

*Welcome* and thank you so much for considering a tour with us.

We highly recommend that you take time to read through this FAQs document, since it covers a wide range of topics and many of the questions that past guests have raised and information relating to the tours and your holiday with us. It will only take you a short time to read and will be useful preparation for your trip.

It is written in an easy plain English style and it is not a contractual document, purely for information. Its main purpose is to help you understand how we work, the style of our tours and to help you decide if we are the type of company you want to deliver your tour/holiday of the region. If you do book, we recommend that you print this document and bring it with you, you can always read it again whilst in transit.

To introduce ourselves, we are a small specialist tour operator who truly care for the experience our guests have whilst in Andalusia. We will go out of our way to try to make your holiday a wonderful and memorable experience. Appreciating that you may only visit the region once in your life, we want to make it as special as we can.

This document aims to answer questions you may have and set your expectation for the level of guidance, free time, and overall philosophy/ethos that we apply to our tours. And, as we say on our website, what we expect from you is to come in a friendly and relaxed manner, so that you can engage with us and other guests, to have an experience that ranks right up there with some of the best travel experiences you have had. We are very different to the large group coach tours. We try extremely hard to discourage people of a 'demanding' nature coming on our tours, so that our small group guests relate to each other wonderfully, and we love to welcome guests who arrive with smiles on their faces. Whilst you will immerse yourself in the incredible history this region offers, you are on holiday and here to enjoy yourself and we appreciate that.

Spain is a laid-back country and can be more bureaucratic than many other Western countries, so don't get annoyed at any little problems or issues that may occur, they can all normally be resolved relatively easily. Relax, participate and allow this wonderful region of Europe to imbue you. Staff in restaurants don't rush, dishes come out individually, not all together, they take their time in presenting you with the bill..... therefore, it may be a different style of service to what you find at home. Just recognise it is a different culture and enjoy it. Be easy going, a little adventurous and explore.

Our range of accommodation is mainly 'boutique', exceptionally clean and comfortable. Our Villa is stylish with character and the hotels we use are carefully selected. Our vehicles are comfortable and safely driven. Our Tour Leaders are friendly and knowledgeable and the places we visit are beautiful, fascinating, cultural and historic.

Come in the right frame of mind, looking forward to having a good time and we will deliver you a great experience. We really hope we have the opportunity to welcome you upon one of our tours.

*Gary*

**Gary Montagu**  
**Owner Tour Andalusia International**



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Q. How long have you been running the tours?

A. We were the first company to offer 'small group' and private tours as a fully registered and insured Spanish company. Our first tours were run in 2009, so we have a high level of experience of running tours in Andaluca.

Q. What time do we need to arrive in Malaga?

A. You can arrive at any 'reasonable time' in the morning, afternoon or evening. We collect you from the airport and, subject to the time of arrival, either spend some time in the mountain village of Mijas, Antequera or just transfer to the accommodation. Please see our terms & conditions detailed in the booking form for the supplement applicable for any collections or drop-offs required outside of our normal working hours.

Q. How far from Malaga are you based?

A. We are 45 minutes North of Malaga.

Q. Can we arrive by train or be collected from a local hotel?

A. Yes.

If you are arriving by train (*normally from Madrid*), we suggest that you come to Malaga train station if your train arrives before 15:00, since we can then spend a couple of hours in Mijas mountain village before transfer to the accommodation. This is a nice way to start your holiday. The train journey from Madrid is around 2 hours 40 minutes.

If your train arrives after 15:00, and you are staying centrally on either the Villa or Antequera tour, then we recommend that you come to Antequera Santa Ana (*on the same Madrid – Malaga line*) because it will be too late to go to Mijas and this station is only 10 minutes from us.

For train departures, from the Villa/Antequera tours, we recommend leaving from Antequera Santa Ana early afternoon, so that you can maximise your departure day and avoid unnecessary travel.

Please contact us for a specific recommendation based on your travel plans.

Q. What time departure flight/train/drop off do we need to have?

A. The departure transfers for our centrally based tours are included in the price of our tour and we can take you to the airport/train station for any 'reasonable' departure time.

However, if you need to arrive at the airport/train station outside of our normal hours, there is a supplementary charge of €40 which is payable directly to the driver to compensate them for this. Please see the Terms & Conditions in the Booking Form which provides more information and specifies the times.

Q. What time in the mornings do we leave for the City trips and when do we return back?

A. For the Villa or Antequera based tours, we normally leave either at 09:00 or 09:30 depending on where we are visiting that day. We usually arrive back around 19:00 most days and 20:00 from Seville. On the Granada visit, we spend the evening in the atmospheric Albayzin to see the Alhambra lit up at night and we have dinner in a 'Bistro Style' restaurant that has a very good local and 'authentic' Flamenco performance, so we don't arrive back until late in the evening.

If you are on the 5\* tour or the Ultimate Andaluçia tour, then you stay in the Cities each night, so we will arrange a meeting time each day depending on the City and the planned itinerary.

Q. What accommodation do you have to offer?

A. We have a range of accommodation as follows:

'Centrally' based tours: we provide B&B accommodation in our lovely Guest House Villa 'Caserio Castaño' in the large village of Mollina, near Antequera. Photos of which are on our website. Or you can either stay at the 4\* Hotel Antequera in historic Antequera or the 4\* Antequera Parador Hotel. Price options detailed on the Prices page of our website.

'Circuit' tours: you stay in high quality hotels in each of the Cities on a B&B basis.

The detailed tour itineraries list the hotels we normally use for the Circuit tours.

Q. For the Centrally based (Hub) tours, which accommodation do most guests prefer between the Villa and one of the Antequera Hotels ?

A. By far the most popular choice is the Villa. Most guests prefer the less formal environment and the freedom to sit around the pool/terraces and lounge areas.

Q. What happens if the Villa is fully booked, since we understand you have a limited amount of rooms available?

A. We can accommodate around 12 guests comfortably in the Villa, if the rooms are booked for the dates you require then we can only offer the Antequera Hotels or possibly consider other tour dates.

Q. We normally stay in hotels, so how different is the Villa accommodation.

A. It is a different experience and less formal. Most guests tend to socialise together in the evenings, but it's not mandatory. It's a very friendly environment where you should feel at home for the week. You have your own bedroom with 'en-suite' shower room. In the warm evenings, many guests sit outside on one of the terraces outside of the rooms or downstairs by the pool. We have a housekeeper who makes breakfast and cleans your rooms each day.

Q. If we prefer to stay in the hotel in Antequera, should we select the Antequera Hotel or the Antequera Parador Hotel?

A. Both are 4\* Hotels, however, the Parador is a more luxurious hotel and closer to the centre of town. The Antequera Hotel is functional and comfortable, but the Parador definitely has the edge. The decision revolves around price and availability. The Parador does carry a higher supplement because their rooms are more expensive than the rooms at the Antequera Hotel.

It's worth noting that Antequera is becoming a more popular tourist destination, so at peak times both hotels can be fully booked. We check and confirm availability for the dates you require, if you wish to stay there.

If you don't mind paying the extra cost, then our recommendation is the Parador.

Q. What are the typical costs for lunch and dinner?

A. Most days you have a Tapas lunch which is typically €10 - €15 a head or you can just have a sandwich. Dinner locally is good value, typically costing €12 - €20 for 'large' main courses, including drinks. If you don't have a large appetite, the restaurants have no problem with people sharing one main course and/or a salad and several offer 'half sized' portions.

If you are on one of the 'Circuit' tours, we recommend some nice restaurants in each of the Cities.

Q. We could not find any tour schedules on your website?

A. We do not publish the tour schedules on the website. The schedules are regularly updated during the year, so please email us to request the latest schedule. We run tours weekly throughout the whole year. Most tours are run to published schedules, which we may be able to augment if your required dates are not included. The Private tours are scheduled to meet your dates, so do not have schedules.

Q. Are the tours fully guided?

A. No, they are 'semi-guided'.

We offer a mix of light guidance around the key Cities from our Tour Leaders. They will tell you some background of the Cities and history. However, they will NOT enter the monuments with you. We know a considerable amount about the history and culture of the region from the Roman period and, in particular, when the Moors occupied the region, and we are happy to share this with you, but we are not historical 'experts'.

The major monuments offer audio & audio/visual guides in the form of 'handheld' units which you can rent from the entrance for a few euros. You may wish to consider these at the Alhambra (Granada), the Royal Alcazar (Seville) and the Mesquita (Cordoba). The use of an audio guide is a personal preference. Many of our guests prefer to visit the monuments and then read a little about them after their visit in some of the wonderful guide-books available. It is entirely up to you.

Each City has their own City based licenced monument guides who just cover that City. We cover 5 to 7 Cities in the course of our tours, so we provide general guidance in each and interesting background information.

Typically, we will give you an orientation walking tour of the City with some background history and interesting facts/stories in the morning. Then we will take a tapas lunch and you visit the monuments in the afternoon. Our style of delivery tends to be interactive story telling about what happened in the past rather than just flat facts. We have found that our guests enjoy this a lot.

Many guests say that we gave them a wealth of historical and cultural information, but different guests expect different levels of guidance, so we prefer to describe ours as 'light guidance', which we find is the appropriate level for most of our guests.

If you particularly want to have a licenced City guide give you a detailed tour in any of the Cities, and you are prepared to hire them, then please let us know, since we have contact with several of them. They normally charge around €150 for up to 3 hours. They are subject to availability, due to the many large tour groups that visit Andaluçia.

Q. Do you recommend us hiring one of the licenced City Guides at any location.

A. As mentioned, the vast majority of our guests prefer to have the introductory walking tour with our Tour Leaders and hire an audio guide, if they want one. Unless you are part of a large group, then we think this is ideal, since, because we have small groups, we can speak to you on a more individual basis.

The coach tours tend to contract the City Guides, who walk them around in large groups of 50 or more people. You receive a lot of information, but the overall experience, in our opinion, isn't as good.

Our tours tend to appeal to more independent professional people, who do not want to be part of a large coach tour, but enjoy the interaction with a small number of similar like-minded people. Many coming from different countries around the world.

We feel that having a lightly guided tour from one of our Tour Leaders in a group of 2 to 7 guests is a much more appealing option, where you can take your time, interact and get the most out of your visit to the Cities.

Q. What does the Flamenco show in Granada cost and do you recommend it?

A. The Flamenco performance is at a lovely 'bistro style' restaurant 'Jardines de Zoraya' at the top of the Albayzin, the hill opposite the Alhambra, and the atmospheric Arab quarter. You will have got the impression by now, that we tend to opt for the smaller, more personal and intimate experience, wherever we can, than a large volume experience.

The food at the restaurant is very good. They provide a '3-course' dinner from which you have selections of dishes for a special price for Tour Andaluçia of €39, including the performance. Normally

the price is €49 so it is a worthwhile reduction. The dinner and show is **not** included in the tour price. You pay the restaurant at the end of your meal just like any other restaurant. Or, you can also just select from the 'a la carte' menu and, as a Tour Andaluçia Guest, pay a reduced amount for the performance.

The performance is by a small group of talented artists, it is a genuine Flamenco performance and not a 'tourist' show and we recommend it wholeheartedly. However, it is 'loud and intense', so be prepared for this.

If you do not wish to eat at the restaurant, or see the performance, then please let us know. There are other restaurants in the Albayzin where you can have dinner, but we think the experience in Jardines de Zoraya is a great addition to your holiday.

Please note that, because this evening is a part of our published tour itinerary for the small group tours, unless universally agreed by all guests on the tour, we stay in Granada until after the dinner and performance and return back to the accommodation late in the evening.

After the dinner/show, we go to the Mirador San Nicolas to see the Alhambra lit up at night from the viewing point.

Alternatively, if it is dark before dinner, we may visit the Mirador before the restaurant.

Q. How much are the entrance fees into the monuments?

A. If you are over 65 or a student there may be concessions, otherwise they range from €3 to €12.

Your entrance to the Alhambra will have already been booked and paid for at £15 a ticket, which will be added to your tour balance. You must provide your personal information, including passport number and age, as part of the booking. Please note tickets are subject to availability and we will inform you if there are any problems for your required tour dates.

We suggest budgeting around €60 to €80 per person for all of the entrance fees whilst you are here. If you think you may qualify for any 'age related' discounts, then make sure you ask at each monument if it is not clearly published and you must **have a copy of your passport or other photo identification at hand** to prove your age. Additionally, you must have your passport, or a copy of it, when you visit the Alhambra, since the entrance system there has random security checks.

Q. I suffer from motion sickness, will that be a problem.

A. Motion sickness can range from a slight feeling of sickness to an extremely bad feeling. Normally for each journey for the centralised based tours, you will spend around 1 hour in the vehicle before we reach our destination (1 hour 30 minutes for Seville). If, however, your motion sickness is acute then possibly a touring holiday isn't the best option, since it does involve covering a large distance during the week. We have had guests in the past request to sit up front every day because of their motion sickness, but we ask you to consider other guests in the vehicle and, whilst the vehicles are spacious,

it is only reasonable to rotate around and let other guests in the vehicle have the opportunity to sit up front if they would like to.

If you are on a Circuit style tour, then the journeys are around 2 hours between the Cities.

Q. How much free time do we have during the tour?

A. We take you to each City and show you the monuments and places to visit. We tell you some background about them. In Granada, Seville, Cordoba & Malaga this includes a walk around the old town and small lanes with 'light guidance' covering historical and cultural information. As mentioned, we try to adopt an interesting 'story telling' style rather than just dry history. However, **we do not enter the monuments with you or give you guided tours of them.** We leave you to go into the monuments on your own to explore and appreciate them.

Ronda, is less itinerary based than the larger Cities and, after an initial orientation, you are left to explore on your own.

For the Ronda and Malaga days, we spend the morning at a fascinating historical site 'Teba' Castle and at the National Park 'El Torcal' respectively, before we reach our destination. Consequentially, you will spend less time in these locations than you will in the other Cities.

Please see the appropriate tour itineraries, which provide detailed information.

Approximately, 40% of your time in the 'major' Cities will be with the Tour Leader and 60% on your own.

Q. Do we have to eat at the restaurants you recommend for lunch?

A. No. We may suggest good value places for lunch, which we know serve tasty typical 'Andalucian' food, but you are free to eat wherever you wish. We have no allegiance with any, and, unlike many Tour Companies, we do not take commission from them. One of the other reasons we have recommended restaurants in some Cities, is that we know they are efficient in the time taken to serve, so you don't spend too long at lunch, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing.

Q. If we want to have something light for dinner and don't want to go out can we?

Yes, if you are staying in the Villa. There is a local supermarket close by and you can buy provisions and eat these at the Villa, either outside on the terraces, by the pool or inside.

Q. Do we need to be able to speak Spanish?

A. Not at all, we will help you when required. All of the Cities are familiar with tourists and English is widely spoken.

Q. If we are on a 'Hub' tour, how long does it take to get to the Cities each day?

A. For the centrally based 'hub' tours, it takes roughly 1 hour to reach each City, other than Seville which takes about 1 hour 30 minutes. It can take us a further 10 – 15 minutes to make our way through the City to the parking places near the centre of the old quarter. Because the journey to Seville is a bit longer then, on the way to Seville, we can take a short toilet and coffee break after 1 hour of driving if you require. We usually ask, in transit, if anyone wants this break.

For the circuit tours, where you move and stay in different Cities, the journeys are longer, being around 1.5 to 2 hours, but you spend the night in the City and don't have a return journey.

The detailed tour itineraries provide more information.

Q. What age demographic come on your tours?

A. This is quite difficult to answer because we have guests of all ages and often groups are of mixed ages. However, we would say that, typically, 70% are over 60, 20% are between 35 and 60 and 10% between 20 and 35. Occasionally, we have a family with teenage children on tours. We rarely have any young children on a tour and we don't run tours to 'mixed' groups with young children on them, only private tours for the family.

Q. Are all of the tours run to a published schedule?

A. No. The small group tours are generally run on a published schedule. The private tours are scheduled to meet our guests' required dates and, as such, is dedicated to the couple or small private group.

Q. Do you cater for single guests or just couples/groups?

A. We have quite a few single travellers join our tours and, if you are a single traveller, then we are delighted to have you participate in one of them.

There are single room occupancy supplements on the tour prices, as detailed on the Prices page of our website. We try to keep the supplements as low as we can.

Q. What is the minimum number of guests you require to confirm a tour is taking place.

Unlike most tour operators, who require quite a lot of guests booked before they confirm the tour, we run most of our tours and tour extensions subject to a minimum of just two guests booked on them.

The 'Ultimate Andalusia' tour is an exception, where we require a minimum of 4 guests before the tour is confirmed.

So for this tour, we recommend considering the Villa/Antequera tour with the Western Andalusia extension as a 'back-up option', since this goes to the same places and typically starts on the same Saturday. This allows you to fix your flights well in advance.



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Q. How many people are there in a tour group?

A. For the small group tours, the group size is normally no more than 7 guests per group.

We run each vehicle with driver/guide 'Tour Leader' as a separate tour group. At popular times, we may be running more than one tour group concurrently, but each has its own Tour Leader.

The private tours are dedicated tour to the couple or small group booking the tour.

Q. Is the booking deposit per person?

A. No, it covers the booking for up to four guests.

Q. What is the deposit if we have more than four guests?

A. We charge a deposit of 15% of the total tour price for more than four guests.

Q. Is the deposit refundable if we need to cancel after we have paid it?

A. Please see our Terms & Conditions regarding Cancellation. These are contained in the booking form. The deposit is non-refundable, since it covers planning, administration and retainers for tour leaders and accommodation. We strongly recommend ensuring that your travel insurance covers any costs you may incur if you need to cancel your holiday.

Q. We see that you use PayPal for the deposit payment, do we need a PayPal account?

A. No. You can pay by Credit/Debit Card. We just use PayPal to process the payments on their secure site because they offer good security. If you have a PayPal account, you can pay with this is you wish.

Q. How do we pay the balance, can we pay by your website?

A. You cannot pay the balance via our website, this is only for the booking deposit.

It is preferable to us that you pay the balance by bank transfer to our UK, Spanish or one of our international bank accounts. We have international accounts, hosted by 'TransferWise' in some Countries, including USA & Australia, these may give you the option to make payment in your own currency and receive an advantageous exchange rate. Please contact us for details.

You can also pay the balance by Credit/Debit Card and we use PayPal to provide this facility. We issue a PayPal electronic invoice. PayPal convert the amount of the balance to your local currency using their internal 'retail' exchange rates.

Balance payments must be made no later than 30 days before the tour start date.

If you prefer not to pay the balance in advance of arrival, we can accept cash upon arrival at your accommodation, but only in €euros or £GBP.

You need to let us know you want to pay upon arrival and payment **must be made** on the day of arrival when you reach the accommodation. Please ensure you have sufficient €euros or £GBP with you to settle your account.

If you are paying cash in Euros upon arrival, we use the prevailing 'mid-market' rate on [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) to convert from £GBP to €euros.

Please note that we do not accept any form of check/cheques.

When making any payments, ensure that you put the 'lead guest; name as the reference, so that we can match the payment up to your booking. This is the name of the person we have been email corresponding with. We have received transfers with no obvious reference to whom they have come from. Send us an email when you make payment and we will confirm back to you receipt of the payment.

Q. Is it possible for us to pay the balance in our local currency?

A. As mentioned above, we have 'local' bank accounts in some of the leading international currencies. These are hosted for us by 'TransferWise'. These include \$US & \$AU. So, if you want to make the balance payment in any of these currencies, then let us know and we can send you the bank information for a bank transfer.

We use [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) to convert the balance from £GBP into your local currency.

Q. What vehicles do you own for undertaking the tours?

A. We currently have six tour vehicles and we are regularly enhancing and adding to our fleet.

Three of these are 9 seat vehicles and can accommodate a driver and up to 8 guests and the other three are 7 seat vehicles that can accommodate a driver and up to 6 guests.

They all have passenger zone air conditioning.

For your comfort, we normally have no more than 7 guests in the 9 seat vehicles, but occasionally if it is sensible for a particular day trip, we may request to take 8 passengers in the one vehicle.

Most of our vehicles are Mercedes passenger transport vehicles.

Q. Can we see what the vehicles look like?

A. Sure.



Q. Is there any particular dress code for any of the religious monuments, such as Cathedrals?

A. No, Spain does not enforce any specific codes of dress, you do not need to cover your head, wear long sleeves and you can wear shorts. Just be sensible.

Q. If we want to spend a few days at the end of the tour somewhere in the region can you help?

A. Yes, we can almost certainly help you. If it is close to Malaga then we can take you there free of charge instead of the airport transfer. If it is more than 1 hour drive away, then we can do this for €40 per hour, the first hour is inclusive in your tour price. If you want us to book the hotels for you, pay them in advance and add the cost onto your tour balance, then please ask us. We have relationships with many hotels.

Q. Do we do something on departure day?

A. This depends on your flight/train departure times. We plan to get you to the airport 2 hours before your flight departure time and to the train station 45 minutes before departure. We often visit Antequera and some of the scenic local areas on the way to Malaga. If it is realistic to visit somewhere on departure day, we will.

Q. How much walking is involved?

A. There is a reasonable amount of walking on the tour, because the Cities and monuments are quite large. The amount of walking normally varies between 5km - 8km a day depending on the City. We take things quite slowly so you can appreciate the environment and there is plenty of time to just sit and enjoy the atmosphere of the Cities if you wish.

Q. What time of year is best to come?

A. Andaluçia is renowned as having one of the best climates in Europe. We would say March/April/May/June and September/October/November are traditionally the best months, but we often have great weather in the other months. You can get rain during November/December/January/February, but it is unusual for it to last for extended periods. It is normally very hot in July/August.

Q. If we wanted to stay a few more days in the Villa or Hotel at the end of the tour is this possible?

A. Yes, this is possible.

See the Prices page on our website for the cost of additional nights. We also have a range of formal tour extensions which you can add to your tour.

Q. Do the tours always start on a Wednesday or Saturday?

A. For many tours, we publish a tour schedule with certain tours normally starting on Wednesdays or Saturdays, on alternate weeks. However, some of our guests cannot make the scheduled dates and, if we can, we will accommodate them arriving and departing on different dates and integrate them into existing or planned tours. Feel free to contact us if you have any specific dates and we will see if we can propose something for you.

Q. Do you have laundry facilities in the Villa?

A. Yes. There is a laundry service offered by the Housekeeper who charges €10 for a plastic carrier bag size of washing. This includes washing, drying and folding, but not ironing.

Guests **cannot** undertake their own washing directly using the washing machine. The laundry facilities are required every day for towels, bed linen etc. and they need to schedule the washing and drying accordingly.

Q. Does the local village 'Mollina', where the Villa is located, have restaurants?

A. Yes, the local village has some small good value restaurants within walking distance.

Q. Is food available in the Villas?

A. We provide a comprehensive breakfast. This includes cereal, yoghurt, fruit, scrambled eggs, toast etc. but not a full English breakfast.

You can bring back food from the local supermarket and eat it on the terraces or guest lounges. Sometimes we have a Paella evening at the Villa. These are subject to a minimum of 10 guests and dependent on the weather. The charge for this is €25 per person and this includes free drink, Sangria, Wine, Beer, Soft Drinks. We put on some music and sit by the pool lit up at night.

Q. If we stay in the Villa, can we spend an evening in Antequera?

A. Yes, we usually arrange an evening dinner in Antequera at a very good Spanish restaurant. Often, we go there straight from Seville.

Q. What is the village of Molina like?

A. It is a typical large Spanish village of around 4,000 people. There is a mixture of old and modern houses. There is a small square in the village with a church. It is a relatively flat village.

It is very functional for our tours and most conveniently, it is centrally located. There are not a lot of shops in the village, however, it does have a good supermarket within walking distance of the Villa. It is very safe to walk in the evening in the village and the local people are friendly. It is a working, agricultural village with mainly Spanish, but some UK residents.

Q. Are you on Trip Advisor?

A. Yes we are on Trip Advisor and we are pleased to have one of the highest ratings of any travel company on Trip Advisor.

[http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review-g187438-d5555289-Reviews-Tour\\_Andalusia\\_International\\_Day\\_Tours-Malaga\\_Costa\\_del\\_Sol\\_Province\\_of\\_Malaga\\_An.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g187438-d5555289-Reviews-Tour_Andalusia_International_Day_Tours-Malaga_Costa_del_Sol_Province_of_Malaga_An.html)

Q. Are you registered?

A. Yes, we are a fully registered Spanish Company, TOUR ANDALUCIA INTERNATIONAL XXI S.L. Number B93181758.

We are also a registered 'Agencia de Viaje' with the Andalusian Tourist Office registration number CIAN 296265-2.

CIAN is the Spanish equivalent of ABTA in the UK.

It is essential, whoever you choose to tour Andalusia with, that you check that they are a registered 'Agencia de Viaje' otherwise they are offering the holiday illegally and will not be correctly insured.

Q. What protection do I have if I pay in advance?

A. As a registered 'Agencia de Viaje' we have insurance that that covers any monies paid if we cannot provide the holiday you have paid for. This insurance is a bond with the Spanish Tourism Department known as 'Seguro de Cauccion' and is required for our Tour Operator licence.

However, better than this, we are the only Tour Operator, that we know of, who do not require you to pay the tour in full before arrival. We offer you the option to pay the balance for your tour in cash upon arrival if you have any concerns whatsoever. Please note that we cannot accept any other form of payment upon arrival, only cash in either £GBP or €euros as mentioned earlier. We do not have an on-site Credit Card acceptance facility.

Q. Are your vehicles insured for carrying passengers?

A. Yes. We have vehicle insurance in the company name that insures us for carrying private tour passengers.

We also have full public liability insurance.

Q. We saw 'El Torcal' on the itinerary for the Malaga day, what is this?

A. El Torcal (the lime towers) is a National Park at the top of the mountain range near Antequera. It is quite a spectacular area and there is a 50 minute walk (1.4 km) which you can take through the rock formations.

You should wear good quality shoes/trainers to do the walk and if it is early Spring or Winter, it may be cold there since it is very high, so wear warm layered clothing and take a small bottle of water.

Whilst the walk is officially rated 'low' in terms of difficulty, it can be quite arduous and you do have to walk up and down rocks on a narrow track and thread your way through some downhill parts. So, it can be quite 'tricky'. Most of our guests do the walk, but don't underestimate it and walk it carefully.

You do not have to undertake the walk, there is a cafeteria and you can just sit and enjoy the beautiful scenery whilst other guests are on the walk. And is also an interesting reception centre with a nice exhibition.

If you have any walking difficulties you should not do the walk and, if it has been raining and the rocks are wet, then we do not do the walk since they can be slippery, muddy and dangerous. In this instance, we will normally visit Antequera before Malaga or go straight to Malaga.

Q. If we want to make some purchases of leather goods, where do you recommend?

A. Several guests have told us, in their opinion, Mijas offers the best quality of leather goods for attractive prices. Because we only normally visit Mijas on arrival day, and this is subject to your arrival time, then we suggest if you see something you like when you are there, then buy it as you may not see quite the same quality/value elsewhere.

Q. We like spending some time in the countryside, do you offer anything?

A. Yes, we offer a range of Tour Extensions where you take part in the appropriate City Cultural Tour and then you can add any extension at the end to take advantage of the Andalucía countryside and/or white villages. These are detailed on our website.

Q. Why are your prices in £GBP and not in €Euro?

A. Whilst our guests come from all over the world, the largest single group (around 35%) come from the UK, because of the ease of travel to Spain with low cost flights. As such, it makes business sense for us to use this as our base currency.

Q. What are the standards of hygiene like in Spain?

A. Hygiene standards in Spain are high, we rarely have guests suffer with 'dodgy tummies'.

You should drink plenty of water each day on the tour, because it is easy to become dehydrated and this will make you feel unwell. We recommend at least two litres a day if the weather is hot.

Q. How do the tour extensions work?

A. You choose any of the tour extensions and on day 7 of the normal tour, when the other guests are departing, you are taken by one of us on the first day of your tour extension. You will either remain in the same accommodation or stay in hotels depending on the extension. The details are published on our website.

Q. Do you book our Alhambra entrances?

A. As an authorised Agent, we prefer to book the entrances for you and add the price of the tickets to your balance.

We will check availability of tickets for the appropriate date for your tour since the Alhambra is one of Europe's most visited sites. It is rare for tickets not to be available if there is a period of three to four months before your tour.

Q. Do we need to pre-book tickets for any monuments other than the Alhambra?

A. For most monuments you just purchase tickets at the entrance.

However, we advise pre-booking tickets online for the Alcazar Royal Palaces in Seville and we can send you a link to make the booking or do this for you when you are here. There is a significant reduction in the entrance price if you are over 65. This avoids waiting in line at the entrance and the lines for the Alcazar can be long at peak times.

Q. Do we need any Visas or special passport conditions to come to Spain.

A. You need to check depending on the Country of issue of your passport. Please remember, that your passport may need to be valid for several months after the date of travel, so check its expiry date to make sure that you fulfil any travel documentation requirements that your own country has. A search on the internet or government travel websites will detail any requirements.

Q. Will we have the same driver/guide for the duration of our tour?

A. Most tours have the same Tour Leader for the full duration, but this depends on availability and our schedules and occasionally we need to switch Tour Leaders. All of our Tour Leaders are personable, friendly and fun. Everyone enjoys their company. Our Tour leaders are neither frivolous or too serious, but professional with a good sense of humour and good company to be with. All are very safe drivers. They are all knowledgeable and highly competent.

Q. Are your Tour Leaders employed staff?

A. Yes, most are permanent employees of ours.

Q. What is the tipping culture in restaurants?

A. Spain is not a big tipping culture. But people do tip for dinner/lunch, normally you just work on one or two euros per head depending on the size of the bill.

You may find in some travel books it says 'Don't tip in Spain', this is somewhat misleading because people do tip, but just not at the same level you may do in North America, for instance.

You don't normally tip if you are just having a coffee or drink.

Q. Should we tip the Tour Leaders and/or the Housekeepers?

A. The Tour Leaders and the Housekeepers do not automatically expect tips, however, if you have enjoyed the tour and the service they have given you, and you want to express your appreciation in the form of a small 'financial gesture' then they would be delighted, but they do not expect it. It is totally left to your discretion.

We are regularly asked for guidelines on tipping the staff and, of course, we feel a little awkward in making suggestions. However, a reasonable guideline would be that, if you are on one of the mixed small group tours, then think of the about €10 per guest to be shared the Housekeepers and the same to your Tour Leader.

If it is a private tour, then please just use your discretion as to what you feel comfortable with. If you have several Tour Leaders during your stay with us, then you can leave something that is put into a 'pot', which we then share out to all of the Tour Leaders.

But we reiterate that you are under no obligation to leave any tip.

Q. What do we do if there is nobody waiting at the airport, train station or comes to our hotel to collect us at the expected time?

A. Firstly, please do not panic.

We have an unparalleled level of punctuality in meeting and collecting our guests, However, occasionally and for many different reasons, we may be slightly delayed.

Please be patient, you are on holiday, relax and we will arrive as quickly as possible.

Similarly, if we agree a time to meet for departure at the end of the day, and the Tour Leader arrives late, just relax. It isn't that they have forgotten, but sometimes for efficiency we move vehicles in the afternoon, whilst you are in monuments or on your own, and there may be a traffic problem, parking



problems or a blocked road that we have been caught up in. The delay will purely be because we are trying to make the service to you as good as we possibly can, no other reason.

You can call Gary or any of the other Tour Leaders, the telephone numbers are at the end of this document and we will also give them to you when you are here.

Do not worry, you will not be left stranded. You may get put through to voicemail because we are driving on our way to collect you, so, if possible, leave a contact number where we can call you back.

We stress that it is extremely rare that we do not meet you as planned. If there has been a serious delay, such as a vehicle breakdown, or traffic accident, we will have back-up capability to send someone to collect you.

It's a good idea to put the contact numbers into your mobile/cell phone before arriving on the tour and then it is easy to make contact.

Q. Is there a printed itinerary we can have?

A. Yes, all the tour itineraries are available in pdf format and can be downloaded from the Tours page on our website.

Note, for the centrally based tours, the sequence of the City visits may be slightly different for the Saturday and Wednesday starting tours. This is to avoid days where certain monuments may be closed.

Q. What facilities does the Villa have?

A. All the rooms have private 'en-suite' bathrooms. We supply towels, hair dryers, shampoo, shower gel, bathrobes.

Details of the Villa are published with photographs on our website.

The facilities in the local Guest House Villa 'Puesta Del Sol' are similar, but the Villa is a different style to our Villa.

Q. Where are your meeting and collection points upon arrival.

A. We have meeting points in Malaga Airport and Malaga train station and we will email these to you.

We can also collect you from local hotels in Malaga and from other locations subject to prior agreement.

If you are unsure of any meeting point, please contact us and we will confirm the location.

For flight arrivals, we arrive at the meeting point 20 minutes after your flight arrival time, it takes at least this time for you to disembark, collect luggage and arrive there.

Q. What do you expect from us?

A. We are a small and personable company and our only expectation is that you come in a friendly 'holiday' frame of mind with a positive attitude.

Smiling and being pleasant makes the holiday wonderful for everyone including us.

Spain is great, sometimes frustrating and sometimes different from other Western Cultures, but a fabulous place to visit.

Come in the right spirit and it will be a great holiday.

We will go out of our way to give you a unique experience and if any problem does arise, we will address it quickly and as best we can.

We aren't a big 'uncaring' tour operator, we genuinely care about the experience our guests have, so bear that in mind and come prepared to enjoy yourself.

Don't be overly demanding, you are here for an authentic experience in a beautiful part of the world.

Remember the whole experience to coming to Spain is not just to replicate what you experience at home. The food will be different, the 'laid back' attitude may be different, the customs, restaurant service.... But that is why you travel!

Spanish people eat later in the evenings, more people smoke (but not inside restaurants), they are noisy, enthusiastic and demonstrative people. Enjoy their zest for life.

If the experience purely replicated of what you have at home, then it would be a waste of time and money coming.

Embrace the difference, adopt a relaxed style and take advantage of the whole experience. Don't complain the waiter is slow or makes mistakes, if the bill/check takes ages to come, it is the way the Spanish do things. We are visiting their country and not trying to change it.

A large part of your holiday with us is to experience a different culture and way of life, not just to see the amazing sites.

Whilst Andaluçia has amazing Cities, it is still very much a farming and agriculture region, with Olive Oil, Wine, Hams and Cheeses being the primary produce.

Have fun, see the spectacular sites, enjoy the different food, it is a short visit and most people fall in love with Andaluçia.

As mentioned, Spanish people do eat dinner later than what you may be used to, so be prepared for this. Normally though, dinner is available from 20:00 in most restaurants.

As we clearly state, we try to discourage any visitors of a demanding nature and we wish to attract friendly 'easy going' guests who enjoy the company of other like-minded people.

Q. There are quite a few Coach Tours in the region, why do you think we should book with you for one of your tours?

A. It entirely depends what you want from your touring holiday in Andaluçia.

We are very different from a coach tour operator. The Coach Tour Operators have much larger marketing and advertising budgets and we are only a fraction of the size of them. They tend to focus on numbers, rather than individuals, since they make money in processing guests in volume.

So, if you are happy to be in a large group of around 50 people and follow a Tour Leader, who is holding up an umbrella and talking to you via an electronic device in your ear, then we suggest the coach tour is fine for you.

We are not 'knocking' the large coach tours, their 'rigidness' suit certain types of people superbly well, we are just explaining the difference. Most of the coach tours will pass you over to a City Guide for a formal tour, we tend to be less formal and more flexible.

If you are an 'independent' type of person and want to have genuine conversations with someone knowledgeable about the area and its history, have a 'true' experience of the region and its culture, then we feel we offer this far more than the coach tours.

Our guests tend to be professional people who enjoy the company of other 'like-minded' people from all around the world. But they don't like the idea of being in a large group. They prefer to 'participate' in the Cities rather than simply 'observe' them and feel our small group philosophy endorses this. We have many retired and practising: Doctors, Teachers, Lecturers, Engineers, Company Directors, Accountants, Lawyers, Health Professionals, Business Owners, IT Professionals, Civil Servants, Social Workers..... come on our tours and they find the company of their other guests, stimulating and enjoyable.

We do though, encourage, particularly strong political opinions to be restrained and tempered!

When you think about it, your choice boils down to one significant factor, which is, if you don't want to be part of a large group, you are social and you prefer not to do it yourself, then we offer a great alternative.

And, for more-or-less the same price of a coach tour, we deliver what we feel is a more appealing experience.

We make it extremely easy for you to turn up in Andaluçia and just enjoy the holiday without hassle.



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Leave the planning and organisation to us and we'll make sure you see and visit the best of these amazing places.

It really is about what suits you best and, hopefully, we will be able to host you on one of our tours.

Telephone contact numbers for the Tour Leaders/Drivers:

Gary	0034 699 328359
James	0034 659 860900
Rob	0034 679 878239
Antonio	0034 722 417500
Alex	0034 722 497113
Dan	0034 676 186847

