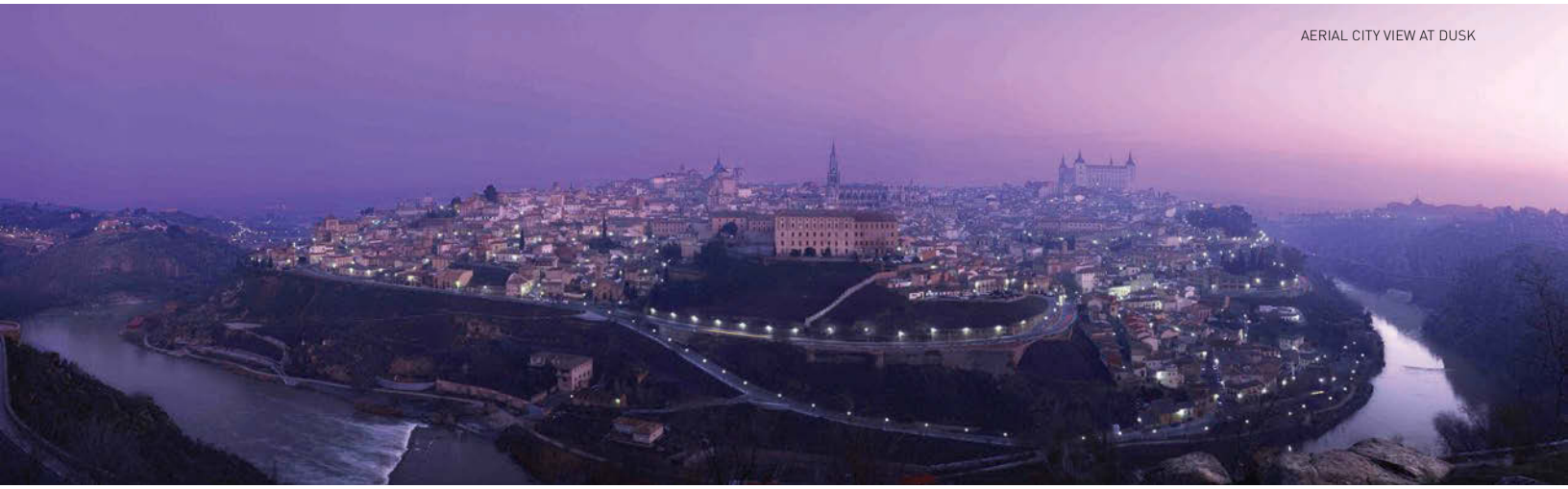
ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | In the heart of the Judería, the **Casa de Sefarad** museum is devoted to the Sephardic-Judaic tradition in Spain with a focus on music, domestic traditions and female intellectuals. Beyond the Jewish quarter, historic sites include the **Roman Bridge** that extends over the 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**.



SYNAGOGUE OF SANTA MARÍA LA BLANCA



AERIAL CITY VIEW AT DUSK

PHOTOGRAPHY: ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO DEL PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE TOLEDO (SYNAGOGUE); JOSÉ MARÍA MORENO / ARCHIVO FOTOGRÁFICO DEL PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE TOLEDO (AERIAL CITY VIEW AT DUSK)

TOLEDO

An hour south of Madrid, Toledo was a great Jewish spiritual center in Europe from the 12th through 14th centuries, earning it the name of "The Jerusalem of the West." The old walled city here recalls the Holy City. Since at least Roman times in the 4th century, Jews have lived in this area, but their arrival may be traced to a much earlier time when the city was founded.

Toledo is also called La Ciudad de las Tres Culturas (the city of three cultures) as Muslims, Jews and Christians coexisted here in relative harmony for centuries. The city's most famous artist, El Greco, was born here in 1541. Near the Museo de El Greco, the Judería thrived and at one point had five Talmudic schools and more than ten synagogues. Most were destroyed in 1391, but two survive, which were converted into churches after the Expulsion of the Jews in 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabella.

In the Jewish quarter, you can walk through winding cobblestone streets, admire the Gothic architecture and take in views of the Tagus (Tajo) River. Stop at Number 5 of Plaza Santa Isabel, home to the famous Escuela de Traductores de Toledo (School of Translators), where Jews used their knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew to translate philosophical and scientific works into Latin and Spanish. One shopping tip: If you're looking to appoint your home in medieval décor, Toledo, which had a reputation for its metalwork, is the place to buy a suit of armor and Damascene swords.

Tourism Office Contact: Puerta de Bisagra s/n, 45071, Toledo; 34-925-220-843; infoturismotoledo@jccm.es; www.turismocastillalamancha.com



CITY VIEW BY DAY



LOBBY LOUNGE / PARADOR DE TOLEDO



ANTIQUE DETAIL / PARADOR DE TOLEDO



GUEST ROOM / PARADOR DE TOLEDO



TOLEDO

ROOFTOP ROMANCE / PARADOR DE TOLEDO

GETTING THERE

While only 35 minutes from Madrid aboard a high-speed train, a scenic 44-mile drive provides a perfect alternative for the leisurely traveler.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | A short distance across the river from the Old Town, **Parador de Toledo** impresses guests with its sweeping views of the city and its Mudejar-style décor, with large wooden beams and grand staircases. After a day of sightseeing, visitors revive in the pool, terraces, living rooms and exceptional bedrooms. The restaurant readies stellar cuisine of the region, such as roast lamb and stewed partridge. *Cerro del Emperador, s/n, 34-925-221-850; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | While few kosher choices are available in Toledo, a couple little shops sell kosher products. Built in 1892, **Venta de Aires** serves Toledo's most prized dish: *Perdiz estofada*, a local red-tailed partridge that's a favorite of hunters. The restaurant was frequented by poets and artists like Lorca and Dali. Experience the charm of **Adolfo**, a 15th-century restaurant with wooden beams and frescoed ceilings. Don't leave the city without ordering the favorite treat of Toledo: Marzipan.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | Constructed by Muslim master builders, **El Tránsito** synagogue houses the **Sephardic Museum**. The temple features Hebrew inscriptions on the walls, a large prayer room, an azara (women's gallery), an old Rabbinic school and ritual baths. On the outskirts of Toledo, the **Synagogue of Santa María La Blanca** is arguably the oldest standing synagogue building in Europe. Now owned and maintained by the Catholic Church, its design is close to that of a mosque.

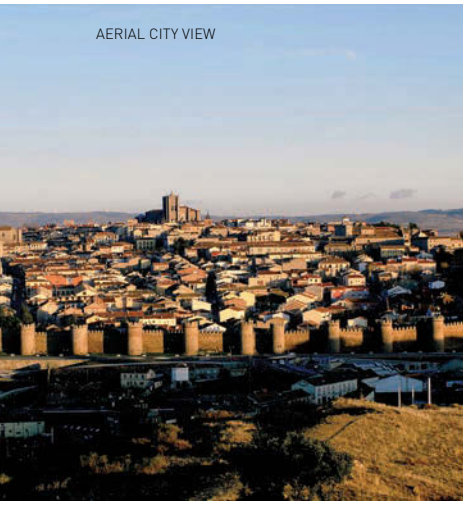
In addition to the Judería, other historic sites of note are the **Cathedral of Toledo** (a supreme example of Gothic architecture) and the **Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes**. The highest point in the city is the **Alcázar**, a huge fortress and home to the Toledo Army Museum. Travel a bit to the south of Toledo to discover the old windmills of **Consuegra**, which recall Don Quixote.

FESTIVALS | From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, Toledo celebrates **Semana Santa** (Holy Week) with extravagant parades. At the end of May and into June, **Corpus Christi** celebrates the tradition and belief in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The monstrance, a priceless vessel in gold and silver used by the Catholic Church dating from 1515 and weighing about 353 pounds, is paraded through the streets. The small town Consuegra celebrates every year at the end October with the **Fiesta de la Rosa Azafran** (Saffron festival).

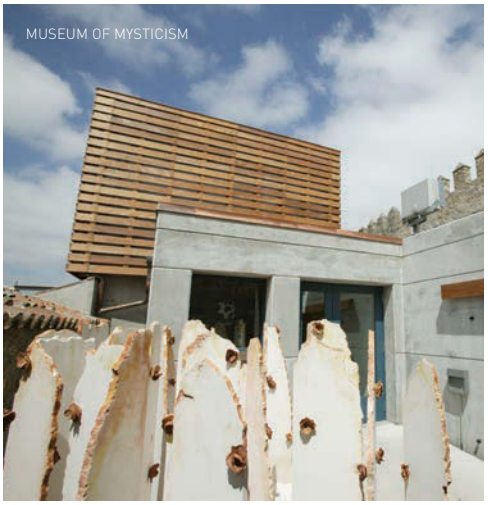


PHOTOGRAPHY: AYUNTAMIENTO DE ÁVILA (MURALLA, MUSEUM OF MYSTICISM)

THE *MURALLA* BY NIGHT



AERIAL CITY VIEW



MUSEUM OF MYSTICISM

ÁVILA

Compared to cities like Toledo and Segovia, Ávila is less traveled but still has a longtime Sephardic legacy. While the earliest documented evidence of Hebrews in Ávila dates to 1144, Jews settled in the city when it was founded by Christians in Roman times. A spectacular, well-preserved 11th-century wall surrounds the old town and defines the city. Beautifully lit a night, the wall stands an impressive 40 feet high. Within the city wall, you will find the main Jewish quarter in the southeast end of the old town with its labyrinth of small streets where Jewish craftsmen and merchants worked and resided.

St. Teresa—an inseparable part of the Ávila identity—was originally from a family of Jewish merchants from Toledo. Some say she brought a mystical Jewish strain to her career in the church, and she reportedly had powers of levitation. She was canonized by the Catholic Church and is the patron saint of headache sufferers. Convento de Santa Teresa (Convent of St. Teresa) is the primary shrine of St. Teresa in Ávila. Sala de Reliquias contains the relics of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. The exhibit of St. Teresa's relics include a finger from her right hand, the sole of one of her sandals, her rosary beads and a cord she used to flagellate herself.

Tourism Office Contact: Casa de las Carnicerías, San Segundo, 17, 5001, Ávila; 34-920-211-387; oficinadeturismodeavila@jcyl.es; www.turismoavila.com



PARADOR ÁVILA

GETTING THERE

While nicknamed the *City of Stones and Saints*, Ávila remains connected to modern Madrid via a 90-minute high-speed train trip.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | Housed in the 16th-century Piedras Albas Palace, **Parador Ávila** offers bright, spacious rooms—some with four-poster beds—granite floors and views of the city wall. Enjoy the peace of the glass-roofed courtyard, and admire the archaeological remains in the garden. *Marqués Canales de Chozas, 2; 34-920-211-340; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Close to the cathedral in the city center, **Doña Guiomar** is well loved among both locals and visitors thanks to a cozy atmosphere and creative menu. For traditional, seasonal cuisine, head to **The Charolés** where hearty cocido stew is served in the charming stone-walled dining room. Be sure to sample the delicious sweets, biscuits, chocolate and cakes that the nuns of the Convent of Santa María de Jesúis (nuns of the Order of Saint Clare) and the Monastery of Santa Anathe make. You may also want to try the beans called judias from **Barco de Ávila**, which are said to be the best in all of Spain. Other local favorite foods are veal, roasts, goat cheese and potatoes flavored with spicy chorizo.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | On Calle Pocillo, you can view the remains of **El Pocillo Synagogue**. In the Jewish quarter here, Moshe de Leon wrote the *Book of Splendor*, the last part of the Jewish Cabbalistic mystic trilogy. Today, sightseers visit the **Museum of Mysticism** and a garden in tribute to Moshe De Leon.

Walking along the ancient city *muralla* (wall) is a must. Stretching 1.5 miles around the city, this awe-inspiring structure has been enhanced over the centuries, with Roman, Moorish, Gothic and Renaissance elements still ingrained in the masonry today. Of the eight gates, the **Puerta de San Vicente** and **Puerta del Alcázar** steal the show with their 65-foot towers flanking the apse of **Ávila Cathedral**. Built as both fortress and place of worship, the cathedral itself forms a robust bulwark in the city wall. Behind the original Romanesque facade are significant 16th-century additions that made Ávila the first Gothic church in Spain.

To see some Isabelline architecture at its best, explore the 15th-century **Real Monasterio de Santo Tomás**, thought to entomb the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada and home to the intriguing **Museo Oriental**.

FESTIVALS | In June, the city hosts the **Ávila Tapas Contest**, and from June to September, **Theater on the Wall** brings the *muralla* to life with costumed performers recounting its history. A Medieval festival recreates the city as it was on the first weekend in September.



PHOTOGRAPHY: TRIANGLE POSTALS / PERE WVES (JEWISH QUARTER)

NARROW STREETS / JEWISH QUARTER



QUIET CORNER / JEWISH QUARTER



ANCIENT ARCH / JEWISH QUARTER

BARCELONA

In the 14th century, the Jewish population hit a peak in this bustling, colorful city on the Mediterranean. The Jews lived in an area of Barcelona called the "Call," derived from the Hebrew word *qahal*, meaning meeting place, or place to be together. By the mid-1300s, this Jewish quarter had swelled to 4,000—about 15 percent of the city's population. From this neighborhood of narrow streets came a community of top scholars, physicians and economists. Winemakers, bankers and bakers all thrived in a hive of commerce, providing goods and services to both the Christian and Jewish communities.

In August of 1391, however, growing anti-Semitism in the Spanish Christian church culminated in a massacre in the Call; many Jews were forced to convert to Christianity and practice their faith in secret. Over the next few decades, hundreds of thousands of Jews left Spain, and the Golden Age of Jewish culture in Barcelona and Spain came to an end.

After hundreds of years, Turkish and Moroccan Jews started returning to Barcelona in the late 1800s. A law prohibiting the establishment of synagogues was struck down in 1909.

Today, about 4,000 Jews again live in Barcelona. Not far from the popular promenade, La Rambla, you can stroll along the Carrer de Sant Domènec, which is the main street in the Call. Walk past the site of the old kosher butcher shop and the ancient Synagoga Mayor. This is one of the oldest synagogues in Europe, dating back as far back as the third century AD. The Associació Call de Barcelona restored the temple, which is now open to the public. Explore Carrer Sant Honorat where the water fountains were located, so that the Jews did not have to leave the quarter to fetch water. Other sites include the hidden *mikvot* (Jewish ritual baths) and a Jewish women's school.

Tourism Office Contact: Ciutat 2, (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona), 8001, Barcelona; 34-807-117-222; telturi@barcelonaturisme.com; www.barcelonaturisme.com



GETTING THERE

While direct flights from New York, Miami and Philadelphia should be more than enough for the international traveler, a two-hour, 30-minute high-speed train trip from Madrid suits domestic needs.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | An hour from Barcelona, **Parador de Cardona**—a charming 9th-century castle—sits on a hill overlooking the town. Moats, towers and Catalán-inspired medieval furniture combine with modern comforts, such as a bar, air conditioning, elevator, satellite TV, gym and sauna. Vaulted ceilings, stone walls and gorgeous courtyards add to the fairy-tale ambience. *Castell de Cardona, s/n, Cardona, 34-938-691-275; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Located in a posh neighborhood near the Sant Gervasi neighborhood, **Delicias Kosher Restaurant** prepares a menu of modern and traditional dishes influenced by the flavors of Spain, Italy, Morocco and Hungary. Try the *matbucha* (a traditional Moroccan dish of tomatoes and roasted bell peppers seasoned with garlic and chili pepper), the *shakshuka* (a rich egg dish that's a Passover favorite) or codfish carpaccio with olive paste. Accompany the meal with a one of the many fine national and international kosher wines. Only minutes from Paseo de Gracia, **Kosher Club** serves delicious Mediterranean cuisine cooked following strict kosher guidelines. Gravlax, latkes and baba ganoush are terrific starters before a dinner of fresh fish. Kosher Club also provides a Shabbat menu.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | On the southwestern border of Barcelona, you will find **Montjuïc** or "Mountain of the Jews," the cemetery where the Hebrew community buried its dead. Located nearby is the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** and **CaixaForum**, both of which house interesting collections of art. Barcelona pulses with creativity: Antoni Gaudí's surreal architecture enlivens the city at several locations. His most famous basilica, the **Sagarada Family** (Sacred Family), is a must-see. The **Picasso Museum** houses one of the best collections of the 20th-century master, including his Cubist originals. The glass tunnel at the **Barcelona Aquarium** allows you to take a thrilling walk among the sharks. Other highlights are the colossal **Barri Gòtic** cathedral and **La Boquería** (also called Mercat de Sant Josep).

For an inspiring day trip, head to **Figueres**, the home of the **Salvador Dali Museum** or travel north to the monastery high in the unusual mountains of **Montserrat**.

FESTIVALS | At the end of September, Barcelona holds one of the largest street parties, **Barcelona La Merce Festival**. Usually in February, the city celebrates a traditional Catalán feast called the **Calçotada**, which is a celebration of spring onions. In June, the **Jewish Film Festival Barcelona** shows a range of film related to Jewish culture and issues.



PHOTOGRAPHY: AYUNTAMIENTO DE CÁCERES (OLIVE GROVE, OLD JEWISH QUARTER)

OLIVE GROVE OF THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER



OLD JEWISH QUARTER



PALACE OF LA ISLA DETAIL

CÁCERES

A four-hour drive west of Madrid, this walled city has been called the most authentically medieval city still in existence, and it is, thankfully, not overrun by tourism. With its name derived from the Arab word meaning "fortified citadel," Cáceres inspires visitors with its jigsaw of Roman, Italian Renaissance and Gothic architecture. Many of the palaces and towers reflect the wealth of gold brought back from America by the conquistadors.

From the 13th to15th centuries, Jewish families thrived in Barrio de San Antonio. Walk through the narrow, sloping alleys of the old Judería and visit the modest homes of the *aljama* (the Jewish community in medieval Spain) and the synagogue, which is now the San Antonio hermitage. Tour Yusuf al-Burch's House and Museum, where the magnificent private baths may be either traditional *mikve* (Jewish ritual baths) or Arabic. Passing through the Arco de Cristo, the only Roman arch still standing, you'll enter the Olivar de la Judería, or the olive grove of the Jewish quarter. Outside the city walls, a new Judería was built in 1478, and the elaborate Palace of La Isla stands on the site of the synagogue in this neighborhood.

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza Mayor, s/n, 10003, Cáceres; 34-927-255-765; caceres@ciudadespatrimonio.org; www.turismo.caceres.es



CÁCERES

GUEST ROOM / PARADOR DE CÁCERES

GETTING THERE

Located to the southwest of Madrid, the comfort of a three-hour, 45-minute high-speed train ride makes shuttling between these two beautiful cities a breeze.

DON'T MISS

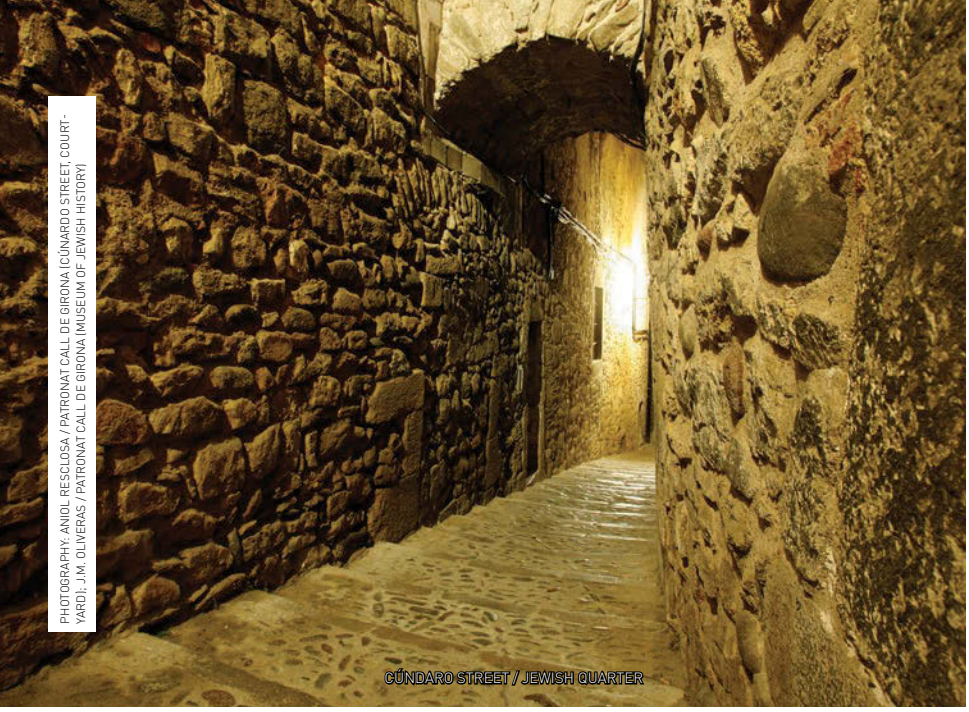
TOP SLEEPS | Set in two 14th-century palaces of the marquises of Torreorgaz and Ovando Mogollón, **Parador de Cáceres** strikes a nice balance between historic beauty and modern amenities. Located in the historic heart of the city, rooms are light and fresh, and the tree-shaded terrace provides a delightful spot for a glass of wine. *C/ Ancha, 6; 34-927-211-759; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Finding kosher selections may be near impossible. Cáceres is in the heart of Spain's pig country, and the indigenous black Iberian pigs have roamed under the oak trees in this area for centuries. But the cuisine extends far beyond the famous pork with many restaurants serving trout, pastries, fried breadcrumbs and honey. **Tortas del Casar** is the most popular cheese of the region. Some of the finest cuisine in the province can be found at two-Michelin-star **Atrio** in the heart of the old Cáceres, where chef Toño Pérez creates rich, regional flavors as well as more continental fare. **El Figón de Eustaquio**, a family restaurant with white tablecloths and waiters in jackets, is one of the older restaurants in the city.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | A short trip from Cáceres is the town of **Hervás**, which possesses one of the best-preserved Jewish quarters in Spain. The small town offers a rich Sephardic history, which it honors with events centered around Jewish culture and customs. For an expedition into nature, **Monfrague National Park** in the province provides stunning bird watching opportunities.

Back in the city of Cáceres, make sure your itinerary includes **Plaza Mayor**, surrounded by intriguing monuments like the **Palacio Toledo-Moctezuma**, the **Bujaco** and **Los Púlpitos** towers, as well as the **Foro de los Balbos** forum, the **Arco de la Estrella** gateway, the **Ermita de la Paz** (Chapel of Peace) and the **Ayuntamiento** (town hall). From here, explore the **Co-cathedral of Santa María**—an impressive Gothic structure with Romanesque and Renaissance features.

FESTIVALS | Cáceres hosts many cultural events throughout the year. **The Medieval Market of the Three Cultures** in November honors the city's Jewish, Islamic and Christian heritage. The city has presented weekend concerts in the Old Jewish Quarter in August, but check with the local tourism office for a full schedule. Its biggest music festival, **WOMAD** (World of Music, Arts and Dance) in May, brings an explosion of music and dance from around the world to this ancient setting. In September, the **Ancient Music Festival** celebrates Latin American and Spanish music from the 17th and 18th centuries.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ANIOL RESCLOSA / PATRONAT CALL DE GIRONA (CÚNARDO STREET, COURTYARD); J.M. OLIVERAS / PATRONAT CALL DE GIRONA (MUSEUM OF JEWISH HISTORY)

CÚNDARO STREET / JEWISH QUARTER



MUSEUM OF JEWISH HISTORY



GIRONA

MUSUEM OF JEWISH HISTORY COURTYARD

GIRONA

Just an hour to the northeast of Barcelona, the enchanting medieval city of Girona attracts visitors who want to step off the beaten path. Founded around 76 BC, the city neatly divides along the Onyar River, which separates the new part of town from the old. As in Barcelona, the Jewish community flourished in Girona in the 13th century, and the Jewish ghetto (the "Call"), with its narrow cobblestone streets, is one of the best preserved in Europe. Take a five-minute walk up the hill from the massive Cathedral of Saint Mary of Girona with its 90 steps, and you'll discover Torre de Gironella, the highest point in the Jewish quarter. In early August of 1391, the Jewish community sought refuge here when anti-Jewish sentiment from Christian Spain erupted. Although Spain's expulsion decree did not go into effect until 1492, Girona's Jewish community was destroyed.

Today, the Jewish heritage of Girona has been reclaimed. With Jerusalem's chief Sephardic rabbi, Rishon Letzion, presiding, the first Hanukkah celebration in 607 years was held on December 20, 1998. Representatives from Jewish communities of Spain, France, Portugal, Germany and the United States attended.

Tourism Office Contact: Rambla de la Libertat 1, 17004, Girona; 34-972-226-575; turisme@ajgirona.cat; www.ajuntament.gi/turisme

GETTING THERE

Just up the Catalán coast, Girona lies well within Barcelona's metropolitan reach thanks to a high-speed rail line that cuts travel time to just 40 minutes.

DON'T MISS

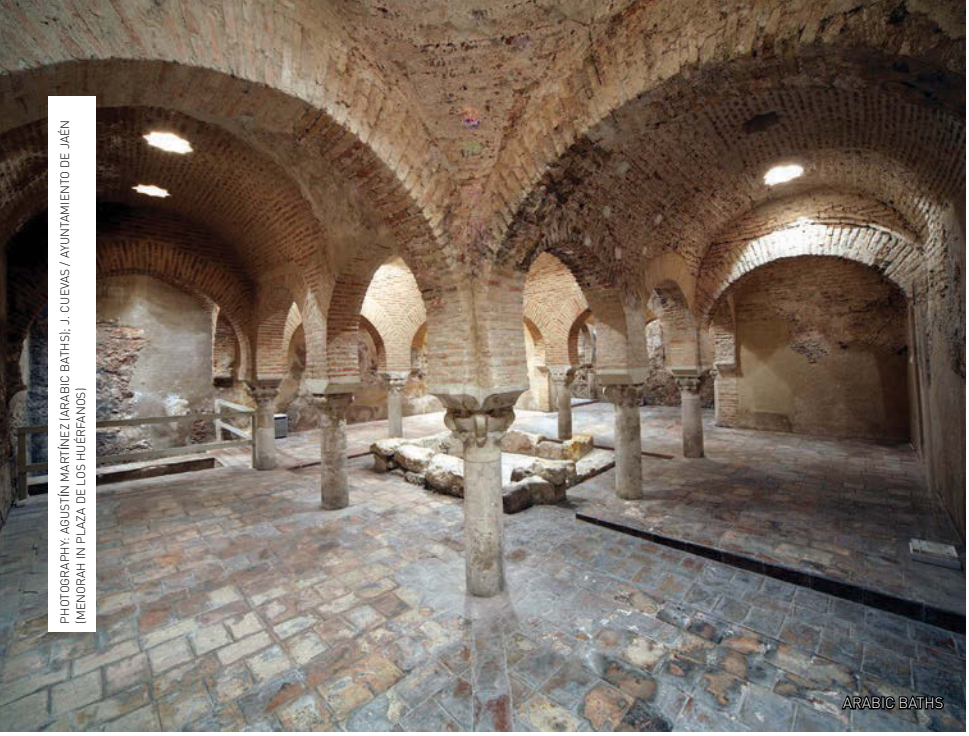
TOP EATS | Girona is known for two rich delicacies: Foie gras and truffles. The area also produces organic apples, asparagus, artichokes and peas. In 2013, **El Celler de Can Roca**, one of Catalonia's top eateries was declared the best restaurant in the world by Britain's *Restaurant* magazine. Airy and modern, the establishment prepares unique twists on Catalán cuisine, such as perfumed pudding (containing perfume), sea slugs and caramelized olives served on a bonsai tree. The food has been described as traditional fused with surreal touches. Some restaurants in Girona will serve Sephardic cuisine sampling menus, but check with the tourism office for options.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | For a better understanding of Girona's Judería, **Museu de Història dels Jueus** (Museum of Jewish History) houses 21 stone tablets, one of the finest collections in the world of medieval Jewish funerary slabs, in addition to other artifacts of Sephardic history.

In addition to the Call, take time to tour the amazingly preserved **Arab Baths** from 1194, which display a Romanesque and Moorish design. Film buffs may enjoy **Musee de Cine**, a unique, quirky, private museum dedicated to the movies. Spain considers **Parque de la Devesa**, the most beautiful gardens in the city, as one of its national treasures.

About 20 miles north of Girona, **Teatre-Museu Gala-Salvador Dali** in **Figueres** displays the works of the surrealist master; Salvador Dali himself is entombed in the basement. Not far from here is **Empordà**, which has been praised as the birthplace of modern Catalán cuisine with dishes such as baby cuttlefish and fish mousse. The picturesque towns of **Besalú** and **Olot** are worthwhile side-trip destinations. Girona is also a short distance inland from Spain's picturesque **Costa Brava** ("rugged coast") with its beautiful seaside fishing villages.

FESTIVALS | In May, Girona is in bloom with flowers of all kinds and the city celebrates the spring with **Temps de Flors** (Time of the Flowers). July brings musicians from around the world to the city for **Festival of World and Sacred Music**. The second week of October, cineastes descend on the city for the **Girona Film Festival**, and fans of theater and dance celebrate during the international **Temporada Alta** festival in the fall.



PHOTOGRAPHY: AGUSTÍN MARTÍNEZ (ARABIC BATHS); J. CUEVAS / AYUNTAMIENTO DE JAÉN (MENORAH IN PLAZA DE LOS HUÉRFANOS)

ARABIC BATHS



MENORAH IN PLAZA DE LOS HUÉRFANOS



LOBBY LOUNGE / PARADOR DE JAÉN

JAÉN

"The footprints of those who walked together can never be erased." Inscribed on a large menorah in the Plaza de los Huérfanos, these words—written in both Spanish and Sephardic—capture the enduring history of the Jews in Jaén, a city surrounded by unending rows of olive groves and known for its superb olive oil.

Situated just over 200 miles from Madrid in the Andalusia region in southwest Spain, Jaén is a good stopping point for tourists en route between Córdoba and Granada. Its name is thought to come from an old Arabic word meaning a resting place for a caravan, and Jaén offers a perfect spot to relax and recharge. Forming part of the ancient fortified walls in the Old City, the old Jewish quarter, or Barrio de Santa Cruz, is made up of tightly huddled houses. In the quarter, you'll also discover the Baths of Isaac by the church of San Andrés. The structure of this church seems to indicate that, before becoming a Christian house of worship, it was once a synagogue.

Other highlights of Jaén include the Gothic, baroque and Renaissance styles combined at the Cathedral de Santa Maria, which is home to a celebrated relic, the Santo Rostro (Holy Face), a cloth used to wipe Jesus's face and said to show his face imprinted on the fabric (similar to the Shroud of Turin).

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza de San Francisco, 2, 23071, Jaén; 34-953-248-000; turismo@promojaen.es; www.dipujaen.es



PARADOR DE JAÉN

GETTING THERE

Though not lightning-fast, the four-hour train ride from Madrid to Jaén complements its patient pace with picturesque vistas of the Spanish countryside.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | Parador de Jaén is not only a magnificent place to stay, it is also the **Castillo de Santa Catalina**—one of the city's most important historic sites. Although constructed as a fortress by the Moors, the castle is said to be the location of a watchtower built by Hannibal and his men. With its high position and breathtaking panoramic views of Jaén, you can understand why it was chosen as a strategic military point. While sightseers come to visit, many stay overnight to enjoy the majesty of the Arabic-style dining room, chandeliers and archways. The rooms come complete with full amenities and an outdoor swimming pool gives a chance to cool off in the warmer weather. *Castillo de Santa Catalina, s/n, 34-953-230-000; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Jaén is one of the few Spanish cities that continues to serve free tapas (appetizers) when you order a drink. They may be potato salad, toast with cured ham or anchovies. Two specialties of the region are *andrajos* (a warm, lime-green stew of rabbit, noodles and vegetables) and *ochíos con morcilla en caldera* (paprika-coated bread rolls filled with flavorful blood-sausage pâté). Expect olive oil to be used in more generous servings than elsewhere in Spain. For traditional and creative fare, try **Casa Antonio** and **Casa Vincente**. For traditional Andalusian cuisine, visit **Mesones 14. Resaurante Juanito** in the village of Baeza in the province of Jaén has been around for more than 50 years and is one of the most famous restaurants in Spain.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | At the **Centro Cultural Palacio de Villardompardoin** in the Judería, three attractions combine into one—two museums (the **Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares** and **Museo International de Arte Naif**) and the impressive Arab baths dating from the 11th century. The Jewish population used these baths on Fridays before the Sabbath.

About a half hour from Jaén, the beautiful 16th-century town of **Baeza** takes you to one of the largest olive plantations in all Europe. About two hours from Jaén, **El Parque Nacional de Cazorla** gives the opportunity to see wild boars, mountain goats, mouflon sheep and other animals of the region. **Parador de Cazorla** provides peaceful accommodations for an overnight stay. Forty-five minutes from Jaén, the splendor of **Ubeda** awaits with its astoundingly well-preserved Renaissance buildings.

FESTIVALS | People travel from all over Spain to watch the processions during Jaén's **Holy Week** celebrations at Easter. On **San Antón's Da**y in January, people gather around bonfires, and eat and dance. The celebration of **Carnaval** arrives in February, and throughout the province, villages and towns celebrate **Cruces de Mayo**, decorating the streets and patios with altars made of flowers to commemorate the Holy Cross.



PHOTOGRAPHY: CÉSAR ANDRÉS MARTÍNEZ / AYUNTAMIENTO DE LEÓN (DON GUTIERRE PALACE, PLAZA MAYOR, MEDIEVAL WALL)

DON GUTIERRE PALACE / OLD JEWISH QUARTER

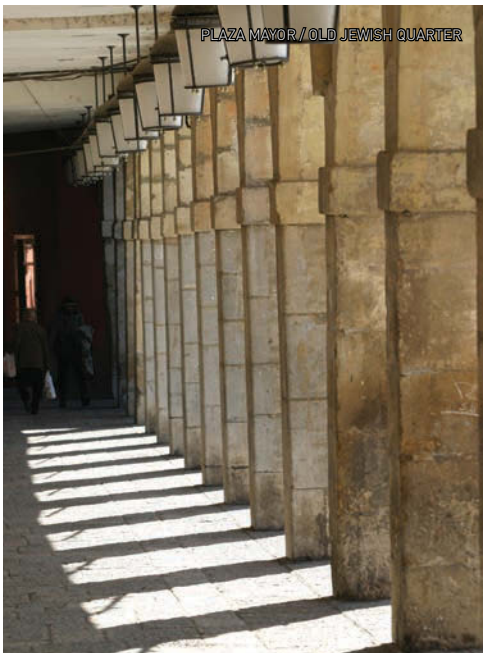


LEÓN

COURTYARD / PARADOR DE LEON



MEDIEVAL WALL / PRADO DE LOS JUDÍOS STREET



PLAZA MAYOR / OLD JEWISH QUARTER

LEÓN

The capital of the northern province of the same name, León blends modern and ancient worlds. On the contemporary side, the city pulses with energy from factories to apartment buildings to the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, León's showpiece of new wave, innovative Spanish architecture. At the heart of the city, you will also find the breathtaking ancient sites of the Middle Ages.

While the popular Barrio Húmedo (or "wet neighborhood") bustles with bars and restaurants, it is also home to the old Jewish quarter. The first Hebrew families most likely arrived at the end of the 10th century, and they prospered here for hundreds of years. At one point, the Jewish community grew to 1,000—about a third of the city's population. In 1090, they were given practically the same rights as Christians—they owned land for farming and winemaking.

As a vital part of León's commerce, they became one of the wealthiest Juderías in Spain. The Main Synagogue stood at Calle Misericordia, and next to the medieval walls, the Prado de Los Judíos, or Meadow of the Jews, is the old Hebrew cemetery. The Jewish influence is recognized in the León Cathedral, a stunning 13th-century temple built in honor of Santa María. Inside the cathedral, with its two tall towers covered with beautiful sculptures and wonderful tall stained glass windows, a fresco portrays the Jews living alongside the Christians.

Tourism Office Contact: Edificio Torreón Plaza de la Regla, 2, 24003, León; 34-987-237-082; oficinadeturismodeleon@jcyl.es; www.leon.es

GETTING THERE

Tucked in Spain's northwest corner, León lies two hours and 45 minutes down the tracks from Madrid's rail hub.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | Parador de Leon–Hostal San Marco holds court over the vibrant Plaza de San Marcos. It was originally built to shelter the pilgrims on the Santiago Way. In the 15th century it was converted into a monastery and today it is one of Spain's most impressive hotels. Highlights are the regal halls, spacious rooms and the library. The restaurant offers impeccable traditional gastronomy. *Pza. de San Marcos, 7; 34-987-237-300; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | Sephardic cuisine is not currently on the menu in León, but with renewed interest in Jewish heritage in the region options may become available. **El Llar** is an old León taberna that serves wonderful tapas (musts are the baked potatoes filled with wild mushrooms and prawns au gratin). The upstairs restaurant has vegetarian options and fish, such as León trout in a crab sauce. **Vivaldi** is considered to be León's best restaurant combining innovative cuisine with traditional products.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | Built in 966, **San Isidoro Basilica** is one of the most important Romanesque churches in Spain. The church holds the Royal Pantheon, and the beautiful Romanesque paintings on its ceiling have been called the Sistine Chapel of Romanesque art.

The village of **Astorga** is a half-hour drive outside of León, and Jews were living in the fortified section as early as the 11th century. Astorga is known for its ancient city wall, and a street called the Garden (Paseo) of the Synagogue formerly ran beside it. Astorga is also home to Gaudì's **Episcopal Palace**, which has been called a fantastic piece of nonfunctional design.

In the villages near León, you may want to explore vineyards such as **Valdevimbre**, where the wine cellar caves go back 300 years. Some of these caves have become restaurants or pubs serving typical food and wine of the region.

FESTIVALS | León celebrates the **Fiestas of San Juan** in June with processions and bullfights during the day and open-air music concerts, bonfires, fireworks and partying at night. The **Easter Week** processions in León are renowned, especially the Good Friday march through the historical center of the city.



SALSIPUEDES STREET / JEWISH QUARTER

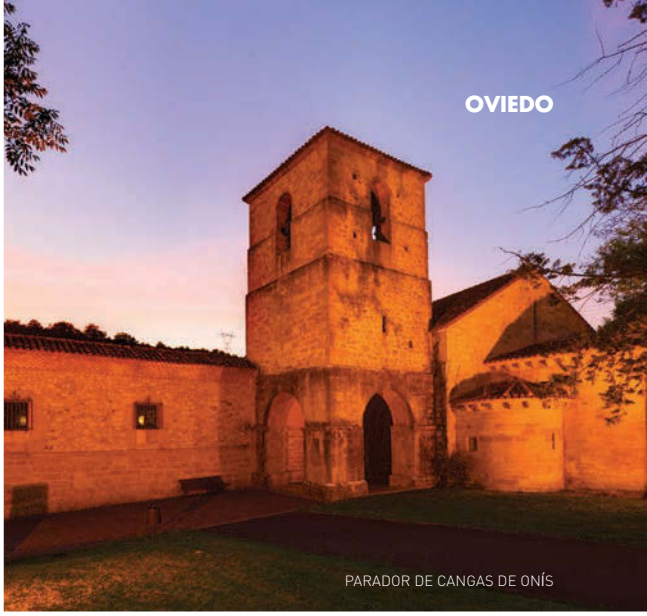


PARADOR DE CANGAS DE ONÍS



FONTÁN SQUARE

PHOTOGRAPHY: AYUNTAMIENTO DE OVIEDO (SALSIPUEDES STREET, FONTÁN SQUARE)



OVIEDO

PARADOR DE CANGAS DE ONÍS

OVIEDO

In Oviedo in 1990, the Sephardic Jews of the world were awarded the Concorde Prize, one of Spain's most prestigious awards, by the Prince of Asturias, the Heir Apparent to the throne of Spain. The gesture was an effort at reconciliation for the expulsion of the Jews nearly 500 years earlier.

A long 276 miles north of Madrid but just 16 miles from the coast, this city in Asturias attracted Jewish settlers before the 11th century and their community steadily increased through the 13th century. A large synagogue was located at Casina del Fontán in the beautiful historic quarter, and until the last quarter of the 13th century, Jews moved freely within the city walls and lived throughout the city alongside their Christian neighbors.

In 1274, the Council of Oviedo established the Judería, stretching from Puerta del Castiello to Puerta Nueva de Soscastiello. The edict confined the community to 500 people and about 50 houses. Visitors today can walk through the old Jewish quarter where the fishmongers and butchers plied their trades. In the 19th century, architects built the Campoamor Theater over the Jewish cemetery, and several plaques now stand demarcating the former Jewish quarter.

Today, Oviedo is a cultural center with a great appreciation of cinema. A Jewish film festival is held there each May, and you might be surprised to bump into a life-size statue of Woody Allen—whose parents were Ashkenazi Jews—which stands in Calle Milicias Nacionales. Allen has said, "My statue in Oviedo is one of the great mysteries of Western civilization." Allen, however, was enchanted by the city. He said, "Oviedo is a delicious city, exotic, beautiful: It's as if it didn't belong to this world....Oviedo is a fairy tale."

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza de la Constitución 4, 33009, Oviedo; 34-984-493-785; citpa.oviedo@asturias.org; www.infoasturias.com

GETTING THERE

About as far north as you can go before hitting the Atlantic Ocean, Oviedo—five hours from Madrid via train—makes for an easy weekend escape.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | Parador de Cangas de Onís, a jewel set on the green banks of the River Sella with the magnificent Picos de Europa as its backdrop, was a monastery from the 12th century. The rooms have been redesigned to offer modern hospitality to travelers. Enjoy the two-story cloister with semi-circular arches around the lower story; the beautiful triple-arch arcade meanwhile lends an air of distinction to the upper part of the patio. At the restaurant here, you can savor local cuisine—soups, bean stews and fish, such as limpet, sea urchin, sea bream cooked in cider and stuffed Hake. *33550 Cangas de Onís, Asturias; 34-985-849-402; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | With a renewed interest in Sephardic culture, typical Jewish cuisine may one day be available in Oviedo. For now, you can shop at a magnificent market in the heart of the medieval neighborhood. If you're looking to quench your thirst, try the typical cider bar **Tierra Astur**. Diners come to **Casa Conrado** for its old-school fine dining experience and meals such as hake in cider. **Casa Fermín** prepares Oviedo's best regional cuisine—a classic dish is fabada asturiana, a bean dish with Asturian black pudding and Avilés ham. Or try the intimate, atmospheric **El Raitán**.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | Highlights of the city are **Museo del Bella Artes** (one of the best public art collections in Spain) and its three major churches, which date back to the 9th century and have a unique style, not influenced by the Romanesque style that spread from France.

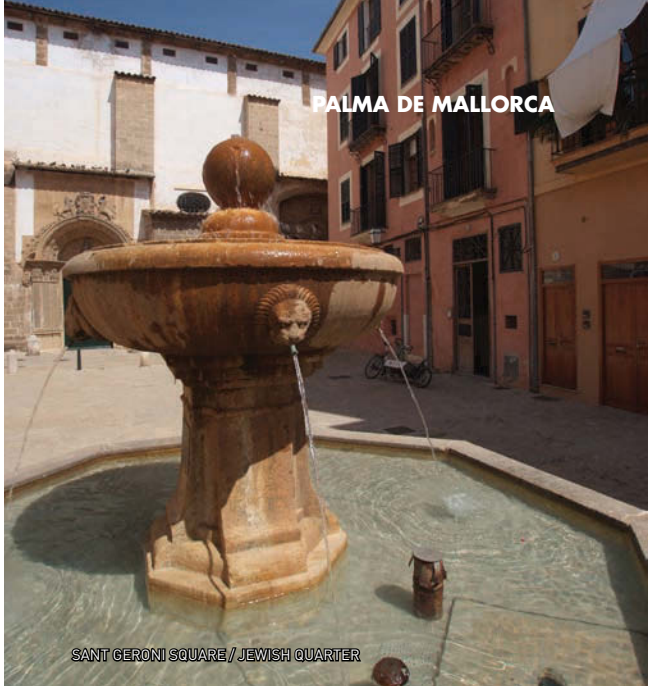
For a change of pace, head into the mountains to **Sotres**, which is the highest of all the villages in **Picos de Europa National Park**. A local at the tiny convenience store says she descended from Jews who sought refuge in Sotres during the Inquisition 600 years ago. For a taste of the sea, travel to the fishing village of **Gijón**, which is not far from Oviedo.

FESTIVALS | In May, **Ciclo de Cine Judio**, the festival about the new cycle of Jewish film, attracts cineastes from around the globe. Oviedo's main festival is **San Mateo** in the third week of September, with the two most important days being **Día de America** on the 19th and the **Día de San Mateo** on the 21st.



PHOTOGRAPHY: RAFAEL BLANC / AJUNTAMENT DE PALMA (SOL STREET, SANT GERONI SQUARE)

SOL STREET / JEWISH QUARTER



SANT GERONI SQUARE / JEWISH QUARTER

PALMA DE MALLORCA

Compared to touring other Juderías throughout Spain, visiting the quarter in Palma is inherently a unique experience because of its location on Mallorca (or Majorca), the largest of the Balearic Islands, about 120 miles off the East Coast. While many Europeans come to the island to bask in the sun, sand and sea, Palma offers a trip back to one of the earliest Jewish settlements, dating from the 5th century.

For several hundreds years Jews built a vibrant community here, making significant contributions to the fields of astronomy, astrology, mathematics, medicine and philosophy. The renowned cartographer Jafuda Cresques, who drew the maps used by Christopher Columbus, lived here, as did the writer Rabbi Joseph Caspi. Walking the streets of the old Jewish Call (Jewish quarter) with its warm sandstone walls, you can view the Church of Monte Sion, which was built on the remains of the old synagogue. Throughout the Call, you will encounter sites of other Jewish temples, homes, schools and businesses. Silver shops lined Calle Plateria, where jewelry is still sold today, and the now calm Carrer Sol (formerly called Career de Call dels Jueus) bustled with life as the main street in the Judería. Although the Catholic Church forced many Jews to convert in the 1400s, many practiced Jewish rites in secret. These "hidden Jews" were called conversos, marranos or the perjorative but commonly used chueto. Today, the chuetos number about 20,000 in Mallorca, and include the descendants of Joan Miró, the famous Mallorcan artist who died in 1983. In 2012, some 600 years after the Spanish Inquisition, the chueto population was given the opportunity to officially reclaim their Jewish identity.

Tourism Office Contact: Passeig del Born 27, (Casal Solleric), 07012, Palma; 34-902-102-365; palmainfo@palma.es; www.palmademallorca.es

GETTING THERE

No need for sea legs on this trip, as 45- and 90-minute flights from Barcelona and Madrid, respectively, make accessing this Mediterranean isle easy.

DON'T MISS

TOP EATS | Kosher food is hard to find on the island, but husband-and-wife team Joyce and Dovid provide selections of kosher chicken, meat and challa (34-629-321-967). Some of the best tapas in Palma are dished up at **La Taverna de la Boveda**. Open since 1700, **C'an Joan de Saigo**, tucked down a small alley, serves a traditional, flaky ensaimada, the twisted pastry of the island perfect for breakfast. **Bon Lloc** is the spot for vegetarian. For cocktails, look for **Tast Club**, a speakeasy reached through an unmarked doorway on Carrer de Sant Jaume. For sophisticated Mediterranean cuisine, try **Misa Braseria** or the restaurant at **Hotel Convent de la Missió**, which is a renovated convent with bright, white minimalist rooms.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | A small Jewish community was founded in Palma in 1971, and about 300 Jews reside in Mallorca. An active synagogue is located at Monsenyor Palmer, 3, Ciutat de Mallorca (34-971-283-729; elcall@fcmail.com). In addition to the Sephardic heritage sites, see the works of artist Joan Miró displayed in his studios at **Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró**.

Also visit the 14th-century **Catedral de Mallorca** with its addition of Antoni Gaudí's stunning canopy, and the turreted, moat-surrounded **Castell de Bellver**. With its scenic landscapes and refreshing sea breezes, Mallorca offers some of the best golfing in the world. And of course, be sure to unwind and relax on la playa.

FESTIVALS | The **Eve of Sant Antoni Abad**, the patron saint of animals, on January 16, is celebrated in several towns of the island. The celebration centers on demons that rise out of the street and have fun with people in the streets. Three days later on January 19, the fiesta continues on the **Eve of the San Sebastián**, with bonfires and live music in the main squares. June 23 brings a celebration of summer, the **Eve of San Juan**, on the shortest night of the year. One of the most popular festivals is the **"Revelta de les Verges"** (Festival of the Virgins) on October 20 when young men gather on the street to court young women.



PHOTOGRAPHY: TURISMO DE SEGOVIA (JEWISH QUARTER, OLD GREAT SYNAGOGUE DETAIL)

VIEW OF THE JEWISH QUARTER



SEGOVIA

LOBBY LOUNGE / PARADOR DE SEGOVIA



GUEST ROOM / PARADOR DE SEGOVIA



ROMAN AQUEDUCT



OLD GREAT SYNAGOGUE DETAIL

SEGOVIA

Sitting on a rocky hill a short half-hour drive from Madrid, Segovia may be a small city but it is packed with history and amazing sights. Its most famous monument is a Roman aqueduct, dating back to the 1st century AD. By the Middle Ages, the Jews, Moors and Christians had all established communities and coexisted peacefully here for hundreds of years. The Sephardic neighborhood grew in the south side of the city and became a center of Jewish learning and one of biggest Juderías in all of Spain. A tile plaque marks the area prior to the Expulsion by the Catholic monarchs in the late 15th century.

With an awakened interest in its Jewish past, the city has begun a process of restoration of its Sephardic sites. In the quarter, sightseers can walk through what was once an impressive synagogue with graceful Mudejar design. (Mudejar describes Muslims of the Middles Ages in Spain.) Moorish horseshoe arches distinguish the former temple, which is now the Corpus Christi Church. The Ibañez Synagogue (known as the New Greater Synagogue) stood in Plaza de San Gereteo. Visitors can also view the gravestones in the 11th-century Jewish cemetery. Decorated with abstract menorahs, black iron fence runs the length of the walkway protecting pedestrians from the steep drop at this ancient site.

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza Mayor, 9, 40001, Segovia; 34-921-466-070; info@segoviaturismo.es; www.segoviaturismo.es

GETTING THERE

Thanks to a high-speed train line, the ancient city walls of this city lie only 30 minutes from Madrid.

DON'T MISS

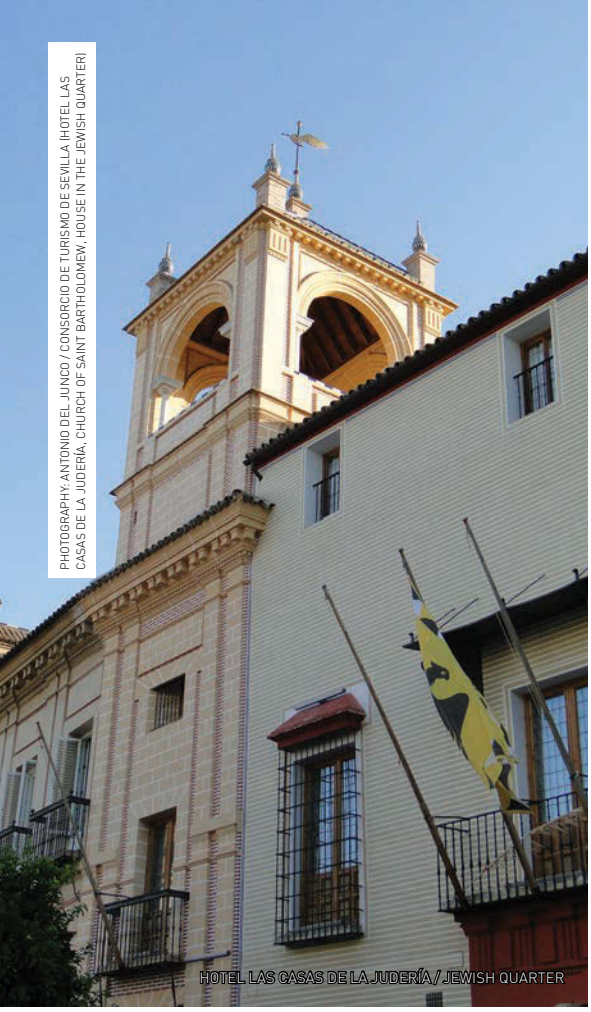
TOP SLEEPS | Parador de Segovia offers large, comfortable rooms with lovely views of the city. The foyer is tastefully decorated with modern art, and the pool is perfect for hot summer days. Events can be held in the convention center, and the restaurant excels in regional cuisine. *Carretera de Valladolid, s/n; 34-921-443-737; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | While not kosher, **El Fogon Sefardi** in the Jewish quarter offers two menus—one meat and one dairy. Here you'll enjoy gracious service and dishes such as duck confit with roasted dates, pears and prunes. **Judería Bar Restaurante** combines Jewish and Arabic flavors with simple meals of humus, falafel, and schwarma. While roast pork and lamb are the stars of Segovian cuisine, beans and trout are also mainstays. The city is big on pastries, and *el ponche Segovian* is a delicious traditional local layer cake.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | The **Museum of Segovia** (Casa del Sol) exhibits artifacts and art related to the region in a building that was originally the kosher butcher. Another highlight is the dramatic **Alcázar**. While the fortress is romanticized as a fairytale castle perched on a cliff, it is also the site in 1492 where Ferdinand and Isabella signed the Jewish Expulsion. Nearby you'll find **La Granja de San Ildefonso**, a Baroque-style royal residence boasting gorgeous gardens and fountains.

For beautiful views of Segovia from a distance, head out to the 15th-century convent of **San Antonio El Real** or the Romanesque churches of **San Millán** and **Vera Cruz**. Back in town, explore the three-nave interior of the Gothic cathedral. From here, you can follow the Calle Real to Plaza Mayor, see the **Casa de los Pico** ("House of Points"), covered with pointy pyramid-shaped reliefs. The 15th-century house was said to have been Jewish, but a superstitious Christian family moved in and changed the facade to ward off "evil" spirits.

FESTIVALS | In September, the **Virgin of the Fuencisla** festival honors the patroness of Segovia, with the biggest celebration on the last Sunday of the month.

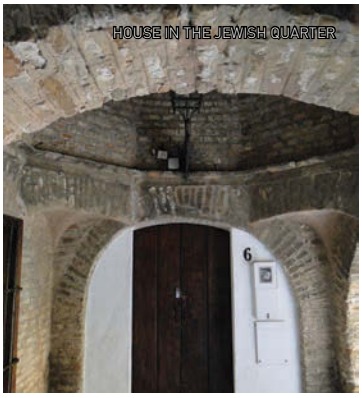


PHOTOGRAPHY: ANTONIO DEL JUNCO / CONSORCIO DE TURISMO DE SEVILLA (HOTEL LAS CASAS DE LA JUDERÍA, CHURCH OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW, HOUSE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER)

HOTEL LAS CASAS DE LA JUDERÍA / JEWISH QUARTER



CHURCH OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW / JEWISH QUARTER



HOUSE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER



SEVILLE

COURTYARD / PARADOR DE CARMONA

SEVILLE

If you've ever been through Williamsburg, Brooklyn, you may be familiar with the Satmar Hasidic Jews, one of the largest Hasidic sects with more than 150,000 members. The Satmars wear a distinctive black hat—most of which are made to order in Seville. While this connection of modern-day Jews to Seville may seem unlikely, the Sephardic heritage in the fourth largest city in Spain extends back to medieval times.

The Jewish neighborhood was centered in the Barrio de Santa Cruz, a playful labyrinth of traffic-free streets and whitewashed buildings, which is one of the most picturesque sections of Seville and fragrant with orange trees and flowering plants from private homes. Many signs of this Jewish neighborhood are no longer visible to tourists. The main synagogue that stood at Plaza de Santa Cruz was converted to the Church of Saint Bartholemew. Santa Cruz, however, is a beautiful area to explore, and you can even experience a passionate flamenco show in a typical Jewish house. Surprisingly, aspects of flamenco actually have their origins in Judaism.

Casa de la Memoria, appropriately located in the old Jewish quarter of Seville, has information and concerts of Sephardic music. As you wander the Judería, take note of Calle Susona, named in honor of the daughter of a Jewish merchant from the 15th century and her tragic love story. She fell in love with a Christian knight, and the couple could only meet in secret. When Susona overheard her father plotting against the Christians, she warned her lover, who told the authorities. Susona's entire family was slaughtered in retaliation. For years thereafter, the street was called Calle Muerte. Susona converted and retreated to a convent. When she died, she requested her skull be placed above the doorway of her home where it remained for 100 years as a symbol of redemption. Now the spot is marked with a glazed tile that shows a skull and one word: Susona.

Other can't-miss highlights of the city are the soaring Cathedral of Santa Maria where Christopher Columbus is buried, the ancient Arabic minaret Giralda tower, and the 14th-century Arabic palace Alcazar.

Tourism Office Contact: Plaza del Triunfo, 1, 41004, Seville; 34-954-501-001; infoturismo@dipusevilla.es; www.turismosevilla.org

GETTING THERE

Only two and a half hours from Madrid by high-speed train, visiting Seville is as convenient as it crucial.

DON'T MISS

TOP SLEEPS | Once a 14th-century Moorish fortress, **Parador de Carmona** provides elegance, comfort and a terrific launching point for exploring Seville. The hotel itself boasts vaulted ceilings, original stonework, spacious terraces and a beautiful courtyard. Visitors relax by the Mudéjar fountain and in the gardens. With its Sevillian tiling, tapestries and antique furniture, the hotel combines local history with modern amenities. *Alcázar, s/n, 34-954-141-010; www.parador.es*

TOP EATS | There are a few kosher options: **Café Bar Jerusalem** on Calle Salado primarily cooks Middle Eastern and kosher chicken, lamb and beef dishes. It's located in a very international area with Chinese, Japanese, Israeli and Argentinian restaurants nearby. Plenty of establishments serve traditional tapas and fino, dry sherry, but for elegant Basque-Andalucian cuisine, try **Enrique Becerra**, **Restaurante Egana-Oriza** or **Taberna del Alabardero**.

ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS | For a wine-tasting excursion, head to **Jerez de la Fronterra**, about an hour from Seville. Jerez is Spanish for sherry and home to the popular **Tio Pepe**, **Harveys** and **Sandeman** brands. For entertainment, take in a performance of the Andalusian dancing horses at **Real Escuela Andaluza de Arte Ecuestre** (Royal School of Equestrian Art) or dance at a "tablao," where flamenco shows are performed. There was a small J**udería of Jerez** with two synagogues.

Two hours from Seville, **Granada** captivates visitors with its amazing tapas and a vibrant Jewish history. In fact, the city was once known as Granada of the Jews. The statue of Yehuba Ibn Tibon, the doctor, translator, philosopher and poet greets tourists coming to the old Jewish quarter called the **Realejo**. By the end of the 15th century, Granada's Jewish population climbed to almost 50,000. The majority of the Jewish buildings were demolished, but you can learn more about the community at a small museum called **Casa de la Judería**.

FESTIVALS | Seville holds major festivals centered around the Easter holiday. During **Semana Santa**, the week leading up to Easter, the streets are packed with pilgrims and grand processions of elaborate floats. The European Centre for Jewish Students has celebrated Purim here as well. In June, the **International Sephardic Music Festival** takes place in Córdoba, an hour and half from Seville. The biggest annual Seville summer street party is **Velá de Santiago y Santa Ana** in July with food and live music.