

## **Crusade and Co-Existence: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Morocco and Spain**

A Travel-Course and Historical/Cultural Tour: 5/23/08 to 6/2/08  
(limited availability on a first register, first serve basis)

**Course and Tour Description:** Medieval Spain had a history like no other, one marked by brutal conquests and reconquests as well as periods of co-existence, tolerance, and multi-faceted cultural exchange. Here the three great monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—converged to shape and re-shape each other's identity. Church next to mosque, mosque next to synagogue, along with a countryside pocked with some of the greatest castles and fortresses that can be found in Europe, medieval Spain left an amazing legacy.

After some historical and cultural preparation, we depart from Boston and leave the 21<sup>st</sup> century behind us. When our feet touch the ground again we will be in Casablanca which, among other things, boasts the Hassan II Mosque, the largest mosque in the world and which possesses the world's highest minaret. We then move on to the medieval Islamic city of Fez, the largest and oldest preserved medieval city in the world, which UNESCO has designated as one of the world's greatest historical/cultural heritage sites. Then we head for the ancient city Tetuan to cross the Straits of Gibraltar to Spain just as the Moorish armies did in 711.

Next is the amazing city Seville, the capital of Andalusia where Columbus is buried, a city possessing some of the greatest surviving examples of *Mudejar* architecture, including the amazing Alcazar. We then transfer to Granada, the last Muslim state to fall to the *reconquista* in 1492, for a guided tour of the greatest Moorish palace-city: The Alhambra. Then we move on toward Cordoba, once the capital of Islamic Spain and the seat of the Umayyad Caliphate that once rivaled Baghdad. After visiting the breathtaking Mosque of Cordoba and other key sites, we will relax at the restored *Hammam* (Arab or "Turkish" baths) followed by an on site professional massage and tea. We then begin the last leg of our tour with a stop at Consuegra en route to Toledo. Here we will walk through the marvelous medieval castle and check out the beautiful medieval windmills that played such a key role in Don Quixote.

We then arrive in the ever-fascinating walled city of Toledo, once the European capital of both science and magic, a city which is much easier to experience than describe. Our tour of the city will conclude with a demonstration of medieval sword-making and jewelry design. The tour concludes with our transfer to Madrid, the current capital of Spain.

### **Tour Itinerary**

**Boston to Casablanca:** Flight from Boston to Casablanca, Morocco. Upon arrival, we will see the Hassan II Mosque, the largest mosque in the world and see the tallest minaret on the planet. We will then travel to Fez, the spiritual and cultural heart of Morocco, on our private, air-conditioned coach.

**Fez:** Guided tour of the old medina of Fez, a perfectly preserved medieval Arab city built in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, which UNESCO has designated as one of the world's greatest historical/cultural legacies. We will virtually walk back into time and wander through the labyrinth of twisting medieval streets and alleys while admiring the city's wondrous minarets, domes, and shops. Wander through streets that still have blacksmiths, old-world traditional artisans, and where goods are still transported via delivery donkeys that charge down the streets. We will dine on delicious Moroccan foods and enjoy traditional entertainment that blends Berber and Arab themes. **Tour Highlights:** the medersas (medieval Islamic religious colleges) of Bou Inania and Attarine; the Qaraouiyine Mosque (one of the oldest universities in the world); a traditional tannery; the Sanctuary of Moulay Idriss (great-great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, great-grandson of Ali, and the most revered religious figure in Morocco); the spice souks.

**Seville:** One of the most atmospheric and romantic Andalusian cities, Seville was founded as "*Hispalis*" by Julius Caesar on the banks of the Guadalquivir. Following the Moorish conquest the city became an important Islamic stronghold until Fernando III conquered it in 1248. Students will have a guided of Seville's celebrated Alcazar, a fortress so impressive that it is second only to the Alhambra. Originally built by the Moors in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and later commandeered by Christians, the Alcazar boasts some of the finest examples of *mudejar* architecture in the peninsula. In addition to its many claims to fame, the Alcazar of Seville is where Fernando and Isabella formally received Columbus upon his return from the New World. Seville itself became known as the "Gateway to the Indies" (i.e., New World) and constantly had galleons shipping out headed for Mexico. Students will also have a guided tour of Seville's famous Cathedral, the third largest cathedral in the world and the largest structure ever built in the Gothic style. The site upon which the cathedral stands was an important since the Roman period. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Moors built a grand mosque on the site with one of the most famous minarets of the period (it was once the tallest structure in the world and still survives). In 1401 the crusaders leveled the mosque to begin construction on the cathedral, one which they hoped would be so large and grand that it would symbolically demonstrate to all who saw it the superiority of Christianity over Islam. The cathedral now holds the tomb of Columbus as his remains were relocated there from Cuba in 1902. **Tour Highlights:** The Alcazar, the Cathedral, and walking tour throughout Santa Cruz.

**Granada:** Conquered in 711 by the first wave of the Moorish invasions it was the last Islamic stronghold to fall to the *reconquista* in 1492. Students will have guided tour of The Alhambra, the most magnificent of all the Islamic "palace-cities" ever constructed. It sits at the foot of the massive and majestic mountain Sierra Nevada. Such palace-cities architectural and political masterpieces, designed to project power, authority, wealth, and spiritual grandeur to all who viewed them. The Alhambra never lost any of this ambiance and has given rise to the saying "If you die without seeing The Alhambra then you never lived." Our tour of Granada concludes with a visit to the Albaicin, the only surviving authentic Moorish quarter in Spain (the rest were destroyed by crusaders in the *reconquista*). The Albaicin also provides an incredible panoramic view of the Alhambra which sits beneath it. **Tour Highlights:** The Alhambra; the Generalife; The Albaicin.

**Cordoba:** Capital of the Ummayad Caliphate, established by the lone survivor of the slaughtered Ummayad dynasty of Syria during the Abbasid revolution. At its height it was the largest and most wealthy city in Europe, containing 700 mosques, 900 baths, and 70 libraries. Students will have a guided tour of the stunning Mosque of Cordoba (La Mezquita) once the largest mosque in the world, which was transformed into a cathedral during the *reconquista*. We will visit the Alcazar, a 14<sup>th</sup> century fortress where Columbus said his goodbyes to the Spanish monarchs and where later the Spanish Inquisition was based. We will see the fabulous still-functioning Roman Bridge and the Calahorra Tower that guards it (and visit the multi-religious museum within it). The day will conclude with a relaxing visit to the completely restored Hammam or Arab Baths, a sort of “spa” experience that stretches back to the Roman period. Here students will experience first hand how luxurious life could be in medieval Spain. Move freely between pools of three temperatures (cold, temperate, and hot) and socialize while awaiting a professional massage. The Hammam experience will be concluded with tea and food. **Tour Highlights:** Mosque of Cordoba; Alcazar; Jewish quarter; Roman Bridge; Museum Torre de la Calahorra; Restored Arab Baths. **Consuegra:** En route to Toledo we will stop at Consuegra to walk through its amazing castle and stroll along a chain of picaresque windmills right out of the world of Don Quixote.

**Toledo:** A beautiful walled medieval city, Toledo was a microcosm of the religious co-existence that made medieval Spain so unique. It was also the European capital of science and magic in the Middle Ages, where many of the Greco-Islamic scientific manuscripts were translated from Arabic into Latin, paving the way for great leaps in European scientific growth as well as the rise of universities. Students will visit the Cathedral of Toledo (the only place in the world where the Mozarabic rite is still performed) and the Juderia (Jewish quarter) and a medieval synagogue. We will see the remarkable mudejar church Santo Tome. Here students will also see El Greco’s masterpiece “The Burial of Count Orgaz.” We will also visit the Sephardic Museum that documents the experience of Spanish Jews from their arrival in the Roman period to their tragic experiences with the Inquisition and eventual expulsion. Our tour of the city will conclude at a local workshop for a demonstration of medieval sword making and Islamic “damascene” jewelry design. **Tour Highlights:** Cathedral of Toledo; the synagogue; Sephardic Museum; Santo Tome. To the highlights we can add the entire atmosphere of the city itself. It has been a universal favorite of students.

**Madrid:** In Madrid, with a population of 5 million, we leave the Middle Ages behind us and return to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The modern capital of Spain, Madrid is a city of skyscrapers, great museums, and a nightlife that ranks among Europe’s greatest. Around 875 the Emir of Cordoba, Muhammad I, built a fortress here called Mayrit. It remained in Moorish hands until the late 11<sup>th</sup> century when Alphonso VI conquered it. For the next few centuries it remained obscure and unimportant until Fernando and Isabella chose it as the site of their coronation, signaling a new political interest in the area. Philip II transferred the capital from Toledo to Madrid in 1561, making it an extremely “young” capital by European standards. And in terms of elevation, it is the “highest” European capital sitting at an impressive 2,100 feet above sea level.

## **Tour Services and Price**

- ❖ **All Airfare**: Round trip airfare from Boston to Casablanca and from Madrid to Boston is included, except the “departure fee” leveled by the United States Federal Government.
- ❖ **All Hotel Accommodations**: All hotel accommodations are included and booked in upgraded, centrally located Three or Four Star Hotels. They are specially selected to balance comfort and amenities with locations convenient to local sites that maximize the use of free time.
- ❖ **All Ground Transportation Abroad**: The price includes all ground transportation while abroad to all scheduled sites and events. Transportation is provided by private, air-conditioned coach. The ferry from Africa to Spain is also included. Unscheduled and free time activity transportation is not included.
- ❖ **Meals**: The price includes **All** breakfasts, **11** dinners, and **2** lunches. Included dinners and lunches are in top-notch restaurants that offer delicious and authentic dishes that stress local specialties. Menu items are specially selected by Dr. Abate to reflect and augment the cross cultural experience. Vegetarian accommodations are readily available on request. Non-included meals allow you to select your own samples of local cuisine.
- ❖ **All Admission Fees to Schedules Sites and Museums**: Admission fees for all scheduled sites and events in both Morocco and Spain is included in the price.
- ❖ **Full Time Regional Guide/Local Guides**: The tour price includes the services of a full time, 24/7 expert regional guide fluent in the relevant languages and cultures who will accompany us for the duration of our time abroad. Additionally, the price includes the services of government certified expert local guides for tours. Our regional and local guides rank among the best in the educational and cultural tourism field.

### Tour Price

- ❖ Since we are shooting for the best package rate possible, and rate fluctuates depending upon the number of participants, the tour price can vary as follows.

30 Participants: \$2655

25 Participants: \$2755

20 Participants: \$2905

- \*\* participants who have traveled with EF previously can deduct \$95 from the price

**Contact: Professor Mark Abate**: *For further information about the tour and the process for registering, contact Professor Mark Abate: [mabate@wsc.ma.edu](mailto:mabate@wsc.ma.edu) or 413-572-5345. Professor Mark Abate received his Ph.D. from Boston University where he specialized in relations*

*between Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Middle Ages; the history of the crusades; medieval Spain; and medieval science and intellectual history.*