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*Somewhere along the Costa Blanca, between Valencia and Alicante  
(Photo by Julianlozanobrau, free of copyright c/o Wikimedia Commons)*

“ESPAÑA INCOGNITA” 2018:

## “ALMONDS, ORANGES, AND DATES”

Valencia – Costa Blanca – Elche – Alicante – El Escorial – Madrid – and more!

11 days, from Tuesday, March 6, to Friday, March 16, 2018

*A delightful winter break in Spain’s Levante Province, situated on the Mediterranean coast and blessed with a mild and sunny climate. Local attractions include Valencia, Spain’s biggest city after Madrid and Barcelona, the picturesque Costa Blanca with fine resorts such as Benidorm, the amazing palm tree forest of Elche, picturesque Murcia, and the ancient seaport of Alicante; and we finish in style with a visit to El Escorial! The tour is escorted by historian Jacques R. Pauwels, PhD, author of ‘Beneath the Dust of Time: a History of the Names of Peoples and Places’ (London, 2009), who will lecture on the history and culture of Spain.*

Tour price from Toronto, based on double occupancy, INCLUDING all present airport taxes, security fees, and fuel surcharges: \$3,375 CAD - Single room supplement: \$575 – “Land only”: \$2,495

### PROPOSED ITINERARY:

[MEALS: L = lunch; D = dinner]

#### Day 1 – Tuesday, March 6:

Departure at 8:00PM from Toronto to Madrid on a *non-stop* flight with Air Canada. Dinner as well as a light breakfast will be served on board.

### Day 2 - Wednesday, March 7:

[D]

Arrival at 9:30AM at Madrid Airport, where a comfortable private coach will be waiting to take us to in the picturesque old town of **Cuenca**, situated in the Castilla-la Mancha region of Central Spain (170km). Accommodation in a first-class/4-star hotel in the heart of the attractive old town, the Convento del Giraldo, a “carefully restored 17th-century building combining comfort and modern technology with old original architectonic elements and an exquisite décor” (<http://www.hotelconventodelgiraldo.com/en>). Free time to settle in, followed by a leisurely walk in wonderful old Cuenca, an outstanding example of a medieval city, built on a steep mountainside, famous for its “hanging houses,” built on the edge of the cliff, overlooking the Huecar River below - an amazing sight! The entire town is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/781>). A welcome drink (Sangria, perhaps?) will be followed by dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.

### Day 3 - Thursday, March 8:

[D]

After breakfast, we motor from Cuenca into the region known as Levante, “land of the rising sun,” Spain sunny eastern seacoast, stretching north and south of its great metropolis, the historical city of Valencia (200km). Arrival in **Valencia** around noon, and visit to the futuristic museum complex known as the City of Arts and Sciences ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciutat\\_de\\_les\\_Arts\\_i\\_les\\_Ci%C3%A8ncies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciutat_de_les_Arts_i_les_Ci%C3%A8ncies)), where you will be amazed by the spectacular, ultra-modern architectural creations of masters such as Sir Norman Foster and Santiago Calatrava: El Puente de l'Assut de l'Or, a bridge whose 125-meter high pillar is the highest point in the city; L'Agora, a covered plaza in which concerts and sporting events are held; L'Umbracle, a landscaped walk with plant species indigenous to Valencia, such as lavender, honeysuckle, and bougainvillea, and sculptures by contemporary artists, including Yoko Ono. We also visit L'Oceanogràfic, the largest aquarium in Europe, featuring an incredible variety of creatures from the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, including sharks, belugas, walruses, and penguins, and the Prince Felipe Museum of Sciences, resembling the skeleton of a whale! In late afternoon we check into a first-class/4-star hotel. Dinner in the hotel.



*Valencia's City of Arts and Sciences (photo by Sunnya343 c/o Wikimedia Commons)*

#### **WEATHER:**

Valencia and the Levante region enjoy a particularly mild Mediterranean climate, with lots of sunshine and very little rain. Spring comes early here, and the average daytime temperatures in March hovers around a pretty balmy 18 degrees Centigrade, while daily high temperatures can climb into the low 20s! However, occasional rain and cooler temperatures are of course also possible.

### Day 4 – Friday, March 9:

Morning sightseeing tour of Valencia's historical city centre, with sights such as Ayuntamiento Square, the Gothic Cathedral, Palacio de la Generalidad, the medieval, late-Gothic Silk Exchange, known as *la Lonja*, a

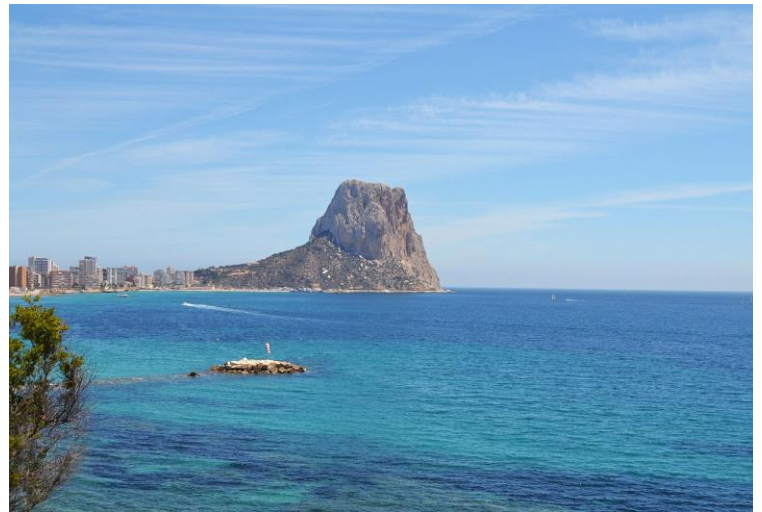
UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/782>), and the Central Market, an enormous metal-and-glass building dating back to the 1920s. We finish the program with a visit to the fabulous González Martí National Ceramics Museum, housed in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century palace. The afternoon is free to shop or explore Valencia on your own. We recommend a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts, featuring masterpieces of local, Spanish, and international masters such as Van Dyck, Murillo, Velázquez, El Greco, and Goya. This evening, opportunity to attend a traditional Flamenco show (*optional*).

Day 5 – Saturday, March 10:

Our full-day excursion starts with a tour of the *Huerta* (“garden”), the fertile countryside around Valencia, served by an irrigation system that goes back to the time of the Romans, and specializing in oranges (“Valencia oranges”!) and other citrus fruits as well as market gardening. Then we explore the **Costa del Azahar**, the “Orange Blossom Coast,” stretching to the north of Valencia and featuring almond as well as orange groves, beaches, resorts, and historical seaports. The highlight will be lovely **Peniscola**, an ancient fortress perched on top of a rocky peninsula, photogenically connected to a fine sandy beach. On to **Sagunto**, where we will visit the Roman Theatre and view the impressive ruins of the ancient acropolis on top of a high and very steep hill, famously besieged by Hannibal and his Carthaginians in 218BC – an opportunity for your tour guide to sort out the fascinating history of Spain in Antiquity! (Did you know, for example, that the name Spain means “Land of Rabbits,” and was concocted by the Phoenicians around 1,000BC?) Return to Valencia in late afternoon and free evening.



< *Peniscola (anonymous photo c/o Wikimedia Commons)*



*The Rock of Gibraltar? No, the Penyal d'Ifac, on the Costa Blanca! >*

Day 6 - Sunday, March 11:

Departure from Valencia after breakfast. We motor south along the famous **Costa Blanca** or “White Coast.” This is where the easternmost peaks of Spain’s central mountain range, covered by pine, olive, and almond trees, meet the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean, and steep cliffs and rocky headlands alternate with salt flats and sandy beaches, tourist resorts, and fishing villages. Stops will be made regularly for pictures and refreshments, e.g. at the amazing rock called **Penyal d’Ifac**, and in resorts such as **Calp** and **Altea**, and of course immensely popular **Benidorm**. Late-afternoon arrival in the ancient and very attractive seaport of **Alicante**, where we will stay in (rooms with sea view) in the first-class/four-star Hotel Melia, located on the Mediterranean waterfront ([www.melia.com/en/hotels/spain/alicante/melia-alicante/index.html](http://www.melia.com/en/hotels/spain/alicante/melia-alicante/index.html)). Dinner in one of the restaurants in our hotel.

[D]

### Day 7 - Monday, March 12:

Morning sightseeing tour of wonderful Alicante, with highlights such as Santa Barbara Castle, situated on top of a steep hill overlooking the city; the Cathedral; City Hall; Santa Maria Church; and Esplanada de España, a wonderful waterfront promenade with multicoloured pavement. The afternoon is free to shop and/or explore Alicante on your own. No group dinner, but Alicante has plenty of fine eateries, ranging from Michelin-starred gourmet restaurants to tapas bars that are ideal for an evening of “grazing”!

*Marrakech? No, Elche!*

(photo by Jose Carlos Diez c/o Wikimedia Commons) >

### Day 8 - Tuesday, March 13:

[L or D]

Full-day excursion to nearby **Elche**, a North-African-style oasis town featuring more than 200,000 date palms, originally planted by the Phoenicians and later expanded by the Arabs; this is one of Spain’s UNESCO World Heritage Sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/930>). The major attractions here are *El Palmeral* (the palm grove); the lush Municipal Park; the *Huerta del Cura*, featuring an 150-year-old palm tree, originally dedicated to Austrian Empress Elisabeth, a.k.a. Sissi; the Baroque Santa Maria Basilica; the medieval Calahorra Tower; and the Arab Baths. We also visit the Museo del Palmeral (Palm Grove Museum), and will enjoy some free time for lunch and exploring on your own. On the way back to Alicante, we will briefly stop in the town of **Jijona** to visit a factory/museum focusing on the local specialty, a delicious type of nougat known as *turrón*. Returning to Alicante, it will still be possible for the art lovers to visit the exquisite Asegurada Museum of Modern Art (MACA), featuring works by world-famous artists such as Picasso, Braque, Gris, and Miró. Today, group lunch in Elche OR dinner in Alicante.



### Day 9 – Wednesday, March 14:

[D]

Departure from Alicante after breakfast. We motor inland and cross Don Quijote’s La Mancha again on our way to the heartland of Spain, the province of Castile. Madrid, formerly a minor Castilian town, was chosen as the capital of Spain by King Philip II, but he himself moved to a residence outside of the city, the monastery of **El Escorial**, and this is our destination for today. However, if time permits, we will enter **Madrid** for a few hours to enjoy a “panoramic” city tour, covering sights such as Plaza de España, the Royal Palace, Plaza Mayor. Dinner and overnight in the comfortable superior tourist-class/three-star Hotel Los Lanceros (<http://en.loslanceros.com>).



< *El Escorial* (photo by H.-P. Schaefer, c/o Wikimedia Commons)

### Day 10 - Thursday, March 15:

[D]

Morning guided visit to the huge 16<sup>th</sup>-century monastery El Escorial, a UNESCO World Heritage Site described as “built on an exceptionally beautiful site in an austere architectural style, where King Philip II of Spain, then the most powerful monarch in Europe, retreated to spend the last years of his reign” (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/318>). In the afternoon we visit the nearby “Valley of the Fallen” (*Valle de los Caídos*), a controversial but impressive Franco-era monument to the victims of Spain’s Civil War.

Return to our hotel and free time before our “hasta la vista!”-dinner in a typical restaurant.

Day 11 – Friday, March 16:

After breakfast, transfer to Madrid Airport in time for the 11:00AM departure of our non-stop return flight to Toronto with Air Canada, scheduled to arrive at 2:30PM.

**Tour price, based on double occupancy, from Toronto, INCLUDING all present airport taxes, security fees, and fuel surcharges: \$3,375 CAD - Single room supplement: \$575 – “Land only”: \$2,495**

*Included in the tour price are:*

- Non-stop return flight Toronto-Madrid with Air Canada, including all airport taxes, security fees, and fuel surcharges;
- Accommodation based on double occupancy, mostly in 4-star/first-class hotels; the single room supplement is \$575;
- Full breakfast daily and a total of *six* multi-course dinners (or lunches), occasionally including wine;
- Overland transportation by private coach;
- All visits and sightseeing, including admission to museums and monuments, as outlined in the itinerary.

*Not included are:*

- All items of a personal nature;
- Beverages with dinners, and meals other than those outlined above;
- A gratuity for the coach driver, normally \$25 or equivalent in local currency;
- Travel Insurance is available on an individual basis, please contact our office if interested.



*The famous hanging houses of Cuenca!*  
*(Photo by Håkan Svensson a.k.a. Xauxa c/o Wikimedia Commons)*

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## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:**

Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. A deposit of \$750.00 is required at the time of registration. **Your reservation is confirmed upon receipt of your deposit and application form. No reservations will be accepted without a signed application form.**

### **REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:**

Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

### **CANCELLATION POLICY:**

Refund of deposit is made in full if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. more than 90 days prior of the departure date of the tour less a \$500.00 non refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation charges apply:

90 days to 46 days before departure: 25% of tour cost  
45 to 31 days before departure: 50% of tour cost  
Within 30 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. reserves the right without notice, to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, etc. may necessitate changes in the itinerary as outlined. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable. Any savings realized by these changes will be passed on to the passengers, any resultant expenses shall be borne by the passenger. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. acts only as an agent in securing hotel, transportation and other travel services and in no event shall be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotel, transportation and other travel services are provided to tour members subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally. The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. also reserves the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, in which case equitable refund will be made at the discretion of the tour operators.

### **AIR TRANSPORTATION:**

Transatlantic economy flight by scheduled IATA carrier(s), based on an economy class group fare. All fares are subject to specific rules and regulations, to changes and to government approval. Deviations from the group flights are possible but subject to higher rates. Pauwels Travel will research any request for date or routing changes at the time they are requested. Should any individual rate be less than the group fare plus airline and administrative fees, the lower rate will be offered to the tour participant. Individual airfares are subject to immediate ticketing and the fare plus taxes must be paid at the time the ticket is issued by the participant requesting the change. Should the group airfare be the lowest available rate, an administrative fee of \$50.00 plus any airline charges will apply.

## APPLICATION FORM

Please book \_\_\_ seat(s) on the "España Incognita" tour from March 6 to 16, 2018.

Enclosed is my/our deposit of \_\_\_\_\_ (\$750 per person, *plus* insurance premium if taken.)

Please indicate with an X if you intend to travel on Group flights \_\_\_\_\_ or Land only \_\_\_\_\_.

**Deposit and insurance premium, if taken, are due with registration. You will be invoiced for an interim payment of \$1000.00 and the balance due 45 days prior to departure.**

**WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 3 MONTHS AFTER TOUR DATE TO BE SENT IN WITH YOUR APPLICATION.**

PASSPORT NAME(S): **Please** indicate the appropriate title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle(s) \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, give your commonly used first name as you would like it to appear on your name tag: (e.g. "Liz" for "Mary Elizabeth") \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ (Email) \_\_\_\_\_

If traveling alone, is a SINGLE ROOM REQUIRED? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin \_\_\_\_\_ double \_\_\_\_\_.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:** We find the earlier a request is made, the more success we have in filling it, so please list any dietary requests, allergies, any special physical needs or frequent flyer numbers etc here. **Please be advised that due to Airline policies, individual seat selection is not always available on group fares and cannot be guaranteed by our agency.**

We cannot ensure requests made 30 days or less prior to departure will be possible.

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**Insurance.** Please call the office for premiums then record it on application and add premium to deposit.

I/we would like to purchase (please check and record your rate):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

All-inclusive Package \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Non-medical Package \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** Decline Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT:**  Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**"I/we agree to the terms and conditions attached to the program, have indicated our insurance choice, indicated any special requests and included payment".** Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward this completed and signed form, copy of passport and payment to:

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