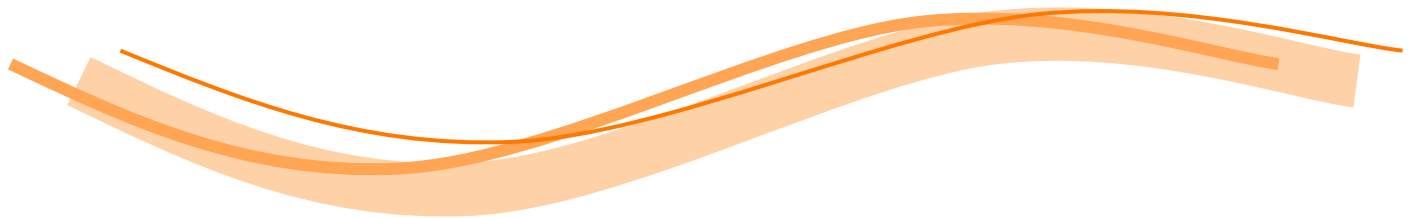




ANDALUCIA, SPAIN + TRANSAT HOLIDAYS





ANDALUCIA	<p>Spain is one of the world's most popular vacation destinations - and it has never been closer, thanks to direct flights to Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga with Air Transat. And once there, you can explore this large, diverse country thanks to new high speed train connections. This year more than ever, special packages are available with Transat Holidays at your Travel Agent.</p> <p>Andalucía is a dazzling mixture of picturesque villages, historic cities, brilliant sunshine and the Costa del Sol's beautiful beaches. Discover centuries of history, where Moorish and Christian elements go hand in hand. Andalucía is the home of Flamenco and bullfighting. Add intriguing Tapas Bars, wonderful restaurants and clubs that stay open until dawn - and you have the recipe for an exhilarating Spanish vacation.</p> <p>Andalucía includes the stunning cities of Cordoba, Seville and Granada. Malaga is the gateway to the region and to the beautiful beaches and excellent golf courses of the Costa del Sol.</p> <p>Transat Holidays offer direct flights to Malaga and a wide range of vacation packages, including a la carte accommodation, coach tours, train and car rentals – plus excursions to help you make the most of your vacation in Andalucía.</p> <p>Malaga Modern Málaga has jealously preserved the traces of its storied past: the city was coveted and conquered some 2,000 years ago by a succession of ancient civilizations, including Phoenicia, Greece, Carthage and Rome, and went on to become an Arab bastion during the 8th and 11th centuries. The popular neighbourhoods of El Perchel and La Trinidad, the gardens of Paseo del Parque, the Alameda and port area all bear witness to the city's eventful history. Monuments, museums and verdant parks all contribute to the appeal of this alluring port city that enjoys year-round balmy weather.</p> <p>Cordoba Cordoba is home to important heritage architecture. To take a stroll through the historic quarter of Cordoba is to discover a beautiful network of small streets, alleys, squares and whitewashed courtyards arranged around the Mosque-Cathedral, which reflects the importance of the city during medieval times.</p> <p>Have a full day tour of this stunning city that was once an Arab caliphate. First and foremost on the agenda is a visit to the Aljama</p>
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	<p>Mosque, one of the most representative buildings of Islamic art. With stunning doors and nearly a thousand columns, it is also home to a cathedral, which was added in the 16th century.</p> <p>Granada Moorish and Christian elements go hand in hand in the streets of Granada. Because it was the last city re-conquered by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492, Granada has an unmistakable Arab flavour. Its cuisine, crafts and urban layout are a consequence of the city's glorious history. Fountains, viewpoints and Cármenes, the villas surrounded by gardens typical of the city, add to Granada's unforgettable charm. Not in vain was one of its oldest districts, the Albaicín, declared a World Heritage Site, together with the Alhambra and the Generalife.</p> <p>The Alhambra's reddish hills house the old Alcazaba and the Nazarite Royal Palaces. This artistic gem of Arab Granada, built between the 13th and the 15th centuries, is composed of many rooms linked by courtyards, gardens and fountains. The Generalife, the summer residence of the Nazarite Monarchs, is also located on this hill, along with the Palace of Carlos V. It is a Renaissance-style building, housing the Provincial Fine Arts Museum and the Alhambra Museum.</p> <p>Seville On the banks of the Guadalquivir River, Seville has a rich Arab legacy and was a prosperous trading port with the Americas. Every street and square that making up the historic quarter of the Andalucian capital bursts with life. Museums, arts centres, theme parks, cinemas, theatres, and banquet halls are only a few of the endless activities. And numerous terraces, pubs and bars are home to the most deeply-rooted of all traditions of the city: delicious tapas cuisine.</p> <p>Enjoy a full day tour of this exceptional city with its beautiful picturesque streets, interior courts and impressive monuments. You will have a chance to admire Maria Luisa Park, Plaza de España, the Cathedral with paintings by Murillo, Goya and Zurbaran and the famed Giralda, as well as stroll through the Jewish district of Santa Cruz.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Spain is located on the Iberian Peninsula, between the Mediterranean Sea to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The Pyrenees separate the country from France to the north and it shares a long border with Portugal to the west. The Strait of Gibraltar divides the country from Morocco on the African continent in its southern part. The region of Andalucía lies in the south of Spain and its coasts are bathed by both the Mediterranean and Atlantic oceans. It borders the regions of Extremadura and Castile-La Mancha in the north, Murcia and</p>

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	<p>the Mediterranean Sea in the east, the Mediterranean and Atlantic ocean in the south, and Portugal in the west.</p>
Geography	<p>The region's scenery stands out because of its sheer diversity. Some areas are covered in mountains while others are full of plains. There are three distinct geographical structures: the sierra Morena to the north, the Guadalquivir river and Betica depression in the central part of the region, and the Betica mountain ranges in the south.</p> <p>The two most notable mountainous areas are the sub-Betica range, containing La Sagra massif that reaches an altitude of 2,383 metres and the Penibetica mountain range. The Sierra Nevada is also outstanding and is home to el Mulhacen, the highest mountain peak on the Iberian Peninsula reaching a height of 3,481 metres. Next comes Veleta peak at 3,392 metres.</p> <p>Andalusian rivers that lead into the Mediterranean sea are relatively short and contain small amounts of water. Amongst these are the Almanzora, the Almeria, the Adra, the Guadalfeo, the Guadalhore and the Guadiaro. The rivers that flow into the Atlantic are bigger and have greater volume. The region's most important river is the Guadalquivir and its tributaries. The Guadiana, the Odiel and the Tinto rivers also flow into the Atlantic.</p> <p>The vast stretch of coast that extends along Andalusia is filled with bays and inlets, some a little more craggy than others as we near the Betica mountain ranges. The most notable geographical quirks that are found along the coast include: the steep rock summit of Farallon, Polacra point, Gata cape, the gulf of Almeria, las Entinas point, Adra bay, Sacratif bay, Malaga bay and Calaburras point. Europa Point forms the Gibraltar headland. This is where the Spanish coast begins stretching from the straits of Gibraltar up to the cape of Trafalgar. Within the straits the most notable parts of the landscape are formed by Algeciras bay as well as by Marroqui (Moroccan) and Tarifa points.</p>
Name	<p>Al-Andalus was the Arabic name given to the parts of the Iberian Peninsula governed by Muslims, at various times in the period between 711 and 1492 and eventually applied to the last region occupied by the Arabs: what is now southern Spain. However the specific meaning of Al-Andalus is lost in the mists of time.</p>
Population	<p>The population of Spain is 40 million and of this region is 8.2 million. It is Spain's most populated region and has a population density of some 94 inhabitants per square kilometre. The population is mainly concentrated in provincial capitals and on the coast. The most populated cities are Seville, Malaga and Cordoba, while the provinces of Seville, Malaga and Cadiz are home to more than 50 % of the region's population.</p>
Language	<p>Spanish – but English is understood by many. A Spanish phrase book and the confidence to try out some Spanish will be richly rewarded.</p>

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Currency	<p>The euro (€), the single European currency, became the official currency in Spain and 11 other participating countries on January 1, 1999. After an overlapping period of just over 3 years, the old currency, the Spanish peseta, disappeared into history on March 1, 2002, and the euro became the sole currency in use.</p> <p>1 Euro = 1.32 Canadian Dollars (14 July 2010)</p> <p>The easiest and best way to get cash away from home is from an ATM (automated teller machine), sometimes referred to as a "cash machine," or a "cash-point." In Spain only four-digit numbers are valid so be sure to change any five- or six-digit PINs you may have to a four-digit number before you go.</p>
Tipping	<p>More expensive restaurants add a 7% tax to the bill and cheaper ones incorporate it into their prices. This is not a service charge, and a tip of 5% to 10% is expected in these establishments. For coffees and snacks most people just leave a few coins or round up to the nearest euro. Taxis do not expect tips. Although tipping is not mandatory for hotel staff, you should be aware that wages in the hospitality industry are extremely low so any supplement will be more than welcome. Tip hotel porters and doorman between \$1 and \$1.25, and maids about the same amount per day.</p>
Government	<p>Spain is a constitutional monarchy, with a hereditary monarch and a bicameral parliament, the Cortes Generales. The executive branch consists of a Council of Ministers presided over by the President of Government (comparable to a prime minister), proposed by the monarch and elected by the National Assembly following legislative elections.</p> <p>The Autonomous Community of Andalusia is administrated through the "Junta de Andalucía" and is one of the four historic regions of Spain. It has a local parliament and president.</p>
Documentation	Canadian passports are required, but no visa is necessary
Time zone	Spain is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time
Health	Spain does not pose any major health hazards. The rich cuisine - garlic, olive oil, and wine - may give some travelers mild stomach upset. The water is safe to drink throughout Spain
Safety tips	Normal traveler precautions apply. The risk of any terrorist activity affecting tourists is minimal. In particular, travellers are advised not to leave passports and tickets in their car.

CLIMATE	
General climate	<p>The weather in Andalucía is dominated by a Mediterranean climate. The summers in Andalusia are very hot while the winters are short. The rainfall except in autumn is low, (less than 700mm), not counting specific areas such as Grazalema sierra, Aracena sierra, the Sierra Nevada and La Sagra massif. The climate in these areas changes</p>

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	depending on the altitude and proximity to the coast, where temperatures are milder than inland. The average temperatures vary between 16°C and 18°C and decrease at altitude.
Today's weather	32 degrees Centigrade and sunny (17 July 2010) in Malaga.
Best time to visit	Winter is a wonderful time for Canadians to visit Andalucía. Not only is the winter weather more like sunny spring days in Canada, it is also low season for European visitors, so the wonderful sights of the region are un-crowded. It is even sometimes possible to ski in the Sierra Nevada in the morning and sunbathe on a Costa del Sol beach in the afternoon of the same day! Summer brings reliable hot, sunny days and great swimming on the Mediterranean beaches – but also the crowds.

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	7 to 8 hours with Air Transat direct flights from Montreal and Toronto to Malaga on the Costa del Sol.
Cities	<p>Cordoba is home to important heritage architecture. To take a stroll through the historic quarter of Cordoba is to discover a beautiful network of small streets, alleys, squares and whitewashed courtyards arranged around the Mosque-Cathedral, which reflects the importance of the city during medieval times.</p> <p>Yet despite its splendid past, Cordoba is definitely a modern city, offering infrastructure and services, as well as a large network of hotels. Cordoba also has high speed train connections and an extensive railway network linking it to all the big cities, like Madrid and Seville. Once inside the city, buses and taxis make it very easy to get around. Cordoba is synonymous with art, culture and leisure, thanks to a myriad of cultural events throughout the year: Flamenco festivals, concerts, ballet, a number of museums and an exciting nightlife.</p> <p>Seville: On the banks of the Guadalquivir River, Seville (population 700,000) has a rich Arab legacy and was a prosperous trading port with the Americas. Every street and square that making up the historic quarter of the Andalucian capital bursts with life. Museums, arts centres, theme parks, cinemas, theatres, and banquet halls are only a few of the endless activities. And numerous terraces, pubs and bars are home to the most deeply-rooted of all traditions of the city: delicious tapas cuisine. Another good excuse to come to the Seville is the festivals. The celebrations of Easter Week and Feria de Abril (the April Fair), reflect the devotion and folklore of the people of Seville.</p> <p>Seville is also your jumping off point for natural treasures such as the Doñana Nature Reserve, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve, and the Sierra Norte Nature Reserve. They are the ideal setting for outdoor sports including hiking, horse riding, and cycling. And Seville has four excellent golf courses in its vicinity.</p>

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	<p>Grenada: At the foot of Sierra Nevada, between the Darro and Genil rivers, lies Granada – a city with architectural gems from the Renaissance period. Because it was the last city to be re-conquered from the Moors by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492, Granada has an unmistakable Arab flavour. Its cuisine, crafts and urban layout are testament to the city's glorious history. Fountains, viewpoints and Cármenes (the villas surrounded by gardens, typical of the city) add to Granada's unforgettable charm.</p> <p>The Alhambra's reddish hills house the old Alcazaba and the Nazarite Royal Palaces. This artistic gem of Arab Granada, built between the 13th and the 15th centuries, is composed of many rooms linked by courtyards, gardens and fountains. The Generalife, the summer residence of the Nazarite Monarchs, is also located on this hill, along with the Palace of Carlos V. It is a Renaissance-style building, housing the Provincial Fine Arts Museum and the Alhambra Museum.</p> <p>Malaga is the gateway to the region of Andalucía and the Costa del Sol - the number one destination for Europeans in winter, with a mild climate, beautiful beaches and excellent golf courses. Visitors will enjoy exploring Málaga's recently refurbished historic city centre. Here, they'll discover the Pasaje de Chinitas, a lively little thoroughfare that's perfect for a stroll; the Calle Granada, home to the city's fine arts museum; and the Calle Larios, one of the old town's main gathering places. Slightly removed from Calle Larios, the neighbourhoods of El Perchel, El Egido and La Trinidad are also worth a visit.</p> <p>The 16,564-hectare Parque Natural de la Sierra de Las Nieveas provides city dwellers with a beautiful green space on the outskirts of Málaga. It boasts a beautiful Spanish pine forest which spreads over 2,000ha and, in its mountain area, juniper trees and Portuguese oaks. The park is also home to some impressive underground caves, including the 1,100m-deep Sima GESM and the Honda. The park's diverse fauna includes otters, ibex, fallow and white-tailed deer, and various birds of prey.</p> <p>Avid sunbathers can head to the gold-sand beaches of the coastal towns that surround Málaga. Torreblanca, near Fuengirola, is perfect for swimming and enjoying water sports. In Nerja, Torrecilla Beach features a walkway where joggers and cyclists can take in the sun while they enjoy their favourite activities.</p>
Distances	<p>Madrid to Granada: 434 km Granada to Seville: 256 km Granada to Cordoba: 166 km Granada to Malaga: 129 km Barcelona to Seville: 1046 km</p>

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Buses	<p>The public coach service in Spain as a whole is comfortable and efficient with a number of coach lines covering long distance routes across the country.</p> <p>Bus service in southern Spain is extensive, low priced, and comfortable enough for short distances. You'll rarely encounter a bus terminal. The station might be a cafe, a bar, the street in front of a hotel, or simply an intersection. A bus may be the cheapest mode of transportation, but it may not be best option for distances of more than 150km as the buses can be uncomfortable and may lack toilet facilities, although rest stops are frequent. It's best for 1-day excursions outside a major tourist center such as Seville. In the rural areas of the country, bus networks are more extensive than the railway system; they go virtually everywhere, connecting every village. In general, a bus ride between two major cities in Spain, such as from Córdoba to Seville, is about two-thirds the price of a train ride and a few hours faster. For bus information, contact ALSA (tel. 91-327-05-40; www.alsa.es)</p>
Trains	<p>Spain's railway system, the Red Nacional de Ferrocarriles Españoles (Renfe) operates the vast majority of Spain's railways.</p> <p>The crown jewel of Spain's next decade of infrastructure construction is the Spanish high speed rail network, Alta Velocidad Española AVE. The overall goal is to have all important provincial cities be no more than 4 hours away from Madrid. As of 2010, AVE high-speed trains link Atocha station to Seville, Málaga and Toledo in the south and to Zaragoza, Lleida, Tarragona and Barcelona in the east. These are currently the fastest trains operating in Europe and even President Obama has told Congress that he would like to see a system similar to to AVE in operation in the US.</p> <p>There are a range of different routes available on Spain's AVE high-speed trains. One of them links the Spanish capital, Madrid, with Seville, in the very heart of Andalusia, southern Spain. In under two and a half hours you can go from the most famous of cosmopolitan Madrid's monuments, such as the Royal Palace and Prado Museum, one of the world's finest art galleries, to enjoy the gastronomy and unique charm of Seville's most beautiful spots, like the Giralda and Torre del Oro towers. The speed of AVE trains means that in a very short time you can also travel from the capital to two cities in the Region of Castile-La Mancha, south of Madrid: Ciudad Real, where you will feel the presence of literary character Don Quixote, and Puertollano.</p> <p>Another Spanish city you can get to by AVE is Cordoba, located in southern Spain. Its historic centre has the World Heritage designation and you can see the mixture of Moorish and Christian cultures, so typical of Andalusia, in monuments such as its famous Great Mosque. Also in Andalusia, just 150 kms from Cordoba, AVE trains take you as far as Malaga where you will be amazed by the Roman Theatre.</p>

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Car Rental	All major international car rental companies operate in Andalucia including the international airport. Driving is on the right in Spain.
Ferries	You can catch a ferry from Algeciras, 132 km west of Malaga, to Tangier in Morocco; it's a 3 hour trip each way to this tip of Africa.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	<p>There is every type of accommodation available in the region from simple pensions to glitzy resorts. Transat Holidays offer a range of 19 accommodations in their Europe 2010 brochure from apartments to all inclusive resorts.</p> <p>One of my special treats when I visit Spain to seek out a Parador, a government-run hotel normally carved out of a historical monument and with a restaurant that serves local dishes – I have never been disappointed. Check out the choices on the website: www.parador.es</p>
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TARGET GROUPS	
Families	<p>Andalucía is called the playground of Spain, so there are many amusements here for the entire family to enjoy, including some of Europe's best beaches. Perhaps your main concern with having children along is pacing yourself to see monuments, including cathedrals. One suggestion is to spend one day at Córdoba but allow two days for Seville, which has many more attractions. That is followed by a visit south to Jerez de la Frontera, fabled for its horses and its sherry. The most scenic journey here will be from Jerez to Arcos de la Frontera all the way to the dramatic mountain town of Ronda, perched over a ravine high in the mountains. Kids will enjoy the final 2 days in Andalucía most of all because it will take them to the beach resorts of Torremolinos and Málaga, the capital of the Costa del Sol.</p> <p>In Cordoba head first for the Mezquita-Catedral de Córdoba, whose 856 still-standing pillars remind kids of giant peppermint stick candy. Follow up with a tour through the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos, which looks like the setting for a medieval adventure film for most kids. In Seville, see the once-mighty Alcázar, which will take about 2 hours of your family time. With its lavish decorations and ornate rooms, along with its 18th-century gardens, the castle fortress has enough elements to appeal to all ages. After lunch, visit Catedral de Seville, the largest Gothic structure on earth. Kids are usually awed by the place. If not, they will be when they get to climb the ancient Moorish tower, La Giralda. Also take the kids to the landmark Plaza de España where they can rent pedal boats, feed the ducks, and be amused by the donkey carts. As the afternoon wanes, head for Isla Mágica, built on the site of the 1992 Expo grounds. The park has been turned into a Disney-like playground including themed festivals and a Pirates' Cove.</p> <p>In Jerez, perfect for family viewing are the Dancing Horses of Jerez.</p>

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	<p>After seeing a performance of these stallions in the morning, you can fill out the afternoon with visits to the Alcázar and an intriguing trip to the Museo de los Relojes, the town's clock museum.</p> <p>Lastly, Torremolinos and the Costa del Sol. The two major beaches are at La Carihuela and El Bajondillo. After beach time you can take the kids to Aquapark with a lot of nautical attractions, including "water mountains." At Benalmádena, the satellite of Torremolinos, the family can visit the best aquarium in Andalusia, Sea Life Benalmádena, and have fun at Tivoli World, a large amusement park. Cap the day by boarding the teléferico, taking you to the top of Monte Calamorro for a panoramic vista of the Costa del Sol. For dinner that night, head to one of the fish restaurants at the old fishing village of La Carihuela.</p>
Romance	<p>Romantic highlights of this region of Spain are the famous White Towns that lie behind the Costa del Sol and the magical gardens of the Generalife in Grenada. Stay in one of the ancient Parador hotels in a castle, palace or monastery for a special experience.</p>
Seniors	<p>Andalucía is an excellent destination for the older traveler, combining high standards of accommodation and cuisine with easy transport and a wealth of cultural and scenic highlights.</p> <p>Mention the fact that you're a senior when you make your travel reservations. Many hotels offer discounts for seniors. In most cities, people over the age of 60 qualify for reduced admission to theaters, museums, and other attractions, as well as discounted fares on public transportation.</p>

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>The Christian forces in Spain finally defeated the last Arab kingdom in Spain at Grenada in the same year as Columbus discovered America for Spain: 1492.</p>
History	<p>What a history! Around 200 B.C. the Romans vanquished the Carthaginians and laid the foundations of the present Latin culture. Traces of Roman civilization can still be seen today. By the time of Julius Caesar, Spain (Hispania) was under Roman law and had begun a long period of peace and prosperity.</p> <p>When Rome fell in the 5th century, Spain was overrun, first by the Vandals and then by the Visigoths from eastern Europe. The chaotic rule of the Visigothic kings lasted about 300 years, but the barbarian invaders did adopt the language of their new country and tolerated Christianity as well.</p> <p>In A.D. 711, Moorish warriors led by Tarik crossed over into Spain and conquered the disunited country. By 714, they controlled most of it, except for a few mountain regions around Asturias. For 8 centuries the Moors occupied their new land, which they called al-Andalús, or Andalusia, with Córdoba as the capital.</p>

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In A.D. 852, under Emir Mohamed I Córdoba, Moors constructed the wooden Alcázar (fortress) in Mayrit - subsequently named Magerit and later Madrid - on the site of the present Palacio Real (Royal Palace). Its strategic position deterred 11th-century Castilian invaders who mistook what was then little more than a rural village for the bigger city of Toledo.

The **Reconquest**, the name given to the Christian efforts to rid the peninsula of the Moors, slowly reduced the size of the Muslim holdings, with Catholic monarchies forming in northern areas. The three powerful kingdoms of Aragón, Castile, and León were joined in 1469, when Ferdinand of Aragón married Isabella of Castile. Catholic kings, as they were called, launched the final attack on the Moors and completed the Reconquest in **1492 by capturing Granada**.

That same year Columbus, the Genoese sailor, landed in the West Indies, laying the foundations for a far-flung empire that brought wealth and power to Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries.

In the first half of the 16th century, Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean, Cortés seized Mexico for Spain, Pizarro took Peru, and a Spanish ship (initially commanded by the Portuguese Magellan, who was killed during the voyage) circumnavigated the globe. The conquistadors took Catholicism to the New World and shipped cargoes of gold back to Spain. The Spanish Empire extended all the way to the Philippines. **Charles V**, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, was the most powerful prince in Europe - king of Spain and Naples, Holy Roman Emperor and lord of Germany, duke of Burgundy and the Netherlands, and ruler of the New World territories.

But much of Spain's wealth and human resources were wasted in religious and secular conflicts. First Jews, then Muslims, and finally Catholicized Moors were driven out - and with them much of the country's prosperity. When **Philip II** ascended the throne in 1556, Spain could indeed boast vast possessions: the New World colonies; Naples, Milan, Genoa, Sicily, and other portions of Italy; the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium and the Netherlands); and portions of Austria and Germany. But the seeds of decline had already been planted.

During the 18th century, Spain's direction changed with each sovereign. The "enlightened" **Charles III** (1759-88) developed the country economically, culturally, and aesthetically. He cleaned up the by then "dark foul smelling" capital by building sewers, introducing street lights, constructing monuments, and creating the wide tree-lined Prado Avenue and incomparable Botanical Gardens. But his successor, Charles IV, became embroiled in wars with France, and the weakness of the Spanish monarchy allowed Napoleon to place his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the throne in 1808. The Madrileños put up a spirited but

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hopeless resistance against these superior odds and it was 4 more years before an allied force under the Duke of Wellington was able to drive out the French and restore Madrid and Spain to the Spaniards. In 1876, Spain became a **constitutional monarchy**. But labor unrest, disputes with the Catholic Church, and war in Morocco combined to create political chaos. Conditions eventually became so bad that the Cortés, or parliament, was dissolved in 1923, and Gen. Miguel Primo de Rivera formed a military directorate. Early in 1930, Primo de Rivera resigned, but unrest continued.

On April 14, 1931, a revolution occurred, a republic was proclaimed, and King Alfonso XIII and his family were forced to flee.

The extreme nature of these reforms fostered the growth of the conservative Falange party, modeled after Italy and Germany's fascist parties. By the 1936 elections, the country was divided equally between left and right, and political violence was common. On July 18, 1936, the army, supported by Mussolini and Hitler, tried to seize power, igniting the **Spanish Civil War**. Gen. Francisco Franco, coming from Morocco to Spain, led the Nationalist (rightist) forces in fighting that ravaged the country.

By October 1, 1936, Franco was clearly in charge of the leadership of nationalist Spain, abolishing popular suffrage and regional autonomy - in effect, launching a totalitarian rule for Spain.

The last great offensive of the war began on December 28, 1938, with an attack by Franco's forces on Barcelona, which fell on January 26 after a campaign of 34 days. Republican forces fled toward France, as a succession of presidents occurred. On March 28 some 200,000 nationalist troops marched into Madrid, meeting no resistance. The war was over the next day when the rest of republican Spain surrendered.

The war lasted 2 years and 254 days, costing some one million lives.

To get a sense of the Spanish Civil War, visitors can travel to El Valle de los Caídos (the Valley of the Fallen) outside El Escorial near Madrid.

Although Franco adopted a neutral position during World War II, his sympathies obviously lay with Germany and Italy. Spain, although a nonbelligerent, assisted the Axis powers. This action intensified the diplomatic isolation into which the country was forced after the war's end - in fact it was excluded from the United Nations until 1955.

Before his death, General Franco selected as his successor **Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón**, son of the pretender to the Spanish throne. After the 1977 elections, a new constitution was approved by the electorate and the king; it guaranteed human and civil rights, as well as free enterprise, and canceled the status of the Roman Catholic Church as the church of Spain.

In 1981 the fledgling democracy overcame its first test. A group of right-wing military officers seized the Cortés (parliament building) in

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	<p>Madrid and called upon Juan Carlos to establish a Francoist state. The king, however, refused, and the conspirators were arrested. The government's second major accomplishment was to gain Spain's entry into the European Union in 1986. Spain has been an integral part of the New Europe ever since.</p>
Books	<p>Completely updated every year (unlike most of the competition), Frommer's Seville, Granada & the Best of Andalusia will help you navigate and explore the wonders of southern Spain, from Moorish palaces and historic villages to the best resorts on the Costa del Sol.</p> <p>Read Nicholas Luard's <i>Andalucía</i> and you will start planning your trip to this unique region. I have reviewed this lovely book in Chris' Book Picks: http://www.chrisrobsontravelshow.ca/content.asp?page=ChrisBookPicks#4</p> <p>Also: <i>Spain: a Phaidon Cultural Guide</i> and James A. Michener's <i>Iberia</i></p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>In Andalucia:</p> <p>Arcos de la Frontera – base for Andalucia's Pueblos Blancas La Mezquita, Cordoba – Iberia's greatest mosque The Alhambra, Granada – Palace beyond compare Seville – the City of Carmen</p>
Must Sees	<p>All the above! My personal favourite is the old Arab town of Arcos de la Frontera. It's so special it's been declared a National Historic Monument, and you'll need about 2 hours to wander its narrow streets where Moors of old trod. You'll want to spend most of your time exploring the Medina or Old Town and taking in the panoramic lookout point, Mirador de Abades. There are some good restaurants here, so consider a luncheon stopover. There's also my favourite Parador hotel in all of Spain.</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	<p>Spain reign supreme in the soccer world! They have just become (July 2010) the World Champions at the World Cup in South Africa and they were already European Champions.</p> <p>Sport in Spain has been dominated by football since the early 20th century. Basketball, tennis, cycling, handball, motorcycling and, lately, Formula 1 are also important due to presence of Spanish champions in all these disciplines. Today, Spain is a major world sports power, especially since the 1992 Summer Olympics that were hosted in Barcelona and promoted a great variety of sports in the country. The tourism industry has led to an improvement in sports infrastructure, especially for water sports, golf and skiing.</p>
Golf	<p>Club Marina Golf Mojacar (Mojácar) Golf Novo Sancti Petri (Chiclana de la Frontera) Club de Golf Isla Canela (Ayamonte)</p>

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	Estepona Golf (Estepona) Marbella Golf & Country Club (Marbella)
Tennis	Tennis is available at most of the larger resort hotels on the Costa del Sol from Malaga to Marbella.
Horse riding	<p>The Dancing Horses of Jerez are a rival to Vienna's famous Spanish Riding School. It is the Escuela Andaluza del Arte Ecuestre (Andalusian School of Equestrian Art), Avenida Duque de Abrantes s/n (tel. 95-631-96-35; www.realescuela.org). In fact, the long, hard schooling that brings horse and rider into perfect harmony originated in this province. The Viennese school was started with Hispano-Arab horses sent from this region, the same breeds you can see today. Every Thursday at noon, crowds come to admire the Dancing Horses of Jerez as they perform in a show that includes local folklore. When performances aren't scheduled, you can visit the stables and tack room, observing as the elegant horses are being trained</p> <p>Jerez May Horse Fair. Jerez de la Frontera stages this spectacular equestrian event at Gonzalez Hontoria Park. Many of the greatest riders, certainly some of the world's finest horses, take part in various endurance trials, coach driving, and dressage competitions. Call tel. 95-633-11-50 for more information. First week of May.</p>
Hiking	<p>There are hiking opportunities everywhere in Spain, from the mountains to the coasts. One of the most famous walks in the world is in northern Spain: The Pilgrims' Way to Santiago. This route of pilgrimage has been hiked for more than eight centuries.</p> <p>The entire Mediterranean coast is also a wonderful choice for hiking. You can choose from Andalusia (with interior routes like the Sierra Nevada route or routes near the beach), Murcia (with its typical vegetable garden landscapes) and the Autonomous Region of Valencia (with its multiple wetlands and large seaside lagoons). Along the coast there is also the option of choosing your favourite stage along the Augusta Way, ideal for those interested in the traces of the Roman Empire in Spain.</p>
Soccer	Spain is soccer mad! And especially now that the Spanish national team are World Champions after the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Both Malaga and Seville have First Division teams. See www.soccer-spain.com for an English language site all about soccer in Spain.
Skiing	Skiing for all, beneath the Andalusian sun, with views of the coast. This could well sum up what it is like to ski at Sierra Nevada, in the stunning mountains of Granada. The privileged location of this Andalusian ski resort guarantees a high proportion of sunny days, even in mid-winter. Any skier, from beginner to expert, will want to keep coming back to Sierra Nevada. Imagine skiing down a piste with the warm rays of the sun on your face, as you look out over the stunning landscapes of the

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	<p>Nature Reserve that surrounds you.</p> <p>It is Europe's southernmost ski resort, situated in southern Andalusia, at more than 3,000 m above sea level. It is the resort's geographical characteristics that give it ideal weather conditions for skiing: during much of the season there are wonderful sunny days. If you are a good skier, you should definitely go up to the Laguna and Veleta pistes. They are so high that, on a clear day, you can see the coast and the sea on both sides of the Mediterranean.</p>
Bullfighting	<p>With origins as old as pagan Andalusia, bullfighting is a pure expression of Spanish temperament and passion. Detractors call the sport cruel, bloody, and savage. Aficionados, however, view bullfighting as a microcosm of death, catharsis, and rebirth. If you strive to understand the bullfight, it can be a powerful and memorable experience. Head for the Plaza de Toros (bullring) in any major Andalusian city; the best corridas (bullfights) are in Seville.</p> <p>Caution: the bullfighting spectacle is not for the faint of heart and may be seen as cruel to the bulls by many Canadians.</p>

CULTURE	
Arts	<p>Spanish art is an important and influential type of art in Europe. Spanish art is the name given to the artistic disciplines and works developed in Spain throughout time, and those by Spanish authors worldwide. Due to historical, geographical and generational diversity, Spanish art has known a great number of influences. The Moorish heritage in Spain, especially in Andalucía, is still evident today in cities like Córdoba, Seville, and Granada.</p>
Music	<p>Spanish music is often considered abroad to be synonymous with flamenco, an Andalusian musical genre, which, contrary to popular belief, is not widespread outside that region. Various regional styles of folk music abound in Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Castile, the Basque Country, Galicia and Asturias. Pop, rock, hip hop and heavy metal are also popular.</p> <p>In the field of classical music, Spain has produced a number of noted composers such as Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla and Enrique Granados and singers and performers such as José Carreras, Montserrat Caballé, Plácido Domingo, Alicia de Larrocha, Alfredo Kraus, Pau Casals, Ricardo Viñes, José Iturbi, Pablo de Sarasate, Jordi Savall and Teresa Berganza. In Spain there are over forty professional orchestras, including the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona, Orquesta Nacional de España and the Orquesta Sinfonica de Madrid. Major opera houses include the Teatro Real, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Teatro Arriaga and the El Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía.</p>
Museums	<p>If you see just one museum in the region, make it this one: Málaga honoured one of its native sons in 1983 with the inauguration of</p>

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	<p>the Casa Museo Pablo Ruiz Picasso. The painter's native home, located in the bustling Plaza de la Merced, is listed as a national historic and artistic monument, and includes a museum dedicated to Picasso's artwork. The museum features both a permanent collection, which includes illustrated books, engravings and ceramics by the artist, as well as a series of seasonal temporary exhibits. Visitors will also discover over 3,500 works by such renowned artists as Miró, Bacon, Ernst, Tàpies and Chillida, to name but a few, as well as various local artists.</p>
<p>Festivals: Fiestas</p>	<p>Granada Reconquest Festival, Granada. The whole city celebrates the Christians' victory over the Moors in 1492 and the highest tower at the Alhambra opens to the public. For information, contact the Tourist Office of Granada (tel. 95-822-59-90). January 2.</p> <p>Día de los Reyes (Three Kings Day), throughout Andalusia. Parades are held all over the province on the eve of the Festival of the Epiphany. Various "kings" dispense candy to kids. January 6.</p> <p>Carnavales de Cádiz, Cádiz. The oldest and best-attended carnival in Spain is a freewheeling event full of costumes, parades, strolling troubadours, and drum beating. Call tel. 95-621-12-56 or go to www.carnavaldecadiz.com for more information. Mid-February.</p> <p>Semana Santa (Holy Week), Seville. Although many of the country's smaller towns stage similar celebrations (especially notable in Málaga), the festivities in Seville are by far the most elaborate. From Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday, a series of processions with hooded penitents moves to the piercing wail of the saeta, a love song to the Virgin or Christ. Pasos (heavy floats) bear images of the Virgin or Christ. Again, make hotel reservations way in advance. Call the Seville Office of Tourism for details (tel. 95-422-14-04). Usually the last week of March.</p> <p>Feria de Sevilla (Seville Fair). This is the most celebrated week of revelry in the country, with all-night flamenco dancing, merrymaking in casetas (entertainment booths), bullfights, horseback riding, flower-decked coaches, and dancing in the streets. Reserve a hotel early. For general information and exact festival dates, contact the Office of Tourism in Seville (tel. 95-422-14-04). Second week after Easter.</p> <p>Feria de Málaga (Málaga Fair). One of the longest summer fairs in southern Europe (generally lasting 10 days), this celebration kicks off with fireworks and is highlighted by a parade of Arabian horses pulling brightly decorated carriages. Participants are dressed in colorful</p>

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	<p>Andalusian garb. Plazas rattle with castanets, and wine is dispensed by the gallon. For information, call tel. 95-221-34-45. Always the weekend before August 19.</p> <p>Feria de Agosto, Málaga. Málaga celebrates its major fiesta of the summer honoring the reconquest of their city on August 19, 1487, from the Moors. The Old Town turns into one big street party with lots of entertainment. Locals dress up in the traditional costumes, and food and wine flow freely. At night the celebration moves to the city's fairgrounds in the suburbs. Call tel. 95-205-86-94 or visit www.feria-de-malaga.es for more information. August 19.</p>
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<p>ATTRACTIONS</p>	<p>Spain has the second highest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world, with a total of 40, second only to Italy. In Andalucía alone there are 5 sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cordoba - Granada - Seville - Donana Park - Renaissance Monumental Ensembles of Úbeda and Baeza.
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>Out of the many beaches lining both the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, here are a couple that are easily accessible from Malaga:</p> <p>Playa de la Carihuela, Torremolinos: Even if the beach here is not among the worlds greatest, you'll have a roaring good time on the sands of La Carihuela bordering the old fishing village of this wildly popular resort along the Costa del Sol. An expat population of Germans, Scandinavians, and Brits can be found playing volleyball or sunning themselves on the beige sands in skimpy suits. When you tire of the sands, a bevy of excellent seafood restaurants lines the waterfront. The beach has facilities for paragliding, windsurfing, water-skiing, and plain old sailing.</p> <p>El Fuerte and La Fontanilla, Marbella: On either side of the Costa del Sol's glossiest resort stretches the sands of these two good beaches, both famous and fashionable since the 1960s. The beaches are protected from the northerly winds by the Sierra Blanca, which allows the bathing season to extend from May to October. If you find the sands too crowded, you can also sample two of Marbella's other beaches, the Playa de la Bajadilla in the east and the amusingly named Playa de Venus, both of which lie between the resort's twin harbors. Many water-sports, including sailing and water-skiing, are possible from these beaches.</p>

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<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>There are a number of parks and wildlife refuges that enable visitors to see the natural side of Andalucía: Parque Natural de las Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas Parque Natural de la Sierra de Hornachuelos Parque Nacional de Sierra Nevada Parque Nacional de Doñana (a UNESCO World Heritage site)</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>Covering some 76,080 hectares, Cota de Doñana National Park is Spain's largest wildlife reserve and one of the continent's last great wildernesses. At an estuary of the River Guadalquivir, it is also one of the world's greatest wetland sites for migrating birds. Bird-watchers by the thousands flock here in spring when hundreds of flocks of breeding birds fly in to nest in the wetlands. In all, there are 300 different species of rare birds, along with colonies of storks, buzzards, kites, kestrels, and egrets, plus 33 species of mammals, 12 species of fish, and 18 species of reptiles. There have even been sightings of the almost-extinct Spanish imperial eagle.</p> <p>Mammals on the verge of extinction, including a rare lynx, also live here. Wild boar can be seen in the marismas (swamps).</p> <p>The park is also the home of more than 10 separate kinds of orange, tangerine, and citrus trees, an estimated 300,000 trees in total, many of them cultivated within the park hotel's sprawling, 1,000-hectare farmlands.</p> <p>The best bird-watching base is the village of El Rocío on the northwestern edge of the marshes. The enveloping marshes and pinewoods here teem with honking wild geese and white storks. The Doñana Visitor Center lies at La Rocina (tel. 95-944-23-40), less than 2km west of El Rocío. A footpath has been cut through the wetlands here, and you can walk its 3.5km daily from 9am to 2pm and 3 to 9pm. Free maps are provided. Along the way you might encounter such creatures as the red-crested pochard or the magnificent hoopoe, even flamingos and hundreds of singing nightingales.</p> <p>The Sierras Subbéticas Geopark is one of the new European UNESCO Geopark network and provides an exceptional access to the geology of the heart of the Bética Mountain Ranges in Andalucía: the lower-Guadalquivir lands of the External Zones domain. The landscape and geology of the Geopark are closely related; ridges are formed of hard limestone; valleys are created in areas underlain by softer argillaceous carbonates and other detrital sediments. The rocks, which range in age from the Jurassic to the Tertiary, were deposited approximately between 200 million years and 25 million years ago. The rocks of the Geopark are rich in fossils and are noted for their Mesozoic ammonites which are an extinct group of marine molluscs. The Geopark</p>

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	is internationally recognised as one of the most significant areas for the study of the evolution of this group of fossils
Gardens	<p>El Generalife, Granada: Exit from the Alhambra in Granada via the Puerta de la Justicia and then circumnavigate the Alhambra's southern foundations until you reach the gardens of the summer palace, where Paseo de los Cipreses quickly leads you to the main building of the Generalife, built in the 13th century to overlook the Alhambra and set on 30 lush hectares.</p> <p>The sultans used to spend their summers in this palace (pronounced "heh-neh-rah-lee-feh"), safely locked away with their harems. Don't expect an Alhambra in miniature: The Generalife was always meant to be a retreat, even from the splendors of the Alhambra. Lying north of the Alhambra, this country estate of the Nasrid emirs was begun in the 13th century, but the palace and gardens have been much altered over the years. The palace is mainly noted for its beautiful courtyards, including Patio de Polo, where the visitors of yore would arrive on horseback.</p> <p>The highlight of the Generalife is its gardens, begun in the 13th century but much modified over the years. Originally, they contained orchards and pastures for domestic animals. Highlights include Escalera del Agua (The Water Staircase) with water flowing gently down. An enclosed Oriental garden, Patio de la Acequía, was constructed around a long pool, with rows of water jets making graceful arches above it. The Patio de la Sultana (also called the Patio de los Cipreses) was the secret rendezvous point for Zoraxda, wife of Sultan Abu Hasan, and her lover.</p>
Caves	<p>The Caves of Nerja are a series of caverns close to the town of Nerja in Andalusia. Stretching for almost 5 km the caverns are one of Spain's major tourist attractions. Concerts are regularly held in one of the chambers which form a natural amphitheatre. The caves were discovered on 12 January 1959 by a group of cavers, who entered through a narrow sink hole, known as "La Mina". This forms one of the two natural entrances to the cave system. A third entrance was created in 1960 to allow easy access for tourists. The cave is divided into two main parts known as Nerja I and Nerja II. Nerja I include the Show Galleries which are open to the public, with relatively easy access via a flight of stairs and concreted pathways to allow tourists to move about in the cavern without difficulty. Nerja II, which is not open to the public, comprises the Upper Gallery discovered in 1960 and the New Gallery discovered in 1969.</p>
Historic Buildings	<p>La Alhambra, Granada: One of Europe's greatest attractions, the stunningly beautiful and celebrated Calat Alhambra (Red Castle) is perhaps the most remarkable fortress ever constructed. Muslim architecture in Spain reached its apogee at this pleasure palace once</p>

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occupied by Nasrid princes and their harems. Although later Moorish occupants turned the Alhambra into a lavish palace, it was originally constructed for defensive purposes on a rocky hilltop outcropping above the Darro River. The modern city of Granada was built across the river from the Alhambra, about 800 metres from its western foundations. When you first see the Alhambra, its somewhat somber exterior may surprise you. The true delights of this Moorish palace lie within. Tickets are sold in the office at the Entrada del Generalife y de la Alhambra. Enter through the incongruous 14th-century Puerta de la Justicia (Gateway of Justice). Most visitors don't need an expensive guide but will be content to stroll through the richly ornamented open-air rooms, with their lacelike walls and courtyards with fountains. Many of the Arabic inscriptions translate to "Only Allah is conqueror."

The tour begins in the Mexuar, also known as Palacio Nazaríes (Palace of the Nasrids), which is the first of the trio of palaces that compose the Alhambra. This was the main council chamber where the sultan's chief ministers met. The largest of these chambers was the Hall of the Mexuar, which Spanish rulers converted to a Catholic chapel in the 1600s. From this chapel a panoramic view spreads over the rooftops of the Albaicín.

Pass through another chamber of the sultan's ministers, the Cuarto Dorado (Golden Room), and you'll find yourself in the small but beautiful Patio del Mexuar. Constructed in 1365, this is where the sultan sat on giant cushions and listened to the petitions of his subjects or met privately with his chief ministers. The windows here are surrounded by panels and richly decorated with tiles and stucco.

The Palace of the Nasrids, Mexuar, was constructed around two courtyards, the Patio de los Arrayanes (Court of the Myrtles) and the Patio de los Leones (Court of the Lions). The latter was the royal residence.

The Court of the Myrtles contains a narrow reflecting pool banked by myrtle trees. Note the decorative and rather rare tiles, which are arguably the finest in the Alhambra. Behind it is the Salón de Embajadores (Hall of the Ambassadors), with an elaborately carved throne room that was built between 1334 and 1354. The crowning cedar wood dome of this salon evokes the seven heavens of the Muslim cosmos. Here bay windows open onto panoramic vistas of the enveloping countryside.

An opening off the Court of the Myrtles leads to the greatest architectural achievement of the Alhambra, the Patio de los Leones (Court of Lions), constructed by Muhammad V. At its center is Andalusia's finest fountain, which rests on 12 marble lions. These marble lions represent the hours of the day, the months of the year, and the signs of the zodiac. Legend claims that water flowed from the mouth

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of a different lion each hour of the day. This courtyard is lined with arcades supported by 124 slender marble columns. This was the heart of the palace, the most private section where the sultan enjoyed his harem, which included both male and female beauties.

At the back of the Leones courtyard is the Sala de los Abencerrajes, named for a noble family who were rivals of the last emir, Boabdil. This hall has a richly adorned honeycombed ceiling. To get rid of his rivals, Boabdil invited them to a banquet. In the middle of the banquet, his guards entered and massacred his guests.

Opening onto the Court of Lions are other salons of intrigue, notably the Hall of the Two Sisters, Sala de las Dos Hermanas, where the sultan kept his "favorite" of the moment. The Hall of the Two Sisters takes its name from the two large identical white marble slabs in the pavement. Boabdil's stern, unforgiving mother, Ayesha, once inhabited the Hall of the Two Sisters. This salon has a honeycomb dome and is celebrated as the finest example of Spanish Islamic architecture in the world.

The nearby Sala de los Reyes (Hall of Kings) was the great banqueting hall of the Alhambra, site of parties, orgies, and feasts. Its ceiling paintings are on leather and date from the 1300s. Eunuchs guarded the harem but not always well. According to legend, one sultan beheaded 36 Moorish princes here because one of them was suspected of being intimate with his favorite.

A gallery leads to the Patio de la Reja (Court of the Window Grille). This is where Washington Irving lived in furnished rooms and where he began to write his famous book Tales of the Alhambra. The best-known tale is the legend of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, the three beautiful princesses who fell in love with three captured Spanish soldiers outside the Torre de las Infantas.

Before going on to the Emperor Charles V's palace, there are some other gems around the Court of Lions, including the Baños Reales (Royal Baths), with their lavish decorations in many colors. Light enters through star-shaped apertures. To the immediate east of the baths lies the Daraxa Garden, and to its immediate south the lovely and resplendent Mirador de Daraxa, the sultana's private balcony onto Granada.

To the immediate southeast of these attractions are the Jardines del Partal and their perimeter towers. The beautiful gardens occupy a space that once was the kitchen garden, filled with milling servants preparing the sultan's banquets. These gardens are dominated by the Torre de Las Damas (Ladies' Tower). This tower and its pavilion, with its five-arched portico, are all that is left of the once-famous Palacio del Partal, the oldest palace at the Alhambra. Of less interest are the perimeter towers, including the Mihrab Tower, a former Nasrid oratory; the Torre de las Infantas (Tower of the Princesses) and Torre de la

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Cautiva (Tower of the Captive). Like the Damas tower, these towers were also once sumptuously decorated inside; today only some decoration remains.

Finally you can move to the immediate southwest to visit Emperor Charles V's Palace (Palacio de Carlos V), where the Holy Roman emperor lived. Charles may have been horrified when he saw a cathedral placed in the middle of the great mosque at Córdoba, but he's also responsible for some architectural confusion in Granada. He literally built a Renaissance palace in the middle of this Moorish stronghold. It's quite beautiful, but terribly out of place in such a setting - Charles V did not consider the Nasrid palaces grand enough. In 1526 he ordered Pedro Machuca, a student of Michelangelo, to design him a fitting royal residence. He financed the palace by levying a tax on the Muslims. In spite of its incongruous location, the final result is one of the purest examples of classical Renaissance in Spain.

Before leaving the Alhambra precincts, try to see the Alcazaba, which dates from the 9th century and is the oldest part of the complex. This rugged Middle Ages fortress was built for defensive purposes. For a spectacular view, climb the Torre de la Vela (Watchtower). You look into the lower town onto Plaza Nueva, and you can also see the snowcapped Sierra Nevada in the distance. From the tower you can also view the Generalife, the "gypsy hill" of Sacromonte.

The Alhambra in Granada offers two types of nocturnal visits to this monumental site: a tour of the Nasrid palaces, and a tour of the Generalife Gardens and Palace. These tours are a wonderful opportunity see these sites fully illuminated, and to take a more intimate look at one of Spain's loveliest architectural treasures.

Mezquita de Córdoba: In the 8th century, this Mezquita (Great Mosque) became the crowning glory of Muslim architecture in the West. With its fantastic labyrinth of red-and-white candy-striped Moorish horseshoe arches, it remains one of the grandest attractions in Europe. Not even the Catholic cathedral placed in its center can destroy the impact of this "forest" of architectural pillars. Visit the phantasmagoric rows of columns and arches first, saving the florid cathedral for last. The caliph of Córdoba, Abd el-Rahman I, built this place of worship in 785. To do so, he razed an earlier Visigothic basilica, which itself had replaced a Roman temple. Initially, the Great Mosque covered 23,400 sq. m. The Mezquita was built in various stages, following an overall plan of a crenellated square perimeter enclosing El Patio de los Naranjos (Court of Orange Trees), which is one of the principal entrances to the mosque. This courtyard was redesigned following the Reconquista. Still visible are the irrigation channels dug by the Muslims. Puerta del Perdón (Gate of Forgiveness), on the north wall, is the

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former entrance into the mosque.
Before the Catholic takeover, the mosque had a total of 900 pillars. Remarkably, **856 pillars are still standing**. Their red and white peppermint stripes are formed in large part by white stone and redbrick voussoirs. The pillars are also built of onyx, granite, marble, and jasper, filling a total of 19 aisles. A second row of arches set above the first almost doubles the height of the ceiling. Some of the most interesting pillars came from the ancient Visigothic basilica. You can pick these out by the impressive carvings on their capitals. Since some of the pillars brought in were taller than others, they had to be sunk into the floor of the mosque. The oldest known pillar came from Egypt and dates from the reign of Amenophis IV.

In the very heart of the Mezquita lies the **Mihrab**, where the faithful gathered for ritual prayers. Bordered by Koranic sculptures and with carved stucco adorning its upper walls, the Mihrab was the holy sanctuary where the Koran was kept. It was also said to have another precious treasure: a bone from the arm of the prophet Muhammad. The bejeweled Koran was copied by the caliph's own hand and anointed with his blood. This sanctum is covered by a scallop-shaped dome, which is richly decorated with beautiful colored mosaics and gilded tiles. In this area you can see the Maksudra, the enclosure reserved for the caliph and his entourage. This most sacred part of the architectural ensemble is roofed by a trio of ribbed domes resting on interweaving multifoil arches. One might call such florid and flamboyant architecture "Islamic baroque"; it features golden mosaics, arabesque, carvings, cupolas, palm-leaf motifs framed by Sufic script, and marble panels. The Byzantine mosaics, which have hundreds of pieces of tiny gold, glass, and ceramic tiles, were a gift of the 10th-century emperor of Constantinople. The frieze in gold and blue that runs all the way around the Mihrab lists the 99 names of Allah. Located in the Sacristy, next to the Mihrab, is the Treasury, displaying beautiful examples of Cordovan silver and gold artistry

In later years the addition of **Christian chapels** destroyed the architectural harmony of the Mezquita. At the far end of the mosque stands the Capilla Villaviciosa which was completed in 1371. The chapel features a stalactite ceiling and stunning plaster lacework. Also added was the Chapel Royal decorated in the 1200s with mudéjar stucco. Although the people of Córdoba rallied against the idea, Emperor Carlos V ordered that part of the mosque be torn down to make way for the Catedral, which disfigured the mosque. Later he regretted his decision, saying to his architects, "What you are building here can be found anywhere, but what you have destroyed exists nowhere."

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	<p>Catedral de Sevilla: The largest Gothic building in the world and the third-largest church in Europe (after St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London), the Catedral de Sevilla was designed by builders whose stated goal was that: "those who come after us will take us for madmen." Construction began in the late 1400s on the site of an ancient mosque and took centuries to complete. The cathedral claims to contain the remains of Columbus; his tomb is mounted on four statues. Works of art abound, many of them architectural, such as the 15th-century stained-glass windows, the iron screens (rejas) closing off the chapels, the elaborate 15th-century choir stalls, and the Gothic reredos above the main altar. During Corpus Christi and Immaculate Conception observances, altar boys with castanets dance in front of the high altar. In the Treasury are works by Goya, Murillo, and Zurbarán, and on the macabre side, a display of skulls. Note: Shorts and T-shirts are not allowed in the cathedral. After touring the dark interior, you'll emerge into the sunlight of the Patio of Orange Trees, with its fresh citrus scents and chirping birds.</p> <p>La Giralda, a Moorish tower next to the cathedral in Seville, is the city's most recognizable monument. Erected as a minaret in the 12th century, later additions include 16th-century bells. To climb it is to take the walk of a lifetime. There are no steps, but if you make it to the top of the seemingly endless ramp, you'll have a dazzling view of Seville. Entrance is through the cathedral.</p> <p>Malaga: The Moorish fortress of Alcazaba was built on the former site of Roman fortifications during the ninth century under King Badis of Granada. Towering over the Mediterranean, it has preserved the fine details of its Moorish architecture, as well as its typically Andalusian gardens and ponds. The Alcazaba is home to a small archaeological museum which features an interesting collection of prehistoric artifacts found in the caves of Nerja, as well as Phoenician mosaics and Roman sculptures. The Teatro Romano was discovered in 1951 at the foot of the Alcazaba, where it had remained buried underground for several centuries. The 16m-high theatre has a diameter of 31m and was built during the first century under the reign of Augustus. It features a 15m orchestra section, as well as three main stands and gateways.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Ceramics and Tiles: Throughout the province, stores sell highly distinctive ceramics (each town or region has its own style) as well as azulejos (hand-painted tiles). For example, to suit the preferences of the many English expats who settled in and around Cadiz, florals and busy scenic designs became popular in this area. Many of these floral</p>

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	<p>motifs, however, were rooted in Spanish cultural traditions from the 18th century. Other pieces have ancient geometric patterns inherited from the Arabs. Some wall plates are enameled and trimmed in 24-karat gold.</p> <p>Antiques: Many avid shoppers land in Andalusia and go on shopping binges for antiques and accessories. Seville in particular offers antique hunters some rare possibilities. There is a wide range of dealers throughout the province; you'll often find them in some of the smaller villages, with the stores marked just by a little sign. Many items purchased in these shops are small decorative pieces that can be shipped home easily. Some of the most popular "antiques" purchased in Andalusia are old posters, many from the 1800s. Posters advertising the famous Andalusian fairs or else the well-attended corridas (bullfights) sell the most copies.</p> <p>Guitars: In the land of flamenco, guitars are highly prized by visitors. Artisans in Granada turn out top-quality, custom-made guitars. Of course, you can purchase ready-made guitars a lot more cheaply. You may like to stroll Calle Cuesta de Gomez, a narrow and sloping street uphill from the Alhambra in Granada. Artisans along this street turn out some of the world's finest instruments. Many of their guitars end up in the possession of famed musicians.</p> <p>Marquetry: Marquetry has been a famous product of Granada since the Muslim empire. Artisans still make furniture and other items inlaid with ivory and colored woods in the Moorish design. Inlaid boxes are a particularly good item to take home as gifts, and they become lasting souvenirs. Throughout Granada, especially in the Albaicin, which is a virtual North African souk (marketplace), you will see shop after shop hawking this extremely delicate work.</p>
Markets	<p>Seville: "Los Hippies" sounds like something from the 1960s, but it actually is what Seville bargain hunters call their flea-market locations. On Wednesday and Thursday, the market takes place at Plaza Magdalena and Calle Rioja, on Friday at Calle Feria and Calle Alameda, and on Saturday at La Plaza del Duque. Almost anything is for sale, from antiques (or faux antiques), lots and lots of junk, even some Cordovan leather goods, and clothes that John Lennon might have worn way back when. There are no set hours, but it's best to go before noon.</p>
Nightlife	<p>The fun of nightlife in Málaga is just wandering, although there are a few standout destinations. More than just about any other city in the region, Málaga offers night owls the chance to stroll a labyrinth of inner-city streets, drinking wine at any convenient tasca and talking with friends and new acquaintances.</p> <p>Start out along the town's main thoroughfare, Calle Larios, adjacent to the city's port. Off Calle Larios, you can gravitate to any of the tascas,</p>

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	<p>discos, and pubs lining the edges of the Calle Granada. Particularly fun and atmospheric is La Posada, Calle Granada 33 (tel. 95-221-70-69). If you want to eat well and cheaply, do as the locals do and head for the taverns. Don't expect a refined experience, but the food is some of the most enjoyable and least expensive in Málaga. You can easily fill up on two or three orders of tapas because portions are extremely generous. The entrance to Bar Logüeno, Marín García 9 (tel. 95-222-30-48), is behind a wrought-iron-and-glass door. It leads into a stucco-lined room decorated in a local tavern style -- enough hams, bouquets of garlic, beer kegs, and sausages to feed a village for a week. However, there's hardly enough room to stand, and you'll invariably be jostled by a busy waiter shouting "Calamari!" to the cooks.</p> <p>Nearby, an all-pedestrian street, Calle Compagnía, and a square, the Plaza Uncibaj, are home to simpler tascas. Completely unpretentious (and in some cases without any discernable name), they serve glasses of wine and tapas similar to those available from their neighbors. A popular dance bar is Carma, Calle Luis de Velázquez 5 (no phone), and Cosa Nuestra, Calle Las Lazcano 5. Don't even think of heading there before 11pm, but the music will probably continue till at least 4am. The main theater in the province is Teatro Cervantes, Ramos Marin s/n (tel. 95-222-41-09; www.teatrocervantes.es), which opened its doors in the second half of the 19th century. This is an elegant yet austere building. Its programs include plays in Spanish, but also a number of concerts and flamenco entertainment of interest to all. The major performances of the Málaga Symphony Orchestra are staged here in winter.</p>
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<p>CUISINE</p>	<p>Andalucía is a melting pot of cultures and cuisines... The Romans taught the Andalusians how to cultivate wheat and vines and used the fish from the seas to produce the best "garum" in the empire. The Arabs taught the Andalusians how to grow fruit and vegetables. They used irrigation systems and improved the cultivation of olive trees and the production of oil. Furthermore, the Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Visigoths left their mark on the art, science, culture and gastronomy of Andalusia.</p> <p>Don't forget that the Spanish don't eat lunch until 1:00 or 2:00 pm, and dinner doesn't start until 9:00 pm; many restaurants don't open until these times. As a rule of thumb, restaurants serve lunch from 1:00 (earlier in touristic zones) until 3:30, then close and re-open for dinner at 8:30 pm, serving until 11:00 pm</p>
<p>Food</p>	<p>Here are some of the many Andalusian special dishes: Potato soup Yellow potatoes Andalusian alfajors</p>

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	<p>Gipsy tripe Cordoban-style swordfish Small kebabs Oxtail Rota-style red band bream Andalusian stew Griddled swordfish with peppers from Padrón Cordoba cake Ajoblanco Stuffed tuna Sacromonte omelette Stewed clams Sevillian-style duck 'Sopa de picadillo' Coffee 'Bienmesabe' Crispy shrimp pancakes 'Huevos a la flamenca' Andalusian fried fish 'Ajo colorao' 'Tocinillo de cielo' (pudding made with egg yolks and syrup) Dressed potatoes Small cuttlefish with broad beans Gazpacho</p> <p>- Tapas, those delicious bite-size portions washed down with wine, beer, or sherry, are reason enough to go to Spain! Original favorites were cured ham or chorizo (spicy sausage). Today you might sample gambas (deep-fried shrimp), boquerones (anchovies marinated in vinegar), albóndigas (meatballs), tortillas (tiny omelets), or calamares (squid). Among the best areas for a tapeo (tapa "crawl") are bustling Plaza de Santa Ana and the labyrinthine Cava Baja.</p> <p>- Visiting Spain without trying Jamon Iberico (ham) would be considered a crime by most Spaniards. Spaniards treat their ham very seriously and types and qualities of ham vary in a similar way to wine.</p>
<p>Drinks</p>	<p>Beer - Cruzcampo from Seville is very popular</p> <p>Wine - Rioja from the province of La Rioja adjoining Navarra is by far the best and most popular quality vino tinto, followed by Ribera del Duero from nearby Valladolid. Rueda (Valladolid again), Penedès (Cataluña), and the expensive Albariño (Galicia) are the favorite whites. Though the capital has its own regional Vinos de Madrid - modest wines but admirable for quaffing - these are still sadly undervalued and struggling to find a niche. You may find them in the cave bars behind the Plaza Mayor.</p>

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	<p>Cider - Still or fizzy sidra is the favorite drink in Asturian eating spots such as Casa Mingo and Casa Lastra. Warning: The still version is stronger than you'd think!</p> <p>Spirits - Adventurous imbibers can try orujo, a fiery liquor or aguardiente (made from the stalks and skins of grapes) that tastes like a rough grappa and is sometimes offered free after a meal. Magno and Carlos 1, mellow coñacs from Cádiz, or Pacharán, a rose-purple anise-flavored sloe gin spirit from Navarra, are more conventional after-dinner tipples.</p> <p>Cava - Spain's answer to champagne is best from Cataluña (though recent political differences between the capital and Barcelona led to a not-too-successful boycott of the stuff). Look for Codorniu and Freixenet. Up-and-coming rivals from Extremadura and Toledo aren't bad either.</p> <p>Sherry – Spain's most distinctive fortified wine - "sherry" in English, jerez in Spanish - uses the charming little Andalusian town of Jerez de la Frontera as its main production center. Touring the sherry wineries, or bodegas, is one of the province's most evocative undertakings. You can see mixing tanks, fermentation rooms, and warehouses for aging, but nothing is more memorable than an actual tasting. You'll quickly determine your favorite, ranging from fino (extra dry) to dulce (sweet). It's best to arrive in early September for the annual wine harvest.</p> <p>Grape Harvest Festival, Jerez de la Frontera. Andalusia's major wine festival honors the famous sherry of Jerez, with 5 days of processions, flamenco dancing, bullfights, livestock on parade, and, of course, sherry drinking. For information, call tel. 95-633-11-50. Mid-October</p>
Restaurants	<p>Here are some recommendations:</p> <p>El Faro del Puerto - El Puerto de Santa María (Cadiz)</p> <p>La Alquería (H. Hacienda Benazuza) - Sanlúcar la Mayor (Seville)</p> <p>La Meridiana - Marbella (Malaga)</p> <p>Juanito - Baeza (Jaén)</p> <p>La Finca (H. La Bobadilla) - Loja (Granada)</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	<p>Visit your local Travel Agent and pick up a copy of Transat Holidays Europe 2010-2011 brochure for many vacation options in this part of Spain.</p> <p>Also contact the Tourist Office of Spain, 102 Bloor St. W., Suite 3402, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1M9 (tel. 416-961-3131) for brochures on Spain</p>

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Websites	For vacation packages and flights to Spain: www.transatholidays.com Spanish Tourism Board: www.spain.info For the region of Andalucia: www.andalucia.org
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AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER	Air Transat www.airtransat.com
Flight details 2010	Toronto to Malaga: Sundays, May-Oct; Tuesdays, Jan-Apr Toronto to Madrid: Sundays, May-Oct Toronto to Barcelona: Saturdays, May-Oct Montreal to Malaga: Sundays, May-Oct; Tuesdays, Jan-Apr Montreal to Madrid: Sundays, May-Oct; Thursdays, June-Sept Montreal to Barcelona: Fridays, Saturdays May-Dec
Option Plus	Option Plus in Transat Economy Class features loads of priority privileges and services to make your vacation even more pleasurable from the moment you arrive at the airport, from \$99 per roundtrip flight to European destinations. Option Plus advantage: Seat Selection (roundtrip) Priority check-in at a dedicated counter Priority baggage handling Priority at security checkpoints (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver) Priority boarding Supplementary baggage allowance up to 10 kg per flight segment Air Transat travel kit offered on all flights to Europe at departure in Canada: practical, compact, and reusable! Bar and snacks Snacks from the On Board Bistro selection Alcoholic beverages during drinks service Bottle of champagne (200 ml) on flights to European destinations Wine or beer with the meal
Wider Seats	Air Transat has added more legroom on all their aircraft, making the journey to and from your destination even more comfortable.
Air Transat Kids Club	To ensure that your family vacations are fun and unforgettable from beginning to end, Air Transat has created Kids Club so that young passengers can really enjoy themselves while onboard an Air Transat flight. It is designed to make air travel a fun experience for young travellers (and for their parents!). Even before the doors of the plane are closed following boarding, every child receives a small bag containing all sorts of surprises and games. The more fun they have, the easier the flight. Furthermore, children who are members of Air Transat Kids Club enjoy certain exclusive privileges. Members of the Air Transat Kids Club will enjoy several benefits that the

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	whole family can share. You can check in at a special "Air Transat Kids Club Members" counter. Thanks to these special counters located in major Canadian airports where Air Transat flies, checking-in is quicker than before. At check-in, special tags will be placed on your baggage; as a result, your baggage gets priority treatment.
Transat Club Class	Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary seat selection, wider, more comfortable leather seats, a choice of gourmet meals and fine wines, priority check-in, baggage service and boarding.

HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER	Melia Costa del Sol Paseo Marítimo, 11, 29620, Torremolinos, Málaga, Spain Tel: 011 (34) 952 386677 Fax: 011 (34) 952 386417 Web: www.solmelia.com/hotels/spain/torremolinos/melia-costa-del-sol
Location	The Meliá Costa del Sol hotel is situated on the privileged landmark of Playa de Bajondillo, right on the sea front. 10 minutes walking distance from the shopping area of Torremolinos. Next to the touristic resort of La Carihuela, easily accessible using the seaside promenade. 6 km distance from the International Airport of Málaga Pablo Picasso. 12 km from Málaga city centre.
Facilities	Internet Corner Gift shop Hairdresser Laundry service 24-hours medical assistance Foreign money exchange Hotel adapted to the needs of the disabled
Accommodation	The hotel's 540 air-conditioned rooms feature TV, mini-bar, Internet, in-room safe and bathroom with hairdryer. It offers an extensive daytime activities program and an evening entertainment program with flamenco and cabaret shows.
Activities	Outdoor pool Thalassotherapy Center Meliá Costa del Sol: dynamic pool, hydromassage pool with sea water, sauna, steam bath, massage rooms, therapeutic treatments Extensive daytime and evening entertainment programme: Stretching, Fitness, Spanish lessons, carabine shooting, archery, rifle shooting, darts, table tennis, games, competitions, Sol Game, hotel tour, Sangría cocktail lesson, Paella cooking lesson, live music in the evening as well as professional Flamenco and Cabaret shows At the front-desk: Rent a bike, motorcycle or car, as well as bookings of day-excursions, tickets for bullfights, green fees, zoo, and casino.
Restaurants	A la carte restaurant, serving regional cuisine and extensive buffets (open from 7am to 10.30am and from 7.30pm to 10.30pm)

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	Cafeteria La Proa Bar
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PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	Madrid, Toledo, Catalonia, Barcelona, Granada, Cordoba, Seville, Cadiz, Jerez, Arcos de la Frontiera, Andalucia, Pyrenees, Costa Brava, Costa Daurada, Costa Blanca, Costa Del Sol; Paradors; Majorca, Ibiza, Menorca, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote
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TRANSAT HOLIDAYS	Transat Holidays offer direct flights to Malaga, gateway to Andalucía, and a wide range of vacation packages, including a la carte accommodation, coach tours, train and car rentals – plus excursions to help you make the most of your vacation in Andalucía.
Transat & Nolitours Background	Transat Holidays and Nolitours are part of the Transat Group which is now the largest tour operator in Canada, and is at the core of the vertical integration process developing and marketing vacation products as well as flights to destinations in the South and Europe. The company acts as a master craftsman in assembling different components of leisure travel: air transportation, passenger transfers from airport to hotel, accommodation, recreational and cultural activities, meals, cruises, and much more. As an industry leader, Transat Holidays offers departures from many Canadian cities including: St. John's, Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, Brandon, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria, Comox, Abbotsford, Prince George and Kelowna.
Mission	Transat Holidays and Nolitours offer quality vacation packages to a wide variety of destinations. Each season, the company presents a wide selection of quality products, in order to meet the diversified needs of Canadian travellers. In keeping with their mission, their employees aim to exceed vacationers' expectations in order to maintain their position as a market leader. They see their role, ultimately, to turn holiday dreams into reality: making the vacation experience one of the most memorable ever.
Products	Packages, Cruises, Hotels, Flights, Tours, Car Rentals & Train Travel. With a choice of over 300 hotels located in more than 50 destinations and a complete line of itineraries offered in partnership with the most prestigious cruise lines, all products offered by Transat Holidays and Nolitours are subject to a rigorous standard review.
Wider Seats	Air Transat has added more legroom on all their aircraft, making the journey to and from your destination even more comfortable.
Air Transat Upgrades	Air Transat have introduced its new Economy Class meal service on sun destination flights.

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	<p>As part of its ongoing efforts to provide clients with the best possible service, Air Transat has upgraded its onboard service. Passengers flying south will now be welcomed onboard with a glass of champagne, while early morning passengers will be greeted with a mimosa. The meal service has also been improved. The airline will now offer passengers a more complete meal tray, including a choice of two hot meals, a complimentary glass of wine and dessert.</p>
Awards	<p>Agent's Choice Awards: Transat Holidays ranked number one for a third year in a row in 2009 by Canada's travel agents according to the results of the Agents' Choice Awards, a survey carried out by Canadian Travel Press and Travel Courier.</p>
Current Brochure	<p>Transat Holidays Europe 2010-2011 brochure Features flights from Toronto and Montreal to Madrid, Barcelona and Malaga, coach tours, cruises, twin centre vacations, excursions, Madrid hotel vacations Flights are on Air Transat and flight time to Malaga is around 7.5 hrs.</p> <p>The brochures for winter 2010/2011 are newly published (June 2010): Transat Holidays: Sun 2010-2011 brochure Nolitours: Sun 2010-2011 brochure</p>
Air Transat Kids Club	<p>To ensure that your family vacations are fun and unforgettable from beginning to end, Air Transat has created Kids Club so that young passengers can really enjoy themselves whilst onboard an Air Transat flight. It is designed to make air travel a fun experience for young travellers (and for their parents!). Even before the doors of the plane are closed following boarding, every child receives a small bag containing all sorts of surprises and games. The more fun they have, the easier the flight. Furthermore, children who are members of Air Transat Kids Club enjoy certain exclusive privileges.</p> <p>Members of the Air Transat Kids Club will enjoy several benefits that the whole family can share. You can check in at a special "Air Transat Kids Club Members" counter. Thanks to these special counters located in major Canadian airports where Air Transat flies, checking-in is quicker than before. At check-in, special tags will be placed on your baggage; as a result, your baggage gets priority treatment.</p>
Transat Club Class	<p>Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary seat selection, wider, more comfortable leather seats, a choice of gourmet meals and fine wines, priority check-in, baggage service and boarding.</p>
Option Plus	<p>This Economy class option includes many priority privileges and services including priority check-in, priority baggage handling, an extra 10kg baggage allowance and even champagne.</p>
Transat and Sustainable Tourism	<p>Transat recognizes the prime importance of the environment, host communities, cultural diversity, and their relationships with their employees, customers and partners. Tourism has become one of the</p>

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	<p>world's leading industries. Society and communities reap the benefits, and, each year, hundreds of millions of travellers discover new countries and cultures. Transat is firmly committed to the responsible development of the tourism industry, and has adopted the following definition of sustainable tourism:</p> <p>“Sustainable tourism entails respect for nature, as well as for host communities and their values; it combines positive socio-economic benefits for local populations with an enriching experience for travellers.”</p> <p>The issue of the environment, as far as Transat's own facilities are concerned, is a clear and basic target. Their environment committees have implemented concrete initiatives with regard to recycling, conservation of resources, the disposal of obsolete electronic equipment, and raising employee awareness. Air Transat, which proved its forward-looking approach by adopting a strict fuel-management system in 2003, has since begun developing an environmental management system that could lead to an ISO 14001 certification in the future. To find out more, consult the Transat and the Environment sections at their website.</p>
<p>Gift Certificates</p>	<p>Here's your chance to make a loved one's dream come true. With Transat gift certificates you can offer the beauty, excitement, and wonders of the world: the South with its heavenly beaches and endless sunshine, or just a rental car.</p> <p>Travel gift certificates are always appreciated, and they are appropriate for all occasions, whether for a wedding, anniversary, graduation, or simply to show you care.</p> <p>Transat gift certificates are valid on all Air Transat, Nolitours, or Transat Holidays products in our brochures. They can be redeemed at a travel agent's office at the time of reservation.</p> <p>To order your gift certificates call 1-800-322-6649.</p>
<p>Transat's Andalucía Vacations</p>	<p>Transat's Europe 2010-2011 brochure has lots of options to choose from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flights to Malaga - Car rental (from \$43 per day) - Seaside Packages: 11 Hotels from 2 to 4 star - Andalucía A La Carte: a selection of 8 hotels in Cordoba, Grenada, Seville and Valencia. These include the fabulous Parador de Granada, built in the 14th century as part of the Alhambra - Andalucía Excursions (see below) - Torremolinos & More: package of Torremolinos hotel, excursions to Ronda, Seville and Gibraltar (from \$1359)
<p>Excursions</p>	<p>Transat has a range of pre-bookable excursions in Andalucía:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grenada - Seville

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cordoba - Ronda and Marbella - Nerja & Frigiliana: “White Towns” - Tangier, Morocco
<p>Special Deals in Andalucía</p>	<p>Right now (July 2010) Transat Holidays have amazing deals on vacations to Spain, such as:</p> <p>Costa del Sol Seaside Package 8 Days for \$1199 at Sol Don Pedro 4H (Add taxes & fees \$305) Includes: Flight, 7 nights’ accommodation, buffet breakfasts, dinners & transfers Sun, Aug 29</p> <p>Costa del Sol City Package 8 Days for \$1469 (Add taxes & fees \$307) Melia Costa del Sol 4H Includes: Flight, 7 nights’ accommodation, hot buffet breakfasts, dinners & transfers, honeymooners receive a bottle of cava and a fruit basket upon arrival, upgrade to Superior Room (subject to availability),gala dinner for 2 (drinks not included). Sun, Aug 22, 29</p>
<p>Best Price Guarantee</p>	<p>Transat Holidays is offering a ‘Best Price Guarantee and Free Upgrade’ promotion on selected resorts for the 2010/2011 winter season. The Best Price Guarantee offers peace of mind to clients who book their winter holiday prior to September 30, 2010 for departures starting November 1, 2010–April 30, 2011. Travellers can be reassured that in the event that a package becomes available at a lower price than the one they paid, they will be refunded in cash.</p>

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