

Spain: Spanish Wildlife and Cuisine
April 30—May 15, 2024
With Johnny Wilson

Itinerary

You may wish to arrive in Seville the day before the tour starts to rest and/or to explore this fascinating city. Just let us know your flight plans and whether you will need an extra night in Seville.

Day 1: Tue, April 30 - Arrival in Seville

The trip starts full of excitement as participants fly into Seville situated in the southwestern Iberian Peninsula. Seville is notable for its large and well-preserved historical center that bears signs of various civilizations that passed through during the city's 2,200-year history. Of note is the Seville Cathedral (Europe's largest Gothic temple), Alcazar, and Archivo de Indias, three remarkable monumental complexes in the heart of Seville that are also UNESCO World Heritage Sites for their extraordinary historical and cultural value. Once at the airport, trip participants will need to take a taxi (about EUR30; 15 minutes) to our accommodation for the night (Hotel Sevilla Center). At the hotel we'll meet in the lobby at 5pm where we will have a brief orientation, followed by dinner and a Flamenco show before settling down for the night. ***Overnight in Seville.***

Day 2: Wed, May 1 - Brazo del Este; Los Palacios

Our local guides will meet us right after breakfast from where we'll head straight to Brazo del Este, a phenomenal birding spot right south of Seville. This location will provide a good list to start the tour, including the possibility of Marbled Teal, Greater Flamingo, Collared Pratincole, Little Ringed Plover, Common Redshank, Savi's Warbler, Great Reed Warbler and many more. Depending on how much time we spend at Brazo del Este, we may also visit nearby Los Palacios, the only place in Europe for Laughing Dove; here we also have good opportunities to see migrating warblers like Garden Warbler, Western Subalpine Warbler, Eurasian Reed Warbler, etc. ***Overnight near Jerez.***

Day 3: Thu, May 2 - Chipiona, Sanlucar, Trebujena

This day is devoted to exploring the Bonanza Salt Pans and its surroundings. It is another rich area with some scarce European birds like White-headed Duck, Red-knobbed Coot, and Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin, as well as more widespread species such as Western Swamphen, Curlew Sandpiper, Slender-billed Gull, and Mediterranean Short-toed Lark. We will also make a quick visit to Chipiona on the eastern Atlantic coast to see the only colony of Little Swift on the European continent. In the afternoon we will drive towards Doñana National Park, near which we will spend the following two nights. Depending on our arrival time we may even make a first attempt to see the globally rare Iberian Lynx. ***Overnight near Villamanrique de la Condesa***

Day 4: Fri, May 3 - Doñana National Park

We will spend a full day in Doñana National Park and its surroundings, visiting some of the lakes and ponds where we will look for Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Whiskered Tern, Eurasian Spoonbill and many other waterbirds. Other species present in the woodlands of Doñana are Eurasian Hoopoe, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Iberian Magpie, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Iberian Gray Shrike, Iberian Chiffchaff, Common Nightingale, and Eurasian Wryneck. ***Overnight near Villamanrique de la Condesa.***

Day 5: Sat, May 4 - Doñana NP; Extremadura

We will have a last morning to try to see the Iberian Lynx while we enjoy some more local birds like Common Cuckoo, Sardinian Warbler, and the striking Dartford Warbler. After breakfast we will visit Dehesa de Abajo for another chance to see some waterbirds, including Ferruginous Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Great-crested Grebe, and a range of shorebirds. We will then drive northward towards Extremadura, with a couple of stops along the way to look for Black Wheatear and Rock Bunting. Once at Extremadura we will have a first opportunity to see Spanish Imperial Eagle, while this area is also good for Golden Eagle. ***Overnight near Monfragüe.***

Day 6: Sun, May 5 - Monfragüe National Park

We will spend most of the day in Monfragüe National Park. This is a great place for raptors, including Eurasian Griffon, Egyptian and Cinereous Vultures, Spanish Imperial Eagle and, with a bit of luck, Bonelli's Eagle. We will also look for passerines like Western Orphean Warbler, Western Subalpine Warbler, Short-toed Treecreeper, and Blue Rock-Thrush, as well as opportunities to compare Thekla's Lark with Crested Lark. ***Overnight near Monfragüe.***

Day 7: Mon, May 6 - Santa Marta Steppes

Today we will explore the Santa Marta Steppes looking for steppe specialists, notably Great and Little Bustard, and Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, while Greater Spotted Cuckoo, Iberian Shrike, Little Owl, Calandra Lark, and Spanish Sparrow are also possible. After our picnic lunch we will start heading to the mountains of Gredos. ***Overnight near Navarredonda de Gredos***

Day 8: Tue, May 7 - Gredos Mountains

We have a full day to explore the mountains of Gredos in central Spain which offer a complete change of scenery from the lowlands where we spent the previous few days. Some of our targets in this region are: Bluethroat, Citril Finch, Western Bonelli's Warbler, and Ortolan Bunting. We will also have another chance to see the impressive Iberian Ibex. ***Overnight near Navarredonda de Gredos.***

Day 9: Wed, May 8 - Gredos; Navarre; Pitillas Lagoon

We will have one more morning in Gredos to catch up with any species we might have missed the previous day. Then we will have our longest drive of the tour (4-5 hrs; we'll have a picnic along the way) to get to Navarre in northern Spain where our main target will be Dupont's Lark; Red-billed Chough and Western Black-eared Wheatear would also be possible. Towards the end of the day, we will make a stop at the Pitillas Lagoon to look for Bearded Reedling, while Water Rail and perhaps even Great Bittern and Common Crane are also possibilities. ***Overnight near Pamplona.***

Day 10: Thu, May 9 - Western Pyrenees

We will spend a full day exploring the forests of the Western Pyrenees in search of some of the most difficult birds to see in Spain, notably White-backed Woodpecker and Middle-spotted Woodpecker. Once we've seen these species, as well as other the likes of Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay, Crested Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, and Eurasian Nuthatch, we will drive to Hecho Valley where we will spend the next two nights. ***Overnight near Hecho.***

Day 11: Fri, May 10 - Central Pyrenees—Hecho Valley

Today we will drive up to Larra to look for some higher altitude species; we might even cross to France at some point during the drive! Yellow-billed Cough, Alpine Accentor, Ring Ouzel, Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush and Marsh Tit are all possible on this journey. On our way back to Hecho we will keep our eyes open for the Bearded Vulture! *Overnight near Hecho.*

Day 12: Sat, May 11 - Hecho Valley; Nerín

We will have one last morning in the Hecho Valley where we will look for the Wallcreeper and Bearded Vulture. Exploring the meadows in the region will also give us the chance to see White-throated Dipper, Eurasian Bullfinch, and Yellowhammer. Then it's onwards to Nerín; on this drive we have opportunities for Rock Sparrow. *Overnight in Nerín.*

Day 13: Sun, May 12 - Sahún; Ordesa NP

This morning we will drive to Sahún, an excellent conifer forest where we will look for very localized species in Spain, including Boreal Owl and Gray Partridge. Other species present here are Goldcrest, Whinchat, Dunnock, Tree Pipit and Red Crossbill. Once done here we will drive back to Nerín through some of the most impressive gullies of Ordesa National Park, and more opportunities for Bearded Vultures. *Overnight in Nerín.*

Day 14: Mon, May 13 - Ordesa NP; Lleida

Today we will visit Ordesa National Park, driving to what probably is one the most impressive viewpoints in Spain: Miradores de Ordesa. From this vantage point we will look for more mountain specialties like Yellow-billed Cough, Alpine Accentor, and the very localised White-winged Snowfinch. Once done here we will go back to Nerín to get our bags and start driving to the Lleida area. *Overnight near Lleida.*

Day 15: Tue, May 14 - Lleida Steppes and Wetlands

The Lleida steppes can be very diverse and will be an excellent place to look for some species that we might have missed earlier on the trip, including Eurasian Thick-knee and Whinchat. Nearby there are some small wetlands where we will have a chance for Moustached Warbler, Bearded Reedling, Common Kingfisher, and Eurasian Penduline-Tit. Then, we will drive east to the famous city of Barcelona, where we will spend the last night of our tour. *Overnight in Barcelona.*

Day 16: Wed, May 15 - Delta del Llobregat

On our last morning we will visit the highly productive Delta del Llobregat on the Mediterranean coast southwest of Barcelona to give us a last chance to see some waterbirds and seabirds. Of particular interest would be Audouin's Gull which we'll try to spot among the more numerous Black-headed and Yellow-legged Gulls, while Balearic Shearwater can also be spotted from the coast with a scope. Shorebirds are usually plentiful with a mix of Little Stint, Temminck's Stint, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Kentish Plover, and Wood Sandpiper all possible. Woodlands in the surrounding area can also be productive, offering chances to see passage migrants such as European Pied Flycatcher and Common Redstart. Once done here we will drive to Barcelona Airport where we will finish our trip.

***Order of days and accommodation may change if logistically necessary.**