

Carleton College Alumni Adventure to Spain
With Al Montero and David Ringrose '60
May 13-24, 2009

Day 1 – Depart USA – Wednesday, May 13th, 2009

Depart USA on overnight flight to Madrid (meals in-flight).

[International flights not included in base package price, please contact Christy Wyatt at EEI Travel for arrangements 1-800-565-7236 ext 2612]

Day 2 – Arrive in Madrid – Thursday, May 14th, 2009 (D)

Arrive in Madrid.

A representative will greet you once you have cleared customs and assist you with your transfer from airport to your hotel either by private car or coach (depending on the number of passengers arriving on the same flight).

Check in to your hotel (if it is too early for check in, the hotel will be able to stow your bags). The day is at your leisure to explore Madrid or relax.

In the evening, your tour escort will lead you to a welcome dinner and reception at your hotel (3-course, 1 glass wine).

One night in Madrid at the H10 Villa Reina Hotel, including continental breakfast daily and portorage in and out of the hotel. The Hotel Villa Reina is an excellent hotel installed in a World War I era building with a great early twentieth century facade. It is ideally located in the center of Madrid, within easy walking distance to many historical sites and one of Madrid's largest department stores.

Day 3 – Madrid/Zaragoza – Friday, May 15th, 2009 (B, L, D)

Today you will have a morning transfer to Zaragoza, a city with more than 2,000 years of history. Upon arrival into Zaragoza, your local guide will provide a tour of this oft-overlooked artistic jewel of Spain. You will see signs of the city's magnificence during the Roman Empire, such as the Forum, Thermal Baths and the Great Theatre. During the Muslim occupation of Spain, Zaragoza was the country's center of art, music and science. The Aljaferia Palace still stands as a wonderful example of Muslim art and Zaragoza's rich history. Your tour includes an entrance to the magnificent Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Pilar, which features ceiling paintings by Goya and Bayeau, and is visited by Christian pilgrims from all over the world. Your day also includes a lunch at a local restaurant.

After the tour, you will check in to your hotel. This evening, your tour escort will lead you to dinner at a local restaurant (3 courses, coffee/tea).

One night in Zaragoza at Superior Tourist Class Hotel, including continental breakfast daily and portorage in and out of the hotel.

Day 4 – Zaragoza/Rioja District/Tudela/Laguardia – Saturday, May 16th (B, L, D)

This morning you will embark on a full-tour of the Rioja wine region, a region which produces some of the finest wine in Spain according to many enthusiasts. You will stop at a local vineyard for some wine tasting, which will not only allow you to experience the wines of the area, but will also give you insight into the culture of Spain.

Your next stop will be the nearby Tudela, which was originally a Moorish settlement, founded in 802. Its historic quarter still contains many influences of its former Arab, Jewish and Christian populations. You will take a walking tour of the town, and have the opportunity to see such highlights as the 17th-century Plaza de los Fueros, the 12th-century Gothic cathedral, and the 13th-century bridges boasting awnings typical of Aragón. You will also have lunch at a local restaurant this afternoon.

After your tour of Tudela, you will travel on to Laguardia, a jewel of the Rioja wine region and a good example of a walled village that has not changed that much since the 13th century. Check in to your hotel, and this evening, enjoy a traditional Tapas-style dinner (3 tapas, 1 glass of wine).

Two nights in Laguardia at the Hotel Villa Laguardia, including continental breakfast daily, and portorage in and out of the hotel (portorage pending hotel capabilities).

Day 5 – Laguardia – Sunday, May 17th, 2009 (B, L)

Today you will have a full-day tour of the Laguardia area, including a visit to the Dinastia Vivancos Wine Museum, considered the most renowned wine museum in the world, which covers every aspect of wine culture.

You will have a lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon you will have a walk through the walled village and a wine tour, which includes some wine tasting. After the tour, you will return to your hotel, and the rest of the day is at your leisure.

Day 6 – Laguardia/Bilbao – Monday, May 18th, 2009 (B, L)

Depart in the morning for Bilbao.

Upon arrival in Bilbao, you will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and a tour of the city. Bilbao, once the Pittsburgh of Spain, is one of Spain's oldest economic centers and also the site of a remarkable example of modernization, environmental restoration, and urban renewal. On the tour, you will see many examples of contemporary architecture and tour the Guggenheim Museum (entrance included). After your tour, you will check in to your hotel.

The remainder of the day is at your leisure.

One night in Bilbao at the Hotel Ercilla, including continental breakfast daily, and portorage in and out of the hotel (portorage pending hotel capabilities).

Day 7 – Bilbao/Santander/Santillana del Mar/Ribadesella–Tues., May 19th (B, L, D)

This morning you will depart Bilbao and travel west along Spain's picturesque North Coast, which surrounds the Bay of Biscay, named for the Spanish province. Your first stop will be the seaside city of Santander, where you will see the Palacio de la Magdalena, the summer residence of the Spanish monarchy in the early twentieth century. It now houses a branch of Spain's Extension University and we may be able to visit the palace.

Continuing west, you will stop in the medieval port of Santillana del Mar. Here you will enjoy lunch and some free time to stretch your legs and do some shopping.

Travel on to Ribadesella where you will check into your hotel. This evening, you will enjoy dinner with your fellow group members at your hotel (3 courses, with coffee/tea).

Two nights in Ribadesella at Superior Tourist Class Hotel, including continental breakfast daily, and portage in and out of the hotel.

Day 8 – Picos de Europa – Wednesday, May 20th, 2009 (B, L)

Today you will have a full-day tour to see the Picos de Europa ("Peaks of Europe") National Park, one of the most spectacular national parks in Europe. The park offers not only magnificent views but a visit to Covadonga, the legendary place where the Visigothic King Pelayo turned back the Moorish invasion in the 700s. In the afternoon, you will enjoy a lunch at one of the local village restaurants (2 courses).

After returning to your hotel, the evening is at your leisure.

Day 9 – Ribadesella/Oviedo/Leon – Thursday, May 21st, 2009 (B, D)

Today you will travel from Ribadesella to Leon via Oviedo, the modern capital of the province of Asturias. It is well-known for its Old Quarter and Oviedo Cathedral, which although Gothic in origin, also offers a unique opportunity to view an array of both Baroque and renaissance art. You will have a half-day tour of the city with an entrance included to the Cathedral of San Salvador, including the Holy Chamber. Continuing on to Leon, famous for its Gothic Leon Cathedral, you will check in to your hotel, and this evening, enjoy a 3-course dinner (with coffee / tea) at a restaurant in Leon's Old Quarter.

One night in Leon at the Posada Regia, including continental breakfast daily, and portage in and out of the hotel.

Day 10 –Leon/Segovia/Madrid – Friday, May 22nd, 2009 (B)

Today you will travel from Leon to Madrid via the unforgettable World Heritage Site of Segovia, where you will have a walking and panoramic tour. Segovia is home to an amazingly preserved Roman aqueduct, and the Castle Alcázar (entrance included), which was built in the 12th century, and later served as Walt Disney's inspiration for Cinderella's castle.

Before leaving Segovia, you will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant (2 courses with coffee/tea). After lunch, you will proceed to Madrid and to your hotel for check-in. Evening is at leisure.

Two nights in Madrid at the H10 Villa Reina, including continental breakfast daily and portorage in and out of the hotel.

Day 11 – Madrid – Saturday, May 23rd, 2009 (B, L)

You will start the day off with a Half-Day Tour of Madrid. With the exception of the Plaza Mayor and a few nearby buildings of the seventeenth century, Madrid is an 18th-century city. You will enjoy a panoramic tour of the city. You will have an entrance to El Prado Museum, where you will see and hear about the works of Francisco Goya, the painter most evocative of Spain's difficult transition from absolute monarchy to its first experiments with a parliamentary government.

After touring El Prado, you will be on your own this afternoon (return to the hotel or use the afternoon for sightseeing on your own in Madrid). This evening, you will gather with your fellow group members for a farewell dinner (3-courses, 1 glass wine).

Day 12 – Depart for U.S.A. – Sunday, May 24th, 2009 (B)

Meet your assistant and driver for private group coach transfer to the airport for departure.

Depart on transatlantic flight back to the USA.

Welcome Home!!!