

# Gardens & Architecture of Andalucia

24 September – 1 October 2025

From £1,860 per person (based on min 20 paying guests)

## Itinerary

### Day 1 – Wednesday 24 September 2025

Flights under own arrangements.

We will assemble at Málaga airport ready to depart at 1400hrs for our first visit - **La Concepción Historical Gardens**, located just outside Malaga. Founded in 1855 the gardens are home to a wide variety of tropical and subtropical plants from all over the world. Step into a world of towering palms, fragrant blooms, and exotic flora from around the globe. Wander through historic estates, admire the breathtaking panoramic views of Málaga, or find serenity by the lily-covered ponds. Following our visit we travel to your hotel in **Granada** – the 4\* **Senator Granada Spa Hotel**.

Evening is at leisure.

### Day 2 – Thursday 25 September 2025

This morning following breakfast we visit the famous **Alhambra Palace** with its **Generalife Gardens**. The Alhambra has one of the most spectacular sites in the world. Alhambra means "red castle", and the buildings are of a seductive pink stone and were built in the 14th Century. We will also visit the gardens of **The Generalife** which was the summer palace of the Sultans of Granada in the 14th Century. In the afternoon, after lunch, your guide will accompany you as you wander through the medieval streets of the Albaicín, glimpsing several "**Carmens**", which are the enclosed gardens typical of the Moorish era of Granada and of which many good examples have been maintained by the Christians. We return to the hotel late afternoon and there will be free time for the remainder of the day.



### **Day 3 – Friday 26 September 2025**

After breakfast we depart for **Córdoba**, passing through a landscape with millions of olive trees. We will visit the **Great Mosque** with its Orange Grove, which was first laid out in the late 8th Century and must be one of the true wonders of the world. Outside is a huge patio covered in orange trees - **Patio de los Naranjos** - which was originally covered with fountains used for bathing before entering the mosque. On entering you are struck by the vast number of pillars supporting the arches with their distinctive red and white tiles which are so much a symbol of the whole design. The mosque is now a mixture of Moorish and Christian with chapels incorporated into the building and it is stunning in both its appearance and atmosphere. The gardens of **The Royal Palaces of the Alcázar** are Moorish in style, laid out in rows around long pools with numerous fountains. The sound of the water and the smells of the garden make it an experience for all the senses. At the end of one of these long pools are statues of Columbus together with Ferdinand and Isabel symbolising their meeting in Córdoba. Following our visit we will have some free time to discover the charms of this most Spanish of towns. Late afternoon we continue to our comfortable hotel in the **Seville** – the **4\* Ribera De Triana Hotel**.

### **Day 4 – Saturday 27 September 2025**

After breakfast the whole day is spent in **Seville**. We begin by visiting the **Maria-Luisa Park** and also the **Plaza de España**, laid out in 1929 for a “Fair of the Americas”. This is among the most impressive public spaces in Spain. Nearby is the Tobacco Factory where Carmen - in Bizet’s opera - worked as a cigar maker. Later you will see the **Gardens of Murillo**, planted in honor of the famous painter from Seville, and Seville’s majestic **Cathedral**.

In the afternoon we will visit Seville’s **Orange Tree Courtyard** which belonged to the old mosque and the gardens of the **Royal Palaces of the Alcázar**. The Alcázar is a magnificent palace which mixes Christian and Moorish styles and has several patios and salons all of which are grand and very highly decorated. The ceilings, in particular, are incredibly intricate in design, one with a wooden dome decorated with red, green and gold cells inscribed with Arabic. After the wonder of the palace it is refreshing to walk through the beautiful gardens made up of a mixture of several eras. There is an “English Garden” unlike any garden in this country as the trees and plants are much larger! There is also a huge 500 year old magnolia tree brought by Columbus from the New World. The gardens are rambling and a leisurely walk here shows orange trees, eucalyptus, palms and many others. You may also see the “Flower of Spain”, so-called because of its colours of the Spanish flag. The gardens are like those of the Alhambra but not so large. There are many fountains and places to sit and admire the great variety of trees and palms. We return to the hotel.





### **Day 5 – Sunday 28 September 2025**

Following breakfast we have the day in and around Seville our first visit will be to the private gardens at the Palace of the Adelantados Mayores (governors) of Andalusia, better known as the **Casa de Pilatos**, which was chiefly built between the 15th and 16th centuries. There are two gardens here: the Large Garden, which was originally used as an orchard in the primitive Mudejar palace and experienced a deep transformation after the arrival in Seville in 1568 of the Neapolitan architect, Benvenuto Tortello, and the Small Garden which features a pond with a fountain decorated with a bronze of a young Bacchus.



The remainder of the day is free to explore Seville at leisure.

This evening, we will visit a “Tablaos” in Seville for dinner and an unforgettable experience which showcases the passionate and expressive art form of **flamenco dancing**.

### **Day 6 – Monday 29 September 2025**

After breakfast we leave Seville behind and head for **Ronda**, a spectacular town rising dramatically amid a ring of dark, angular mountains set above the gorges of the River Tajo. Enroute we will visit stop at one of the many wineries that the region has to offer to enjoy a tour, wine tasting with some appetizers.

We then continue to Ronda where we will visit **Casa del Rey Moro** gardens and water mine. The gardens were designed in the early 20th century by the renowned French landscape architect Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, who wanted to create a garden for the senses based on his concept of a "Mediterranean garden". It is a type of garden inspired by Hispano-Muslim art, reminiscent of the gardens of the Alhambra or the Alcázar of Seville; it integrates fruit trees and aromatic plants, adapted to the climate of Ronda to provoke sensations throughout the year. For those who wish you can venture down the 200+ steps into a hidden 14th-century Moorish water mine, an incredible feat of engineering built by the Nasrid dynasty to provide water during sieges. The descent leads to the Guadalquivir River, offering a one-of-a-kind perspective of Ronda's dramatic cliffs.

We later continue to our comfortable hotel the **4\* Hotel Maestrana, Ronda**. Evening is at leisure.

### **Day 7 – Tuesday 30 September 2025**

After breakfast we will enjoy a full day exploring Ronda including a visit to the **Alameda del Tajo** gardens set on the edge of the spectacular gorge offering fantastic views. These were completed in the early 19th century and give fine views over the plains. We have also included a visit to the gardens of the **old Palace of the Moorish King of Ronda (Mondragón Palace)** with its narrow terrace over-hanging the gorge.

The evening is free to explore Ronda.



### **Day 8 – Wednesday 1 October 2025**

This morning after breakfast we will transfer to Malaga Airport where guests are free to make their own onward travel (under own arrangements). For those opting to join the **Gardens of Marrakech tour** we will depart from Málaga mid-morning (full details below).

#### **Included in the price**

- 7 nights' bed and breakfast accommodation: 2nts at the 4\* Senator Granada Spa Hotel, Granada, 3nts at the 4\* Ribera De Triana Hotel, Seville and 2nts at the 4\* Hotel Maestrana, Ronda
- Visits to Alhambra Palace (Granada), Great Mosque and Royal Palaces (Córdoba), Casa de Pilatos, Cathedral, Alcázar, Maria Luisa Park and Gardens of Murillo (Seville), Alameda del Tajo Gardens, a Winey tour, Cas del Rey Moro and Mondragon Palace (Ronda)
- Flamenco evening with dinner
- Service of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as your Brightwater Holidays Tour Manager

#### **Not included (per person)**

- Single room supplement £495



### ***Your Brightwater Tour Manager - Colin Crosbie***

Colin studied horticulture at the West of Scotland Agricultural College. He then worked in the Savill and Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park before being appointed as Head Gardener to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother at Royal Lodge Windsor. Colin then moved to RHS Garden Wisley, firstly as a Superintendent before being appointed Curator in 2010. Colin is a passionate plantsman with a keen interest in garden design and has appeared on radio and television gardening programmes and is in demand as a guest speaker. Colin is also the immediate past President of the Scottish Rock Garden Club and is currently a trustee for Scotland's Garden Scheme for whom he opens his garden annually as well as a trustee for The Caledonian Horticultural Society.

**Activity Level - Moderate - A decent level of fitness is required for our moderate tour. There could be walking between sites, more standing and more travelling to encounter.**



## Optional Extension: Gardens of Marrakech

**1 – 5 October 2025**

**£1,595 per person (based on min 15 paying guests)**

### Itinerary

#### Day 1 – Wednesday 1 October 2025

We depart mid-morning from Málaga airport on a direct flight to Marrakech. On arrival early afternoon we will be met by our local coach and guide and transfer to our first visit to **El Bahia Palace**, which was built in the late 19th century by the great vizier Sidi Moussa and intended to be the greatest palace of its time, capturing the essence of the nation's style, both Moroccan and Islamic. There is a two-acre garden with rooms opening onto sunlit courtyards, planted with cypress, orange trees and jasmine and furnished with wells and fountains to provide a sheltered and private space.



Following our visit we continue to our comfortable hotel, located in the heart of the luxurious district of Hivernagein, five minutes' walk from the heart of old Marrakech, **Es Saadi Gardens & Resort Palace** features sumptuous decoration created by Master Craftsmen of Morocco. The hotel is set in extensive grounds and once we have settled into the hotel we will have a **tour of the gardens** with the Head Gardener. Dinner is served in the evening.

#### Day 2 – Thursday 2 October 2025

After breakfast we begin our exploration of Marrakech with a visit to **El Badi Palace**, built by Ahmad al-Mansur over a period of 25 years in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The original building is thought to have consisted of 360 rooms, richly decorated with marble and gold. It also has a small, underground, tunnel-like jail with about four cells where the king kept his prisoners. Unfortunately, the palace was torn apart by the Sultan Mawlay Ismail but there is still a lingering sense of grandeur and some interesting nooks and crannies to explore.



We continue to the famous garden of **La Majorelle**, which was made in the 1920s by the French painter Jacques Majorelle, with marble pools, raised pathways, banana trees, groves of bamboo, coconut palms and bougainvilleas. Unsurprisingly, the garden is composed and coloured like a painting, with many of the solid features painted in a rich blue ('Majorelle Blue') which works very well with the soil, climate and plants. Water is a prominent feature of the garden, with channels, lily-filled ponds and fountains and there is a wide range of plants, for Majorelle was an avid collector. After years of neglect, the garden was then taken over

and restored by the fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent and today presents an extraordinary and at times surreal combination of colour, form and light.

### **Day 2 – Thursday 2 October 2025 continued...**

In the afternoon we will walk to the **Yves Saint Laurent Art and Design** for a brief visit before we drive to the expansive gardens of **M. Ben Chaabane**, who is a renowned Garden Designer, botanist, perfume maker and publisher. M. Chaabane was approached in 1998 by Yves Saint Laurent to restore the Majorelle Gardens and develop a perfume that represented them. He also encouraged him to create his own perfumes, which are now commercially available throughout the country. Within this garden property we will admire a stimulating collection of contemporary paintings by local and foreign artists. Nearby we will see the cactus garden, an excellent example of a dry garden of the semi-arid zones. We later return to the hotel where dinner is served in the evening.

### **Day 3 – Friday 3 October 2025**



Our exploration of Marrakech continues today with a visit to to visit the tranquil **Menara Garden**, which has its origins in a 12th century orchard of palm, olive and fruit trees. An orchard, pools and pavilions are the primary components of Islamic gardens and Menara is a classic example, with a formal pool overlooked by a pavilion previously used by the sultan and his family. The present pavilion dates from the nineteenth century but is believed to be on the site of a 16th-century Saadian structure. The image of the trees and surrounding mountains reflected in the shimmering pool provides perfect photo opportunities and lingering memories.

We continue with a walk in **Arset Moulay Abdessalam** within the city walls, which was a space for the artisans of the souks to organize their parties. Then we continue to **Jnane Harti**, known for its cactus and other exotic plants.

After an opportunity for lunch (not included) this afternoon we will visit one of the most sumptuous palaces of Marrakech, **Dar el Basha**, built for the famous dignitary El Glaoui more than a century ago.

We continue to **Le Jardin Secret**, a garden that has been the home of some important political figures. Designed by Chelsea Gold Medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith, this is an outstanding example of the art and architecture of an Islamic garden and is a part of the great tradition of stately Arab-Andalusian and Moroccan palaces. From here we continue to the artisan quarter to visit the workshops of dyers, tinsmiths, leather makers and wood painters, with the opportunity to take many rewarding photos of this colourful, bustling market. At the end of the afternoon, we will enjoy a guided walk on the square of **Jemaa El Fna**, which teems with acrobats, jugglers, snake-charmers and story-tellers and provides a colourful taste of Moroccan life and culture.





Dinner will be served in the hotel this evening.

#### **Day 4 – Saturday 4 October 2025**

After breakfast we drive into the **Atlas Mountains** to visit the organic and aromatic gardens nestled in the lush green valley of Ourika. As we reach the first foothills we will visit a Saffron Plantation and learn all about this ancient, expensive and almost mythical spice; its cultivation and its culinary and therapeutic properties.

We will enjoy a cup of delicious Moroccan saffron tea before we head to **Nectarome**, an aromatic garden located deep in the valley. On arrival we will have a guided tour of the property to discover the secrets and benefits of local plants as well as the Moroccan natural cosmetic products optimized by modern science. We then enjoy a succulent lunch, carefully prepared with organic vegetables and aromatic plants from the garden and served in its beautiful Pergola.

After lunch (included) we will go to visit the contemporary gardens of **Anima**, created by an Austrian artist who skilfully combines plants and indigenous African art.



We return to our hotel where we enjoy our final evening meal together.

#### **Day 5 – Sunday 5 October 2025**

After breakfast we check out of the hotel and continue back to the airport in time for our early afternoon flight back to Malaga. On arrival in Málaga the group shall disperse on make onward flight connections (under own arrangements).

**Included in the price**

- Four nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Es Saadi Gardens & Resort Palace, Marrakech
- One lunch
- Return flights from Málaga to Marrakech
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as Brightwater Holidays Tour Manager

**Not included (per person)**

- Single room supplement                      £395

**Activity Level - Moderate - A decent level of fitness is required for our moderate tour. There could be walking between sites, more standing and more travelling to encounter.**