With each click of the castanets, you feel it—from flamenco to fiestas, gazpacho to tapas, bodegas to bullrings—the essence of Spain lies squarely in the heart of Andalucía. In this long-ago Moorish stronghold, every romantic sultan’s palace, striking cathedral and brilliantly whitewashed village has captivating stories to tell. We’ll take you deep inside and reveal their secrets. Biking in Andalucía with Backroads—quintessentially wonderful!
Well done! Your trips add value to one’s life. You provide opportunities that bring people together, place them in remarkable locations and, in many cases, ask the individuals to challenge themselves physically, resulting in true feelings of accomplishment. It doesn’t get much better than that! Thank you!

Lynda Farmer - North Saanich, BC

**NEVER SUBCONTRACTED**
We operate our own trips around the globe. That way we control the quality—and we’re fully responsible for your great experience.

**TWO SUPPORT VANS**
We provide two support vans on all of our trips* so you can count on us to be there when you need us, regardless of the route you take.

**THREE LEADERS**
Our trips have three leaders*, for an average 6:1 guest-to-leader ratio. Guests consistently score our leaders 9.7 out of 10, telling us they make all the difference.

**THOUGHTFUL TRIP DESIGN**
We know how to create exceptional travel experiences, ensuring that you get the most from every moment as your trip unfolds.

**MULTIPLE DAILY ROUTES**
Being able to choose among several expertly designed routes each day gives you the freedom to enjoy the best of a region at your own pace.

**WE CELEBRATE MIXED ABILITIES**
To accommodate varied activity levels, you need three leaders, two vans, multiple route options, detailed directions, a rating system showing if shuttles are required, and plenty of well-matched riding/hiking companions.

*95% of Backroads guests travel with the support of two or more vans and three leaders. The remaining 5% are on trips with very few guests where only one van and two leaders are needed to maintain our high standards.
We want to make sure you’re on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

Terrain & Shuttles
With Andalucía’s limestone cliffs and ancient hilltop towns, you can look forward to some great climbs and descents. For Level 3 riders, we can flatten some of the hills with strategic shuttles to give you a boost, but you should be comfortable with some pretty long down-hills or hopping in the van for a lift.

Day 1
On the first day of the trip, meet your Trip Leaders (the folks in the Backroads T-shirts) at 10 a.m. at the Santa Justa train station in Sevilla. Look for your leaders to the far right-hand side as you exit the station. Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today’s ride.

Shuttle to Zahara de la Sierra 1½ Hours
Reina Victoria Route 20 Miles (1,500’ elevation gain)
¡Bienvenidos a Andalucía! After meeting in Sevilla, we shuttle to Zahara de la Sierra, a picturesque pueblo blanco (“white town”) perched above the sparkling Zahara-El Gastor Reservoir. We sit down to a lovely lunch of local specialties before gearing up for our first ride. After a brief talk on biking techniques and safety, your leaders fit your bike. Then set off through the countryside, accompanied by views of the Sierra de Grazalema mountain range and the reservoir.

The ride takes you to the Reina Victoria hotel, dramatically set alongside the precipitous El Tajo Gorge. You’ll have some time to settle into your room and into the relaxed pace of life in this part of Spain.

Tonight we gather for a welcome reception and a glass of Spanish wine before heading out for a short walk to dine at a local favorite restaurant. Fresh, local and seasonal ingredients describe the simple but excellent traditional cuisine of this region—in Spain, you can’t go wrong with anything made from olives or grapes.

Lodging: Hotel Catalonia Reina Victoria

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE
We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We’ll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.
Day 2

Biking Options:
Morning Boost Route: 19 Miles* (1,100’ elevation gain)
Grazalema Route: 22 Miles* (2,800’)
Montejaque & Benaojan Route: 43 Miles (3,700’)
Zahara Epic Challenge Route: 53 Miles (5,000’)
*with shuttle

Fuel up this morning for a day of fantastic—and challenging—riding. After a quick shuttle, begin by pedaling your way through a region well-known and beloved by cyclists. The combination of tough yet scenic climbs through pine forests with smooth valley cruising keeps things interesting. Earn your midday meal on the climb from Zahara Reservoir to the hillside town of Grazalema. If you’re looking for a heftier morning challenge, tackle the winding and steep ascent from Zahara to the summit of Monte Prieto. At 4,400 feet, you’ll enjoy sweeping and well-deserved views before descending into Grazalema for a tasty almuerzo (lunch) in a local restaurant.

If you’ve had your fill of biking, hop in the van for a lift back to the hotel where you can lounge poolside for the afternoon or visit the spa (spa treatments not included in the trip price). Otherwise, jump back on your bike and make your way down through the charming towns of Montejaque and Benaojan en route back to the hotel.

This evening we meet for a guided walk through town followed by dinner on your own. An ancient capital, Ronda is a fascinating town with close ties to one of the oldest but most controversial traditions of Spain: bullfighting. Its Plaza de Toros, built in 1784 in neoclassical style, is the oldest bullfighting ring in the country. Also noteworthy are the three 18th-century bridges that span El Tajo. If you’ve read For Whom the Bell Tolls, this view may seem familiar. Ernest Hemingway spent several summers in Ronda and allegedly based a poignant scene from his book on events that occurred here during the Spanish Civil War. After taking in the sights, head out on your own to one (or several!) of Ronda’s eateries to sample authentic Andalusian tapas.

Lodging: Hotel Catalonia Reina Victoria
Day 3

**Biking Options:**
Ardales Route: 29 Miles* (1,700’ elevation gain)
El Chorro Gorge Route: 36 Miles* (2,000’)
Convento La Magdalena Route: 52 Miles* (3,700’)

*with shuttle

Today we experience the variety of Andalucía’s terrain as we travel eastward and watch the landscape transform from evergreen forests to desert-like plains to fertile citrus valleys. A smooth warm-up section leads us out of town and prepares your legs for the first climb of the day in the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park followed by a thrilling downhill, which takes you to the tiny village of El Burgo. Then pedal on to El Chorro, a 1,200-foot-deep gorge that’s a mecca for cyclists, rock climbers and hikers. Your reward after this challenging route? A scrumptious lunch with a view! From here you can take the van for a boost to the hotel, or get back in the saddle for more miles. Either way, take in the scenery and breathe deeply—you’ll likely notice a pleasant scent in the air thanks to the orange and lemon trees that line the road to the Abdalajis Valley. Don’t forget to look down and relish the views of the Guadalhorce River as it meanders through the valley below.

Tonight’s hotel, La Magdalena, has been converted from a 16th-century convent to a homey inn; the property is particularly well-known for its painstaking efforts to restore and preserve its rich collection of original frescoes. Unwind in the hot tub or sip a glass of vino on the patio. Tonight we reconvene to discover lovely Antequera, a hidden gem of a city with Castilian and Moorish heritage that is especially magical at night. We dine together in a restaurant renowned not only for its traditional cuisine but also its picturesque setting above the illuminated town. **Lodging: Hotel Convento de la Magdalena**

Day 4

**Biking Options:**
Antequera Route: 23 Miles* (1,300’ elevation gain)
La Bobadilla Route: 49 Miles (3,000’)

*with shuttle

Rest your legs this morning with a quick shuttle to El Torcal National Park. Be sure to bring your walking shoes so you can explore the extraordinary limestone formations on foot. Until about 100 million years ago, this area was part of an ancient seabed. Over time rain and wind have chiseled the horizontal layers of limestone into otherworldly shapes.

Afterward, hop on your bike to enjoy the thrilling descent from this hilltop park into the colorful Malagan countryside and further on into Antequera for lunch on your own. Later we travel on wheels across the border from Málaga Province to Granada, and almost simultaneously the landscape fills with endless olive groves. There’s no question as to what this region’s primary export is!
Tonight you join the ranks of royalty and celebrities who have lodged at the opulent La Bobadilla hotel. Set amid a 1,000-acre private estate, this Moorish-inspired palace and a Leading Hotels of the World member is like no other. Settle into your sumptuous room, then explore the property’s grounds or just put your feet up and take in the panoramic views.

This evening we partake in an exclusive sherry tasting followed by dinner at the hotel’s festive El Cortijo restaurant. **Lodging: Barceló La Bobadilla**

### Day 5

**Biking Options:**
- La Haza Route: 22 Miles* (1,800’ elevation gain)
- La Haza Extended Route: 26 Miles (1,900’)
- La Bobadilla Loop: 44 Miles (3,100’)
- Iznajar Route: 51 Miles (4,000’)

*with shuttle

Today’s ride leaves from the hotel and takes you into the thick of the Loja’s hills, blanketed with countless olive trees. Climb above the sparkling “Embalse de Iznajar” (Iznajar Reservoir) and cruise the undulating route to Cortijo La Haza, where lunch is served along with warm hospitality and views that stretch as far as the snowy Sierra Nevada. Afterward, shuttle to the hotel or make your way there on two wheels.

Back at La Bobadilla, treat yourself to a spa treatment, stroll through the lush manicured gardens or soak up some sun poolside. Tonight we toast our week together at La Bobadilla’s La Finca restaurant for a fine dining experience where traditional local flavors are combined with innovative cuisine. **Lodging: Barceló La Bobadilla**

### Day 6

**Archidona Out-&-Back** 19 Miles (700’ elevation gain)

**Shuttle to Granada** 1 Hour

This morning we take to our bikes for one more ride through the Andalusian countryside. This out-and-back route takes you to Archidona, a delightful whitewashed town of narrow, winding cobblestone streets in the foothills of the Sierra de Gracia. Of course, if you decide to skip the ride, you can sleep in and enjoy a leisurely morning. Arriving back at the hotel, you’ll have some time to freshen up before we shuttle to the enchanting city of Granada, where our trip ends. Please see “Arriving & Departing” for end-of-trip logistics.

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**Shift Gears!**

At Backroads we understand that you have your own idea of the “perfect” trip—the right mix of being active, discovering new cultures and natural wonders, and having time to relax.

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of a region the way YOU want. Feel like you’re ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want more time to enjoy your hotel, lounge by the pool, grab a drink with new friends or head out on your own? No problem!

Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you’re missing out. So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!
Arriving & Departing

See Day 1 for meeting time and location.

All prices are in U.S. dollars and subject to change. The standard unit of currency in Spain is the euro. At the time of printing, 0.75 EUR = 1 USD.

CONCLUSION OF THE TRIP

On the last day of the trip, Backroads provides transportation to Granada, arriving at Hotel Hospes Palacio de los Patos, (www.hospes.com) between 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m.

If you’re flying out of Granada today, you can take a taxi from this hotel to the airport; please schedule your flight for after 5 p.m. Alternatively, you can take the evening train to Madrid, departing at 6 p.m., which allows you some time to explore Granada before taking a taxi to the train station. (You may store your luggage at Hotel Hospes.)

Granada is a beautiful historic city, well worth a visit after your Backroads trip. We highly recommend staying at least one night to allow for time to explore this vibrant city on your own or with a local guide. We also recommend visiting the Alhambra, Granada’s famed Moorish palace and one of Spain’s crown jewels. Purchasing tickets in advance is advised. You can find details about guided tours, ticket prices and times at www.alhambradegranada.org.

The Hotel Hospes Palacio de los Patos can help you arrange a tour of the palace and also offers Backroads guests a discount on rooms. See “Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip” for details.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

This trip begins in Sevilla and ends in Granada. We suggest flying into Sevilla’s San Pablo Airport (airport code: SVQ; www.sevilla-airport.com) and out of Granada’s Federico García Lorca Granada-Jaén airport (GRX; www.aena-aeropuertos.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Federico-Garcia-Lorca-Granada-Jaen/en/).

Alternatively, you can fly in and out of the Madrid-Barajas International Airport (MAD; www.madrid-airport.info) in Madrid and travel by train to the trip start and from the trip end. See below for details.

For help arranging air transport to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel agent or you may choose to work with the Backroads Travel Desk. Our expert travel advisors are ready to share their insiders’ knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations. These professional agents are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Call 800-GO-ACTIVE (462-2848) to be connected with an advisor. Please note that consulting or ticketing fees may apply, depending on the services requested. The Backroads Travel Desk is open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time.

GETTING FROM SEVILLA AIRPORT TO MEETING LOCATION

A taxi ride from the Sevilla airport to the Santa Justa train station takes about 15 minutes and costs around $30.

Public buses also connect the airport with the train station and the city center. The Santa Justa station is the second stop on the route. One-way fares cost about $2 per person and the trip takes around 25 minutes. Visit www.tussam.es for more information.

You can also book a private transfer with Shuttle Direct (www.shuttledirect.com; +34-(0)90-233-4633) for approximately $25 per person.

GETTING FROM MADRID TO SEVILLA BY TRAIN

There are several daily trains between Madrid and Sevilla; travel time on the high-speed AVE train is about 1½ hours and ticket prices start at $40. Your safest bet is to arrive in Sevilla the day before our trip starts, but a 7:30 a.m. departure from Madrid’s Puerta de Atocha station will get you to the Santa Justa station in Sevilla just in time to meet your Trip Leaders on the day your trip starts. Be sure to visit www.raileurope.com or www.renfe.com for the most up-to-date train schedules and to book your tickets in advance.
GETTING FROM GRANADA TO MADRID BY TRAIN
There are three daily trains from Granada. The only departure that coordinates with our trip end departs Granada around 6 p.m., arriving in Madrid at 11 p.m. We recommend taking the opportunity to spend a night in Granada and booking a seat on the morning or midday train to Madrid the following day. Travel time is 4–5 hours and tickets prices start at $40. Visit www.raileurope.com or www.renfe.com to book your tickets in advance.

BUYING TRAIN TICKETS
If you need assistance booking your rail tickets, please contact your travel agent or the Backroads Travel Desk at 800-462-2848, available Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time.

You can also buy tickets and make reservations through Rail Europe at www.raileurope.com. Please note that all online orders are subject to an $18 shipping fee. You can check schedules and purchase tickets online, but for the most detailed and up-to-date information, it’s best to speak directly with one of Rail Europe’s agents by calling 877-257-2887. Just keep in mind that if you make reservations by phone, there is a $33 shipping and handling fee. Note: The most thorough online schedule for train travel in Spain can be obtained through the RENFE website at www.renfe.com.

Climate
Summertime in Andalucía is typically hot, while temperatures are generally cooler in spring and late fall. On many days you’ll be comfortable biking in a short-sleeved jersey or synthetic T-shirt, but be sure to pack a jacket as well to combat the cooler, more unpredictable weather of Ronda’s higher elevation. (When you head out in the morning, you will want to wear a lightweight jacket or vest, arm warmers and knee/leg warmers.) Rain is possible year-round—don’t forget to bring waterproof, breathable rain gear. Please see the “Suggested Packing List” in your Travel Planner for more recommended clothing and gear.

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<th>Average</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Low °F</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Temperatures in Europe are measured in degrees Celsius. Zero degrees Celsius is 32 degrees Fahrenheit. For a quick conversion, double the Celsius reading and add 30 to determine the approximate temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.
Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip

For help making hotel reservations for before and after your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel agent, or you may choose to work with the Backroads Travel Desk. Call 800-GO-ACTIVE (462-2848) to be connected with an advisor. Please note that consulting or ticketing fees may apply, depending on the services requested. The Backroads Travel Desk is open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time.

Of course, we also recommend extending your stay at any of the hotels we visit on this trip; see the accommodations sidebar for details.

Refer to the Hotel Room Rate Guide for starting double-occupancy rates. Note that the chart reflects the internet and/or best available rates, which were accurate at the time of printing, but hotel rates are always subject to change. Also be aware that some hotels may require a minimum stay. We recommend that you consult directly with the hotels for specific details, as these requirements can change depending on the season and time of the week. Book early, especially during peak travel season!

Keep in mind that even in first-class hotels, rooms may be smaller than those in typical U.S. hotels. Rooms on the street tend to be noisy, so you might want to request a room overlooking the hotel’s garden or courtyard.

Sevilla and Granada are vibrant cities, brimming with culture and history. We highly recommend spending time in both of these cities before or after your Backroads trip.

### SEVILLA

**Hotel Alfonso XIII**
Recent renovations ensure that a stay at the Alfonso XIII—long preferred by royalty, celebrities and VIPs—will be even more memorable. Constructed in 1928 to lodge guests of the Iber-American Exposition, this luxury hotel is highly regarded for its central location, historic value and beautiful architecture. In the Andaluz-, Castillian- and Moorish-influenced guest rooms, opulence is reflected in the marble floors, silk-covered walls and crystal chandeliers throughout. (pool) | Travel + Leisure World’s Best Award 2013 | Calle San Fernando, 2 | [www.hotel-alfonsoxiii-seville.com](http://www.hotel-alfonsoxiii-seville.com) | +34-(0)95-491-7000 | 151 rooms & suites | Rates: ++++

**Hacienda Corral del Rey**
This small boutique hotel is found in the heart of Sevilla, tucked into the Barrio Alfalfa neighborhood, just a 5-minute walk from the cathedral. The pair of 17th-century buildings that make up Corral del Rey have been beautifully transformed with contemporary appeal, yet retain vestiges of its original architecture, including exposed wooden beams and whitewashed walls. (pool) | Corral del Rey, 12 | [www.corraldelrey.com](http://www.corraldelrey.com) | +34-(0)95-422-7116 | 14 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**Hotel Palacio de Villapanés – AlmaSevilla**
Built in the early 18th century by the first marquis of Torreblanca del Aljarafe, this historic palace seamlessly fuses modern conveniences with traditional Spanish charm. Considering its central location, vast range of accommodation options, indoor pool, fitness center and sauna, it’s an easy pick. (pool, spa) | Calle Santiago, 31 | [www.almasevilla.com](http://www.almasevilla.com) | +34-(0)95-450-2063 | 50 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**Hotel Amadeus**
Built around a typical Sevillan patio dating to 1745, Hotel Amadeus puts a unique musical spin on traditional accommodations. If you’re musically inclined, feel free to pick up an instrument or simply sit in on one of the occasional classical music concerts hosted by the hotel. If that’s not your cup of tea, no problem: soundproofing was part of the restoration upgrades. The rooftop hot tub and open-air terraces are ideal spots to unwind after a day on the town. | Calle Farnesio, 6 | [www.hotelamadeussevilla.com](http://www.hotelamadeussevilla.com) | +34-(0)95-450-1443 | 14 rooms & suites | Rates: ++
Andalucía Biking

Hotel Casa 1800 Sevilla
With attentive staff, plush accommodations and a location that can’t be beat, this hotel—a sister property of the equally popular Casa 1800 Granada—ends up at the top of countless recommendation lists. The renovated mansion dating to 1864 enjoys a perfect blend of contemporary and traditional design elements, and sunshine from the central courtyard splashes warm natural light inside. The rooftop terrace is a perfect place to put your feet up and take in the city’s sights, including the cathedral and famous bell tower, La Giralda, both a stone’s throw away. | Rodrigo Caro, 6 | www.hotelcasa1800sevilla.com | +34-(0)95-456-1800 | 24 rooms & suites | Rates: ++

Hotel Holos
This cozy hotel is a great stop if you’re seeking peace and quiet within easy reach of the city center. A 10-minute drive or 25-minute leisurely bike ride (rentals at the hotel) gets you into the center of town from the relaxed Heliópolis neighborhood. The real draw is the top-notch hospitality of owner Carmen, though the tasty breakfast and patio spaces are big plusses as well. | Calle Uruguay, 8 | www.hotelholos.com | +34-(0)95-429-6069 | 7 rooms | Rates: ++

Hotel Hospes Las Casas del Rey de Baeza
Recommended by Andrew Harper and The New York Times, this Hospes property occupies a peaceful neighborhood enclave in the Jewish quarter of Santa Cruz. Tastefully appointed guest rooms, located in two historic residences, are centered around a lovely courtyard. When you’ve had enough of the busy city life, retreat to the rooftop solarium for a dip in the pool. | Calle Santiago, 2 | www.hospes.com | 877-865-8215 (from the U.S.) or +34-(0)91-436-3478 | 42 rooms & suites | Rates: ++

Granada

Hotel Hospes Palacio de los Patos (Our drop-off location on Day 6)
Occupying a Belle Epoque-style 19th-century palace in the heart of town and a 10-minute taxi ride from the Alhambra, this Hospes property is a lovely base for exploring Granada. Light-filled alabaster-white interiors and minimalist décor create serene private and public spaces. During your stay, visit the popular Senzone Restaurant for a contemporary interpretation of traditional cuisine. (pool, spa) | Solarillo de Gracía, 1 | www.hospes.com | 877-865-8215 (from the U.S.) or +34-(0)91-436-3478 | 42 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

Parador de Granada
Originally constructed as a convent in the 15th century by orders of the Catholic monarchs, the Parador de Granada enjoys a privileged location within the ancient walls of the illustrious Alhambra. Step back in time as you walk around the cloistered courtyard, along mosaic-tiled walkways and through lovely gardens. Antique tapestries and paintings adorn public spaces, while recently renovated guest rooms feature modern furniture, décor with Moorish touches and black marble baths. | Real de la Alhambra | www.parador.es | +34-(0)95-822-1440 | 40 rooms & suites | Rates: ++++

AC Palacio de Santa Paula
Housed in the historic Santa Paula Convent, this hotel offers comfortable accommodations and a central location. The original cloister has been renovated and provides a tranquil sunny respite from the bustling city streets. Return at day’s end to unwind at the hotel’s Turkish bath, sauna or fitness center. | Gran Vía de Colón, 31 | www.palaciodesantapaula.com | +34-(0)95-880-5740 | 75 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

Hotel Alhambra Palace
If visiting the Alhambra is your primary goal while in Granada, few lodgings offer a more convenient location. Inaugurated as a hotel by King Alfonso XIII, the Alhambra Palace has been hosting guests for over a century. Intricate Moorish-style mosaic tiling and arched passageways adorn the interior spaces, while breathtaking views of the city and its environs make the outdoor verandas and rooftop terrace all the more enticing. | Plaza Arquitecto García de Paredes, 1 | www.halhambrapalace.es | +34-(0)95-822-1468 | 126 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

Andalucía Biking
**Hotel Casa 1800 Granada**
Situated below the hilltop Alhambra and at the foot of the labyrinthine Albaicín Quarter of narrow cobbled streets, teahouses and tile-roofed whitewashed buildings, Casa 1800 benefits from an enviable location in the center of the historic district. The individually decorated guest rooms aren’t fancy, but are well appointed with modern amenities and lots of character. Be sure to head back from sight-seeing for afternoon tea, which is complimentary and served in the delightful courtyard. | Calle Benalúa, 11 | www.hotelcasa1800granada.com | +34-(0)95-821-0700 | 25 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**Carmen de la Alcubilla del Caracol**
At the upper limits of the Realejo neighborhood, this family-run carmen, or historic villa, features a terraced garden and orchard, as well as commanding views of Granada and the Sierra Nevada. The soothing sound of water running through the original Moorish irrigation canals that traverse the garden creates a peaceful atmosphere. Guest rooms are clean and airy, and many open directly to the garden or feature a private veranda. | Calle del Aire Alta, 12 | www.alcubilladelcaracol.com | +34-(0)95-821-5551 | 7 rooms | Rates: ++

**Hotel Santa Isabel la Real**
This charming but modest guesthouse, set in the medieval Albaicín Quarter, is run by the Castillo family after a painstaking renovation of the 16th-century home. Santa Isabel is a cozy place to hang your hat for a night or two, and as such, has received numerous accolades including placing as a finalist in the Condé Nast Traveler’s Johansens luxury hotel guide for three consecutive years. Be sure to catch views of the Alhambra illuminated at night from the nearby mirador. | Calle de Santa Isabel la Real, 17 | www.hotelesantaisabellareal.com | +34-(0)95-829-4658 | 11 rooms | Rates: ++

**Hotel Ritz**
This Leading Hotels of the World member has long been considered one of the finest hotels in Madrid. Commissioned by King Alfonso XIII, who wanted a traditional British hotel in his city, the Ritz is filled with antiques, crystal chandeliers, hand-embroidered linens and fresh flowers. After you spend a day exploring the Prado and the Thyssen-Bornemisza (both adjacent to the property), splurge on a meal at the Hotel Ritz restaurant, one of Madrid’s best dining experiences. | Plaza de la Lealtad, 5 | www.ritz.com | 800-237-1236 (from the U.S.) or +34-(0)91-701-6767 | 167 rooms & suites | Rates: ++++

**AC Santo Mauro**
The former residence of the Marquis of Santo Mauro, this sophisticated neoclassical townhouse is located in the aristocratic Chamberi neighborhood. With guest rooms adorned in plush fabrics, exotic rugs, Art Deco antiques and contemporary art, the Santo Mauro makes you feel like a guest in a private mansion. (pool) | Calle Zurbano, 36 | www.autograph-hotels.marriott.com | +34-(0)91-319-6900 | 51 rooms | Rates: +++

**Casa de Madrid**
Recommended by Andrew Harper, this “cozy yet aristocratic 7-room bed-and-breakfast in the sprawling apartment of a noble Spanish family” is a gem. Set across from the Royal Opera House, the landmark 18th-century building has several balconies with views of the Plaza Oriente and Royal Palace. Opulent furnishings and excellent service render Casa de Madrid a luxurious spot from which to explore the city. | Calle Arrieta, 2 | www.casademadrid.com | +34-(0)66-034-2427 | 7 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**Hotel Orfila**
This Relais & Châteaux member is a small 19th-century palace that opened its doors as a boutique hotel in 1999. A gracious helpful staff is in attendance and individually decorated rooms featuring antique furniture exude elegance. Situated just outside the city center, the Orfila is still within walking distance of the Puerta del Sol, Prado Museum and other Madrid must-sees, yet the lovely little garden courtyard offers welcome respite from the busy capital. | Calle de Orfila, 6 | www.hotelorfila.com | +34-(0)91-702-7770 | 32 rooms & suites | Rates: +++
**Hotel Urban**

Behind a façade of metal and glass, this avant-garde building in the Austrias Madrid neighborhood is a standout in innovative design. Entering beneath an oversized portico, you pass through a tubular atrium to the majestic lobby where stainless steel, alabaster and light mingle, and sentry-like totems from Papua New Guinea keep watch. In each of the guest rooms, East meets West with European leather headboards and original Asian art pieces. For a scrumptious nosh, Europa Decó offers Mediterranean cuisine, while the Glass Bar holds title to Madrid’s only raw oyster bar. (pool) | Carrera de San Jerónimo, 34 | www.derbyhotels.com | +34-(0)91-787-7770 | 102 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**ME Madrid Reina Victoria**

The trendy “ME” by Meliá collection adopted the former Grand Hotel Reina Victoria and gave it a contemporary facelift. It still enjoys the same prime location near art galleries and shopping, but offers newfound flair in both style and ambience. See and be seen at the rooftop bar, where fashionable patrons lounge on chaises and order fancy cocktails from a bar set into the wall. For top-notch personalized service, spring for a suite, which includes your very own “experience manager,” who operates under the brand mantra, “everything is possible.” (spa) | Condé Nast Traveler Gold List 2013 | Plaza de Santa Ana, 14 | www.memadrid.com | 888-956-3542 (from the U.S.) or +34-(0)91-701-6000 | 192 rooms & suites | Rates: +++

**Hotel Atlántico**

Built in 1920, the stately four-star Hotel Atlántico is an architectural landmark situated in the heart of the city. Guest rooms reflect the building’s serene grandeur with neoclassical décor, rich tapestries and elegant furniture, some with balconies overlooking the Gran Vía. The hotel is crowned by a French-style cupola tower and rooftop terrace, perfect for savoring a glass of wine and tapas while taking in panoramic views of Madrid. | Gran Vía 38 | www.hotelatlantico.es | +38-91-5226480 | 109 rooms | Rates: ++

**Hotel Hesperia**

This contemporary luxury hotel in the heart of Madrid’s business and shopping districts blends old-world elegance with state-of-the-art technology. Spanish designer Pascua Ortega, renowned for his works in the Royal Theater, designed the hotel’s stunning interiors. Don’t miss Hesperia’s beautifully decorated Santceloni restaurant, where you’ll be treated to an unforgettable meal of Mediterranean specialties. | Paseo de la Castellana, 57 | www.hesperia.com | +34-(0)91-210-8800 | 137 rooms, 34 suites | Rates: ++

**Hotel Preciados**

With its convenient location and friendly staff, Hotel Preciados earns recommendations from past guests for good value. Rooms are comfortable and if you don’t mind a little street noise, request one with a balcony. A 5-minute stroll takes you to Plaza Mayor, and many other major attractions, restaurants and bars are within easy walking distance. | Calle Preciados, 37 | us.preciadoshotel.com | +34-(0)91-454-4400 | 74 rooms & suites | Rates: +

**Vincci SoMa**

The streamlined Vincci SoMa offers a modern look with its blonde-wood furniture, white fabrics and brushed steel accents. Situated at the center of the fashionable Barrio Salamanca, you’ll appreciate the hotel’s convenient location with easy access to the airport and metro system. | Calle Goya, 79 | www.vincichoteles.com | +34-(0)91-435-7545 | 170 rooms & suites | Rates: +