



Spain-Morocco Farm Study Tour

2014 draft itinerary

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Sat, Jul 5 (meals on plane)	Evening flights out of various Australian capitals – connecting through Asia or Dubai – with an early afternoon arrival (the next day) in Casablanca.	On plane
DAY 2 Sun, Jul 6 (L,D)	On arrival we are met and transferred for check-in to our luxurious Casablanca hotel. We enjoy a light snack at the hotel before a well-earned rest. We have a brief city tour later in the afternoon to get our bearings. While in Casablanca we will see the sights of this amazing city made famous by Humphrey Bogart and Hollywood.	Casablanca (Morocco)
DAY 3 Mon, Jul 7 (B,L,D)	Casablanca is the most cosmopolitan of Morocco's cities. Tall palm trees line the boulevards and you are never far from a quiet park, café or superb patisserie. A highlight is the magnificent Hassan II Mosque, Morocco's tallest structure. A sumptuous traditional Moroccan dinner this evening before a short flight to Ouarzazate (war-zazat), the film capital of Morocco (<i>Gladiator</i> etc).	Ouarzazate
DAY 4 Tues, Jul 8 (B,L,D)	We have a brief tour of Ouarzazate before travelling two hours south through the spectacular Draa Valley and onto the northwestern gateway of the mighty Sahara at Zagora. The inhabitants of the Draa Valley are a mixture of Arab, Berber, Jew and the descendants of Mauritanian slaves. Under constant attack from pillaging nomads, they clustered together in fortified villages called 'Ksours', surrounded by their patchwork blanket of fields and palm groves. With a farm visit along the way, we arrive at Zagora, a French colonial trading outpost where the Saadians launched their expedition to conquer Timbuktu in 1591, and where desert caravans gave this isolated spot cosmopolitan character. Time for a spot of camel riding before dinner.	Zagora
DAY 5 Wed, Jul 9 (B,L,D)	Today were "taking you to Marrakesh" (I feel a song coming on!), via Tazenakht and across the High Atlas mountains. We will travel through desert villages with their old kasbahs and oases and river valleys before we climb between the peaks of the high Atlas through the Tizi-n-Tichka pass. As we start to descend again, the country becomes greener with oak trees, walnuts and oleanders. Later in the afternoon we will arrive in Marrakesh in time to explore some of the famous markets and souks.	Marrakesh
DAY 6 Thurs, Jul 10 (B,L,D)	Marrakesh is one of the great cities of North Africa. Its palm-lined streets surround a huge medina of flat-roofed houses. The city is set in an oasis of olive groves and date palms. The Menora Garden is one of Morocco's most famous and enduring sights. The iconic rectangular pool irrigates ancient olive groves. And the city's souks are famous for their dazzling variety of spices, Berber carpets and fine leatherwork. We also meet with Moroccan farmers and officials. This southern production region is in a subarid climate and features crops grown under intense cultivation and irrigation. At dusk we head to the Djemaa el-Fna, a huge square in the Marrakesh Medina and one of the world's greatest spectacles with food stalls, herbalists, acrobats, snake-charmers, dancers and street performers.	Marrakesh
DAY 7 Fri, Jul 11 (B,L,D)	We board our coach and travel northeast through spectacular farming country in the shadows of the Middle and High Atlas mountains. Brief stop at the Ouzoud Cascades – one of the most breathtaking waterfalls in Morocco. Then on to Beni-Mallal, the centre of a large irrigation area and site of the annual cotton festival (in March).	Beni-Mellal
DAY 8 Sat, Jul 12 (B,L,D)	This morning we visit a farm in the area, then we travel on to Fez, the spiritual, cultural and culinary centre of Morocco. On the way, we pass through Azrou (famous for its rugs) and the alpine village of Ifrane.	Fez

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DAY 9 Sun, Jul 13 (B,L)	Tour of Fez in the morning and then an early lunch featuring pastillas (sweet or savoury pies made by the Fassi women) and other local delicacies including fresh goat's milk cheese. Optional tour this afternoon to Volubilis, the largest and best preserved Roman ruins in Morocco. After a guided tour of this amazing site, we return to Fez for overnight.	Fez
DAY 10 Mon, Jul 14 (B,L,D)	Early morning departure by coach, with visits in the rich farming country of northern Morocco, on the way to Tangier, the hustling, bustling sea port and the gateway to Europe.	Tangier
DAY 11 Tues, Jul 15 (B,L,D)	<p>This morning we board our 8.30 am fast ferry (35 minutes), cross the Strait of Gibraltar and dock at Tarifa, on Spain's Costa del la Luz (the Coast of Light). We clear customs and board our private coach and travel along the Costa del la Luz to Cadiz for an early lunch. Cadiz is considered the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in Europe. Now well into its fourth millennium, the ancient centre, surrounded almost entirely by water, is a hodgepodge of winding streets where Atlantic waves crash against eroded sea walls.</p> <p>After lunch and a chance to drink in the atmosphere and views of this amazing city and its meandering streets, we board our coach again and head north along the delta of the Rio Guadalquivir where we have a cotton and grain farm visit. After Greece, Spain is the EU's second largest cotton growing country producing around 250,000 bales per year. We then continue on our way to the beautiful medieval city of Seville – home of Carmen, Don Giovanni and a vibrant social scene. When you hear the term – “We Spanish work to live, not live to work” – you're probably in Seville!</p>	Seville (Spain)
DAY 12 Wed, Jul 16 (B,L)	Morning city tour and then some free time to enjoy the delights of Seville including The Alcazar or some of the other fine buildings – or maybe a spot of shopping or simply relax back at the hotel.	Seville
DAY 13 Thurs, Jul 17 (B,L)	<p>Today we travel east and into the unforgettable Andalucian countryside. This is the start of our discovery of magnificent regional sights, villages and cuisine. It is the land of salads, olives, fried fish and seafood and the famous cold soup gazpacho – not to mention sherry and other fortified wines.</p> <p>Olive oil is produced in huge quantities in Andalucia and forms the basis of the cuisine. The region is also renowned for fantastic game dishes. We continue onto historic Granada, in the foothills of the snowcapped Sierra Nevada – this is one of the few places on the planet where you can snow ski in the morning and finish off your day with a few hours of sunbaking at the local beach.</p> <p>Granada was the last stronghold of the Moors in Spain and was a Muslim capital for 800 years. The significance of this city is no better portrayed than in the architectural grandeur of the Alhambra which majestically overlooks the city. We have a tour of Old Granada this afternoon then free time to explore this beautiful town.</p>	Granada
Day 14 Fri, Jul 18 (B,L,D)	<p>Early this morning we visit the breathtakingly graceful Alhambra and its exquisite palace, patios, fortresses and gardens before continuing on our way to Jaen and its Moorish old town. Here narrow cobblestone streets of the old town spectacularly hug the mountainside. After lunch in Jaen we enjoy a farm visit as we continue on our way to Cordoba.</p> <p>One of the most fascinating cities in Andalucia, Cordoba is also the provincial capital and abounds with architectural and artistic riches. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Cordoba retains much of its historical splendour which, 10 centuries ago, placed it as one of the greatest cities in the world. We enjoy a guided tour of the city.</p>	Cordoba
Day 15 Sat, Jul 19 (B,D)	Late this morning we transfer to the railway station to catch the high speed AVE train to Madrid. This is a 400 km journey we will travel in 1 hr 45 minutes. Lunch at your leisure on the train. On arrival in Madrid we will check into our downtown hotel, a chance to freshen up and then we enjoy a walking tour of the nearby city sights. We have an early dinner which introduces us to the famous Madrid tapas scene. Then it's a free evening to enjoy this exciting city's great nightspots and other attractions. Many people say a trip to Spain is not complete unless you experience the passion and heat of traditional flamenco in Madrid.	Madrid

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Day 16 Sun, Jul 20 (B)	<p>A free day in Madrid. Options include a visit, at your own pace, to the Museo del Prado (Prado Museum) – considered to house one of the finest art collections in the world. Adjacent to the Prado are the Royal Botanical Gardens plus other nearby museums and sights.</p> <p>This may not be everyone’s cup of tea, but there is an option this afternoon to fully immerse yourself in Spanish tradition and culture by taking in a bullfight. There is a bullfight scheduled for July 27 at ‘La Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas’ – the most important bullring in the world and a temple for real bullfight aficionados (the word ‘aficionados’ originally meant a devotee of bullfighting).</p>	Madrid
Day 17 Mon, Jul 21 (B,L,D)	<p>Leave Madrid for the broadacre farming country of Old Castille-Leon. Visits to farms and grain research establishments before overnight at Burgos.</p>	Burgos
Day 18 Tues, Jul 22 (B,L,D)	<p>Farm visit then coach through to Haro in La Riojas province – often called the Tuscany of Spain and the prime wine producing area of the country. We are now in the magnificent Basque region. The Basque people are the oldest traceable ethnic group in all Europe. Our lunch at a local winery introduces us to the world famous Basque cuisine. In the afternoon we continue on to Bilbao and a visit to the amazing Guggenheim museum before continuing towards the French border and the beautiful city of San Sebastian nestled in the Bay of Biscay.</p>	San Sebastian
Day 19 Wed, Jul 23 (B,L)	<p>A brief tour of this magnificent seaside port to get our bearings. San Sebastian boasts few of the tawdry trappings of most resort towns and has the highest concentration of Michelin Star restaurants in Europe outside Paris.</p>	San Sebastian
Day 20 Thurs, Jul 24 (B,L,D)	<p>Early departure from San Sebastian as we travel southeast through the spectacular foothills of the Pyrenees via Pamplona (Running of the Bulls fame) and onto Zaragoza – a rich farming region. We visit a farm before continuing on to Barcelona.</p>	Barcelona
Day 21 Fri, Jul 25 (B,D)	<p>This morning we have a city tour taking in the intriguing Gothic Quarter and the magnificent artworks of Gaudi, the foremost proponent of Catalan modernismo. Then free time this afternoon before our farewell dinner featuring the specialties of Barcelonan cuisine and wine.</p>	Barcelona
Day 22 Sat, Jul 26 (B)	<p>Free time today to do your own exploration of Barcelona before we are transferred to the airport for our late afternoon flight back to Australia.</p> <p>For those ‘staying on’ there are many add-on options for Europe or Asia.</p>	On plane