Cordoba
CONTENTS

Introduction 3
Discover Cordoba district by district 4
Culture 11
Tasting Cordoba 12
Cordoba in the four seasons 14
Cordoba with children 17
The hidden city 18
Enjoy the nightlife... 22
What to visit near Cordoba? 23
How to get there 25
Getting around in Cordoba 26
INTRODUCTION

A compendium of the past and modernity, this ancient city, declared a World Heritage Site, is a living testimony of the mix of cultures that have settled in it.

Let yourself be seduced by its colours, its aromas and its atmosphere and discover its most fascinating legends and mysteries.

Its vast cultural and monumental heritage will amaze you. Enter its grandiose Great Mosque-Cathedral, cross the Roman bridge over the Guadalquivir River and wander in the Jewish Quarter, a beautiful maze of narrow streets and whitewashed courtyards.

History is always very present in its cuisine, in which olive oil, a fundamental ingredient of the Mediterranean diet, has occupied a place of honour since the Romans came to Hispania. Cordoba's Iberian cured ham and delicacies such as salmorejo (a tomato-based chilled cream soup) are other examples of its culinary hallmarks.

Cordoba is also synonymous with art, culture and entertainment, thanks to the many cultural events organised throughout the year: flamenco festivals, concerts, dance, etc. Activities that are complemented by its many museums and a lively nightlife.

Andalusia is sun, joy and festive spirit. Try visiting in May, when its streets are perfumed with the scent of jasmine, one of the flowers always to be seen in the Fiesta of the Patios in Cordoba, a festival declared by UNESCO to be Intangible Cultural Heritage. The white walls of its houses are decorated for this festival to create a few days of singular beauty.

Hospitality is one of the characteristics of its open, welcoming people, and you will be made to feel right at home. Come and discover a city full of experiences for the five senses.
JEWISH QUARTER

Its narrow streets of whitewashed houses are full of charm. There you will find corners where the memory of the three cultures of medieval times endures: Christian, Muslim and Jewish.

For one of the most beautiful views of this special place in Andalusia, climb to the top of Calahorra Tower, and get a foretaste of the spectacular city that awaits you. Cross the Roman Bridge over the Guadalquivir River and enter the city through the Puerta del Puente gateway.

From there it's just a short distance to the heart and soul of the city, the Great Mosque-Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which you can enter through the Puerta del Perdón doorway. The beautiful Orange Tree Courtyard leads to the incredible forest of columns with two-tone horseshoe arches in the interior.
One of the spaces you can visit is the minaret, preserved inside the current tower. You can climb the bell tower to get beautiful views, from an interesting angle, of the main building of the Great Mosque-Cathedral. You should also not miss the San Esteban Doorway, which is the oldest in the complex, and the mihrab (prayer niche), the most intimate and sacred place in the Mosque, with Byzantine glass mosaics and a dome. The Catholic Cathedral, which is a blend of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque, stands proudly in the centre of the mosque.

In the same district you can see the synagogue, one of the best conserved in Spain. Built in the first quarter of the 14th century, it has had other uses in subsequent times. Thanks to conservation work, the quantity and quality of its Hebrew inscriptions is excellent.

Nearby is the municipal craft bazaar. Located in a two-storey Mudéjar-style building, it is a market where craft workers from Cordoba display their traditional silver, pottery and leather goods. It is a good place to buy a pretty souvenir.
In the Jewish Quarter you can also listen to flamenco music in the Posada del Potro-Fosforito Flamenco Centre, which works to disseminate this typical form of song and dance from Andalusia. A tour that explores the birth and development of flamenco through its instruments, artists and costumes.

In the old Jewish quarter you can see such characteristic Cordoban façades of as that of Casa del Indiano house, with its mix of Gothic and Mudéjar elements. Or take a snapshot of the colourful Calleja de las Flores street, with wonderful views of the Great Mosque-Cathedral.

Further information: www.mezquita-catedraldecordoba.es
Running parallel to the Guadalquivir River, San Basilio has one of the city’s greatest attractions. This is the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos, an ancient fortress where the discovery of America was planned. Its Moorish gardens are a true delight. Inside you can visit the Mosaics Room, with huge examples of this art from Roman times, or the Receptions Hall, with historical furniture such as a 17th century chapter choir and current pieces such as the age of discovery map table.

Very nearby are the Royal Stables, built at the end of the 16th century by order of Philip II to breed the Spanish or Andalusian horse, a thoroughbred of Arab descent.

Also nearby the Alcázar are the walls of the Judería Castle, an ancient military construction which was a Sephardic settlement in the early 13th century. From here you can go through the Puerta de Sevilla gateway, bringing you to the San Basilio district, or look at Torre de Belén, a tower that is a vestige of the wall that surrounded the old Jewish Quarter.

Further information:
www.turismodecordoba.org/alcazardecordoba.cfm
CORDOBA

SANTA MARINA DISTRICT

Discover a different kind of city, with narrow streets full of palaces and ancient houses of Cordoba’s aristocracy.

It is also known as the bullfighters’ neighbourhood, because of its long association with bullfighting. On its streets you will find a statue in honour of one of the great Spanish bullfighters of the 1940s, Manolete. It stands in front of Santa Marina Church, from the 13th century, one of the oldest in the city. Notice the buttresses on its façade, which give this church the appearance of a fortress.

Another place not to be missed is Viana Palace, a mansion with a Mannerist doorway. Inside is the garden with its twelve different patios, with a splendid display of flowers in the springtime. You can also visit its rooms, each with a different theme: art, mosaics, coffered ceilings, Goya, etc.

San Agustín Church has a wonderful interior, one of the jewels of the Baroque in Cordoba. Thanks to its recent restoration, beautiful murals and frescos of great chromatic richness are now visible. It has many similarities with the chapels of San Cayetano Church, located on a steep street called Cuesta de San Cayetano. It has stunning vaults and decorative details.

Nearby the charming Jardín de los Poetas (Poets’ Gardens), run parallel to the Muralla del Marrubial, an Almoravid wall from the 11th century. It was part of the walls that surrounded the Ajerquía, the area that is now the historical quarter, where artisans and merchants lived during the period of Arab dominion.

Further information:
www.palaciodeviana.com
SAN ANDRÉS-SAN PABLO
DISTRICT

Low houses, shops and taverns line its streets, with their deeply Cordoban flavour. Known in the Muslim era as the neighbourhood of the silk embroiderers, it retains its Al-Andalus layout. Most of its churches and noble houses are concentrated on its main streets, San Pablo and Realejo.

The parish church of San Andrés is a perfect example of the Ferdinanda style: medieval churches built by order of King Ferdinand III during the reconquest of the city in the 13th century (1236). San Pablo Church is built over what was in its day the Roman circus and subsequently an Almohad palace. See the Mudéjar coffered ceilings of the vaults, and one of the images most beloved by the people of Cordoba: Nuestra Señora de las Angustias (Our Lady of Sorrows).

Other religious buildings you can see include Santa Marta Convent, in Mudéjar style, with a pleasant patio from which to observe its Gothic façade.

Palaces and stately houses are other attractions of the area. Houses like Casa de los Villalones or Palacio de los Luna, with coats of arms on their façades, are places where time seems to have stood still.

Finally, you must take a look around the grand square of Plaza de la Corredera, built in the 18th century in the neighbouring district of San Pedro. This popular spot, the only quadrangular main square in Andalusia, is a perfect place to have tapas at a terrace and explore one of the city’s traditional markets.
SAN LORENZO DISTRICT

After the Christian reconquest of the city, the church that gives its name to this historically very popular area was built on the site of an old mosque. San Lorenzo Church is one of the most beautiful in the city, with a splendid Gothic-Mudéjar rose window in its main façade. Another interesting place to see in this district is the church of Nuestra Señora de Gracia, in Baroque style. It forms part of the Trinitarians Convent, founded in the 17th century. Inside you can see several religious carvings of great value such as Our Father Jesus Nazarene Rescued and the Holy Christ of Grace, both greatly venerated by the people of Cordoba. Complete your tour with a visit to Colegio Salesianos School. There you can see the church of María Auxiliadora, the first church in Andalusia dedicated to this Virgin, whose image is carried in procession every 24 May through the streets of the neighbourhood.

MEDINA AZAHARA

Very near to the city is the archaeological site of Medina Azahara, one of the most beautiful Palatine cities of Al-Andalus, built in the 10th century by Abd ar-Rahman III. Visit it on your own or take a guided tour to discover the roots of its magnificent past. Its rooms will transport you back to the time when the Caliphs governed the city.

The archaeological site has a visitor centre as a starting point for the tour. Go down into its subterranean depths to see a fascinating collection of museum pieces from the most important periods of the ancient Medina.

You can get there by car or on a bus that stops on Avenida del Alcázar. Tickets must be purchased in advance, on its website, by phone or at tourist information points.

Further information and ticket sales are available at tourist offices and at: www.museosdeandalucia.es/web/conjuntoarqueologicomadinatalzahra
The Museum of Fine Arts, located in Plaza del Potro, in the old Hospital of La Caridad, houses an interesting collection of Spanish painters, including Valdés Leal, Zurbarán, Ribera and Murillo, and sculptors from Cordoba such as Mateo Inurria and Juan de la Mesa.

Sharing the same courtyard as the Museum of Fine Arts is the Julio Romero de Torres Museum, with works by this painter from Cordoba who achieved great popularity with paintings full of symbolism and a certain aura of mystery. The museum has some of his most representative paintings such as La chiquita piconera and Naranjas y limones.

In Plaza Jerónimo Páez, a 16th century Renaissance palace is home to the Cordoba Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum. Spread over three courtyards and eight rooms, the museum has unique pieces dating from prehistory through to the Al-Andalus period.

THE ARTS
Find another way of exploring Cordoba’s history, culture and lifestyle at its many museums and art centres.
There are also interesting art centres like the Palacio de la Merced, a former convent that hosts temporary exhibitions. The building is one of the best examples of Cordoba’s Baroque, with a particularly fine main cloister.

The Casa Andalusí Museum, located in the heart of the Jewish Quarter, is a beautiful and enchanting place. The Andalusian flavour of the house is mixed with oriental touches, and every nook and corner is pervaded with music, aromas and the colours of flowers. It also houses the Paper Museum, offering an interesting explanation of this material's manufacturing process in the period of the Cordoba Caliphate, as well as an interesting collection of Al-Andalus coins.

If you're interested in contemporary art, visit the Pepe Espaliú Art Centre, located in a recently restored 18th century house-courtyard. It has a permanent exhibition of some 40 works by the painter and sculptor Pepe Espaliú, a key figure in 20th century Spanish art.

Further information:
www.museojuilioromero.cordoba.es

TASTING CORDOBA

Taverns and their tapas are the quintessence of the city’s philosophy and its cuisine. There you can try delicious bites of cuisine in miniature, washed down with a glass of Montilla-Moriles wine.

These taverns are scattered throughout the city, especially in the San Lorenzo, San Andrés and Santa Marina districts, and many of them have been in existence for more than a century. They are the soul of Cordoba, places where cuisine is an art form.

One of the best known dishes of Cordoba's traditional cuisine is salmorejo, a cold cream of tomato, garlic and bread crumbs, which is eaten especially in summer. Other dishes to be seen in all restaurants in Cordoba include flamenquín (a roll of Iberian ham and pork loin, breaded and fried), oxtail, marinated fish and ajoblanco (a cold soup of bread, ground almonds, garlic, water, vinegar, salt and olive oil).
The city also has a growing number of restaurants serving avant-garde cuisine, which offer singular, exclusive experiences. Try the reinterpretation of Andalusian cuisine offered by prestigious chef Paco Morales, or proposals that combine traditional recipes with the use of new culinary techniques.

Complete your gastronomic route by exploring some of the city’s urban markets. The most gourmet-oriented of these is La Victoria Market, with stalls offering both fresh and prepared products. To add to that, it has an unbeatable location, in La Victoria Gardens. Come to a unique spot to lunch or have tapas.

For dessert, try some of the typical sweet pastry delicacies from the area, such as Cordoba Cake, a puff pastry cake usually filled with Spanish pumpkin preserve or cider or quince jelly from Puente Genil.
CORDOBA IN THE FOUR SEASONS

SUMMER

The summer months are an ideal time to visit the Sierra de Córdoba mountains, discover their stunning nature and cool down. The nearest place to visit in these mountains is Santa María de Trassierra, about 15 minutes away by car.

An hour to the west are the La Breña Reservoir and the Sierra de Hornachuelos Nature Reserve, with abundant vegetation, waterfalls and rapids. It is a privileged place to observe a large population of birds of prey.

Another option is to enjoy the summer nights at the outdoor performances of the International Sephardic Music Festival, held in the Botanical Garden, an incomparable setting for these concerts by the best performers of the Sephardic legacy. Other occasions not be missed are the Noche Blanca all-night flamenco festival, held at the end of June, and the Guitar Festival, in the first fortnight of July.

AUTUMN

Cordoba has always been associated with horses. In the months of September, October and November, Otoño del Caballo (Horse Autumn)
takess place, which is when the majority of activities, championships, events and shows associated with these beautiful animals are held.

The other key event in these months is **Otoño sefardí (Sephardic Autumn)**. For over a fortnight numerous workshops, concerts and activities will allow you to learn about Sephardic history and discover Spain's Jewish cultural heritage.

**WINTER**

Cordoba's Christmas programme holds many surprises, such as the **Christmas choirs**. This involves several choirs parading through the city centre's streets, creating an infectious atmosphere of joy.

The other big event is **Christmas of the patios**, which are decorated for the occasion with poinsettias. Many private and institutional patios in the city open their doors for you to visit. The people tending these patios usually offer visitors some **polvorones** (light crumbly biscuits) and anisette.

**SPRING**

The scent of orange blossom and jasmine fills the city air when spring arrives. It is the time of the year of greatest splendour, thanks to the succession of three authentically Cordoban celebrations: Easter Week, the Fair and the Festival of the Patios.

**Easter Week** commemorates the Passion of Christ as the people publicly show their faith. The processions that take place in Cordoba's historic centre are especially emotional, marked by silence and recollection.
During the first fortnight of May the popular **Festival of the Patios** is held. For two weeks, the people of Cordoba proudly open up their patios in the historical old town, adorning them with an abundance of pots of geraniums, carnations, jasmine, etc. They can be visited at practically any time of the day and there are often Flamenco shows as well as the chance to taste delicious **tapas** from Cordoba and Montilla-Moriles wine.

Experience the joy and colour that fill the city during the days of the **Cordoba Fair**, usually held at the end of May. Horse riders, gypsies and flamenco artists gather in the Arenal fairground, while people from Cordoba and outsiders come to drink, sing and dance in the marquees distributed in the different fairground passages.

**Further information:**
patios.cordoba.es
CORDOBA WITH CHILDREN

Discover a city with many attractions for families.

Children will love to see how the Andalusian horses dance in the Royal Stables.

Although perhaps what catches their imagination most is the Children’s City, a huge playground in Cruz Conde Park, with dozens of swings, zip-lines, picnic areas and kiosks to enjoy a pleasant bite to eat. The entrance is on Avenida de Menéndez Pidal avenue. There you can enjoy a pleasant walk among trees and gardens while games of all kinds are taking place. The star attraction in summer is the enchanted forest, a series of artificial trees that spray water as you pass by them.

Right here, with its entrance on Avenida Linneo, is Cordoba Zoo. An exotic, welcoming world, well worth spending a few hours in if you are going to be in this beautiful city for a few days.
THE HIDDEN CITY

If you still have time and would like to discover more, here are some possibilities to add to your itinerary. There’s no question; it is well worth spending time to discover all the charms of this city.

PARKS AND GARDENS

In addition to its numerous beautiful monuments, the city has many green spaces in which to relax and enjoy nature. Cruz Conde Park, Juan Carlos I Gardens and the spacious Paseo de la Victoria green walkway are some of the best examples.

On the river bank you will find other places of singular beauty, such as Sotos de la Albolafia, a protected natural area with islets, water birds and ancient watermills that contributed to the splendour of the medieval city of the Umayyads.

By the Guadalquivir River, near San Rafael Bridge, is Cordoba Royal Botanical Garden. Built for educational and scientific purposes, it is laid out...
with several plant collections. From the arboretum or natural forest, to the Cordoba-style courtyard, it includes rose gardens and several greenhouses. You can also see its amazing stone forest, a collection of large vegetation fossils.

SECRET MUSEUMS

If you want to delve into the city's history or some of its most curious traditions, there is much to see.

One of the most striking places is the Gallery of the Inquisition, a private collection covering the procedures used by European inquisitorial courts from the 13th to the 19th century. Documents, illustrations and torture devices are used to give a rigorous explanation of the judicial process, from the arrest of the accused and the different methods used to get a confession, to pronouncement of the verdict and execution of the sentence.

The Alchemy Museum is the first space in Spain to be dedicated to the fascinating world of this sacred, ancestral science. Objects, videos and reproductions of ancient contraptions, such as the "rota" (a rotating wheel with the signs of the zodiac), help the visitor understand some of the keys of alchemy, in a beautiful building in the Jewish Quarter. Its displays include an alchemical laboratory, stills and a small observatory.

Also in the Jewish Quarter, documenting the city's Jewish past, is the House of Sepharad - House of Memory. It has a permanent exhibition in eight rooms, exploring highlights of the Sephardic tradition and its subsequent development in the diaspora.

In a similar way, the Living Museum of Al-Andalus, in the interior of the Calahorra Tower, has a double objective: to journey through the culture of Al-Andalus and highlight positive aspects of collaboration among Christians, Jews and Muslims.

Lastly, Casa Ramón García Romero Museum, located next to the Great Mosque-Cathedral, pioneers dissemination of the region’s artwork of tanned leather from the times of the Omeya caliphate, which was famous for its quality and colourful ornamentation.

Further information:
www.casadesefarad.es
MONUMENTS

Be captivated by the city's monumental beauty. Some of its greatest secrets are in plain sight. This is the case, for example, with the Roman Temple, next to the Town Hall.

The current reconstruction of the building gives an idea of Cordoba's grandeur in Roman times. Some of the original pieces from the temple are exhibited in the Archaeological Museum and in places like Plaza de Doblas square, where some of the entrance columns are seen.

One of the monuments that all visitors should see is the Puerta del Puente gateway. Located at one end of the Roman bridge, it was the entrance that connected the city with the Via Augusta. As well as passing under its imposing opening, you can visit its interior. You can enter its permanent exhibition room, which illustrates its history over the centuries.

Photo: World Heritage Cities
THE ROOFTOPS OF CORDOBA

The city does not have steep hills, so some of the best places from which to view its historic centre are its own monuments.

There are few views from the roofs of Cordoba as beautiful those seen from the Calahorra Tower lookout point, with the Roman bridge and the Guadalquivir River at its foot and the monumental skyline of the city on the other side of the river.

Another essential place from which to admire Cordoba’s skyline is the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos fortress wall. You can walk around it when you visit this historic complex and observe the grandeur of the gardens. Or climb the tower of the Great Mosque-Cathedral to get some beautiful views of the city centre.

If you are looking for a fuller panoramic view, 15 kilometres from the city you will find the Las Ermitas shrines complex, a place of religious meditation since the Middle Ages. The site includes a magnificent lookout point under the shadow of the monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From there you will get a wonderful view of the city and part of the Guadalquivir River’s fertile plain.
When night falls, Cordoba becomes a party town, its clubs, bars and live music venues staying open until the early hours of the morning.

The nightlife is concentrated in four areas, where the people of Cordoba meet to spend the night in good company, enjoying tapas, drinks and different styles of music. The most classic of these, and the one with the highest concentration of bars, is the city centre, in and around Calle Alfaros street and Plaza de la Corredera square.

The most fashionable bars and clubs are on Vial del Norte, the city's most modern avenue. The student district of Ciudad Jardín is where people gather who want to enjoy Cordoba's street life at night. Real night owls in search of a party go to the big dance clubs in the Polígono de Chinales industrial district.
WHAT TO VISIT NEAR CORDOBA?

Half an hour away by car is Almodóvar del Río, a small, charming town dominated by its imposing castle built on the hill in 760 by the Muslims. It is one of the most important and best-preserved fortresses in Spain. Walk around its surroundings and inside, where many activities are offered throughout the year.

Visit Lucena, known as the Pearl of Sepharad. There the last king of Granada, Boabdil el Chico, before surrendering to the Catholic Monarchs, was held prisoner in the tower of the Castillo del Moral, a fortress which today houses the city's Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum. You can also visit the parish church of San Mateo, constructed over the old synagogue, and the beautiful Condes de Santa Ana Palace.
If you want to explore one of the oldest towns in the region, head for the lovely Cabra. Surrounded by mountains, springs and natural sites of great beauty, it preserves its Al-Andalus past in its double walled enclosure and in the beautiful Condes de Cabra castle. It also has some of the most interesting Baroque architecture in Andalusia, with such jewels as the parish church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción y Ángeles.

But, unquestionably, the most emblematic monument of this style is the Fuente del Rey-Fuente de la Salud Fountains, a set of sculptures around three ponds and a spring, where you can lose yourself in an atmosphere of peace and quiet.

Lastly, mention should be made of Fuente Obejuna, a small town nestled among fields of holm oaks, famous for a popular revolt of the 15th century that inspired the play Fuenteovejuna, written by the famous dramatist Lope de Vega. In summer, the piece is usually staged by the town’s residents in Plaza Mayor square, which was the scene of the historical events. You can also visit its churches and shrines, and the modernist Casa Cardona palace, which houses the Municipal History Museum.

Another great example of the beautiful Baroque of Cordoba, Priego de Córdoba has many churches and a quite remarkable historic quarter of Muslim origin.
**HOW TO GET THERE**

**AVE**
A fast and very attractive way is the high-speed train (AVE), which connects the city with Madrid, Malaga, Barcelona, Valencia and Seville. There are also daily connections via fast trains to Huelva and Cadiz.

**The Renfe Spain Pass** allows non-Spanish residents to travel by rail in Spain on all AVE (high-speed) long distance and medium distance trains. It is valid for one month starting from the first trip, and passes for 4, 6, 8 or 10 journeys are available.

For more information go to www.renfe.com

**AIRPORT**
To travel by plane, the nearest airports are Malaga and Seville, an hour and a half away by car and less than an hour by AVE high-speed train.

Further information: www.aena.es

**ROAD**
Spain's extensive road network makes it easy for you to get there. The A-4 Andalusia motorway connects the city with Madrid and Seville, while the N-432 A-road connects it with Granada. Lastly, the A-45 motorway connects Cordoba to Malaga.

**BUS**
Many regular bus lines run from the bus station, connecting the city daily with other major cities such as Madrid, Seville, Malaga and Granada, as well as with the different towns in the province.

Further information: www.estacionautobusescordoba.es
You can get around Cordoba on foot, as the old town and the main monuments and places of interest are very close to each other.

There is also a public transport service that covers the whole city and links with the suburbs. A good way to get around Cordoba is on the city buses. If you want to make several journeys or are travelling in a group, the best option is the 10-journey Bono Bus pass, which can be purchased and topped up in several establishments.

You can also ride around the old town in a horse-drawn carriage. These carriages are available next to the Great Mosque and close to the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos fortress. Segways are the latest way to tour the monumental areas. Electric cars equipped with GPS are also available for hire and are distributed in several car parks in the city.