**Lecture by Rick Steves**

**Introduction to Iberia**

Many layers of history: Roman, Moorish, Reconquista, Age of Discovery (and riches), Inquisition and Counter-Reformation, Catholic heritage, Civil War Revolution and present prosperity

Paseo: Evening stroll, bars serve munchies, tapas

Pousadas and Paradores: Expensive, historic, government run hotels, “poorman’s paradors”

Private homes: Camas, quartos, casas particulares

Eating: Churros, a breakfast treat? Tapas, portions and rations. Eat with local schedule in mind. Don’t fight it.

Economic Crisis: Impact on tourism is negligible

---

**SPAIN**

**Barcelona**

Cultural capital of Catalonia: Ramblas Blvd, Sardana Dance, La Boqueria Market, Gaudi architecture, art nouveau, Parc Guell, Sagrada Familia Church, Picasso’s museum. Slicked up pretty well after ’92 Olympics, Catalan spirit

Side Trips: Montserrat (mountaintop monastery), Dali Land – Cadaques, his home, Figueres for his museum

**Madrid**

Puerta del Sol: Madrid’s bustling center

Prado: Europe’s best collection of paintings. Masterpieces by Bosch, Goya, Velazquez, El Greco

Picasso’s Guernica: In Centro Arte Reina Sofia

Royal Palace: Europe’s third-greatest palace

Bullfights: Most Sundays and holidays from Easter through October. Bull bars, bull tail stew

El Rastro flea market: Sunday mornings, near Plaza Mayor


Plaza Mayor: Main square, people-watching, drink-sipping

**Andalusia**

Granada, Alhambra: Europe’s best-preserved Moorish palace, Moors (Arabs) ruled Spain from 711 to 1492. Albayzin – Moorish quarter, Ferdinand and Isabella “Catholic Monarchs”

Costa del Sol: Touristy, Nerja = top Costa del Sol stop, Balcony of Europe

Sevilla: Moorish-designed Alcazar, Cathedral, Plaza de Espana, Virgin de la Macarena – weeping Mary altarpiece, flamenco shows a city with a pulse that’s fun to feel, Semana Santa (Holy Week) and April Fair (casetas), Triana District (tapas, gritty), Fine Arts museum – Zurbaran, Murillo

Cordoba: Best Moorish architecture, cathedral in grand mosque, Mezquita

Ruta del Pueblos Blancos: Route of the white-washed hilltowns covers the best of Andalusia, Arcos de la Fronter (south of Sevilla), Ronda (bridge over gorge, oldest bullring)
Tarifa: Just east of Algeciras, charming old town, good one day boat tours to Tangiers (Morocco)
Gibraltar: Walk over the border (air strip) from Algeciras, a little piece of Britain, climb the “rock” for a great view

North Spain
San Sebastian: Best tapas in Spain
Guernica: Cultural home of Basque people
Galicia: Santiago de Compostela
Bilbao: Guggenheim Modern Art Museum (Gehry)
Pamplona: Running of bulls, July 6-14 every year
Burgos: Leon, grand Romanesque cathedrals
Camino de Santiago: Ancient pilgrimage route
Santiago de Compostela: Mossy cathedral, percebes (barnacles)

LEARN MORE

Read: Rick Steves’ Spain, Rick Steves’ Spanish Phrase Book
Watch: Rick Steves’ Spain DVD
Listen: Travel with Rick Steves radio podcast archives at ricksteves.com
Tour: Best of Spain in 14 Days, Best of Barcelona and Madrid in 8 Days, Best of Basque Country of Spain & France in 8 Days Tour, My Way: Spain in 11 Days Tour
App: Rick Steves’ Audio Europe — Free audio tours and radio features organized in geographic playlists, for iPhone and Android
Surf: ricksteves.com