

# Top Ten Things to Do and See in Córdoba

(Where available book tickets in advance, there are some good combination deals with 'skip the crowd' option which can avoid very long queues at peak times!).

## 1. Patios Festival

Traditionally the first two weeks of May Córdoba bursts into bloom with special festivities, starting off with the 'Battle of the Flowers' parade, when the city officially launches into its spring celebrations with the 'May Crosses' festival. This is followed by the popular 'Patio Contests', a tradition where locals fill their central patio with lots of plants and water features to keep their homes cool. These hidden treasures can be seen by visitors every year when the heavy doors and iron grates are opened to reveal a visual feast of colourful flowers, stone mosaics and ceramic decorations. You can also experience the classic scents of Córdoba: jasmine and orange blossom mixed with a myriad of scents from the many other flowers and plants.



## 2. Alcázar of Córdoba

This medieval alcázar known as the 'Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos' can be found in the historic centre of Córdoba, next to the Guadalquivir River and near the Grand Mosque. The Alcázar is a castle with beautiful gardens and a Moorish Bath House. The castle is almost a perfect square with the castle walls connecting the four (now three) towers with walkways protected by block battlements. As well as the towers there is the Moorish Patio, Mosaics Hall and Royal Baths to visit. Outside the main castle walls the gardens occupy 55,000 square metres where you can relax amongst the wide variety of plants, palm trees, cypresses, orange and lemon trees, which overlook stone fountains and large ponds. For more information visit: <https://alcazardelosreyescristianos.cordoba.es/?id=3>



### **3. Mezquita-Catedral (Mosque-Cathedral)**

Also known as the 'Great Mosque of Córdoba', the building is most noted for its arcaded hypostyle hall. The 856 columns of jasper, onyx, marble, granite and porphyry were made from pieces of the Roman temple that had occupied the site previously, as well as other Roman buildings, such as the Mérida amphitheatre. The famous alternating red and white 'voussoirs' of the arches were inspired by those in the Dome of the Rock and also resemble those of the Aachen Cathedral, which were built almost at the same time. The Great Mosque has two main areas: the courtyard or 'arcade sahn', where you will find the minaret, and the 'haram' or 'praying hall'.

For more information visit: <https://mezquita-catedraldecordoba.es/>



### **4. Medina Azahara**

Medina Azahara is the ruins of a vast, fortified Andalus palace-city built in 929 AD by Abd-ar-Rahman III, the first Umayyad Caliph of Córdoba, and located eight kilometres on the western outskirts of Córdoba at the foot of Sierra Morena. The city has three terraces surrounded by a wall, and included ceremonial reception halls, mosques, administrative and government offices, gardens, a mint, workshops, barracks, residences and baths. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 the site was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For more information visit: <http://www.medinaazahara.org/en/tickets-medina-azahara.html>



## **5. Torre Calahorra (Calahorra Tower)**

The term 'Calahorra' is a pre-roman name given to isolated and important towers such as this built on the left bank of the river Guadalquivir. Throughout the centuries additions to the tower can be seen reflected in the architecture. The tower was originally built to protect the bridge and has had many uses since including a prison, barracks and a girls' school. It was declared a Historic Artistic Monument in 1931 and in 1985 the Spanish Historical Heritage Law granted the highest protection category to the Tower.

For more information visit: <https://www.torrecalahorra.es/>



picture by Daniel Villafruela

## **6. The Judería de Córdoba (Jewish Quarter)**

The 'Jewish Quarter of Córdoba' is possibly the best known area of Córdoba's Historic centre which was made a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984. It is a network of small streets and alleys where the Jews lived between the 10th and 15th centuries and lies northeast of the Mosque-Cathedral.

The Synagogue lies at the centre of the quarter, a 'Mudejar' construction built in 1315 and believed to be one of only three originals remaining in Spain.

The area also has the Zoco Municipal (Zoco Municipal Market), the Museo Taurino (Bull-fighting Museum), and the statue of Maimonides, a Sephardic Jewish Philosopher and Astronomer born Córdoba.



## **7. Royal Botanical Garden**

The Royal Botanical Garden is located near to the river Guadalquivir over a 7.5 hectare area. Developed in 1987 it was conceived as a 'living museum' of cultural and scientific contents related to the plant world. There is a strong emphasis on environmental education including agricultural, botanical and ethnobotanical schools. The Garden itself includes:

Central Greenhouses with 130 species of flora Canaria

American Greenhouses with 100,000 species of flora from around America

Arboretum with Over 200 trees and shrubs from around the world

Stone forest with tree trunk and fern frond fossils

A Courtyard, Rose Garden, museums and the 'Martos' and 'San Antonio' mills.

For more information visit: <http://www.jardinbotanicodecordoba.com/>



## **8. Córdoba City Sight Seeing Bus Tour**

A great way to see Córdoba and learn about the rich heritage and history of the city, with a full-day hop-on hop-off sightseeing bus tour. Listen to commentary in 10 different languages as you travel to 17 different stops through the city, where you can get off to explore and learn more. There are also **Bike Tours** with a professional guide for the more energetic visitor. Please note tours don't usually include tickets to access the attractions, but they are a great way to get an overview of the city.



## **9. Flamenco Show**

Experience the passion of flamenco at a live show in the 10th-century Arabian Baths of Santa María in the Jewish Old Town of Córdoba. This highly expressive dance characterised by hand clapping, percussive footwork and intricate body movements is traditional of Spain.



## **10. Wine Tasting / Cooking Class**

Spend an evening with a local expert learning about the different wines from the Montilla-Moriles region in a local wine shop. You will get to taste a number of wines accompanied with a selection of delicious typical local tapas. Or if you fancy a gastronomic experience you can take a guided tour of Córdoba's Old Town and visit the historic Mercado La Corredera to learn about the ingredients that are central to Andalusia's celebrated cuisine. Choose the fresh ingredients for your class and learn to cook the Andalusian way!

For more information on items 8, 9 and 10 above visit: <https://www.getyourguide.com/>

