

THE SILVER ROUTE

The Silver Route is an old commercial path that joins the northwest of Spain with the Mediterranean by way of Andalusia, thus avoiding the winding Atlantic coast. The Carthaginian general Hannibal trod this route as did the Romans who left their mark in the form of bridges and other wonders of engineering.

Here is where their culture had the most impact, influencing their urban design, their language, their laws and the Christian religion. The Arabs would arrive later, but throughout the Middle Ages the northern Christian kingdoms would make their way back down imposing definitively their power. During the Reconquest there emerged great Spanish noble families whose countless palaces span the cities and towns along this road.



Day 1 Of the three capitals that the Muslims had in Andalucía, it was Seville that the Christian kings chose for themselves. Peter I had the Royal Palaces built, one of the prominent works of the Mudéjar style art. Here too the Gothic Cathedral occupies the grounds of the former mosque, leaving only the Patio de los Naranjos and the ancient minaret, the Giralda bell tower from which one can enjoy a panoramic view of all Seville. A stroll through the center of the town with its palaces, churches and parks takes us to quarters such as Santa Cruz with its singular courtyards, iron gates and balconies. Possibility of organizing a special tapas lunch. Overnight in Seville.

Day 2 The city formerly known as Hispalis has an important Roman history and even traces of Tartesian origins. But it is in the neighboring Roman city of Itálica where we can best contemplate this aspect of history. Having been the cradle of the Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian, we get an idea of the importance of this municipality. The excavations have brought to light the typical Roman reticule, the amphitheatre, remains of the baths, and mosaic-decorated homes. Overnight in Seville.

Day 3 The village of Zafra played an important role as a border town between Andalusia and Extremadura. Over the castle of Arab origin rises the Gothic-Renaissance fortress and ancient palace -nowadays a Parador- of one of the great figures of Spain, the Duke of Feria. The urban framework centers on the beautiful gated squares, side streets, old hospitals and convents, one of which is today the town hall. Mérida is considered to be the Spanish city that has best preserved its Roman legacy. Notable sites include the amphitheatre and the theater, the very interesting National Museum of Roman Art, and the Temple of Diana located in the center of town. Not lacking are various works of infrastructure such as the Roman bridge, an aqueduct, and a reservoir. Overnight in Mérida.

Day 4 Traveling down the road known during the Middle Ages as the Road to Santiago, we find Cáceres, the next stop for those making the pilgrimage from the south of Spain. The number of estates and palaces huddled around the Plaza Mayor and its adjacent streets is so abundant that the visitor feels transported to times gone past. Towers, beautiful facades and unique windows adorn the palaces of the families Golfines, Toledo Moctezuma, Godoy and Carvajal among others. The walled village of Plasencia features narrow side streets centering around a lively Main Square. Notable palaces include the Mirabel and the Carvajal. The most interesting of all are the two Cathedrals, hidden within each other. Overnight in Plasencia.

Day 5 The best kept stretches of the Roman Route of Silver are found in the mountain passes, here in the section of the sierra that separates Extremadura from Castile. Following a brief stop at the arch of the Roman ruins of Cáparra. Possibility of hiking from Baños de Montemayor to the Magdalena Bridge.

We can enjoy an evening stroll and enter Salamanca from the south, crossing the well preserved Roman Bridge. Salamanca is now, and has always been, more than anything a university city. The historical university buildings that have been preserved since medieval and Renaissance times, are unique and many of them are open to tourists. The homogenous mix of students and visitors beckons us to stroll through its lively streets and to indulge in the festive atmosphere. Notable monuments include the Plaza Mayor, the two Cathedrals -from Romanesque to Baroque- the House of Shells, the San Esteban Convent, and the interesting Art Nouveau and Art Déco Museum situated in the modernist Casa Lis. Overnight in Salamanca.

Day 6 Our route will take us to Zamora in the morning and we will have the chance to discover its charming medieval quarter visiting the Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral with its beautiful Byzantine dome and the castle's park. More than twenty Romanesque churches are scattered throughout the city -notable among them are San Ildefonso, La Magdalena, San Juan and Santa María la Nueva-. León, the capital city of the kingdom that encompassed the Silver Way almost in its entirety, offers masterful works of art from various eras. Just as the Romanesque style of the Collegiate of San Isidoro was pioneering in both architecture and painting, and the Gothic cathedral houses one of the best kept treasures of stained glass, so does the ancient pilgrims hospital of San Marcos possess one of the most beautiful Plateresque façades of 16th century. Possibility of organizing a special regional dinner. Overnight in León.

Day 7 Today we cross the Cantabrian mountain range to reach Asturias. The Christians took 524 years to arrive to Seville from here. It was in these valleys that the first kingdom was formed against the invading Muslims and Oviedo soon became its capital. In the surrounding area we find two jewels of the period: the Pre-Romanesque churches of Santa María del Naranco and San Miguel de Lillo. In Oviedo's historical district there still remain vestiges of 9th century Asturian art: the Foncalada, the apse of the San Tirso, and the Cámara Santa. The late-Gothic Cathedral dominates the city center that with its palaces, University, bourgeois homes, convents, and small plazas, recounts tales of a prosperous past that still exists today. In Gijón we reach the Cantabrian coast where we find one of the most important maritime ports that used to join the country with the north of



Calzada romana y Baños de Montemayor. Foto cedida por: Turismo de Extremadura



Salamanca. Casa de las Conchas. Foto cedida por: Turismo de Castilla y León



Santiponce. Conjunto arqueológico de Itálica. Foto cedida por: Red de Cooperación de Ciudades en la Ruta de la Plata

Europe. The historical district is located behind a small peninsula flanked by loading docks and San Lorenzo beach. Overnight in Gijón.

Day 8 Transfer to the Asturias Airport.

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| 8 days | |
| Day 1 | ✈️ SEVILLA |
| Day 2 | EXCURSION ITÁLICA |
| Day 3 | SEVILLA - ZAFRA - MÉRIDA |
| Day 4 | MÉRIDA - CÁCERES - PLASENCIA |
| Day 5 | PLASENCIA - SALAMANCA |
| Day 6 | SALAMANCA - ZAMORA - LEÓN |
| Day 7 | LEÓN - OVIEDO - GIJÓN |
| Day 8 | GIJÓN ✈️ |