

From Gaudi's Barcelona to Moorish Toledo, and to the great museums of the capital Madrid, this provides an excellent introduction to the art of Spain and the Mediterranean.

## **10 Day Spanish Art Tour: Barcelona-Madrid-Segovia-Toledo**

### **Day 1 - Arrive Barcelona**

Arrival Barcelona. Meet your local guide in the Arrivals Hall and transfer to the hotel for check in. Balance of the day at leisure to explore the city.

Overnight Barcelona

### **Day 2 - Barcelona**

Today's activities are undertaken by foot, so please dress appropriately. We spend the morning in the Gothic Quarter including Tapineria Street and Ramon Berenguer Square with some of the most impressive architecture in Old Barcelona. We spend time inside the magnificent 13th century cathedral, noted for its fine Gothic chapels, medieval choir stalls and shady cloisters. We also visit the City History Museum. This afternoon we make a brief visit to the Picasso Museum where you can view a handsome collection of the artist's early works and the influence of the city upon his work. Then move onto the Museum of Textiles with its wonderful collection of tapestries, embroidery, dresses and accessories. Our final visit this afternoon is to the Contemporary Art Museum MACBA with its substantial collection of Catalan, Spanish and international works. Overnight Barcelona

### **Day 3 - Barcelona**

Departure to Montjuic Hill (The Hill of the Jews) and we spend the morning at the National Museum of Art of Catalunya which traces the general history of all Catalan art from the Romanesque period through to the mid 20th century. We then continue to La Caixa Foundation and Caixa Forum. Our final visit of the afternoon is to the Joan Miro Foundation, which celebrates his collection of tapestries and sculptures. Overnight Barcelona

### **Day 4 - Barcelona**

Antonio Gaudi was one of the world's most important modernist architects, and much of his work can be found in Barcelona. Our motorcoach tour will highlight some of them; Bellesguard, Colegio Teresiano, Casa Mila, Casa Calvet and his most ambitious yet unfinished work at Sagrada Familia Church with space for 5 organs and choirs of 1500. The balance of the day is at leisure to explore the city perhaps stroll down the Ramblas or take a harbor cruise. Overnight Barcelona

### **Day 5 - Barcelona/Madrid**

Morning flight from Barcelona to Madrid. Transfer and check in at the Madrid hotel. Guests who are visiting Madrid for the first time may wish to join the guide and motorcoach for a 2 hour orientation tour of the city including the major landmarks and squares. For others, perhaps revisit some of your favorite haunts or join the locals and their families as they enjoy an afternoon in Retiro Park which is a 2 minute walk from the hotel. Overnight Madrid

### **Day 6 - Madrid**

Today we begin at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts housing one of the oldest and finest collections in Spain including two Goya self portraits. Rubens, Van Dyke and Picasso round out the permanent collection. Continue to the Lazaro Galdiano Museum one of the lesser traveled museums of the city. It features many of the old masters with an interesting gallery dedicated to the English landscape and portrait artists of Reynolds, Gainsborough and Constable. The upper floor features 15th and 16th century artifacts; vestments, swords and Byzantine jewelry. Our final visit of the day is to Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, home to Madrid's most important modern art exhibitions its often compared to London's Tate or the Pompidou in Paris. Its core collection is essentially made up of 20th century Spanish works including Picasso, Miro, Cronica, Julio Gonzales and Gerardo Rueda. Overnight Madrid

### **Day 7 - Madrid/Segovia**

We leave Madrid behind for a full day excursion north to Segovia. The town lies on the slope of the Guadarrama Mountains. This ancient city stands in the center of the most castle-rich part of Castile. Wherever you look, you'll see reminders of a golden era whether it's the most spectacular Alcazar on the Iberian Peninsula or the well-preserved, still-functioning Roman aqueduct. Our visits today include the Gothic Cathedral, Vera Cruz Templar Church and Casa de los Picos. Our final visit is the Roman Aqueduct. The Romans built this architectural marvel nearly 2,000 years ago. Constructed of mortarless granite, it consists of 118 arches, and in one two tiered section it soars 95 feet to its highest point. Late afternoon return to Madrid. Overnight Madrid

## **Day 8 - Madrid**

First stop today is to visit the famous Goya frescoes on the ceiling of the Ermita San Antonio de la Florida and then continue to the Arqueologic Museum. This stately mansion is a storehouse of artifacts from the prehistoric to the baroque. One of the prime exhibits here is the Iberian statue The Lady of Elche, a piece of primitive carving 4 BC, discovered on the southeastern coast of Spain. The Islamic collection from Spain is outstanding. There are also collections of Spanish Renaissance lusterware, Talavera pottery, Retiro porcelain, and some rare 16th and 17th century Andalusian glassware. We then make a brief visit to the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum adjacent to the Prado and now home to one of the world's largest private collections amassed by the Swiss/Hungarian family. Mid afternoon we walk to the Prado Museum - this iconic museum needs no introduction, sufficient to say that with over 7,000 works it is one of the world's most important repositories of art. It contains an unrivalled collection of Spanish works, but also an excellent Italian section as well as Flemish works of Rubens and Bosch. The museum remains open until 7pm so you have the opportunity to spend as much time here as you wish and it is within walking distance of many of the hotels. Overnight Madrid.

## **Day 9 - Madrid/Toledo**

A morning excursion south of Madrid to Toledo. Surrounded on three sides by a bend in the Tagus River, Toledo stands atop a hill overlooking the arid plains of New Castile a natural fortress in the center of the Iberian Peninsula. It was a logical choice for the capital of Spain, though it lost its political status to Madrid in the 1500s. Toledo has remained the country's religious center, and has retained most of its medieval charm. We begin our tour at the Gothic Cathedral, ranked among the greatest of all gothic structures. It contains art treasures, such as the transparente, a wall of marble and florid baroque alabaster sculpture overlooked for years because the cathedral was too poorly lit. Sculptor Narcisco Tome cut a hole in the ceiling, much to the consternation of Toledans, and now light touches the high-rising angels, a Last Supper in alabaster, and a Virgin in ascension. We stop into the 14th central chapel of Ste Tome to view El Greco's Burial of the Count of Orgaz before proceeding to the Transito Synagogue, a once important point of worship for Toledo's large Jewish population. Our last visit is to the Santa Cruz Museum. The facade of the museum is almost more spectacular than any of the exhibits inside. It's a stunning architectural achievement in the classical Plateresque style. The major artistic treasure inside is El Greco's The Assumption of the Virgin, his last known work. Paintings by Goya and Ribera are also on display along with gold items, opulent antique furnishings, Flemish tapestries, and even Visigoth artifacts. Late afternoon return to Madrid. Farewell dinner at a local restaurant in Madrid. Overnight Madrid

## **Day 9 - Depart**

Return transfer to the airport.

*\*Operated in conjunction with Select Travel Service*

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