

Casa Uno



Your home in the heart of Andalucía

www.casa-uno-spain.com

Welcome - Casa Uno is the perfect place for families and friends to come and relax.

This booklet aims to give you some information about the house and its facilities, as well as discussing some of the things you can do in the surrounding area. At the end, we will also tell you how you can book your stay at Casa Uno – if you have not already done so !!

Set in a very quiet hill-top village, the house is built in the style of a Roman Villa. At the centre of the house is a large swimming pool around which is a colonnaded terrace leading to the various rooms and terraces.

The house sleeps 8, with cots available for small children. There are 4 completely private bedrooms, all with their own en-suite bathrooms. The house is usually configured with 2 double beds and 4 twin beds (2 per room). Each room is intended to sleep 2 people.



There is a 15-metre-long 'sun terrace' which has 3 distinct areas. For those who want to go home with a tan, then simply pick up one of the many sun loungers and point it towards the sun. If the sun is too hot, then sit back on one of our sofas and armchairs under the cool awning. When you are feeling hungry, fire up our large brick-built barbeque and enjoy a meal at the roof-top dining area.

We particularly liked the upstairs terrace in the evening- the furniture and space is tasteful and well-appointed.

Mr & Mrs Flower – August 2019



If you want things a bit cooler then the Moroccan dining area is on the ground floor, just outside the kitchen. This area spends most of the day in the shade - it is also the place where most people congregate throughout the day, whether it is for breakfast or an evening review of the day with a glass of wine and a few olives and other nibbles.

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The house features a fully equipped kitchen - if there is something you needed that isn't there, please tell us. There is a large Spanish Oak dining table, making that 3 dining areas overall !!! There is a lounge with enough seating for everyone. This includes a DVD player and a large Smart TV, which you can use to connect to your various streaming services. For those who understand such things, we have some movies and TV shows that you can watch via our PLEX system. We also subscribe to SIPTV so you can watch TV from anywhere in the world. You can find instructions in the house book.

The villa was beautiful, I have never seen such a well stocked kitchen for utensils, crockery and glassware - we did not want for anything.

The Ware family from Essex – August 2019

We have super-fast direct fibre internet WiFi which delivers speeds in excess of 75mbps. This is faster than most UK connections. This should allow everyone to use their laptops, tablets and phones without problem.

The Bedrooms

Each room is beautifully colour coordinated, with its own en-suite bathroom. They also have a dressing area with built-in wardrobes. Every room has :

- Air conditioning
- Heating
- Desk / Dressing table
- Wardrobes and drawers
- Extra Blankets
- Bedside tables with lamps



Three rooms open directly onto the pool colonnade, with the fourth on the top floor of the main house.

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Swimming Pool

When we purchased the house, the pool was fitted with a water heat exchange mechanism which is no longer operational. Our investigations suggest that it was not the right system and despite several attempts we have been unable to get it working. However what is clear from our guests is that, given the heat during the holiday season in our part of Spain, the water cannot be cool enough! The pool temperature is lovely from May to September, but available all year round for those who are braver than most!

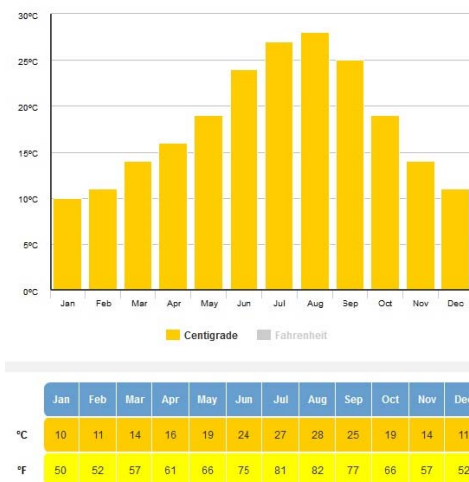
Temperature

The temperature in this part of Spain is usually quite pleasant, even in the winter months. It is not uncommon to be able to sunbathe in December – we have !!

It is unusual for the temperature to fall below 10° C (which is quite pleasant). Between June and August it is very rare to have a rainy day.

If you are looking to avoid rain, then November to early December are best avoided. However, this is an excellent time for those interested in seeing the sights of Andalucía, without the impact of the energy draining sun.

Source : www.holiday-weather.com



Village of Las Pinedas

If you are looking for an authentic Spanish experience, then Las Pinedas delivers. It is a very quiet village (with one notable exception in August!!!), situated on a small hilltop. If you are looking for a nightclub, then you won't find one !

It is a small intimate place. The locals are welcoming but don't expect them to speak much English. The bar is the meeting place, particularly on a Sunday afternoon where families come out for a long lunch. The men of the village will spend the day reading their newspapers and playing dominoes in the bar.

Casa Uno is situated on the town square. This features a large paved square with orange trees and seating. The village church overlooks the square. If you are staying

at the house over Easter, then the Easter Sunday procession which starts and ends at the Church is not to be missed.

Every town and city in Spain has its annual fiesta, and Las Pinedas is no exception. This is when it gets noisy – very noisy. The first weekend in August is the village's fiesta weekend. This sees the square full of people. There is a bar, things to eat and very loud music. The music and dancing goes on into the small hours over Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. You can't ignore this, it will be difficult to sleep and could be frustrating if you are checking out at 9:30 checkout on Saturday morning.

However the fiesta is great fun and if you go prepared for it, you will have a great time. Some people book especially to experience the fiesta, but we just think it is best to warn you in advance.

If you want to get back to nature, then a short walk out of the back of the village is recommended, especially in springtime when wild flowers and migrating birds can be seen.

La Carlota

This is the local town, a 5-minute car drive away. If you are going to experience the restaurants, bars and cafes, then we recommend one of the local taxis at a cost of €10 per trip.



Besides a number of significant shops and banks (discussed later), this is a good place for an evening visit – remembering that most evenings don't start till 8pm. The main road on entering La Carlota is a wide expanse with a paved walkway in the middle. On this walkway many of the bars and cafes put their tables and chairs where family sit and chat while the children play. You will see many people doing 'el paseo' (the walk) which is a very Spanish custom.

The road features many varied bars, including a tea room. Bar San Francisco is clean and modern and the tapas are excellent. The best steak and chips can be found at El Horno – El Fogon (just a few yards away from San Francisco). For the biggest pizza ever then a visit or take away from Pizza Lalola is well worth it. They are so big you can put two different toppings on one Pizza !

Shopping Locally

Las Pinedas

Paqui's Autoservicio ('self-service') is Las Pinedas' one shop, open six and a half days a week, though like other businesses in Southern Spain, it is closed every afternoon between 2pm and 5.30pm. Paqui (pronounced Packy) sells locally-produced ham, sausages and cheese, fruit and root vegetables, fresh bread, frozen meat and fish, many kinds of tinned and bottled food, soft drinks, beer, wine and spirits, and everything for household cleaning.

Spain is a country which has not yet succumbed entirely to the economics of the supermarket. The freshest and most delicious produce, much of it locally sourced, is still to be found in local shops and on market stalls – every large town worth its name has a covered market.

It is so easy to fall into the habit of using the larger supermarkets (we have !), however we now try to use the independent greengrocers, bakers, fishmongers and butchers that can all be found in the local town of La Carlota. You can wander around and find them for yourself, or if you need help just ask. By using the local independents, you not only get the best produce but you keep these people in business. It's also a lot of fun and adds to the holiday !

La Carlota

La Carlota, (pop. 15,000), 5 km away, is the local market town. At the last count it had 5 butchers, 4 greengrocers, 3 fishmongers, 2 bakers, several pharmacies, numerous banks with credit/debit card access, a Co-operative producing excellent extra virgin olive oil, ironmongers, haberdashers, a large Mercadona supermarket, and several fairly modest self-service stores.

Cordoba

Cordoba (pop. 100,000+) is the provincial capital, famous for shoes and leather goods, with a fine central marketplace for fresh food, several large supermarkets with easy parking (Eroski, Mercadona, Carrefour), and in central Cordoba El Corte Ingles is Spain's answer to John Lewis, with a food hall added.

We found everything to be spotlessly clean, with excellent facilities. I can't think of an extra thing we needed - I was particularly grateful for the cleaning items/rubbish bags etc which meant we did not need to shop for these things.

Mr and Mrs Flowers – August 2019

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Eating Out

All Spanish restaurants must by law offer a fixed-price 3-course Menu of the Day at lunch time on week days, often excellent value for as little as 6 or 7 Euros in more modest restaurants, though a definite second best at the grander establishments which expect you to eat *a la carte*. Many bars and small restaurants enable you to order individual dishes in three different sizes: *tapas*, *media raciones*, *raciones* - effectively a saucer, a half-plate or a full plate of the dish in question. Several *media raciones* shared communally between two or more people makes a magically varied and convivial meal.

Some suggestions for eating out at CASA UNO, nearest first.

Las Pinedas

- Bar Gran Parada is Las Pinedas's one bar, central to village life. Do not be deceived by its rustic appearance. It keeps a fine kitchen, serving notable steaks and fish, and that delicious cut of pork known only in Spain, the *Secreto Ibérico*. Prices are extremely reasonable and it is only 200 yards from Casa Uno, so there is no need to drive home.
- Spaniards love picnics. There are two picnic parks equipped with rustic barbecues in groves of holm oak within 3 km of the village, and another 11 km away on the Sierrazuela hillside above Posadas.

La Carlota

- The restaurant at the Hotel El Pilar gets two crossed knives and forks in Michelin: 'A dining room in classical style with a culinary offer giving very correct results.'
- Restaurant Carmen at the Western end of La Carlota is where the town's new generation of movers and shakers network at lunchtime - food very fresh, service keen.

Posadas

- A favourite summer haunt for local families is the sunny terrace of the hilltop restaurant in the Sierrazuela woods above Posadas (on the left after the railway bridge on the Villaviciosa road), with views out across the plains of the Guadalquivir River, the woods around busy with blue-winged magpies and gaudy-throated bee-eaters.

Almodovar El Rio

- As well as a marvellously romantic castle, rebuilt from ruin in the 1930s, this has one of our favourite restaurants, La Taberna, in the C/ Antonio Machado – though you may need a satnav or a map to find it.

Hornachuelos

- Another open-air favourite, advertising itself as Carnes a la Brasa ('grilled meats') at the Embarcadero – overlooking the embarkation point for boat-trips along a spectacular beautiful mountain reservoir - specialises in locally caught fish and wild game grilled over wood-fires.

Cordoba

- Infinite choice here – but El Caballo Rojo opposite the Mezquita, is still one of the great shrines of traditional Andaluz cuisine: famous for its Arabic, Mozarabic and Sephardic dishes
- El Blasón, c/ Jose Zorrilla-11 in the old town, as well as having a fine restaurant indoors, in summer offers up-market tapas in a lovely shaded courtyard
- El Pisto, just off Córdoba's main square Plaza Tendillas, set in a tall covered patio bedecked with bull-fighting posters, is the city's most atmospheric tapas bar/restaurant

Andujar

- Las Perolas – Meson Ana – c/Serpiente-6. Barely 3 minutes walk from the lovely Andujar El Greco, Ana with her counter of steaming brown stews presides over the ultimate tapas bar for carnivores

Carmona

- The Parador (a state-owned luxury hotel in an ancient Moorish palace) has a stately pillared patio with murmuring fountain, perfect for a ruminative cup of afternoon tea

Zuheros

- In the lee of the Moorish castle, accessible through the bar of the cliff-edge café, a restaurant serves roast suckling pig, baby kid or lamb, while looking down from Zuheros's crags onto an apparent infinity of olive trees running to every horizon across earths of ever shifting colours – silver, grey-green, pink, red, orange and deepest gold

Cazalla De La Sierra

- A white mountain town in the Sierra Morena: those who know the area well eat in the Posada del Moro on the left at the entrance to the town coming from Las Pinedas, and the wise have the dish of the day with slow-cooked vegetables

Sport and Recreation

Inland Andalucía has fewer recreational facilities than along the coasts, but they are almost invariably much more pleasant to participate in, if only because they are less crowded.

Local to Las Pinedas

- Las Pinedas lies at the heart of a network of local dirt roads for the walker and mountain biker, unmetalled once they leave the village, giving access to an open countryside of olive and orange groves, fields of wheat and stands of tall sunflowers.
- Immediately outside the village runs the Camino Rural – a countryside trail for walkers and bikers laid on the bed of a former railway branch line, running Westwards 3 km to a fine bridge across a local river rich in wild life, and Eastwards 25km all the way to Córdoba, passing through two tunnels en route.

Further Away

For information about:

- Golf...
- Hill-walking
- Swimming
- Scuba-diving
- Bird-watching
- Flamenco
- Riding horses and pony-trekking
- Gymnasiums and fitness training
- Local Ferias (fairs) and Festivals
- Bull-fighting and visits to bull-farms (ganaderias)
- Etc.

The two best sources of information are www.turismodecordoba.com for the province of Córdoba, and www.andalucia.com for the wider view. There are also informative leaflets and guides in Casa Uno.

Would-be walkers should note that the signs in 'Parque Natural' and 'Parque Nacional' that say 'Coto Privado de Caza' are intended only to discourage unlicensed hunting – you are still free to walk the trails. The Andalucia.com website provides information about walking trails. A visit to the tourist centre on the La Pedrosa road out of Constantina will set you up with all necessary information about the Parque Natural del Sierra Norte. The Michelin Green Guide for Andalucía will point you to many other similar sources of information.

For ultra keen bird watching zealots, the ultimate resort is Doñana National Park (Q.V.) on the Atlantic coast – but you need to arrive there early and book your tour in advance, and it is two and a half hours drive away.

Culture, History and Adventure

The Moors of ancient Al-Andalus have long gone from Andalucía, most of their mosques, palaces, bath houses and religious schools long ago demolished and built over. But the landscape of Andalucía remains shaped by the ever-shifting frontier between Christian Spain and the kingdom of Granada, which for some 250 years until the fateful year of 1492 remained the last bastion of Moorish Spain. As a result every significant hill-top is occupied by a town, every hill-top town is crowned by a fort, and round every fort rambles a town centre centuries old and still largely intact – later buildings have simply been cobbled onto the outside. This means that there is not an Andalucían town or village not worth exploring, not capable of revealing some unexpected delight of architecture or atmosphere or distant views. Below are simply listed some of the more outstanding examples. There is much, much more out there.

Within 30 minutes of Casa Uno

Córdoba, ancient capital of Moorish Spain

- Mezquita: immense 9th century Moorish mosque which majestically survived having a Catholic cathedral injudiciously inserted into its fabric in the 16th century – the gold mosaic Mihrab in the Eastern wall was a personal gift to the Caliph from the Emperor of Byzantium in those more tolerant times.
- Medinet al Zahra: archaeological site of the stupendous out-of-town Caliphal palace-city constructed in 936, razed to ground by Berbers in 1013 – a place of dreams now extensively re-excavated and with the splendid Aga Khan museum
- Judería: warren of small streets around Mezquita with a few good and many touristy shops/eating places; open doors offer tantalising glimpses of flowered patios

- Palacio Triana: glorious old town house with an abundance of flowered patios and fountains
- Baños arabes: recently re-opened Arabic thermal baths – insist you book in advance
- Alcazar: grim former royal palace with splendid Moorish-style water-gardens
- Plaza de la Corredera: grand city square reminiscent of Plaza Real in Madrid – take coffee in the sun, buy fresh food in the covered market on the South side of the square, bargain-hunt in the Saturday morning open marketplace.



Almodovar

- Almodovar castle: hilltop vantage point occupied successively by Celts, Iberians, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors and Christians: magnificent Mediaeval castle restored to its original glory at start of 20th century, astounding views, impressive keep with dungeon. Princess Zaida, imprisoned here in ancient times, is immortalized in a heart-rending aria in Mozart's otherwise only totally unsuccessful *Opera Zaida*.

La Rambla

- Ceramics capital of region: abundance of ceramic outlets – from simple earthenware to gaudy Hispanic.

Ecija

- City of church towers with ceramic decorations in the plateresque ('silverware') style, arcaded central square one of the most beautiful in Southern Spain.

Within 90 minutes of Casa Uno

Seville – this stylish city boasts glories too many to count, but must-sees include :

- Cathedral of gigantic size, only rivalled in Mexico City, contains tomb of Christopher Columbus
- Alcazar: enchanting Moorish palace built for a Christian king, with magical Arabic gardens
- Casa de Pilatos: Renaissance town-house of many patios, luxuriant foliage and flowers
- Judería: grander and more extensive than Córdoba's, and considerably more lively
- Museum of Fine Art: another building with splendid flowered patios – paintings by Zurbaran are the jewels in the crown – lots of Murillo if you like him
- Palacio de Lebrija: aristocratic townhouse extensively garnished with classical remains from the nearby Roman city of Italica, ransacked by an antiquarian millionairess in the 19th century. Upstairs an impressively stuffy recreation of a 19th century set of upper class apartments

Italica

- Roman regional capital: archaeological site includes spectacular amphitheatre, various excavated sites and a theatre a little distance away in the town

Carmona

- Walled hilltop city: ancient monastic buildings, fine churches, evocative views over the plains below

Marchena

- A group of paintings by Zurbaran is unexpectedly to be found in the little vestry of the handsome church here – but check your guidebook for times when the priest is available to show them

Osuna

- The world's smallest Cathedral is to be found within the burial vault of the Dukes of Osuna in the hilltop church

- The Casino, curiously reminiscent of Raffles hotel in Singapore, has lofty anterooms with comfortable chairs and tall windows for viewing the busy world go by in the town's main square below – delicious tapas

Antequera

- Menga and Viera dolmens – Large Neolithic burial chambers on the outskirts of this agreeable city
- El Torcal – dramatic rock formations sculpted by aeons of wind and rain, despoiled by a shabby car-park but with wonderful views South - formed part of the Republican front line early in the Spanish Civil War
- Laguna de Fuente Piedra – beyond the town of the same name, an inland salt lake where 10,000 pink flamingos at a time congregate to breed – bring binoculars

Priego de Córdoba

- Baroque city with fine churches and fantastic fountains
- The Parque de Subbetica to the North can be accessed by a well-made dirt road from Luque and the 25km drive is through some of the emptiest and most dramatic landscape in Southern Spain

Jaen/Ubeda/Baeza

- A trio of Renaissance cities East of Córdoba with magnificent church architecture by Andres de Vandelvira – the Spanish Christopher Wren - cathedrals in Jaen and Baeza, the ducal Chapel beside the Parador hotel in Ubeda – the latter the loveliest city centre of them all

Andujar

- The principal church, Iglesia Sta Maria, contains one unexpectedly restrained painting by El Greco

Arjona

- Byzantium meets the Industrial Revolution in the vault of the Velasco family at Arjona's fine parish church, where under a ceiling of gold mosaic, solid marble angels on railway lines trundle out from the walls to admit coffins into their individual niches, then trundle heavily back to the walls to stop the newcomers getting out again

Marmolejo

- Mineral springs on the edge of the town promise long life, health and happiness plus a cure for most ills; the Gran Hotel Spa Marmolejo offers a wide range of mineral water therapies and its own special course of chocolate therapy
(www.albalnearios.com/granhotelspamarmolejo/index.htm)

Sierra Morena

- An enchanted territory of hills and mountain villages, much of it designated as 'Natural Park', runs along the whole of Northern Andalucía, with cork-oak forests grazed by the plump black pigs that provide the region's famous Serrano ham, abundant wild life and the occasional herd of fighting bulls. Winding roads, little traffic, spectacular vistas

Further Afield

GRANADA

The last Moorish Kingdom in Spain, surrendered in 1492

- The Alhambra is the Moorish palace of the Nasrid dynasty, built early 1300s – a place of wondrous beauty but access is rationed by the clock, and you are advised to book well ahead via the internet to be sure of getting in. Allow two and a half hours from Las Pinedas
- Gardens of the Generalife – all on the one ticket, but further up the hill away from the Alhambra itself – summer palace with fragrant gardens and a myriad of fountains, laid out in 1302-1309
- The majestic Chapel Royal of Granada Cathedral contains the mausoleum of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, conquerors of Granada, unifiers of Spain, patrons of Christopher Columbus, who also broke their word to the Moors, expelled the Jews and instigated the Inquisition
- The Albaicín is the ancient Moorish quarter of the city immediately in the lee of the Alhambra – still atmospheric though no longer a magnet for artists as in the days of Federico Lorca – murdered here by Nationalists in 1937

Málaga

A port with history and character, fine beaches, a grand cathedral, a Picasso Museum in the artist's birthplace, a Parador with sublime evening views over the city (ask for room 303) and just outside town, on the way to Antequera, the delicious green shade of its extensive botanical gardens founded in the late 19th century (2 hours from Las Pinedas)

Ronda

A former magnet for artists (David Bomberg was a noted visitor) now largely surrendered to tourism, dramatically bisected by a deep gorge where choughs wheel across the rock face. The two halves of the city were united in the late 18th century by an equally dramatic bridge which also housed the prison. The Palacio de Mondragon is a 14th century Moorish residence of many patios. The famous Plaza de Toros has its own museum of bullfighting (At least 2 hours cross country)

Cadiz

The intrepid old city with its fortifications, the oldest city in Europe, founded by the Phoenicians, its fine Cathedral, its winding streets and its many little squares was built on an isthmus and centuries later remains largely unspoiled. The new city commands a couple of miles of fine Atlantic beaches (2 ½ hours)

Jerez de La Frontera

If you're a biker, this is where they hold the Spanish Grand Prix. If you're a sherry-drinker, this is where it comes from. If you're into flamenco, this is your mecca. If you relish fine urban architecture, you will be able to treasure central Jerez for that alone. If you're a horse you'll either be in this horse-mad city already, or looking forward eagerly to the next Feria de Caballo (the annual May Horse Fair) to meet up with your chums (ca. 2 hours)

Doñana National Park

The greatest nature park in Southern Europe, saved for posterity by the World Wildlife Fund, now under threat from intensive farming and seafront property development. Lying at the mouth of the Guadalquivir river, its many miles of wild beaches, its unique landscape of sand dunes and marsh, its ancient forest inhabited by deer and wild boar, can nowadays only be visited by the park's own 4-wheel people-carriers on a bumpy but fascinating 4-hour safari. In the spring breeding season, mingled colonies of variegated heron, duck, stilt, pelican, egret and flamingo cohabit cacophonously in ragged bushes and shallow waters. The park's

various visitor centres have marked trails for hikers. A bird-watcher's paradise. (Just over 2 hours).

The approach to Parque Doñana is by El Rocío, scene of an annual spring Romeria (pilgrimage) of the Virgin of El Rocío, Europe's biggest pilgrimage attracting more than million people over one ecstatic long weekend in May/June, many of them arriving on horse-back – in token of which the streets of El Rocío remain unpaved, in a sandy simulation of a Wild West city, complete with hitching posts. (Just under 2 hours)

Mérida

Just short of the Portuguese border in the direction of Badajoz, accessible by fast dual carriageway from Seville, Mérida was the ancient capital of the Roman province of Lusitania and still possesses an astonishing suite of Roman remains. Amongst its many splendours:

- The Roman Theatre seating 6000 has been restored as the site of a well-known annual festival of drama and opera
- The Amphitheatre – the Roman version of the mass media – offers an echoing silence where once a crowd of 16,000 cheered on invariably brutal games
- The Roman bridge over the River Guadiana, 64 arches, half a mile long, took all the town's traffic for 2000 years, closing to vehicles only in 1993 - starlings formate in vast murmurations over the river as the sun goes down
- Storks perch in sociable rows, clattering their long beaks at each other, along the summit of the immense Roman aqueduct which brought water to the town from nearby hills
- The National Museum of Roman Art contains an outstanding display of mosaic flooring, vertically hung on the museum's tall brick walls, their pictorial drama visible as it never would have been to those provincial Romans whose sandals once glided softly over them
- In addition, Roman villas in various states of archaeological recovery and a fine Temple of Diana

Mérida is too far from Las Pinedas to be visited in a day: it merits an overnight – the Hotel Melia on the main square is recommended and there is also a Parador - other smaller hotels and guest-houses are also listed in the red Michelin guide. As an extension to the romance of Andalucía into the province of Extremadura, Merida once visited will not easily be forgotten.



Andalucía

A NOTE ON ITS HISTORY

Stretching from Almería in the East to Huelva on the Atlantic coast, embracing snow-capped Sierras, rolling hills, deep river valleys, fertile alluvial plains and plantations of cork-oaks providing shade and pasture for the fighting bulls and tasty black pigs of the region, Andalucía, with its claimed 320 days of sunlight every year, was for 600 years the garden of Moorish Spain, abundant with corn, oil, figs and grapes, with Córdoba the great centre of civilised learning and military power at its heart. The still magnificent ruins of the Caliphal palace Medinat al Zahra (built 936, but destroyed by the succeeding dynasty) are testimony to the grandeur of a civilisation greatly more advanced than Western Europe's at that time. Córdoba's great central mosque, the Mezquita was in its day the largest religious building in the world – even now, with a Renaissance Cathedral inserted into one part of it, it is still a stupendous space and the mihrab, the focal point of Islamic worship, still stunningly beautiful.

At its height in the 11th century the Moorish empire in the West pushed over the Pyrenees and into Southern France. But then the Christian Franks driving down from the North fought the Moors back over the mountains and began the grim and glorious process of *reconquista* – the re-conquest of Spain and the re-establishment of Christian rule in its territories. By the mid-13th century Córdoba itself had fallen to the Christian forces, and Moorish Spain had been reduced to the province of Granada – held as a feudal fiefdom from the encircling Spanish powers. There the Nasrid dynasty built that most perfect and wistful of Moorish architectural fantasies,

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the palace of the Alhambra, dedicated to Allah but designed for love, luxury, intrigue and the occasional fitful act of extreme intra-dynastic violence. With the Nasrids, Moorish Spain was already living on borrowed time. In 1492 the twin monarchs of the united kingdoms of Catholic Spain, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, forced the surrender of the keys of the Granada from its last Moorish ruler, the Nasrid King Boabdil. One of the heaviest sighs in all history is said to have been heaved by poor Boabdil, as he stopped at a pass in the Sierra Nevada to look back on his beloved Granada for the very last time.

Ferdinand and Isabella had promised to respect the religion, laws and customs of Moors and Jews who wished to remain in the country after the re-conquest. But the Inquisition had other ideas. In 1492 the Jews were driven out of Andalucía. In 1502 all Moors wishing to remain were forced to convert to Christianity (becoming '*Moriscos*'). By the end of the 16th century, the rebellious *Moriscos* had been driven out too. Thus Spain swept away an entire indigenous middle class of merchants, financiers, artisans and farmers – and with them went their creative skills in banking, industrial production, agriculture and irrigation. In the Spain which remained a proud and indolent aristocracy funded by torrents of looted Aztec and Inca gold, disdainful of trade, supported all the way by Church and Inquisition, confronted an impoverished and largely uneducated peasant class. Thus were laid the foundations of the Spanish Civil War four centuries later.

The expulsion of the Jews and the *Moriscos* was a double blow to the ancient economy of Andalucía. The intricate irrigation systems of the Moors which had made the dry Andalusian soil flower and bear fruit now fell into neglect. Deprived of water, the Andalusian economy itself crumbled into dust. Every variety of bandit and brigand came to roam the land and raid the villages. (Theophile Gautier records a journey from Jaen to Málaga in the 1840s, along a trail regularly marked with the crosses of travellers murdered en route.) It was in an attempt to reverse this trend by the Spanish Crown, that Andalucía was deliberately re-colonised in the second half of the 18th century, and the hazardous route from Seville to Córdoba was gradually made safe by garrison towns such as La Carlota, and their satellite farming villages such as Las Pinedas itself, each with its rectilinear grid of streets and central square framing a simple church.

Spanish

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Complete ignorance of the Spanish language has never stood between the British and their collective love-affair with the warm-hearted peoples of Spain and the sparkling spring weather, sun-drenched summers and long lingering rosy autumns – nowhere to be enjoyed more exquisitely than in Andalucía. Point and pay still remains a highly effective mode of communication for English-speaking travellers throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Moreover Andalusians speak a form of Spanish from which the letter 's' has been mysteriously excised. Thus *más o menos* (meaning 'more or less') becomes *ma'-o- meno'* – and a well-known local bordello, which advertises itself in neon as *S'candalo* (meaning 'Scandal') is known colloquially as '*Candalo*'. This does not always make native Andalusians easy to understand, and for this reason it helps to have a few words of Spanish of your own to parlay with. Phrasebooks expose you to the risk of sounding as if you know more Spanish than you really do. A very few hours with a Spanish grammar and some listening to spoken tapes will give you a basic feel for the language which is likely to serve you much better in the longer run and add significantly to your pleasure.



Booking your stay at Casa Uno

Booking your stay at Casa Uno is simple and easy

If you visit our website www.casa-uno-spain.com then there are many links to the booking section. Here you can see what weeks are available. A booking week runs from Saturday to Saturday. You can select the time you want to stay at the house.

The website will give you the price of your selected stay, but you do not pay us any money until your booking is confirmed. Simply click the 'Request to book' button and we will get back to you confirming your booking.

If you have any questions, then please feel free to email us at sun@casa-uno-spain.com.

It is also possible to book Casa Uno via other websites such as Trip Advisor, VRBO and Sawdays. The price you pay may be more expensive but you may feel more comfortable using these companies.

If you feel there is anything missing or misleading in this guide, please let us know.



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With thanks to :

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