

## In Search of the Iberian Lynx

*4-night/5-day privately guided wildlife safari in the Sierra Morena mountain range of southern Spain*



*This is a privately guided tour to observe the Iberian Lynx and other fascinating wildlife species of southern Spain. Accompanied by an experienced wildlife guide, you'll spend 5 days exploring the beautiful Sierra de Andujar National Park in Andalusia, one of only two locations where the Iberian Lynx can still be seen in the wild. While the Lynx is typically the focus of wildlife itineraries in the Sierra de Andujar, many other species can be found in the park, including wolves, Spanish ibex, wild boar, and otter, to name just a few of the highlights! Keen birders will also find much to admire in this remote corner of Spain, with several endangered raptors, including the Spanish imperial eagle, the golden eagle, and black vulture all to be seen within the region.*

*This tour can be run throughout the year except during July and August, but the autumn and winter months are best for spotting lynx and wolves.*

### **Day 1: Arrive Malaga; transfer to Andujar via Granada and the Alhambra Palace**

Depart London Gatwick on the BA early flight to Malaga, arriving late morning. On arrival, meet with your driver and depart for Granada, a drive of approx. 1 and a half hours.

Granada is a comparatively small city with a population of just under a quarter of a million. The city has a vibrant bohemian feel to it and is packed with street stalls, cafes, bars and flamenco clubs. Granada is famous for its Moorish architecture, typified by its horseshoe arches, narrow winding streets, and a vibrant Arabian quarter.

### ***Your Financial Protection***

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

The historical highlight of Granada is of course the Alhambra, a magnificent palace and fortress complex dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup>-century, which you will have time to explore this afternoon. The Palace enjoys a spectacular location, perched on a high hill overlooking the city, with the Sierra Nevada Mountains as its backdrop. During your tour you'll be able to enter several of the palace rooms, which have been beautifully preserved, and enjoy a walk through the lovely palace gardens, revealing typical Moorish planting of roses, orange trees and myrtles. Surrounding the main complex are dense elm forests planted by the Duke of Wellington in 1812.



The Alhambra was originally built as a fortress in the 10<sup>th</sup>-century, but its most glorious period was not until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when Mohammed 1, the first king of the Nasrid dynasty, established it as his royal palace and built extensive expansions to the palace and grounds, which were further embellished by subsequent Islamic and Christian rulers. What began as a defensive fortification was expanded to become a palace complex, incorporating a watch tower, mosque, public baths, and numerous courtyards with ornate water features. Following the Christian Reconquista in 1492, the site became the Royal Court of catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. It is where Christopher Columbus received royal endorsement for his expedition.

Today the Alhambra is a UNESCO world heritage site and Spain's most visited historical site.

After your tour of the Alhambra, continue with your wildlife guide to Sierra de Andujar National Park, where you check-in for four nights at La Carcola Guesthouse on full-board basis.

### **La Caracola**

*La Caracola is a charming guesthouse situated in woodlands just outside the Sierra de Andujar National Park. La Caracola is a traditional Andalusian house featuring tiled floors, wrought ironwork on the windows, white-washed walls, thick wooden beams and typical red tiled roofing. There are seven bright, contemporary rooms, each with private bathroom. The lounge is large and comfortable with an open fire for cool evenings. There is a separate dining room and bodega. The outdoor pool and extensive gardens are perfect for relaxing. There is a hide in the garden for observing birds, who are frequent visitors!*

### **Day 2: Sierra de Andujar National Park**

The next three days will be spent exploring the Sierra de Andujar National Park by 4x4 vehicle in the company of your experienced wildlife guide. Your guide will focus on sites where the lynx is known to visit. Guests are encouraged to look for tracks of lynx but also for other wildlife, including boar, wolves, wildcat and ibex.





Sierra de Andujar National Park is a large (748sq km) semi-mountainous part of the Sierra Morena mountain range, and is the preserve of some of Andalusia's oldest Mediterranean forests of cork and oak. The Yeguas river flows through the rocky hills of the park, providing an essential water source for its forests and for its wildlife, which includes several endangered species. This is an excellent spot for wildlife enthusiasts, being home to the elusive lynx, perhaps the rarest cat in the world. After many years of being on the brink of the extinction due to habitat fragmentation and lack of its main prey (rabbit), the Iberian lynx is now slowly recovering. Among the other mammals found within the park are wolves, wild boar, red and fallow deer, fox, wild cat, Spanish ibex, and otter.

Sierra de Andujar also offers fabulous birdlife. Several birds of prey are frequently sighted within the park, including golden eagle, as is one of the largest birds in Europe, the black vulture. In addition, Sierra de Andujar is home to 25 breeding pairs of Spanish imperial eagle – one-tenth of the total population of this rare bird. Little owls nest between the granite rocks and rock buntings, hawfinches and warblers can be seen moving from bush to bush, while corn buntings gather together and hoopoes are usually seen feeding on the meadows.



Keen botanists will also find much to admire in Sierra de Andujar National Park. The open areas of the park display various varieties of rock rose and aromatic Mediterranean plants such as lavender, marjoram, thyme and rosemary, while the banks of the Yeguas River sustain willows, alders and poplars. Other species of flora include oleander, strawberry trees, myrtle and false

olive. The stone pine is also found here and highly valued for its edible pine kernels. Botanists will be eager to spot some more unusual plants, such as the spring flowering *Jasione crispa*.



## Day 5: Return Malaga and fly home

After breakfast, enjoy a final drive in the park before returning to the guesthouse for lunch. Following lunch, say goodbye to your hosts and drive to Malaga Airport (approx. 3 hours) to catch the BA flight out to Gatwick / your onward connection.

### Price Guide:

The cost of this privately guided itinerary is **£1,785 per person**, based on two travellers in shared twin/double accommodation. For four travellers, the price is reduced to **£1,285 per person**; for 6 travellers, **£1,050 per person**. The single supplement is £80.

For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

### Includes:

- Services of private wildlife guide
- 4 nights' accommodation in La Caracola, inclusive of all meals and one drink with dinner
- Entrance to the Alhambra Palace
- All transfers as outlined in itinerary

### Excludes:

- International flights (British Airways direct flights from Gatwick start from £120 per person, including taxes)
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature
- Tips