



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Maximo Lopez (etsella)

# Hot Spots: History, Tapas, Nightlife

## Granada, 2 Days

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** If you think you have enough energy to hit up the main sights in Granada and still enjoy the best of its nightlife, this is the guide for you. There's a lot to see in Granada, and fortunately, it is possible to fit the main attractions and a lot of fun into a two-day trip.

Arrive early on Friday and get situated in Hostel Atenas, an affordable, centrally located base with a helpful staff. Get your map at the front desk and walk toward the center of the city to Manolo, where you'll start the day with traditional dishes from Granada and Andalusia. Nearby is the Granada Cathedral, a beautiful example of Spanish Renaissance architecture, which is rich with political and religious history. Around the cathedral, there are a number of vendors selling fresh spices and teas that make for exotic souvenirs.

Balance the time you spend in the Cathedral and your next destination wisely, as there is a wealth of uniquely Moorish architecture to be seen in Albaicín. As you begin walking up this hilly district, you'll encounter a number of shops that have a counterculture vibe, selling scarves, pottery, jewelry, and quality leather goods. Walk to the Mirador de San Nicolas, where you can enjoy fantastic views of the city, Granada Cathedral, and the surrounding sierra (mountainous landscape)—but most of all, it is a spectacular spot to appreciate the beauty of the Alhambra.

Satisfy your hunger and relax at El Huerto de Juan Ranas, located on the Mirador de San Nicolas. El Huerto de Juan Ranas, in addition to its exceptional views of the Alhambra, offers a romantic ambience and a delicious menu featuring a fusion of Spanish, Moroccan, and mediterranean cuisines as well as an extensive wine list.

Once you've had a chance to relax, you can explore deeper into Albaicín, where you'll find hidden treasures of well-preserved original Moorish homes. It is truly a unique neighborhood unlike any other in Spain. If it's getting late, it is advisable to take a taxi from the Mirador back to the Hostel, as the dark streets of Albaicín can be a risky area at night. If you feel like taking a nap, don't hesitate—it's Andalusian tradition.

Within walking distance from Hotel Atenas is La Riviera, a laid-back tapas bar where you can fill your stomach and start out the night with a few drinks. The walk to El Camborio along the Darro River is long but beautiful, with dimly lit cobblestone streets and the Alhambra situated to the right. If you're not up for the walk, it would be best to take a taxi. El Camborio has numerous dance floors including four indoor "caves," a glass-enclosed rooftop

terrace, and an elegant outdoor patio that features—you guessed it—magnificent views of the Alhambra, illuminated at night.

On your second day, don't hesitate to hit the snooze button—remember, you're in Spain, and everything around you is moving at a relaxed pace. For breakfast, order a typical Spanish tostada (toast) with your choice of toppings: jamón (ham), tomate (tomato), mantequilla (butter), mermelada (marmalade), or simply, aceite (olive oil—a Spanish favorite). Café Fútbol has a large outdoor patio and other Spanish breakfast and lunch staples such as churros con chocolate (fried breakfast pastry with warm chocolate sauce) and various bocadillos (sandwiches), if you're a little hungrier. After a warm Moroccan tea or a café con leche, you'll surely be rejuvenated and ready to explore the Alhambra.

After drooling over the Alhambra from afar for an entire day, you'll be more than giddy about finally visiting this legendary fortress. It's best to buy your ticket for the Alhambra online, ahead of time, rather than trying to squeeze a trip to the ticket office into your plans and risking ticket unavailability. The Alhambra, originally constructed for what would become the last Muslim rulers in Andalusia, is Spain's most prevalent site in regards to Islamic architecture. Peruse the endless rooms of this elaborate palace—no matter how much time you spend in the Alhambra, it may never seem enough.

Later in the day, stop by La Bella y La Bestia at the corner of Calle Cárcel Baja and Calle de Elvira—a short walk from Atenas. There is a decent amount of seating to rest your legs both inside and on the patio. La Bella y La Bestia is a well-known chain in Granada, and this location has an extremely relaxed atmosphere, serving large, delicious tapas that are sure to please your taste buds. If you're craving even more of Granada and think you have the stamina, go out with a bang at Granada 10. It's one of the most popular discotecas (clubs) in the city, featuring numerous dance floors—each with unique music varying from salsa to house.

This exhilarating two-day visit to Granada will give you a keen feel for the city and a preview of the culture you'll encounter throughout Andalusia. Having gotten a taste for its one-of-a-kind neighborhoods, main attractions, tapas, and nightlife, you'll find yourself wanting to return again and again.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Granada



**Manolo**  
Typical Dishes & Authentic Atmosphere



**Catedral and Capilla Real**



**Albayzín (El)**  
Authentic Moorish District



**La Riviera**  
Laid-back tapas bar



**Camborio**

## Day 2 - Granada



**Fútbol**  
Churros, ice-cream & more



**Alhambra**  
Moorish Fortress



**Bodega La Bella y La Bestia**  
Pleasing Ambiance

# Day 1 - Granada

## QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: +34 958 554 1504

**location:**  
Plaza de Bib-Rambla 16  
Granada 18001

**hours:**  
Mo to Su from 12:30 PM to  
12:00 AM

## 1 Manolo

**DESCRIPTION:** Try this restaurant for some authentic local dishes that you won't find elsewhere in Spain. The tortilla sacromonte is only made in Granada. It's not everyone's idea of a delicacy, but if you've got a strong constitution you'll survive. The omelette is made of eggs, brains, bull's testicles and vegetables. You might even enjoy it and you can brag to your friends. The other local dishes worth trying are habas con jamón (broad beans with cured ham) and tortilla de bacalao (cod omelette). The atmosphere and the decor are authentic, too. That means that the decor is minimal - just a plain wood interior - and the clientele are noisy and good-humored. You'll find it on one of the corners of the attractive Bib-Rambla Square, not far from some good shopping in the Alcaicería and close to the massive cathedral. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: 95-822-29-59

**location:**  
Gran V&iacute;a de  
Col&oacute;n 5  
Granada

**hours:**  
Daily 10:30am-1:30pm and  
3:30-6:30pm (4-8pm in  
summer)

## 2 Catedral and Capilla Real

**DESCRIPTION:** This richly ornate Renaissance cathedral with its spectacular altar is one of the country's architectural highlights, acclaimed for its beautiful facade and gold-and-white interior. It was begun in 1521 and completed in 1714. Enrique de Egas created the original Gothic-style plans, but it was Renaissance maestro Diego de Siloé who designed the facade and the chief attraction inside the cathedral, the **Capilla Mayor**, a rotunda circled by an ambulatory. Capilla Mayor is surmounted by a 45m (150-ft.) dome. The graceful rotunda has two architectural layers, the upper one adorned by art by Alonso Cano depicting the life of the Madonna along with stunning stained glass that dates from the 1500s. At the entrance to the rotunda is a pair of panels, one depicting Ferdinand and Isabella in prayer, the other by Alonso Cano depicting Adam and Eve. Several glittering side chapels also decorate the cathedral, and one is especially extravagant, the carved and gilded Capilla de Nuestra Señora de la Antigua, also known as the Capilla Dorada, on the north wall. Before leaving the area, and once outside, note the Puerta del Perdón, a notably elaborate side entrance facing north on Calle de la Cárcel. Behind the cathedral (entered separately) is the Flamboyant Gothic and Plateresque **Royal Chapel**, where the remains of Queen Isabella and her husband Ferdinand are. It was their wish to be buried in recaptured Granada, not Castile or Aragón. Work was begun by Enrique Egas in 1506 but completed in 1521 when Charles V reigned as emperor. Nonetheless, the chapel still has a unity of architectural style. Visitors enter through the Lonja (Exchange House), which is an adjoining structure on Calle de los Oficios, a narrow pedestrian street that runs alongside the cathedral. Inside, the chapel is a virtual celebration of the Isabelline style, with its ribbed vaulting along with walls emblazoned with the arms of Isabella and Ferdinand, the conquerors of Granada. A highlight is a visit to the chancel, enclosed by a **screen** by Master Barolomé. This adornment contains the **mausoleums** of Ferdinand and Isabella on the right. You may be surprised by how short they were. Occupying much larger tombs are the remains of their daughter, Joanna the Mad, and her husband, Philip the Handsome. Domenico Fancelli of Florence sculpted the recumbent Carrera marble figures of the Catholic monarchs in 1517 and Bartolomé Ordóñez the figures of Juana la Loca and Felipe el Hermoso, the parents of Charles V, in 1520. Look for the stairs at the royal feet of the sculptures. These lead to a crypt that contains a quartet of lead caskets where the royal ashes actually lie, including a very small casket for one royal grandchild. Of special interest is the **high altar retablo** dating from 1520. This was one of the first retablos in Spain to show no Gothic influence. If you head for the north transept, you will encounter the most celebrated triptych in Granada (much reproduced on postcards). By Fleming Thierry Bouts, it is called the Triptych of the Passion. In the sacristy you can view Isabella's

personal **art collection**, including many works by Flemish masters and various Spanish and Italian artists, including Rogier Van der Weyden and Botticelli. Some of the most outstanding pieces of art are by Memling, Bartolomé, and Bermejo. A glass case contains Ferdinand of Aragón's sword and Isabella's scepter and crown, as well as a reliquary and a missal. You can also see the queen's ornate jewel chest. Church vestments are also on display in the sacristy. Above the chapel's exit doorway is a copy of the famous painting of Boabdil's surrender to Isabella. She is depicted wearing her filigree crown, the one you've just seen. The cathedral is in the center of Granada off two prominent streets, Gran Vía de Colón and Calle de San Jerónimo. The Capilla Real abuts the cathedral's eastern edge. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: +34 958 247 146  
<http://www.turgranada.es/cultural-monumental/cultural-monumental-detalle.php>

**location:**

Albayzín  
Granada 18009

**3 Albayzín (El)**

**DESCRIPTION:** You'll see Granada's finest medieval Moorish mansions, or cármenes, in this attractive hillside district. The spacious whitewashed buildings all have one special feature: a central, walled courtyard filled with fountains and flowers. There are great views from Mirador de San Nicolás over to the Alhambra complex on the opposite hill and the Sierra Nevada mountains in the distance. This district was populated by an influx of Moors from the town of Baeza in 1227 and historians maintain that Christians, Jews and Muslims lived in relative harmony here for many years. © wcities.com



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**contact:**

tel: 958 227 969

**location:**

C/ Cetti Meriem, 7  
Granada Granada

**4 La Riviera**

**DESCRIPTION:** La Riviera's simple wooden interior and dim lighting give this tapas bar a warm energy that is inviting to granadino locals and visitors alike. A life-size knight statue guards a couple of animated bartenders whose jovial personalities fuel a fun, casual atmosphere. These guys are typical andaluces (Andalusians): always talking and joking around with guests and each other, they somehow find time to serve everyone at a reasonable pace and, impressively, remember which tapa you'll be enjoying next. At La Riviera, the kitchen determines the menu and serves a new tapa that corresponds with the round of drinks you order. While not exactly gourmet, the food is delicious, filling, and exemplary of traditional Andalusian favorites such as carne con tomate (stewed beef in a savory tomato sauce). Portions are generous, and you'll be fully satisfied after a few rounds. However, you'll want to keep 'em coming when you see the people next to you munching on those calamares (calamari) they got with their next round. La Riviera's low prices, authentic atmosphere, and location at the foot of historical Albaicín make it an ideal spot to begin the night and fill up on on tapas that the locals crave. © Amy G

**contact:**

tel: 95-822-12-15

**location:**

Camino del Sacromonte 48  
Granada

**5 Camborio**

**DESCRIPTION:** A 20-minute walk uphill from Plaza Nueva, this is a particularly popular address with students. Many of these young people stand on the rooftop terraces for a panoramic view of the Alhambra at sunrise, one of the most striking vistas in all of Andalusia. Each of the four bars plays different music. A 10€ (\$16) cover charge is imposed only on Friday and Saturday nights. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 11pm to 7am. © Frommer's

# Day 2 - Granada

QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: +34 958 22 6662

**location:**  
6 Plaza de Mariana Pineda  
Granada 18009

**hours:**  
Mo to Su from 06:00 PM to  
01:00 AM

## 1 Fútbol

**DESCRIPTION:** It is worth coming here on two special occasions; the first is early on New Year's Day morning to line your stomach with some deliciously thick hot chocolate and churros (dough fritters) before or after celebrating the great event. The second is during the Aniversario de Mariana Pineda celebrations to get a prime spot from which to see the events. During the summer, you'll find lots of shade whilst sitting on the terrace under the huge chestnut trees. Try one of the flavours from their wide range of homemade ice creams. The interior is pretty ordinary, so you're best off taking advantage of the terrace. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +34 958 027 971  
<http://www.alhambra-patrona.to.es>

**location:**  
Calle de Real de Alhambra  
Granada 18009

## 2 Alhambra

**DESCRIPTION:** This masterpiece of Moorish architecture is simply the most wonderful and inspiring set of buildings in Spain. It's consequently the country's most visited historic sight. The complex is made up of three parts: a fortress (Alcazaba), royal palaces (Alhambra) and a summer palace with luxuriant gardens (Generalife). The buildings date mainly from the 13th and 14th Centuries, after the Arabic Nasrid prince, Ibn al-Ahmar, made Granada an independent Moorish state. Each succeeding Nasrid ruler continued to beautify the royal palaces, combining wood, plaster, marble, brick and ceramic tiles with water, light and Arabic calligraphy. A limited number of tickets are available per day and entry is timed. Tickets tend to sell out far in advance so reserving tickets is your best bet for actually getting to see this magnificent complex. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +34 958 22 3413  
<http://www.bodegaslabellaylabestia.com/>

**location:**  
Carrera del Darro 37  
Granada 18001

## 3 Bodega La Bella y La Bestia

**DESCRIPTION:** Surrounded by pretty buildings perched atop is the popular Bodega La Bella y La Bestia. This restaurant is a pretty sight. The stone walls, wooden bar stools and interesting curios make this place very appealing. Tapas served with a variety of drinks and cocktails never tasted better. Exotic food and relevant services are available for hosting private functions too. There are two other eateries at different locations in Granada. Once you step out of this restaurant, a lovely scene awaits you. So dining at Bodega La Bella y La Bestia will be an experience like none other. Contact them for the restaurant's open hours. © wcities.com

# Granada Snapshot

## Local Info

Granada, like other modern cities, continues to grow and change with the times. Yet, one thing remains the same: the Alhambra and the four districts around it are still the center of attention for locals and tourists alike. Each of the districts has something different to offer. The Realejo is a friendly, easy-going district where neighbors gather in the street to chat. Parts of the Albayzín have the sleepy, timeless feel of a Moroccan hill town. Gypsy families still live in caves in the primitive hillside Sacromonte. The old town district is full of massive churches and cathedrals, quaint little squares and hundreds of independent small stores selling everything under the sun. Another district worth visiting is the modern commercial center where you'll find large department stores and shopping centers as well as student bars and clubs.

### THE REALEJO

This is the most relaxed, friendly and welcoming district. The official language school is here so you see lots of young foreign students on their exchange programs taking time out in the bars and internet cafés, mixing freely with the locals. The residents like to hang around in their doorways, the shops and the squares, passing the time and gossiping.

You can sit outside to eat and drink in peace in any of the restaurants in Campo del Príncipe Square. This district was the city's Jewish quarter for centuries before the Inquisition's reign of terror and persecution. The Christian rulers who conquered Granada in 1492, and their successors, systematically expelled all Jews and Muslims from Spain during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The area around this square then became royal gardens for a while. Now the narrow winding streets and pretty whitewashed houses are nice to wander around without any specific purpose.

### THE ALBAYZÍN

There's an atmospheric new Arabic quarter at the foot of the Albayzín where Calle Elvira meets Plaza Nueva. This triangle of streets, bordered by the Calderería Nueva and the Calderería Vieja is now home to many colorful Arabic and New Age craft shops, authentic Middle Eastern

restaurants, take-away kebab houses and relaxing Moroccan tearooms like Alfaguara.

The rest of the district, further up the hill, is a warren of alleys and cobbled streets running between whitewashed houses and villas with orchard or gardens called cármenes. The wealthy Arabs living here between the 12th and 15th centuries wanted privacy and sought to hide their prosperity in case they became the targets of envy and hostility. So they built high walls around their houses to keep out prying eyes. Look through the gates and grilles and you'll still see the geometrically designed gardens and patios with their fountains, irrigation systems, fruit trees, plants and flowers.

There are lots of pretty little squares up here too. The Plaza San Miguel Bajo, for example, fills up on sunny days with people sitting outside on the bar and restaurant terraces. The square's huge church, like most other churches in this area, was built on the site of a mosque after Christians took control of the city from the Moors in 1492. The Plaza Larga was once an Arab souk (market) and is still the venue for a market on Saturday mornings. You get the best views in the city from nearby San Nicolás Square. By day, look over the Alhambra complex and see the Sierra Nevada mountains in the background; by night you see the Alhambra's palaces and fortress spectacularly illuminated by floodlights.

On your way back to the center you'll pass the historic buildings on Carrera del Darro. The nuns in San Bernardo Convent next door to the Archaeological Museum make delicious cakes and biscuits. To buy them you have to go to the first door on the side street to the left (Calle Gloria, 2) and speak into an intercom. You don't get to see the nuns because it's a closed order. Instead, your delivery arrives on a revolving wooden contraption. If you prefer something savory, stop in at Casa de Todos, one of the busy tapas bars en route. The trendy music bars along this street open late and close late. Try Al Pie de la vela or Rey Momo.

### SACROMONTE

Sacromonte district is where you'll still find gypsies living in caves that have been excavated from the hillside. The front of one might look like the entrance

to an ordinary house, but once inside you'll notice the difference. Many of these cave-dwellings have been converted into entertainment venues where gypsies perform their traditional flamenco music and dance. Try the show at Los Tarantos, for example. While you're here, it's also worth visiting the 17th-century Sacromonte Abbey and Museum and the Museo de la Zambra (Museum of Gypsy Traditions). The best time to come up here is during Semana Santa when religious statues are paraded through the streets all night long. The mix of incense, candles, bonfires and singing creates a highly charged atmosphere. There's a cheerful pilgrimage up to the abbey on St. Cecil's Day, February 1st, and an open air picnic in the countryside afterwards.

### THE OLD QUARTER

This area has been the city's main religious and commercial center since the 14th century and still offers great shopping for arts, crafts and souvenirs in the narrow little alleys of the Alcaicería. The nearby Cathedral dominates this flat ground below the Alhambra and Albayzín hills. One block south is the pretty Bib-Rambla Square, full of florist's stalls and restaurants, like Manolo. If you're interested in looking good, you'll find loads of fashionable clothing retailers around here, including Los Muñecos, Mango, and many more.

### SHOPPING CENTRES AND NIGHTLIFE

Head for the lower, southern part of the city for large department stores like Corte Inglés (EI), indoor shopping centers like Centro Comercial Neptuno and the greatest concentration of nightlife in the bars and clubs lining Calle Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. You can choose from an endless number of bars with different themes and atmospheres.

©

## History

The main reason that so many people come to Granada is to experience its rich and varied history. It's easy to walk through all the different districts, past the well-preserved historic buildings, and imagine yourself living in an earlier and more exotic time. The most evocative sight is undoubtedly the Alhambra, a complex of

## Granada Snapshot continued

marvellous Moorish buildings on a hill that includes a fortress, palaces and gardens, built during the city's golden age.

According to archaeological research, Stone Age people were living in Granada province as long as 400 000 years ago. The big game hunting and the abundance of caves to shelter in attracted these early people. Later peoples took advantage of the well-irrigated plains to cultivate food and the natural mineral resources were used to produce weapons, cooking utensils and eventually, jewelery. You can see an interesting collection of artifacts dating from the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic eras in the Archaeological Museum.

Between the tenth and the fourth centuries BC, a series of Mediterranean trading states, including Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Greeks, settled on the province's coastal fringe. They came to exploit the vast mineral deposits and the good fishing.

The first written documents available to historians are from the fifth century BC and record a Jewish community living in what's now Granada.

By the end of the fourth century AD, the Romans had completely colonized southern Spain. After the Romans, the next wave of invaders were the Visigoths, from Northern Europe, who occupied the city in the fifth century AD but made few changes to the civil, military and religious status quo.

Little is known about the Jewish community that settled here, but it must have been significant because it's mentioned often in fourth century AD legal documents. Jewish leaders are believed to have collaborated with the Arab invaders in 711 to overthrow the Visigoth monarchy. The tower you see in San José Church and the Red Towers were built immediately after the Arabs and their Berber mercenaries took control of Granada in the eighth century. The mainly Muslim Middle Eastern and North African invaders—called Moors—conquered almost the whole of Spain within a decade.

At first Granada became an important outpost of a new Western Islamic Empire

ruled by Abd ar-Rahman III based in Cordoba. However, fighting between different ethnic and cultural Muslim factions and an on-going Christian crusade to expel the Moors created a chaotic political situation in Andalusia. Ibn al-Ahmar, of the Arab Nasrid tribe, used the situation to his advantage in 1238 to establish an independent Moorish state of Granada. Independence was maintained by paying tribute to the encroaching Christian king of Castile, Fernando III. So, as the rest of Spain started to fall into Christian hands, Granada—the last Moorish state—received the Muslim and Jewish refugees fleeing from other cities and continued to expand and prosper. In fact, the 13th and 14th centuries were the city's glory days when commerce, art and culture flourished, and the Alhambra and the Arab University were built.

Towards the end of the 15th century, the ruling Nasrid family ended up fighting among themselves. The now united Catholic Monarchs of Castile and Aragon, having conquered the rest of Spain, besieged the city and persuaded the last Moorish ruler, Boabdil, to surrender in 1492. For the first few years of Christian rule, Muslim citizens were permitted to live according to their religion and culture. But, by 1499, Cardinal Cisneros was trying to force all Muslims to convert to Christianity. They were later banned from speaking their language, wearing their traditional clothes and practicing their customs, and they were charged excessively high taxes.

During this period the Christians also destroyed many mosques or turned them into monasteries, churches or public buildings. San Miguel Bajo Church, Santa María Church, San José Church and many more, all stand where mosques used to be. In response to this religious and cultural persecution, the Muslims held an unsuccessful rebellion in 1568 and then had to flee to find refuge in the Alpujarras on the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains. They lived there until they were expelled from Spain altogether following their final defeat at the Battle of the Alpujarras in the 17th century.

By confiscating Muslim property and taking a percentage of the riches entering Spain from the New World during the 16th and 17th centuries, the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown became enormously rich. This was when Granada's great cathedral, churches, monasteries and convents were built.

From the late 17th century until the present day the city has kept a low profile.

The only event that brought it international attention during the 20th century was a tragic one. At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, reactionary supporters of General Franco's military uprising murdered thousands of innocent Republican sympathizers, including the outstanding local poet and playwright, Federico García Lorca.

Granada remained the prosperous administrative capital of a fairly backward agricultural province until relatively recently. Over the last few years the university and private language schools have attracted thousands of foreign exchange students, the city's historic sights have attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors and Granada's official bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics has helped to raise the city's international profile.

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©

## Hotel Insights

Granada has understandably become a popular tourist destination and the range of places to stay has grown to meet the increase in demand. You'll find every category of accommodation available, from campsites to youth hostels to simple guest houses and hotels. There's something to meet most needs in terms of price, comfort, facilities and location. If you're looking for something close to the historic sights, you won't be disappointed. There are lots of comfortable, family-run, mid-range hotels within walking distance of the city's major attraction, the Alhambra.

Most visitors only spend two or three nights here, so there's a rapid turnover of rooms and as long as you're flexible about dates you'll always find somewhere to stay. The busiest times are during Easter Week and the Day of the Cross, at the start of May.

If you want to see the colorful processions and dancing in the street, book a room well in advance.

If you're not short of money, the most memorable place to stay is inside the Alhambra complex itself, in the exclusive four-star San Francisco Parador. If you're looking for something unusual and different, try El Abanico Caves.

There are several hotels on the Alhambra hill set in leafy surroundings within walking distance of the historic complex: Los Alixares, Guadalupe, Washington Irving, Los Ángeles and the Hotel Alhambra Palace.

For cheaper accommodation that's still within walking distance of the Alhambra and the other historic sights, try Hostal Austria, Hotel Carlos V, Hotel Niza or Hostal Cónsul.

The area around the Cathedral and Royal Chapel has some more expensive and sophisticated bases for exploring the city's cultural and artistic heritage, in Anacapri, Gran Vía and NH Inglaterra.

If you want to be close to the central commercial and business district and the Conference and Exhibition Hall, look out for the eight-story Hotel San Antón with its prime location on the banks of the river Genil and its space-age external glass elevators. It's popular with business travelers and offers great views from the upper floors. For even greater luxury, close to the riverside, choose Hotel Tryp Albayzín. Two central hotels offer rooms specially equipped for disabled visitors, Hotel El Carmen and Saray.

You'll find three accommodation options all belonging to the same chain in the Camino de Ronda district alongside all the big department stores and shopping centers and close to the student nightlife area. Hotel Luz de Granada is popular with tour groups. Business travelers prefer Gran Hotel Luna de Granada. While families like the freedom offered by the self-catering facilities in Apartahotel Luna.

Away from the bright lights and noisy traffic, you'll find peaceful places to stay on the outskirts, including Hotel Sol Inn Alcano,

Hotel Camino de Granada(near the airport) and Hotel San Gabriel, which has wonderful views of the Albayzín district.

©

## Restaurants Insights

According to official statistics, Granada has more bars per inhabitant and square kilometer than any other city in Spain. Everyone here- rich and poor- goes out to eat and drink regularly. All the visiting tourists eat and drink out as well. Consequently there are an enormous variety of bars and restaurants to choose from. What's more, the cost of living is comparatively low so you'll find that drinking and dining are pretty cheap.

You'll probably notice how everything tastes fresher and has more flavor than you're used to. That's because traditional methods are used to cure meats and mature cheeses. Fresh produce is grown locally, gets lots of sun and it's picked ripe because it doesn't have to travel far. The tradition of giving free tapas with drinks in bars is still going strong here even though it's dying out elsewhere in Spain. In fact, bars in Granada compete with each other to win custom by offering even bigger and better tapas. Taking a tapas tour is a great way to get to know the city and the local cuisine at the same time. Have enough tapas and you won't need to bother about an evening meal. It's paradise for gourmets and hedonists. Some of the typical tapas you'll be offered are *areadobos de cazón*(dogfish marinated in paprika and olive oil), *carne en salsa*(chunks of pork in tomato sauce), *berenjenas rebozadas*(breaded and fried aubergines) and *anchoverones en vinagre*(anchovies marinated in vinegar). You still come across traditional little tapas bars that just serve wine and ham to laborers and where flamenco is the only music. A couple of blocks away you'll find smart restaurants with fancy decor catering to business executives on expense accounts.

The best place for tapas at midday is the busy Antigua Bodega Castañeda, which lies at the foot of the Albayzín district.

## Granada Snapshot continued

Lunch doesn't normally start until around 2pm, so you'll want to have two or three drinks before deciding where to have your main meal of the day. You can stay in the area around Plaza Nueva, where there are lots of other tapas bars, or take a short stroll along Carrera del Darro to try some savory snacks in Casa de Todos. Have a proper sit down lunch and take your time in El Rincón de San Juan de Dios, which serves succulent meats from northern Spain, or Sibari, located below the magical Alhambra. Some of the traditional dishes served here, and in the rest of Granada, are tortilla sacromonte (omelette with bull's testicles), habas con jamón (broad beans and ham), pipirrana (tomato and cucumber salad), migas (breadcrumbs fried in olive oil with raisins and chorizo sausage) and the plato alpujarreño (fried potatoes, fried egg, cured ham and spicy sausage). The brilliant use of herbs and spices has been handed down from generation to generation since Moorish times. You won't leave here hungry or malnourished.

After lunch, head for Calle Elvira and its Moroccan tearooms. Stop in at Alfaguara to relax over an exotic tea, a sticky pastry or some healthy natural fruit juice. If you've spent the afternoon visiting the historic sights, you'll be thinking about food and drink again by 8p. Have a beer and tapas in La Antigualla and then make for the Middle Eastern restaurant, Arrayanes, to savor some dishes with a subtle mix of herbs and spices.

If you've still got lots of energy and want to dance, head for Calle Pedro Antonio de Alarcón and the adjacent streets like Calle San Juan de Dios and Calle Gran Capitán. This is the nightlife zone with the greatest concentration of bars, clubs and pubs. It's a university city with a young population who like to party.

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### Nightlife Insights

You're never short of something to do in Granada. The range of entertainment on offer is vast and covers a wide spectrum of formal and informal events. One of the first

things you'll notice is the amount of posters displayed in public places advertising pop concerts, orchestras, ethnic bands, theater shows, dance classes, photography exhibitions and lots more. Get a list of events from the tourist office.

Another thing you'll notice is that the locals like to dress up, go out and enjoy themselves. Many colorful traditional festivals are still celebrated with gusto. Even on ordinary weekend evenings you'll find a vibrant atmosphere in the streets and squares and bars. It's a university city with over 60000 students aged between 18 and 25. That means one in every six inhabitants is a student, and you know what students are like, always celebrating something.

Performers and spectators from all over the world flock to Granada during June and July every year to take part in the prestigious Festival Internacional de Música y Danza. The performance venues could hardly be more romantic and atmospheric and include the Generalife gardens and Charles V's Palace. The Festival Internacional de Teatro, the Festival Internacional de Tango and the Festival Internacional de Jazz Granada are just three more world-class cultural events hosted here annually.

The local fiestas are like big street parties where everyone is welcome and everyone gets involved. They all have religious origins but that doesn't stop anyone from dressing up in traditional costume, drinking lots of fino sherry and dancing sevillanas (lively folk dances) without inhibition until the early hours of the morning. That's what happens on the Day of the Cross on May 3rd when the streets and squares are covered with pretty crosses made out of flowers by the local residents. No sooner have you recovered from that excess than it's time for Corpus Christi, another religious celebration with a hedonistic flavor. After watching the processions of saints through the streets, people dress up in traditional costume once more and head out to the special arena on the outskirts of town. There's a children's amusement park with rides for the kids and tents where the adults get together to

sing, dance and drink more fino sherry. The atmosphere is always relaxed and friendly and visitors are welcome to join in the fun.

The big student spring festival takes place at the end of March or the beginning of April with the support of the Town Hall, which hosts a weekend's worth of live music, theater, poetry and more. Students also celebrate the start of term in September and October and the end of exams in February and March.

There's a regular calendar of live theater in the Alhambra Theatre and Isabel la Católica Theatre with a selection of classic and modern drama. There's no shortage of cinemas either where you can catch up on the latest releases.

You could spend the day quietly soaking up information in the Archaeological Museum, Manuel de Falla's House and Museum, Federico García Lorca's House and Museum and the Museo de la Zambra (Museum of Gypsy Traditions).

Doing a bar crawl along the famous Calle Pedro Antonio de Alarcón is a popular way of spending Friday or Saturday night. See if you can make it from one end to the other still standing after stopping in at Soho or one of the many other bars and clubs along the way. Then turn up Calle San Juan de Dios to try El Rincón de San Juan de Dios before finally hitting the dance floor at Granada 10, Planta Baja or Sala Príncipe.

There are lots of outdoor attractions in the immediate vicinity as well. The Sierra Nevada ski resort is fully equipped and just 35km away. There are beaches and water parks on the shores of the Mediterranean only an hour's drive from the city center. For great trekking in pristine countryside, head for the Alpujarras, on the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, an hour and half's journey by car or public bus.

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### Things to Do Insights

Granada is a relatively compact city. It's easy to reach virtually all the important historical sights on foot. This being said, there's no avoiding hills, steep flights of

## Granada Snapshot continued

steps or narrow, cobblestone alleys, so comfortable, sturdy footwear is advisable. If you don't have the time or inclination to walk, public buses or private tour companies can take you to all the places mentioned below.

### Tour 1: THE ALHAMBRA, GENERALIFE AND REALEJO

If you only have time to see one sight in Granada, head for the city's main attraction, the marvelous Alhambra and its adjoining Generalife gardens. The Alhambra complex is made up of three separate parts: the fortress, the palaces and the gardens attached to the summer palace. In 1238, an Arab prince, Ibn Ahmar, of the Nasrid tribe established Granada as an independent Moorish state and rebuilt the existing fortress on this hill at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The Arabs called it al-Hamra, the red fort, after the ochre colored walls. The Nasrid dynasty expanded and beautified their hill settlement over their following 250-year rule.

Start from Plaza Nueva and go up the Cuesta de Gómez, past all the budget guest houses, souvenir shops, guitar makers and craft shops, to Granada Gate. Walk through and turn right to see the Red Towers. Or turn left through the tree-lined avenue to reach one of the main entrances, the Justice Gate. This tower gateway features the Muslim symbols of a key and an outstretched hand, carved in marble. The five fingers symbolize the five precepts of the Koran. Once through the gate you reach the Jardín de los Adarves (Adarves Garden) that leads in turn to the Fortress. This was the Nasrid military headquarters. Beyond the central patio (Plaza de las Armas), you'll see an Arab bathhouse, living quarters, stables and dungeons. Climb up the steps to the defensive walls and towers for the fantastic views over the neighbouring Albayzín and Sacromonte districts.

The second part of the complex is the Royal Palace, which is made up of a number of brilliantly designed and decorated function rooms and courtyards that were used by the Muslim rulers for

different purposes. To get here, you have to leave the fortress and follow the signs for the Nasrid Palaces. The first series of rooms, the Mexuar Palace, were used for business meetings and dispensing justice. From here you enter the Sala del Trono, or throne room, where the sultan made his most important decisions as military commander-in-chief. This room opens out onto the Patio de los Arrayanes (myrtles) with its large central pool, which then connects with the famous Patio of the Lions and the heart of the harem section. It was here that the rulers lived, in the Palace of the Lions, a series of rooms including the Sala de los Mocárabes, Sala de los Reyes, Sala de los Abencerrajes and Sala de dos Hermanas. After being mesmerized by the intricate beauty of the palaces, the next stage is to relax and wander through the sultan's luxuriant landscaped gardens and summer residence, together called the Generalife.

The Alhambra complex houses some other impressive buildings of a later date that were built after the Arabs were defeated and expelled from the region by the incoming Christian rulers. The massive bulk of the Renaissance-style Carlos V's Palace stands in stark contrast to the delicate Moorish Royal Palaces next door. The San Francisco Parador was once a mosque, then a monastery and is now a wonderful four-star hotel. The Santa María Church is also worth a look.

The whole of the Alhambra hill is covered in large leafy trees and is pleasant to walk around, especially in summer, to get some cool and shade. Head for the huge Hotel Alhambra Palace and walk below it, along the Paseo de los Coches, down to the Campo del Príncipe square, heart of the Realejo district. This square has lots of bars and restaurants where you can sit outside to enjoy a drink or a meal. The Realejo was the city's Jewish quarter until their expulsion from Spain in the late 15th century. The old whitewashed houses and narrow, mysterious streets give it a special charm.

### Tour 2: THE ALBAYZÍN AND SACROMONTE

The Albayzín is the city's oldest district and still retains aspects of its medieval Moorish past. The invading Arabs first built their fortress on this hill. The residential area that developed later is a network of tiny, narrow streets running between Moorish-style cármenes, whitewashed houses with walled gardens and patios beautifully decorated with flowers, plants, trees and fountains.

Start your tour from the Plaza del Triunfo and head through Puerta de Elvira, an early fortified gateway. Walk up Cuesta de la Alhacaba to see some remains of the original Moorish defensive walls and other Fortified gates. Turn right towards Plaza San Miguel Bajo and you'll pass historic buildings like Dar-al-Horra Palace and Santa Isabel la Real Convent before reaching a viewpoint over the old town and the cathedral. Past the convent on the street of the same name, take the first left along Cuesta Madre de la Miel to Plaza Larga, which still functions as a colorful market on Saturday mornings, just as it did in Moorish times. From here, take Callejón San Cecilio to San Nicolás Square for some fantastic views of the Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada mountains in the background. Like most of the other churches in this district, the nearby Nuestro Salvador Church stands on the site of what was a mosque.

From the upper part of the Albayzín you see the hillside above littered with caves where the gypsy community have lived for centuries in the Sacromonte district. To visit, take Camino del Sacromonte from Cuesta del Chapiz. This has been an important pilgrimage route since the 17th century and used to be lined with crosses, although only four now remain. It leads to the fascinating 17th-century Sacromonte Abbey and Museum. The best times to come up here are on February 1st (St. Cecil's Day) or during Easter Week, when the pilgrimages and other religious festivities are spectacular. Or you can come to see a flamenco show any night of the week in one of the atmospheric gypsy caves.

## Granada Snapshot continued

To continue the tour through the Albayzín, return to Cuesta del Chapiz, turn left and head downhill until you come to the river Darro. Here, you can cross the bridge and follow the path upstream through some pretty countryside to Avellano fountain. Alternatively, you can stop at a bar for drinks and tapas and sit outside on the Paseo de los Tristes. After resting, carry on towards the Plaza Nueva along the Carrera del Darro, which runs alongside the river of the same name. You pass two more historic buildings on the way that are worth visiting, first the Casa Castril, a beautiful old palace that now houses the Archaeological Museum and second, the Arab baths.

Once in Plaza Nueva, turn right and walk along Calle Elvira to return to Plaza del Triunfo where you began.

### Tour 3: THE HISTORIC CENTRE

Start from Plaza Nueva, the true center of the city. It's a popular meeting place for locals and tourists alike. You can sit outside at one of the many bars and watch visitors making their way up to the Alhambra and locals heading in and out of appointments at the courts and registry offices. Both the Real Chancillería (Law Courts) and the San Gil and Santa Ana Church are located here.

Walk down the busy Calle Reyes Católicos past the statue on your left that commemorates the agreement signed in 1492 between Isabel of Castille and Christopher Columbus. Take the first alley on your left to visit the old Moorish inn, Corral del Carbón, which is now the main tourist office. To continue, return along the same alley and cross over Calle Reyes Católicos to the Alcaicería. Medieval merchants staying overnight in the Corral del Carbón transported their goods, especially silk, from the Alpujarras, to this market area to sell. This was the city's religious and commercial centre during the Middle Ages, and on the other side of the Alcaicería you'll find three important historic buildings side by side: the Cathedral, Royal Chapel and Arab University. The surrounding area is full of small shops selling everything under the sun. Head back through the Alcaicería, turn right and walk

down Calle Zacatín to the attractive Bib-Rambla Square, filled with flower stalls. From nearby Plaza de las Pasiegas you'll see the impressive Cathedral facade. Take Calle San Jerónimo and you'll pass some of the old faculty buildings belonging to the University. You'll eventually come out at Calle San Juan de Dios. This street is lined with impressive early 16th-century religious buildings within a few hundred meters of each other, including San Justo and San Pastor Church, San Jerónimo Monastery and Church, San Juan de Dios Hospital and San Juan de Dios Church.

From here, you can head north up Calle San Juan de Dios to the massive fountain and the shade provided by Triunfo Gardens, located below the university's main administration offices in the Hospital Real. Or you can turn left and head south down Calle Gran Capitán and Calle Emperatriz Eugenia to the big department stores and shopping centers on Calle Arabial. Further along Calle Arabial you come to García Lorca Park where you'll find Federico García Lorca's House and Museum. He was a locally born, world-famous poet and playwright murdered at the age of 37 by General Franco's supporters at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

### Tour 4: RIVERSIDE WALK

This walk combines some of the city's minor, less-visited, but no less attractive sights with good shopping areas and leafy avenues. Start at Puerta Real outside the main post office building. Walk south along the Acera del Casino and the attractive tree-lined Carrera del Genil. There are smart shops on either side of the avenue along with Spain's premier department store, El Corte Inglés. Next door, you'll come to the church dedicated to Granada's patron saint, Nuestra Señora de las Angustias, where the wealthy like to get married. The river Genil is at the far end of the Carrera del Genil. There are two options at this point. Turn left and walk upriver, following the leafy Paseos del Salón and la Bomba and then head uphill to explore the fascinating old Jewish quarter, the Realejo. Or turn right and cross the

river to reach the Paseo del Violón, where you'll find the Conference and Exhibition Hall, San Sebastián's Chapel and an Old Moorish Fort. Keep going in the same direction and you'll come to the ultra-modern Science Park.

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## Travel Tips

### Getting there and around:

#### By air:

Granada does not have an international airport, so you have to transfer from either Madrid or Barcelona. You can also fly into Malaga and take a bus from there. The local airport is located about 15km from the center of Granada.

Regular local operators: Air Aviaco Air Europa

#### By train:

Granada can be reached by train, though they do not have any international connections. There are trains from Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia.

#### By bus:

There's a regular connection to Seville and Corboda about nine times a day, and fourteen times to Malaga. Within the city, the buses are a popular mode of travel. You rarely have to wait more than 15 minutes and the bus routes frequent many of the tourist spots and city sights. The popular number 3 bus goes from the main bus station to the Gran Via Colon.

#### By car:

Granada is easily accessible by car. Be warned that car rental is expensive. The streets are often narrow and congested so driving can be very difficult, especially for tourists. It might be more efficient to entrust your travels to taxi drivers who know the city and are easily flagged down.

#### On foot:

Much of Granada is easily accessed by walking. Certainly getting into the city will require transportation, and long trips are often unavoidable, but overall, many of the

## Granada Snapshot continued

attractions are within walking distance. A centrally located hotel, or one quick cab or bus ride could be all you need for a jam-packed day of sight seeing and cultural immersion.

Taxi Services:

Mercedes Granada

Radio Taxi Genil

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### Fun Facts

**Granada Country:** Spain

### Granada by the Numbers:

Population: 238,000 Elevation: 2261 feet  
Average January Temperature: 44 degrees F  
Average July Temperature: 77 degrees F  
Average Annual Precipitation: 17.3 inches

### Quick Facts:

Major Industry: silk, fishing, tourism  
Electricity: 220 volts, 50 Hz Time Zone:  
GMT+1 Country Dialing Code: 34 Area  
Code: 958

### Did You Know?

The Alhambra is a famous Moorish citadel and palace located in Granada. This significant item of the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian historical legacy is a popular tourist spot.

### Orientation:

Granada is the capital of the province of Granada located in Andalusia, Spain. The city lies at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

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