

Under Andalusian Skies: Total Eclipse in Old Spain

*with Dr. Jo Marchant
or Dr. Bill Worden*

July 29–August 4, 2027



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From: \$8,995 per person



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Journey to southern Spain with The Great Courses Journeys for an immersive exploration of Andalusia, where history, culture, and science converge beneath one of Europe's most dramatic skies. From Roman cities and Moorish palaces to royal observatories and star-filled mountain views, this journey features exclusive access to a rare astronomical event: a total solar eclipse experienced from a private estate in the heart of the path of totality.

Guided by expert scholars and astronomers, you'll gain a deeper understanding of humanity's enduring fascination with the cosmos—how ancient civilizations observed the skies, how modern science deciphers celestial mechanics, and how rare events like eclipses still inspire awe today. Coupled with exceptional cuisine, historic cities, and meaningful leisure, this journey invites you to see Andalusia—and the universe—through a new lens.

Enjoy the rare opportunity to learn from two Great Courses experts as both departures come together for select program experiences, including eclipse observations and shared discussions that blend perspectives from science, history, and culture.

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Jo Marchant is an award-winning science writer and speaker, as well as the author of several popular books, including *The Human Cosmos: Civilization and the Stars*, which takes readers on a journey through the history of science, and humanity's relationship with the night sky and the cosmos beyond. It was named a Best Book of 2020 by NPR and *The Economist*, among others. She's also the author of *New York Times* bestseller *Cure: A Journey into the Science of Mind over Body*. Her newest book, *In Search of Now*, explores the science and mystery of a moment in time. She earned a PhD in Genetics and Medical Microbiology from the Medical College of Saint Bartholomew's Hospital. She has worked as a senior editor at *New Scientist* and *Nature*, and her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Smithsonian* magazine. Her podcast, *Where the Wild Thoughts Are*, features boundary-pushing scientists across cosmology, physics, neuroscience, and beyond. She's created two Great Courses: *The Power of Mind Over Body*, and the upcoming release, *Civilization and the Cosmos: An Integrated History*.



Dr. Bill Worden is an Associate Professor of Spanish at The University of Alabama. He received his PhD in Hispanic Studies from Brown University. Professor Worden's main area of research is the work of groundbreaking Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes, especially his novel *Don Quixote*. Professor Worden has published extensively in the fields of early modern and 19th-century Spanish literature. He has taught a wide variety of courses at The University of Alabama, ranging from Introductory Spanish and Advanced Grammar and Composition to undergraduate and graduate courses in 16th- and 17th-century Spanish literature. In 2013, the Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers selected Professor Worden as the winner of the annual Outstanding Foreign Language Teacher Award for Post-Secondary. He has taught two Great Courses: *Learning Spanish: How to Understand and Speak a New Language* and *Learning Spanish II: How to Understand and Speak a New Language*.

Highlights

- Enjoy the rare opportunity to learn from two Great Courses experts as both departures come together for select program experiences, including eclipse observations and shared discussions that blend perspectives from science, history, and culture.
- Witness nearly three minutes of totality from a private estate in the path of the eclipse, guided by a Great Courses Journey expert who will explain the science behind this rare celestial event.
- Explore how Roman, Moorish, and Enlightenment-era astronomers shaped navigation, timekeeping, and scientific discovery in Andalusia, culminating in Spain's oldest royal observatory.
- Travel to an Andalusian estate in the countryside for dinner and a star party with local astronomers beneath pristine Sierra Norte skies.
- Learn how eclipses and celestial cycles influenced ancient civilizations' beliefs and architecture, while gaining modern scientific insight into orbital mechanics and solar physics.
- Experience Andalusia's vibrant culture through a flamenco performance, sherry tastings in historic bodegas, and regional cuisine highlighting local wines, olive oil, seafood, and seasonal produce.

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Itinerary



Day 1: Arrival in Seville

Arrive in Seville today and settle into your centrally located hotel. Late this afternoon, meet your local guide for a walking tour to introduce you to Seville's rich and diverse cultural history. Stroll the cobblestone streets of the former Jewish quarter. Examine the eclectic architectural styles at the Cathedral and Giralda tower, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the final resting place of Christopher Columbus. Continue to the Royal Alcázar, the official residence of the Spanish royal family, and the oldest continuously used royal palace in Europe, filled with more than 1,000 years of history and art. This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Included Meals: Dinner

Accommodations: Melia Lebreros



Day 2: Roman Roots

Today, step back into Roman Spain with a visit to Itálica, an influential city founded in the third century BCE and later reshaped by Emperor Hadrian. Explore the *Vetus Urbs* (Old City), the original settlement beneath modern Santiponce, and the *Nova Urbs* (New City), Hadrian's carefully planned extension with broad avenues and elegant homes. Highlights include the immense amphitheater—one of the largest in the Roman Empire, once seating up to 25,000 spectators. Continue to the Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, a striking Gothic and Mudejar complex constructed in the 14th century for Cistercian monks. Late this afternoon, join your Great Courses Journeys expert for a lecture about the significance of eclipses through history, from Babylonian omens and Roman battles to proving Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Later, travel one hour north to a remote Andalusian farmhouse, far from light pollution. After dinner at the estate, local astronomers will lead a late-night stargazing experience, teaching you how to identify constellations, planets, and other celestial wonders.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Melia Lebreros



Day 3: Star-Struck in Seville

Explore Seville's aristocratic heritage today as you step inside two of the city's most remarkable private palaces. Begin at Casa de Pilatos, a 16th-century masterpiece that blends the elegance of the Italian Renaissance with intricate Mudejar design. Still a residential

“This trip to beautiful Andalusia has it all – drama, history, science, awe—I can’t wait to share this life-changing moment with you.”

—Dr. Jo Marchant



palace, it remains the ancestral home of the Dukes of Medinaceli. Continue to the Palacio de Lebrija, where graceful Moorish arches, Renaissance details, and Asian art form a living tapestry of history and culture. Your guide will bring history to life with stories about the aristocratic families that have lived here. This afternoon, both Andalusia departures come together for a special lecture featuring both Great Courses experts. While each group travels independently throughout the journey, this exclusive gathering provides the rare opportunity to learn from two distinguished scholars whose complementary perspectives on astronomy, history, and culture will enhance your understanding of the mechanics of eclipses and the science of awe. This evening, enjoy dinner at your hotel, followed by an authentic flamenco performance celebrating Andalusia’s vibrant cultural traditions.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Melia Lebreros

Day 4: Sherry in Jerez

Depart Seville this morning for Cádiz, one of Europe’s oldest continuously inhabited cities, dramatically set on a narrow peninsula surrounded by the Atlantic. Explore the history, science, and gastronomy of the Jerez de la Frontera. Begin at the Alcázar of Jerez, an impressive Almohad fortress that reflects the city’s Moorish past. Continue to the Cámara Oscura, housed in the Villavicencio Palace tower, where an ingenious system of mirrors and lenses projects live, panoramic images of Jerez onto a viewing screen, bringing the city’s streets, monuments, churches, and famed wineries into focus. Then, visit a traditional sherry bodega to learn about the region’s distinctive *solera* winemaking process, tour the cellars, and enjoy a tasting paired with local specialties, such as Iberian ham, cheeses, and olives. Continue to a local restaurant for lunch. Return to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure before dinner as a group.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Fuerte Conil-Resort

Day 5: Totality in Torrestrella

This morning, join travelers from the companion departure and take a short drive to Finca de Torrestrella, a historic and picturesque finca in the heart of the Andalusian countryside, perfectly situated in the path of totality and surrounded by olive groves and grazing bulls. As the sky begins to darken, enjoy morning refreshments,





like artisanal bread, locally produced olive oil, and seasonal organic tomatoes. You will have an opportunity to visit the stables and observe livestock activities connected with traditional rural life. At 10:45 a.m., experience nearly three minutes of totality as the moon blocks the sun. As the sun reemerges, sit beneath the trees for a Mediterranean lunch with wine pairings showcasing local vintages and regional flavors, including seasonal produce, artisanal cheese, olives, gazpacho, and *almadraba* tuna. Return to the hotel this afternoon for another joint lecture from both Great Courses experts about the phenomenon that you just witnessed. Then, take time to enjoy the grounds on your own this evening.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Fuerte Conil-Resort



Day 6: Cities, Coast, and Cosmos

Explore the historic heart of Cádiz, beginning at Plaza de San Juan de Dios and wandering through the atmospheric old quarter. Visit the impressive Cádiz Cathedral. Then, continue to El Pópulo, the city's oldest neighborhood, known for its medieval character, narrow labyrinthine streets, historic monuments, and ancient city gates. Enjoy lunch at leisure, perhaps sampling fresh seafood or Andalusian specialties. This afternoon, travel along the coast to San Fernando for an exclusive visit to the Royal Observatory, the oldest observatory in Spain. Meet with a local astronomer to view the historic equipment and learn about its pivotal role in astronomy, timekeeping, and geophysics. Return to the hotel for a festive farewell group dinner to toast your journey through Andalusia.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Fuerte Conil-Resort



Day 7: Departure

Depart the hotel for individual flights home.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations



Meliá Lebreros

Seville

Meliá Lebreros offers a stylish urban oasis in Seville's vibrant Nervión district, just steps from public transit and surrounded by shops and restaurants. The hotel features a seasonal outdoor pool, 24-hour fitness center, and expansive public spaces. Guests can enjoy diverse dining options, including the all-day Mosaico Restaurant serving local and international cuisine, traditional Andalusian dishes at La Taberna la Dehesa, and creative cocktails at Bribone Bar. Rooms are sleek and contemporary, with minimalist décor, hardwood floors, flat-screen TVs, minibars, and premium amenities. **(3 nights)**



Hotel Forte Conil-Resort

Cádiz

Hotel Forte Conil-Resort is perfectly situated on the Atlantic edge of Cádiz, directly facing La Fontanilla Beach and surrounded by landscaped gardens. Its architecture blends contemporary Mediterranean lines with traditional Andalusian touches, using white façades, natural stone, and expansive terraces overlooking the ocean. The property offers indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a full-service spa, gym, and multiple restaurants and lounges. Rooms are airy and elegant, decorated in soft neutral tones with natural wood, modern furnishings, and private balconies that invite in coastal light and breezes. **(3 nights)**



Pricing:

Departure:	Double Occupancy:	Single Occupancy:	Deposit:	
July 29–August 4, 2027 with Dr. Jo Marchant	\$8,995	\$10,020	\$650	<u>BOOK NOW</u>
July 29–August 4, 2027 with Dr. Bill Worden	\$8,995	\$10,020	\$650	<u>BOOK NOW</u>

What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses Expert, travel director and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance

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