

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Get a grip!

Why not take a mountain bike trip, for example, starting in Montecorto in the Sierra de Grazalema run by *Andalusian Cycling Experience* → p. 104

INSIDER TIP In the footsteps of Russian artists

The *Colección del Museo Ruso*, an offshoot of the state museum in St Petersburg in Málaga, is a must for art lovers → p. 67

INSIDER TIP Heavenly views

In the Cabo de Gata, take a walk into the mountainous *Vela Blanca*, from where there are magnificent views down onto bays, cliffs and the cape itself → p. 40

INSIDER TIP Tapas-hopping in Málaga with insiders

Tapas bars, small craft shops and food stores: discover with the *Spain Food Sherpas* all those bits of the town you would otherwise miss without them → p. 70

INSIDER TIP Poetic pilgrimage

At the *Huerta de San Vicente* in Granada, you can follow in the footsteps of the great Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca → p. 53

INSIDER TIP Welcome to the caves

In the picturesque district of Sacromonte in Granada, you should have a look at the *Cuevas del Sacromonte* ethnographic museum. It offers fascinating insights into the cave dwellers' way of life → p. 57

INSIDER TIP The real thing

The stage is set for the emerging talents who perform authentic flamenco at the *Sala Vimaambi*, part of an artists' workshop in Granada → p. 60

INSIDER TIP Sci-fi in the desert

Pay a visit to this futuristic experimental solar energy station, the *Plataforma Solar de Almería* for its powerful message → p. 38

INSIDER TIP Howling and prowling

In *Lobo Park*, the unique wolf park near Antequera, the predators prowl around their gratifyingly large enclosures. On a guided tour through the park you will discover lots about their habits and behaviour – and on the night of the full moon you can take part in a Wolf Howl Night → p. 73

INSIDER TIP Simply ham-tastic!

Spain's highest village, Trevélez in the Alpujarra, is always worth a detour to the mountains; trying and buying some of its *Serrano ham* makes it even more of a treat → p. 99

INSIDER TIP Once Upon a Time in the West

Gunfights, brawls and stunts on horseback are all part of the *Western Show* at the Oasis Park. The barren landscape of Almería province provides the perfect backdrop for Wild West movie sets → p. 108

INSIDER TIP The Centre Pompidou's little sister

The glass cube on Málaga's boulevard houses the first foreign branch of the Paris art and culture centre (photo below) → p. 66

INSIDER TIP Stars in the quarry

At the height of summer, the *Starlite* Festival sees a former quarry near Marbella transformed into the spectacular setting for national and international stars → p. 112

INSIDER TIP From rags to rugs

In the mountain villages of the Alpujarra they sell colourful *rag rugs*. Once such rugs were essential household items, today it's mainly tourists who buy them as souvenirs → p. 31

INSIDER TIP The spirit of the great composer

The *Casa Museo Manuel de Falla* in Granada preserves the legacy of the composer who once lived and worked here → p. 54



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● Contemporary art

CAC is the common abbreviation for the *Centro de Arte Contemporáneo*, the centre for contemporary art based in Málaga. On your visit you will be treated to changing exhibitions showcasing internationally famous artists. What's particularly pleasing is that this experience won't cost you a cent → p. 67

● Flamenco in Mijas

You can experience free flamenco every Wednesday at noon on *Plaza Virgen de la Peña* in Mijas, one of the most popular excursions along the Costa del Sol. But only if the weather is fine → p. 86

● On the trail of historic tomb builders

Antequera is famous for some very special monuments dating back several thousand years. The *dolmen*, Stone Age burial tombs, are constructed of massive stone slabs balanced on huge side pillars. The town boasts three such dolmen worth mentioning – Menga, Viera and El Romeral – and all three are open to visitors free of charge → p. 71

● Objets d'art from the Moorish period

High up on the Alhambra plateau (photo) in Granada the *Museo de la Alhambra* on the lower level of the Palacio de Carlos V presents Hispano-Moorish art from the Middle Ages – interesting displays for free! → p. 55

● A real highlight for free

The *Alcazaba* fortress in Almería is a highlight in its own right – and the fact that you can get in without having to pay is the icing on the cake → p. 34

● Varied summer programme

In summer, when the little holiday resort Roquetas de Mar puts on its culture and entertainment programme *A Pie de Calle* and the music festival *Pul-pop*, it's a real treat not least for the more money-conscious visitors – all performances are free of charge → p. 37

● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of...' tips

ONLY ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

Unique experiences

● White villages

Andalusia's white villages are like free open-air museums. Narrow alleyways and staircases wind their way between the bright-white facades; planters and flowerpots provide splashes of colour. *Frigiliana* (photo) in the Nerja hinterland and *Casares* on a ridge in the Sierra Bermeja in the west of the Costa del Sol are particularly beautiful → p. 77, 83

● Gorgeous squares

Atmospheric squares and promenades are a feature of Andalusia. In essence outdoor living rooms, they are perfect places in which to meet friends. One of the nicest is the *Plaza Bib-Rambla* in Granada, a favourite Old City hotspot → p. 56

● Moorish palaces

There's nowhere else like it: the *Alhambra* in Granada. Follow the trail of the Moors between the fortifications, the palace complex and the baths. Be seduced by this place of astonishing splendour, with its many pools, amazing stalactite ceiling decorations and forests of columns → p. 50

● Excursion to the 'Snowy Range'

The *Sierra Nevada*, the 'Snowy Range', rears up within sight of Granada. *Mulhacén* and *Pico de Veleta* soar to heights of almost 3,500 m/11,500 ft. A mountain road leads up to just beyond the ski resort of Pradollano, but be aware that the snow is only there in winter → p. 63

● Marinas

Andalusia has a lot of marinas. If you'd like to try one that's a little less busy and at the same time very attractive, make a note of *Marina del Este* at Almuñécar. In contrast, *Puerto Banús* near Marbella is the epitome of expensive chic → p. 48, 90

● Tapas crawl

No Spanish person would even think of spending a whole evening in a single bar. People typically hop from bar to bar, sampling as many tapas as possible as they go. Why not join them? Granada is a tapas paradise → p. 60



ONLY IN

DISCOVERY TOURS

1 THE COSTA DEL SOL AT A GLANCE



START: 1 Málaga
END: 1 Málaga

12 days

Actual driving time
approx. 18–24 hours

Distance:

approx. 900 km/560 mi

COSTS: approx. 1800–2000 euros/2 people (fuel, accommodation, admission fees, food)

IMPORTANT TIPS: Book your Alhambra visit (early!) and hotels in Granada in advance!



Drink a cocktail on the ‘Balcony of Europe’, immerse yourself in the desert landscape of Almería, wander in the footsteps of the Moors in white-painted villages and on a visit to the Alhambra in Granada, let yourself be captivated by the mys-

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

tic mountain world around Ronda, savour the exquisite tapas in Málaga’s Old Town and some grilled fish in one of the beach restaurants: experience the many facets of the Costa del Sol!

Start your tour at a car-hire agency at the airport in **1 Málaga** → p. 64 – there are plenty of them. For your first taste of the coast, head for **2 Nerja** → p. 74, just under an hour to the east. The place where everyone gets together is the expansive esplanade, the **Balcón de Europa**. At sunset, the beach bars are an inviting place for a sun-

DAY 1

1 Málaga

(54 km/33.5 mi)

2 Nerja

