

## **Walking & horse-riding short break in the Sierra de Arcena**

- Stunning scenery and charming villages
- All transport included
- Carefully planned itinerary
- Full day independent walking
- Full route description, diagrams and topographic map provided.
- Full day ride from local stables
- Back-up and vehicle support, as well as advice and recommendations
- Three nights in Posada del Castaño
- Option of additional night(s) in Seville

***This 3 night break is offered by Posada del Castaño - a recently converted village guesthouse in a beautiful mountain region of south-west Spain. For more details about the Posada del Castaño see: [www.posadadelcastano.com](http://www.posadadelcastano.com)***

***The trip is ideal for couples or small groups of friends who enjoy exploring traditional, out of the way areas. The itinerary starts and ends in Seville, though pick ups can be made by special arrangement from other airports in the region such as Jerez, Faro, Beja or Malaga.***

***Details of the itinerary are as follows.....***

### ***Day 1 – Arrival and transfer to Posada del Castaño***

You'll be met on arrival in Seville and taken directly to the mountains and to your base in the tiny village of Castaño del Robledo. The Sierra de Arcena lies just 1½ hrs to the north-west of Seville but might easily be in a different country. After you've had time to settle in to the charming surroundings of the Posada you can get to know a little of Castaño del Robledo – perhaps with the help of Craig or Sasha – and once back in the Posada you'll sit down to a 3-course dinner - a delicious first foray into the region's culinary delights. *Overnight Castaño del Robledo*

### ***Day 2 - Walk to Linares via Alájar and the Peña de Arias Montano. Visit Arcena. (4 hrs walking + stops)***

After breakfast you'll be provided with picnic lunches then climb steadily out of the village on an ancient cobbled mule trail. Crossing the hills you'll be treated to spectacular views southwards with the historic Rio Tinto mines in the distance. Later the trail descends sharply to the Peña de Arias Montano - an important place of pilgrimage offering fantastic views over the village of Alájar and the tree-clad hills beyond. After admiring the views and perhaps visiting the cliff-top church you'll descend further to wander the cobbled street of the Alájar. There'll be time for a drink in one of the bars before taking the track to Linares - another gem of a 'Serrano' village whose plaza doubles as a bull ring. After exploring the quaint corners of this sleepy Andalucian outpost you'll board the local bus for the last 7km to Arcena. Here you can visit the famous caves and explore the ruined hilltop castle above. There are several recommended restaurants where you can dine this evening (not included) and later you'll come back to the Posada by taxi. *Overnight Posada del Castaño*

### **Accommodation On The Trip**

Your accommodation will be in a recently renovated guesthouse in the charming village of Castaño del Robledo, in the Natural Park of the Sierra de Arcena. The guesthouse retains all the original rustic character and rural charm that typifies this delightful region. From the rustic terracotta floor tiles to the age old, chestnut roof beams, the house blends both charm and practicality. In addition to en-suite double rooms the house boasts lounges, a dining room and a terrace overlooking a traditional cobbled patio.

### **How Tough Is The Walking?**

**Ascents/descents:** Whilst the walks in the Sierra are almost never on the flat, the rolling nature of the Arcena range is such that steep climbs and descents are few. Castaño del Robledo is the highest village in the range Linares is significantly lower so your walk is predominantly downhill.

**Terrain:** Mostly you'll be walking on broad dirt tracks, old cobbled mule trails or narrower footpaths. Dirt tracks make for easy walking and involve little effort in placing your feet. The cobbled trails vary in their state of repair from level stone flags with well defined steps, to uneven jumbles of large boulders. Footpaths can be rocky and have loose stones underfoot but are generally easy to follow and have firm footing. Very occasionally footpaths may be ill defined for short distances or, depending on the time of year, may have some vegetation (like brambles) over-hanging the trail in a few places. Your route notes however, will keep you on the right path on such occasions.

**Obstacles:** The routes used on this itinerary avoid the need to climb any walls or fences or cross any significant water courses. The paths used are designated walking routes within the Natural Park and are often way-marked. In general this itinerary is well within the capability of anyone who takes occasional long walks in the countryside.

### **Day 3 - Circular horse trek from Galaroza via Fuenteheridos and Valdelarco (4½hrs riding + stops)**

Today, after breakfast in the Posada, there's a short 7km taxi ride to neighbouring Galaroza where you'll be mounted up for today's ride. You'll follow narrow forest tracks and cross splashing streams on your way to the village of Fuenteheridos, then head northwards through the undulating landscape of Valdelama. Dotted with small farms and cork groves these mixed pastoral and arable lands provide a diversity of fruit, vegetables and other produce. There are many delightful rural scenes as you pick your way through the many tracks and trails towards Navahermosa. Your sure footed mounts easily negotiate the cobbled path and stream through the narrow valley of Talenque, home to numerous hawfinches and warblers. You later emerge into a startling landscape of steep gorges and wide valleys wherein we find the pretty village of Valdelarco. A welcoming tapas bar provides an ideal spot for lunch (not included) and afterwards the route back to Galaroza crosses rocky, cork strewn hillsides before coming sharply down into the village itself. You'll return from the stables by taxi to enjoy a final dinner at the Posada. *Overnight Posada del Robledo.*

#### **Our Horses**

We work with a highly professional and fully insured riding outfit with years of experience and a stable of healthy Andalucian crossbreds - all highly accustomed to the terrain and with easy-going temperaments which permit handling by riders of varying experience. The horses are fit, sure-footed and responsive and are individually chosen to suit their riders.

We use comfortable Spanish trail saddles (similar to Western style) and, while there is no jumping, there are several opportunities for cantering should you wish. The ride is suitable for beginners.

NB: Hardhats are not compulsory in Spain though the stables do have some available free of charge.

### **Day 4 - Seville**

After breakfast a short drive brings you to the neighbouring village of Fuenteheridos where you'll board a comfortable air-conditioned coach to Seville. As there are two buses per day you can choose to arrive in Seville at 09.05 or 18.20 (Sun; 12.00 or 18.35). The tour ends at the bus station in Seville where luggage lockers are available. You're then free to enjoy the city's marvellous atmosphere and many historic attractions before continuing your onward travel.

*NB: If you wish to add a night in Seville at the beginning or the end of your itinerary we will be happy to make a hotel reservation on your behalf.*

#### **Included in the trip**

- All transport from/to Seville
- Local transport in the sierra
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- Breakfast throughout the trip
- One picnic lunch
- Two evening meals
- Route notes and topographic map
- Guided horse-ride

#### **Not Included in the trip**

- Flights to/from Seville
- Lunch on horse trek
- Dinner in Arcena
- Entrance fees to monuments and museums
- Airport taxes
- Accommodation in Seville
- Transfer out from Seville city to airport

### **Rates:**

The price for the trip in 2009 is **259 euros per person** based on minimum two people who share a room. There is a single supplement of 50 Euros for those requiring a single room throughout the trip.

Bookings can be made for any dates (subject to availability) and couples or groups of up to 16 people can be accommodated. Group discounts apply for 6 or more people - the bigger the group the bigger the discount. Please contact Posada del Castaño for details.

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