



trips for 18 to 30 somethings

TRIP ITINERARY

TRAIL OF COLUMBUS 2011

10 days, 2 countries
Find the explorer within!

Legendary 15th Century explorer Christopher Columbus courted the monarchies of both Spain and Portugal to fund his voyages, which ultimately ended up discovering the 'New World'. Topdeck's Trail of Columbus takes in both of these great countries, so you can decide for yourself which one you prefer! From cosmopolitan Lisbon and historic Porto, to magnificent Madrid and buzzing Barcelona, get a flavour of the best that the Iberian Peninsula has to offer! With a host of like-minded Topdeck travelling companions to share the experience with, this is sure to be a holiday to remember!

DAY 1 LISBON, PORTUGAL

We start our trip in the cosmopolitan capital of Portugal, Lisbon! Arrive today and make your way to our joining hostel – details will be sent along with your personal trip documents, approximately 6 weeks before your departure.

Meet your Topdeck Trip Leader in the evening for a brief welcome meeting.

Tonight we enjoy an included welcome dinner, after which we can check out Barrio Alto, one of the oldest districts in Lisbon and the heart of its buzzing nightlife! (D)

DAY 2 LISBON

A free day to explore all that Portugal's capital has to offer! You could wander through the cobblestone alleyways in the district of Alfama, visit the Oceanarium, or maybe check out the highly rated Maritime Museum. This evening we have the chance to find a local restaurant for dinner and sample some delicious Portuguese cuisine. (B)

DAY 3 LISBON TO PORTO

We drive north towards Porto, but we take time out to visit the town of Sintra to visit the Palacio Nacional de Pena, one of the best examples of 19th Century Romantic architecture in the country. After arriving at our accommodation we have an included group dinner. (B, D)

DAY 4 PORTO

Today is our chance to explore Porto! Check out the Ribeira district, the medieval old town which characterises the city. We will see many azulejos, the hand-painted tiles that are so familiar from many of Portugal's eye-catching buildings - there are some particularly magnificent examples on Sao Bento Station which depict the history of Portugal. (B)

DAY 5 PORTO TO MADRID, SPAIN

We reluctantly depart charming Portugal this morning and head back in to wonderful Spain! Our destination is the capital, magical Madrid. En route we stop at Salamanca, one of the most spectacular Renaissance cities anywhere in Europe, and home to the oldest University in Spain. (B)

DAY 6 MADRID

On our city tour today we see the Royal Palace, home to one of Europe's oldest monarchies, as well as the Plaza de Espana. There is plenty of free time for us to take in the sights, sounds and culture of this great city – we could visit the Prado and take in the exquisite art in this famous gallery, or the Reina Sofia Museum, home to legendary Spanish artist Pablo Picasso's most famous work, Guernica. If you are of a more sporting persuasion, then the huge Santiago Bernabeu stadium is home to arguably the world's biggest football club, Real Madrid, and the 25,000 capacity Las Ventas bullring is the largest venue in Spain to host the controversial pastime of bullfighting.

This evening we enjoy an included group dinner, after which we can always check out the vibrant nightlife of Madrid! (B, D)

DAY 7 MADRID TO SAN SEBASTIAN

We move on to the stunning town of Segovia, a World Heritage city complete with a remarkable Roman aqueduct, ancient city walls and a magnificent Cathedral. After some time to look around we head on to San Sebastian in the proud Basque region, where this evening we have an included dinner. (B, D)

DAY 8 SAN SEBASTIAN

Today is free for us to relax in this beautiful coastal town. We could hit the fantastic sandy beaches and try a spot of surfing in the Atlantic swell, or check out some of the fascinating architecture such as the Cathedral, the City Hall and the Maria Cristina bridge. This evening we can always try out some of the local pintxos (tapas) bars in the old town, and lap up the laid back Spanish atmosphere. (B)

*** Please note, if you are on the 12th June departure, today there will be a day trip to Pamplona for the Running of the Bulls festival***

DAY 9 SAN SEBASTIAN TO BARCELONA

We drive towards Barcelona today, stopping on our way to visit Zaragosa, a town jam-packed with striking churches and bridges reflecting a variety of architectural styles. After spending some time here we head onwards to incredible Barcelona, where we have a farewell dinner in a local restaurant this evening, after which we can head out to sample some of the legendary nightlife! (B, D)

DAY 10 BARCELONA

The tour finishes this morning after breakfast, when it will be time to say a fond farewell to our Topdeck companions! Enjoy the remainder of your stay in fantastic Barcelona! (B)

IMPORTANT NOTES

- To be fully prepared, download the following documentation from www.topdecktravel.co.uk and go to the relevant Itinerary Page of your trip:
 - * Pre-departure information
 - * Optional Activities
- Luggage Allowance - 1 Backpack plus a day pack. Maximum weight of backpack must not exceed 20kgs. Size must not exceed 70cmx45cmx25cm. Due to the strict weight regulations for coaches in Europe, passengers whose luggage exceeds 20kgs will be asked to offload the excess on departure morning. Storage facilities are available at the departure point in London.
- This is a suggested itinerary and should be used as a **guide only**. The day to day itinerary may vary depending on the availability of sights and products. Admission fees are not included in the trip cost.
- Please check your visa requirements.
- Check in time on the first day in Lisbon and **6.00pm**.
- This itinerary is only valid if you are travelling before 27 September 2011.