

# Getting Started

Andalucía is as big as Portugal so you need to think ahead about where and how you want to spend your time. Take account of the travel time between destinations: you could drive right across Andalucía along the main highways in seven or eight hours, but cross-country roads and coastal routes are slower. The Itineraries chapter (p18) gives ideas for routes geared to different interests and periods of time. Don't try to do *too* much: hurrying is a waste of your time here. A good strategy is to build your trip around a few chosen destinations but to also allow time for following up unexpected discoveries.

Andalucía has sleeping and eating options for all budgets, ranging from youth hostels to super-luxury hotels. Travellers on midrange budgets will find some charming options available to them. Public transport services are mostly good, but car hire is generally inexpensive and uncomplicated, and the roads good, so this is one of the best ways to get around.

## WHEN TO GO

Andalucía can be enjoyable any time of year, though the weather between November and Easter is hit or miss. Climatically, the ideal months to visit are May, June, September and October, when the countryside is at its most colourful and you can rely on good to excellent weather. Some of the hotter inland places such as Seville, Córdoba and Ronda are at their busiest, tourism-wise, during these spring and autumn months because the peak summer season there (July and August) is just too hot for many people. The shoulder months are also generally the most comfortable for land-based outdoor activities such as walking, horse riding and golf (see p71 for more information).

July and August temperatures can be extreme, up to 45°C inland, but these are the high-season months in many places, especially on and near the coast, where the crush of tourists can sometimes make rooms scarce and pushes room prices up.

From late October to Easter (with a brief exception over Christmas and New Year) crowds are few and many hotels reduce their prices. But the weather is unpredictable and can be downright cold inland.

The majority of special events – festivals, fairs, religious processions and pilgrimages, sports events, big concerts – happen in the warmer months from Easter to September. Every city, town and village has a

### DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Checking the visa situation (see p439)
- Adequate travel insurance (see p433)
- Warning triangles and a reflective jacket if you're going by car (see p452)
- Lonely Planet's *Spanish* phrasebook
- A small daypack
- A compact pair of binoculars if you plan to look for wildlife
- Your favourite swimsuit and sunglasses!
- Clothes to cope with cold snaps or rain between October and May

See Climate Charts (p428) for more information.

*feria* (fair) at some time during this period. Along the coast, many events happen in July or August; inland, the cooler months either side of the summer peak are favoured. See p432 and the sections on individual cities and towns for more on the timing of Andalusian festivals.

## COSTS & MONEY

Andalucía is refreshingly economical by European standards. Accommodation, meals, drinks, transport, car hire and entertainment generally cost noticeably less than in the UK or France. All prices listed in this book are for the high season, so if travelling outside this time you might be pleasantly surprised.

If you are very frugal, it's possible to scrape by on €40 a day by staying in the cheapest accommodation, avoiding restaurants except for an inexpensive set lunch, and keeping a close eye on what you spend on museums, entertainment and bars. A comfortable midrange budget would be €70 to €130 a day. This would allow you €30 to €60 for accommodation; €3 or €4 for a light breakfast; €15 to €30 for one full meal and one lighter one; €8 to €15 for public transport, the odd taxi and admission fees; and the rest for a drink or two, intercity travel and some shopping. If you have €200 a day, you can stay in excellent accommodation and eat some of the best food Andalucía has to offer.

Two people can travel more cheaply (per person) than one by sharing rooms. Rooms, apartments and villas for up to six people, available in many places, work out even cheaper per person – good value for families, especially when they have a kitchen where you can prepare meals. You'll also save by avoiding the peak tourist seasons, when most room prices go up.

Children benefit from reduced admission fees at many museums, monuments and attractions, as do, in fewer cases, students and seniors. A few museums have free-admission days – worth bearing in mind if you're taking the whole family.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

Andalucía has fascinated foreign writers for two centuries, giving rise to a wealth of literature in English and other languages.

**South from Granada** (1957) In the 1920s Englishman Gerald Brenan settled in the remote village of Yegen in Las Alpujarras, Granada province, aiming to educate himself unimpeded by British traditions. His classic book is an acutely perceptive, humorous account of village life punctuated by visits from the Bloomsbury set.

**Driving Over Lemons** (1999) The entertaining, anecdotal, bestselling tale of taking on a small Andalusian farm by a more recent British migrant to Las Alpujarras, amiable drummer/sheep-shearer/writer Chris Stewart.

**Tales of the Alhambra** (1832) American Washington Irving took up residence in Granada's abandoned Alhambra palace in the 1820s. His book weaves a series of enchanting stories around the folk with whom he shared his life there, and contributed much to romantic notions of Andalucía which persist to this day.

**Andalus** (2004) Jason Webster uncovers what's left of the medieval Islamic legacy today as he travels across contemporary Andalucía with an illegal immigrant from Morocco – a book both comical and serious that combines adventure, travel and history.

**Getting to Mañana** (2003) Amid the welter of 'The First Year of My New Life in an Old Farmhouse on the Continent' books, Miranda Innes' tale stands out for telling us about the troubles as well as the dreams of the real people who did it (in this case in the hills of Málaga province). Good on food and plants too.

**The Sierras of the South** (1992) It's instructive to read the stories of foreigners who settled in Andalucía before everyone else was doing it. Alastair Boyd evokes life in the hills around Ronda in the 1950s and '60s, when foreigners were a rarity.

## LOVELY PLANET INDEX

1L petrol	€1
1.5L bottled water	€0.50
Bottle of San Miguel beer	€1.50
Souvenir T-shirt	€10
Tapas	€1.80

## HOW MUCH?

Two-hour bus or regional train ride	€10
Admission to major monument or museum	€6-12
Midrange double room in high season	€65-120
Decorative fan	€10
Three-course lunch or dinner with drinks	€20-30

## TOP TENS

### Festivals & Events

Andalucians love to celebrate, and there's always something exciting going on somewhere. For more festivals and events around Andalucía, see p432 and individual destination sections.

- Carnaval (Carnival) February or March; wildest in Cádiz (p179)
- Semana Santa (Holy Week) March or April; grandest in Seville (p113)
- Feria de Abril (April Fair; p114) April or early May; Seville
- Motorcycle Grand Prix (p199) April or May; Jerez de la Frontera
- Feria del Caballo (Horse Fair; p195) early May; Jerez de la Frontera
- Concurso de Patios Cordobeses (Patio Competition; p308) first half of May; Córdoba
- Romería del Rocío (Pilgrimage to El Rocío; p157) May or June; El Rocío
- Festival Internacional de Música y Danza (International Music & Dance Festival; p372) late June and early July; Granada
- Feria de Málaga (Málaga Fair; p257) mid-August; Málaga
- Bial de Flamenco (p114) September of even-numbered years; Seville

### Outdoor Adventures

Andalucía has no shortage of challenges to set the adrenaline pumping – for plenty more ideas see the Andalucía Outdoors chapter (p71).

- Canyoning the Garganta Verde (p207)
- Climbing the sheer walls of El Chorro gorge (p287)
- Paragliding over the Mediterranean coast at La Herradura (p395)
- Windsurfing Tarifa (p218)
- Kitesurfing Tarifa (p218)
- Dolphin- and whale-watching in the Strait of Gibraltar (p219)
- Walking Las Alpujarras (p386) and the Sierra Nevada (p382)
- Skiing at Europe's southernmost ski station, Sierra Nevada (p383)
- Horse riding in Las Alpujarras (p389)
- Watching for deer, ibex, boar and mouflon as you walk in the verdant Parque Natural Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas (p347)

### Hotel Conversions

Some of Andalucía's most charming hotels used to be urban palaces or country farmhouses.

- Las Navezuelas, Cazalla de la Sierra (p141) 16th-century farm, winery, olive mill
- La Casa Grande, Arcos de la Frontera (p202) Rambling cliffside mansion
- Alquería de Morayma, Cádiar (p392) Alpujarras farmstead
- Casa de Carmona, Carmona (p134) 16th-century town palace
- Sierra y Mar, Ferreirola (p391) Alpujarras village houses
- Parador de Granada, Granada (p375) 16th-century monastery within the Alhambra; original burial place of the Reyes Católicos (Catholic Monarchs)
- Hotel Carmen de Santa Inés, Granada (p373) Islamic house in the Albayzín
- Las Casas del Rey de Baeza, Seville (p117) 18th-century communal-housing patios
- Hospedería Las Cortes de Cádiz, Cádiz (p180) Elegant 1850s mansion
- Hospedería de la Cartuja, Cazalla de la Sierra (p141) 15th-century country monastery

**Andalucía: A Portrait of Southern Spain** (1984) Naturalist Nicholas Luard does a similar job for the country behind Tarifa and Algeciras in the 1960s and '70s.

**The Almond Blossom Appreciation Society** (2006) Chris Stewart's third book about his quirky life in Las Alpujarras (and before) – this time with a Moroccan angle too.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Andalucía te Quiere** (Andalucía Loves You; www.andalucia.org) Encyclopedic official tourism site of Turismo Andaluz, with detailed information on every city, town and village, directories of everything from accommodation to recommended hikes, and around 100 maps.

**British Embassy in Madrid** (www.ukinspain.com) Good practical information.

**Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com) Succinct summaries on travel in Andalucía; the popular Thorn Tree forum; travel features; services for travellers; downloads and lots more.

**OKSpain** (www.okspain.org) Site of the Spanish tourist offices in the USA, with good links.

**Welcome to Spain** (www.spain.info) Site of Turespaña, Spain's national tourism authority; tons of useful stuff.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### THE BIG THREE

Capture the essence of Andalucía's culture and history by visiting its three great World Heritage cities: **Seville** (p91), **Córdoba** (p300) and **Granada** (p356), home to Andalucía's most outstanding medieval Islamic monuments. You can fly in or out of Seville or Granada, or take a return flight to Málaga and journey overland to Seville at the start of the trip.

Seville's great monument is the glittering **Alcázar** palace (p99), but don't miss the city's monumental Gothic **cathedral** (p97) and its great flowering of baroque churches. Or head to Andalucía's finest Roman site at nearby **Itálica** (p130). From Seville, move northeast to Córdoba, home of Spain's most influential and magnificent Islamic building, the **Mezquita** (p301), as well as the Christian **Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos** (p307). Get out of the city to visit the vast caliphs' palace **Medina Azahara** (p306). From Córdoba, head southeast to the fabled city of Granada, overlooked by the magnificent jewel of the **Alhambra** palace (p359) and its exquisite **Generalife** gardens (p364). Move on to explore Andalucía's best-preserved old Islamic quarter, the **Albayzín** (p367), but don't neglect Granada's great Christian heritage, at its most evocative in the historic **Capilla Real** (p365). For a change of pace, head out of Granada to mainland Spain's highest mountains, the **Sierra Nevada** (p382).

Seville to Granada via Córdoba is only 300km. Allowing for one night in Málaga at the start or end of the trip, and half a day for travel on each leg of the route, you can see heaps with four nights in Seville, two in Córdoba and three in Granada. If you have extra days, so much the better.



### 10 Days to Two Weeks

### EASTERN DELIGHTS

If you're travelling through eastern Andalucía, it's a perfect opportunity to explore the remains of the region's two principal historical eras: the eight centuries of Islamic rule (AD 711–1492) and the subsequent Reconquista (Christian reconquest). There are moody castles, vibrant fortresses and elegant architecture, and we've added an opportunity for some beach time.

Start in Málaga, with its monumental **Castillo de Gibralfaro** (p245), delightful **Alcazaba** palace (p247) and massive post-reconquest **cathedral** (p244). Head north to the architectural gem of **Antequera** (p288), home to some 30 churches and a history that reaches back nearly 5000 years to its prehistoric **dolmens** (p289). Carrying on north brings you to Córdoba, whose famous **Mezquita** (p301) is all about the architectural clash between Islamic simplicity and Christian flamboyance. Explore the dramatic hilltop castles that stood near the Muslim-Christian frontier in later Islamic times, such as those at **Almodóvar del Río** (p317) and **Zuheros** (p319), and Jaén's all-seeing **Castillo de Santa Catalina** (p330). The rolling countryside you pass through once nurtured wealthy rural towns such as **Priego de Córdoba** (p320) and the exquisitely unique Renaissance towns of **Úbeda** (p339) and **Baeza** (p334).

Turning south, go to Granada, home to the incomparable **Alhambra** (p359), the last Islamic fortress to fall in the Reconquista. Then make for Almería, overlooked by one of Andalucía's finest fortresses, the **Alcazaba** (p401). Before returning to Málaga take a few relaxing days to enjoy the unspoilt beaches along the unique **Cabo de Gata** (p410) coastline.

Three weeks should be plenty of time for this circuit. Public transport links most of the towns but timetables can be restrictive, making travel by your own car preferable.



### Three Weeks

Driving through olive fields, Europe's only desert and down the Mediterranean coast, while stopping along the way for the best of eastern Andalucía's fantastic architecture, plus swimming at some of Spain's best beaches – it's a dream trip. The 850km can be done leisurely in three weeks, giving you extra time to explore off the beaten track.

## BEST OF THE WEST

### Three to Four Weeks

Start this loop of western Andalucía with a couple of nights in **Málaga** (p242), a vivacious city whose recently opened **Museo Picasso** (p245) is drawing attention to its cultural depths. Then head across to spectacular, historic **Ronda** (p277) and move on west into Cádiz province to the little village of **Grazalema** (p204), a good base for some marvellous walks through the area's verdant, undulating landscapes.

Continuing westward, stop off at the dramatic and ancient cliff-town of **Arcos de la Frontera** (p200), before you reach **Jerez de la Frontera** (p191), home of sherry and fine horses, and a hotbed of flamenco. Move north for a few days to experience the buzzing and beautiful regional capital, **Seville** (p91), then back south to another of the highly individual towns of the 'sherry triangle', **Sanlúcar de Barrameda** (p188), to enjoy the town's famed succulent seafood and sherrylike wine, manzanilla. From Sanlúcar take a trip to the vast and incomparably vital wetlands of the **Parque Nacional de Doñana** (p154), then plunge into the historic, atmospheric port city of **Cádiz** (p174). Now head down the Costa de la Luz, where Andalucía's most glorious stretches of sand front the Atlantic Ocean. The small coastal getaways of **Los Caños de Meca** (p211), **Zahara de los Atunes** (p213) and **Bolonia** (p214) are all ideal for chilling out before you reach **Tarifa** (p215) at Spain's southern tip, an ancient town with a hip international scene based loosely around windsurfing and kitesurfing.

En route back to Málaga, stop at the spectacular historical anomaly that is **Gibraltar** (p228) and, if the Costa del Sol tweaks your curiosity, **Marbella** (p270).

This western circuit around some of Andalucía's best natural and cultural attractions is 800km. Three weeks gives time to enjoy it but four weeks allows you to really savour the spectacular scenery, explore the historic towns and cities in depth, linger in the sherry houses and truly lie back on the beaches.



## TAILORED TRIPS

### LANDSCAPES TO DREAM ON

Andalucía's landscapes both pamper and shock the senses. Lovers of the hills will adore the little-trumpeted **Sierra de Aracena** (p167) at the western extremity of the rolling Sierra Morena with its evergreen oak forests and timeless villages, and the large **Parque Natural Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas** (p347) in the northeast, with its majestic topography and Andalucía's greatest numbers of visible large mammals – deer, boar, mouflon and ibex. The summit, though, is the **Sierra Nevada** (p382). Here rises mainland Spain's highest peak, **Mulhacén** (3479m; p385) in the midst of an awesome high-altitude wilderness with a population of some 5000 ibex. By contrast the Sierra Nevada's southern flank harbours one of Europe's most harmoniously human-influenced landscapes – the ancient white villages of **Las Alpujarras** (p386), among green hillside orchards, thick woodlands and rapid streams.

Andalucian beachscapes are by far their best along the sandy Atlantic littoral, and nowhere more attractive than on the massive dunes of **Ensenada de Valdevaqueros** (p218) and **Bolonia** (p214). A little further up this coast are the infinite wetlands of the **Parque Nacional de Doñana** (p154), teeming with deer, wild boar and birdlife.

Over at Andalucía's southeastern tip you'll find its most otherworldly landscape, **Cabo de Gata** (p410), Europe's driest area, with near-deserts running down to a coast of turquoise waters and beautiful beaches strung between fearsome cliffs.



### ANDALUCÍA FOR KIDS

Beaches, beaches everywhere, but away from the salt water, kids of most ages won't fail to be excited by the attractions along the Costa del Sol west of Málaga: **Aquapark** (p268) and **Crocodile Park** (p268) in Torremolinos; **Tivoli World** (p268) amusement park, **SeaLife** (p268) aquarium and the **Selwo Marina** (p268) dolphinarium at Benalmádena; **Parque Acuático Mijas** (p268) in Fuengirola; and **Selwo Aventura** (p268) wildlife park near Estepona.

In **Gibraltar** (p228) kids love the cable car, the apes and the caves of the upper rock. Next stop: Jerez de la Frontera for its **zoo** (p195) and the prancing horses of the **Real Escuela Andaluza del Arte Ecuestre** (p194). In Seville, **Isla Mágica** (p111) is a highlight for all white-knuckle thrill-seekers.

Head west to visit the old metal mines and vintage train at **Minas de Riotinto** (p162) and enjoy another subterranean experience at Aracena's **Gruta de las Maravillas** (p166). Call in at the **Reserva Natural Castillo de las Guardas** wildlife park (p113) on your way east to Granada's hands-on science museum, the **Parque de las Ciencias** (p371), and **Mini Hollywood** (p407), a Wild West movie town in the desert north of Almería. En route back to Málaga, stop in at the **Parque Ornitológico Loro-Sexi** (p394), Almuñécar's tropical bird aviary, and the spectacular **Cueva de Nerja** (p297).



## EATING FOR EPICURES

Work up a good appetite swimming on Málaga's beaches and dine on octopus and beetroot rice in **Café de Paris** (p261). Famished after schlepping around the Alhambra? Grab fantastic seafood at Granada's **Los Diamantes** (p375), North African tapas in **Om-Khalsum** (p376), or drool over a lamb *tagine* in **Restaurante Arrayanes** (p376). Following a day of swimming on the spectacular Cabo de Gata, replenish in Almería city on delicious deer cutlets with caramel treacle at **La Encina Restaurante** (p405). The elegance of Úbeda's architecture is complemented by the food at **Taberna La Imprenta** (p344) where the prawns are saucy, the asparagus is wild and the chocolate cake positively dangerous. Celebrate Córdoba's abundance in good food with a slice of famed **Bar Santos** (p313) tortilla. Tapas are excellent at the **Taberna San Miguel** (p313). Dine at **Bodega Campos** (p314) where royals, stars and presidents have eaten. Taste Seville's best tapas at **Los Coloniales** (p121) where the *churrasco* (cutlets) are the size of a small African country. Explosive, inventive dishes by the world's best chef, Ferrán Adriá, are at **Hacienda Benazuza** (p118). The best of Huelva province is Alájar's **Casa Padrino** (p169), where scrambled eggs with freshly picked wild herbs go splendidly with wine. And finally, Cádiz city is master of seafood: **El Aljibe** (p181) plays with tradition, stuffing halibut with seafood and burying it in puff pastry. ¡Buen provecho!



## A BEACH HOLIDAY

Andalucía's best beaches are undoubtedly along **Costa de la Luz** in Cádiz and Huelva provinces. **Tarifa** (p215) has tiny, popular **Playa Chica**, and the 10km white-sand **Playa de los Lances**, at the end of which stands a dreamy sand dune. **El Palmar** (p210) is a popular spot with trendy *madrileños*, who flock here for the peace and lack of development. **Los Caños de Meca** (p211) has beautiful sandy bays overlooked by a pine forest, and gets busy with a relaxed, shabby-chic crowd and plenty of surfers. One of the top beaches along this coast is at the fashionable **Zahara de los Atunes** (p213).

The coast of Huelva province is one long, wide sandy beach over 100km long, whose peace is being threatened by holiday development, so tread lightly. Sixty kilometres of beach and windswept dunes with a thick, protective barrier of pines run southeast from the outskirts of Huelva. Check out the 100m-high dunes at **Cuesta de Maneli** (p153) and, going towards the Portuguese border, the superb beaches at **Isla Cristina** (p160) and **Punta Umbría** (p159), where some adventurous beachgoers try their hand at kitesurfing the coast. More languorous beach bums will love the perfect beaches of **Parque Natural de Cabo de Gata-Níjar** (p410). Charming little coves, such as Cala del Barranco, Cala Grande and Cala Chica, are excellent for a day of beach hopping and picnicking.



# Snapshot

Andalucians continue to bask in their biggest economic boom since Christopher Columbus found America and turned Seville into the richest city on earth. Thanks to a decade of growth in tourism and construction and two decades of EU subsidies and finance for agriculture and infrastructure, unemployment in Andalucía is at its lowest levels in memory (14% in 2006 – a figure that ignores the many Andalucians who work while registered as unemployed).

Since the left-of-centre Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE; Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) regained power at national level in 2004, Andalucía – whose regional government is also in the hands of the PSOE – has enjoyed improved cooperation with Madrid on a range of issues, from strategies to save the Iberian lynx (see p64) to renegotiation of the regional autonomy statute that defines the separation of powers between Madrid and Seville (Sevilla in Spanish).

Andalucía is also at last (albeit far too late) taking some steps to check the rampant overdevelopment of its coasts and some of the corruption, international crime and environmental degradation that feeds on this. A series of big police operations in 2005 and 2006 saw dozens of people arrested in crackdowns on international money laundering on the Costa del Sol, and the mayor, deputy mayor and over 50 others arrested in the notorious resort town of Marbella in connection with a web of bribery and illegal building permits (see p34).

Meanwhile Andalucía continues successfully to meet another new challenge thrown up by the 21st century in the form of unprecedentedly high levels of immigration – not just sun-seeking, wealth-bringing northern Europeans but also economic migrants from impoverished Africa (especially from nearby Morocco), Latin America and Eastern Europe (see p39). Ethnic harmony is something all Spain is striving doubly hard to maintain and Andalucía, historically a crossroads and meeting place of so many cultures, seems to be maintaining its traditions of racial integration.

In the half-century since tourism was launched on the Costa del Sol, Andalucía has transformed itself from an impoverished, hungry, rural backwater with a barren coastline to a prosperous region with increasingly cosmopolitan, fashionable and cultured cities, high levels of consumption, a coast lined with international holiday resorts, universal schooling, large universities and much more relaxed social codes. Wages, educational standards and employment levels still lag below the Spanish average, but the air of confidence and progress is palpable. There are, however, one or two little clouds on the economic horizon that may make the late 2000s slightly less golden. The construction and property boom finally showed signs of plateauing in 2005–06, and the enlargement of the EU to 25 countries in 2004 means that Spain will become a net contributor to the EU budget after two decades as a large-scale recipient of funds. Meanwhile, in contrast to its overweight construction and tourism industries and still large agricultural sector, Andalucía lags in technological industries. With 18% of Spain's population, it produces only 5.4% of the national output from technologically advanced industry. Diversification has to be a key to its future.

## FAST FACTS

Area: 87,000 sq km  
(Portugal: 92,000 sq km)

Human population:  
7.9 million  
(Spain: 44 million)

Lynx population: under  
200 (Spain: under 200)

Thoroughbred horses  
confiscated in 2006  
Marbella corruption  
investigation: 103

Wolf population: 60 to 80  
(Spain: 2000 to 2500)

Olive trees: 80 million  
(Spain: 120 million)

Registered  
unemployment (2006):  
14% (Spain: 9%)

Average monthly wage  
(2005): €1482  
(Spain: €1682)

Annual visitors to  
Alhambra: 2 million

Half-bottles of manzanilla  
consumed in Seville's  
Feria de Abril: 800,000

# The Authors



## JOHN NOBLE

**Coordinating Author, Cádiz, Huelva, Málaga**

John, originally from England's Ribble Valley, and his wife, Susan Forsyth, decided to try life in an Andalusian mountain village for a year or so in the mid-1990s. They are still there, along with their now bilingual, multicultural children Isabella and Jack. A writer with a specialism in Spain and Latin America, John has travelled throughout Andalucía and loves its music, dance, architecture, history, tapas, wine, labyrinthine villages and wild, dramatic countryside. John co-wrote the first two editions of this guide with Susan and was also author of the Andalucía chapter of Lonely Planet's *Walking in Spain*. For this guide John wrote the introductory and back-end chapters except Food & Drink, plus Huelva province and parts of Cádiz and Málaga provinces.

## My Andalucía

My ideal loop around Andalucía strings together quirky, mostly small destinations and I'll travel between them by back roads wherever possible. Starting at castle-crowned Vélez Blanco (p421) in Almería's remote northern hills, I'll head across the empty uplands of the Granada *altiplano* to explore the dramatic Parque Natural Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas (p347). I'll roll west along the Sierra Morena to drink in the fabulous views from the Castillo de Miramontes at Santa Eufemia, Andalucía's northernmost village (p316), then down to Sevilla's Sierra Norte (p139), to spend time walking around Cazalla de la Sierra and Guadalcanal, and on westward to the verdant Sierra de Aracena (p167) with its timeless villages. Next, down to Parque Nacional de Doñana (p154) for some salt air and wildlife-spotting, then my favourite Andalusian city: liberal, cultured, open-minded Cádiz (p174). I'll be able to take in the lovely Sierra de Grazalema (p203) en route to my final destination: the magical, mysterious villages of the Las Alpujarras valleys (p386) and the mountains of the Sierra Nevada (p382), mainland Spain's highest, towering above them.



## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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## SUSAN FORSYTH

**Cádiz, Gibraltar, Málaga**

Susan, an Australian, has spent the last decade based in Andalucía inbetween travelling, researching and writing in Spain, Mexico and Central America. The hispanification of her life continues apace, with her two children totally immersed in local life. Andalusian culture, lifestyle and the Spanish language fascinate her: she marvels at Andalucía's architectural and artistic heritage, loves its varied landscapes and finds many similarities with Australia, including the ocean beaches and big blue skies. Susan co-wrote the first two editions of *Andalucía* with John Noble and has written substantial sections of Lonely Planet's *Spain*. For this guide Susan covered most of Cádiz and Málaga provinces and Gibraltar.



## VESNA MARIC

**Almería, Córdoba, Granada, Jaén, Sevilla**

Vesna's infatuation with Spain started the first time her feet touched ground in springtime Andalucía, in 2000. She's been travelling around the country for years, making sure she visits at least once every season, and more in spring and summer. Family relations in Málaga and the north of Spain have meant that she has been taking part in local life from the beginning, quickly becoming an expert in the art of eating tapas and sleeping during siesta hours. Her particular joy is writing about food, because she has a great excuse to try the best on the menu, at least once. For this guide Vesna also wrote the Food & Drink chapter.

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