

Top Ten Things to Do and See in Granada

(Where available it is recommended to 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. Alhambra fortress

This Unesco World Heritage site built in 889AD was originally a small fortress. It was rebuilt in the mid-13th century and converted into a royal palace in 1333; over the centuries it was altered in the Renaissance and Mannerist style, but then allowed to fall into dis-repair for centuries! Now it is one of Spain's most significant examples of Islamic architecture with 16th-century, and later Christian, building and garden additions.

For more information visit: <http://www.alhambra-patronato.es/>



2. Carmen de los Martires

Carmen of the Martyrs house was built at the end of the 19th Century as a summer residence in the grounds of the Alhambra. Throughout its history it has been home to dungeons, a convent, a place of torture and a palace. The gardens were designed reflecting French, English and Spanish styles and after years of neglect the house and gardens have been restored to their former glory. The gardens are now an oasis of trees, plants, statues, grottos, waterfalls, and the San Juan aqueduct. The lake has a bridge with a tower and is home to black swans and ducks!



3. Arabic quarter of Albaicín

The Albaicín is the old Arab Quarter within Granada and the place the first Siri court was built in the 11th-Century. With a strong Muslim influence it featured luxurious carmenes and public baths, and at the height of its splendour it had a population of more than 40 thousand inhabitants and thirty mosques. Battles saw the mosques demolished and replaced with churches; the Moors left their homes and wealthy Christians used them to build their carmenes. With its medieval Moorish narrow streets and well-kept traditional houses, this area has retained its old charm and is the ideal place to discover Moorish architecture.



4. El Realejo

Throughout the ages the Barrio Realejo was an important Jewish quarter called 'Garnata al-Yahud' (Granada of the Jews) by the Moors during the 8th century. During Moorish rule the Jews lived peacefully, however following the Christian conquest by the Catholic Monarchs the Jews were expelled, the Jewish quarter destroyed and the barrio renamed 'El Realejo'.

Today it is a truly cosmopolitan neighbourhood where people from very different backgrounds coexist, with its narrow winding streets and many tapas bars it is one of the liveliest areas of Granada.

There are many interesting places to visit such as the 'Campo de Principe', a square located on the site of the former Muslim cemetery, and the beautiful 'Iglesia Santo Domingo' church. Many of the walls of the Realejo have been decorated by the local graffiti artist 'El Niño' giving the Realejo an edgy, creative ambience.



5. Sacromonte

The Sacromonte offers mountain views, meadows, rivers, and caves! It is the old gypsy quarter with caves originally carved out by the Arabs into which the gypsies moved in after the conquest in the 18th century. The 19th Century saw writers and artists of the Romantic Movement, mostly bohemian English and French travellers, in search of these picturesque oddities adorned with shiny copper pots. The one main street, 'Camino del Sacromonte', is lined with caves, above which is a cliff hanging secondary street 'Vereda de Enmedio' somewhat less touristy. Along a hilltop ridge in a series of whitewashed caves is the 'Cave Museum of Sacromonte' in a wonderful scenic setting. Sacromonte is known for 'zambra', a flamenco variation where the dancer also sings, which can be seen in many of the cave-bars.



6. Cathedral

Built on the site of the former great mosque, Granada's Cathedral is a masterpiece of Spanish Renaissance style. The first stone was laid in 1523 and 181 years later in 1704 the cathedral was finished; although of the two towers that were planned only one was built. The height of this tower had to be lowered because it was too heavy for the foundations!

The cathedral has a stunning interior with chapels of different ages and styles, the most impressive being the chapel of 'Nuestra Senora de la Antigua'. The 'Royal Chapel' is the final resting place of the Catholic Kings and must be accessed through a separate entrance; the tombs of 'Los Reyes Catolicos' are not in the cathedral itself but in the adjacent building.

For more information visit: <https://catedraldegranada.com/>



7. El Bañuelo (Arabic Baths)

El Bañuelo dates back to the 11th century and is the oldest civil building in Granada and one of the best preserved ‘hammams’ in Muslim Spain. In the 20th century it was restored and is now a Cultural Heritage Site. The facility, which has a rectangular shape, is made up of several rooms that comprise the classic Arab bath model. The lobby, where people relaxed and left their clothes, leads to a cool room where the water is at room temperature. This is followed by the main or warm room, the largest at El Bañuelo has a stunning dome with octagonal star-shaped skylights that allow light to come in and create a magical atmosphere. The room is surrounded by three galleries topped with horseshoe arches perched above columns. The last area is the hot room or sauna, where a hole in the wall shows the original location of the water heater that made it possible to reach high temperatures. The water conduits below the floor required visitors to wear wooden sandals to avoid burning their feet! For more information visit: <http://www.hammamgranada.com/en/>



8. Granada Charterhouse

The Charterhouse is a Carthusian monastery and one of the finest examples of Spanish Baroque architecture. Founded in 1506 with construction starting ten years later and continuing for the next 300 years! The exterior is somewhat plain, a peaceful cloister with rows of Doric columns dating from the 1600's, from this courtyard you will find rooms hung with paintings of martyrs who met a bloody end. The interior can only be described as a flamboyant explosion of ornamentation. The most striking features include the tabernacle, church and famous sacristy, richly decorated with a dome painted by the 17th century baroque master, Antonio Palomino. For more information visit: <http://cartujadegranada.com/>



9. Hicuri Art Restaurant

Granada's leading graffiti artist, El Niño de las Pinturas, has been let loose inside Hicuri, creating a psychedelic backdrop to the vegan food served at this friendly, laid-back restaurant. Zingy salads, tofu, and curried seitan provide welcome alternatives to the traditional meat dishes that dominate so many city menus.

For more information visit: <https://www.restaurantehicuriartvegan.com/>



10. Granada Science Park

A great venue with or without children! The 70,000 square meters of Science Park is located about 15 minutes' walk from the city centre, or a shorter journey by bus. You can learn about Planet Earth and the Human Body in a fun and interactive way. There are also the botanical gardens, a butterfly greenhouse, planetarium and 50m high observation tower with viewing tower.

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

