

Celebrating El Greco in Toledo 2014 (21st-24th April)

History and Art

Visiting the City of Toledo is a journey to the heart of medieval Spain, where we will enjoy the imperial splendour of the City of three cultures – Muslim, Jewish and Christian. It is dramatic, majestic and wonderful. It is this City in which El Greco chose to live and work and, by all accounts, he was quite a controversial character in his day!

Day 1

Our journey starts in Nerja, moving through Granada province, where we will have breakfast and continue on up through the countryside of Jaen with its olive trees as far as the eye can see. We lunch together in Bailen and then continue through the plains of Castilla La Mancha, enjoying the colours that this rich terrain has to offer, making a comfort stop at an Inn, believed to have been in Cervantes' thoughts when he wrote Don Quixote. We then proceed to Toledo and check-in at the Hacienda Cardenal, where we will stay for 3 nights on a bed and breakfast basis. This Hotel is a piece of history all on its own, built 700 years ago for Cardenal Lorenzana. It is in a superb location within the City walls and has a pretty garden. We will meet later for dinner together in the Hotel's restaurant.

Day 2

After breakfast, our bi-lingual guide Maria will join us and we will "set the scene" of the City, which we will first circumnavigate by coach. We will then commence our tour on foot with Maria. We will visit a small Mosque, a Synagogue and the Cathedral – all extraordinary religious monuments which survive to tell of how Toledo once had a community of Jews, Muslims and Christians co-existing, seemingly very well. But did they? Our guide will offer some food for thought. We will also visit San Roman, Visigoth Museum. There will be free time for lunch and some personal sightseeing if desired. Later, we go together by coach to the Parador on the outskirts of the City, for spectacular views and dinner !

Day 3

After breakfast, our Guide will join us again to embark on our journey to see more of El Greco – and there are many places in which to find him ! We will visit Santa Tome where there is his famous painting of the Burial of Count Orgaz. We will continue the visit to the Museum of Santa Cruz, which is an enormous space with many works of El Greco. Then on to Santo Domingo "El Antiguo", which is an amazing place and has a real wow factor. We will have lunch together at the Museo Castilla La Mancha and afterwards there will be a ride around the City on the tourist train. Then free time – sightseeing ? shopping ? dinner.

Day 4

After checking out from the Hotel, our coach will proceed southwards on our return journey to Nerja. After a coffee break en route, we continue on to the largest expanse of vineyards in the world (some experts claim), Valdepenas.

Here we drive through acres of vines to the Bodega Real, a family owned private bodega, where we will have a tasting and then lunch. There is a shop on the premises for a souvenir bottle or two, or indeed, a case !

We then continue southwards with a comfort stop en route and arrive in Nerja at approx. 8.00 pm

Toledo is built on a hill and the two days are very much a walking visit although there are escalators at either end of the City, for ease of access to some places. However, you need to be an able walker and wear sensible shoes.

It is possible that the exhibitions for El Greco may be in special locations for this anniversary year of celebrations.

Price per person in double room 495 € (60 € single supplement for 3 nights) on B & B basis and includes : Transport, All entrances, Bi-lingual Guide, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner on day 1; Dinner on day 2; Lunch on Day 3; Lunch on Day 4, All coffee breaks and tips.

