



SPAIN EXPLORATION

Triumph of Christianity: The Reconquista

Designed & Led by Jack Wheeler & Rebel Holiday

Friday, October 8 to Sunday, Oct 18, 2026



Spain Exploration: The Triumph of Christianity in Spain

Over 3,000 years ago (1100 BC), sea-faring Phoenicians founded trading colonies like Gadir (now Cadiz) along the Mediterranean coast of a land they called *i-shaphan-im*, the land of hyraxes (a small furry animal similar to a rabbit with tiny ears). Centuries later, Roman settlers Latinized this to *Hispania* – España to the Spanish, Spain to us. **By 180 AD, both Roman settlers and local peoples such as Celts and Iberians had begun adopting Christianity.** By 250 AD, Christian churches were in a number of communities throughout Spain.

Christian civilization had become deeply established by the time of Rome's crumbling in the early 400's, when Spain was taken over by two waves of Germanic tribes. The first was the Vandals, who called their conquered territory Vandalusia. Next to come were the Visigoths. Becoming Christians, the Visigoths established a vibrant and prosperous kingdom with its capital at the old Roman city of Toletum (Toledo) that lasted for almost 300 years.

In 711, an invading force of Berbers from North Africa, who had just adopted a religion called Islam, landed at a huge rock promontory called Mons Calpe at the southern tip of Hispania. The invaders' leader was Tariq ibn Ziyad, so they renamed the monolith *Jabal Tariq*, the Rock of Tariq – subsequently shortened to Gibraltar. Waves of Moslem invaders followed, sweeping the Visigoths away and conquering all Hispania, which they named *Al-Andalus*, their pronunciation of Vandalusia. Now the southern region is called “Andalucia.”

This coming October, you are invited to personally experience one of Western Civilization's most heroic achievements – Spain's triumph of Christianity over foreign conquest that took eight centuries to complete. We will explore one of the most epic sagas in all history, known as the *Reconquista*, Reconquest, from start to finish.

Along the way, we will learn a great deal while we enjoy modern day Spain, with luxury hotels, marvelous Spanish cuisine and wine, immerse ourselves in Spanish culture, and have so much fun together along the way.

Wheeler-Windsor Expeditions
Spain Exploration – The Triumph of Christianity
Known as The Reconquista



Day 1 – Oct 8, 2026 - Arrive BCN / Barcelona

You will be met at the airport and driven to our hotel, the lovely Barcelona Astoria Hotel



Meet for lunch and then light afternoon activities.

We will visit **Barri Gòtic** with early medieval layers help set the “pre-Reconquista” stage. The Barri Gòtic or Gothic Quarter goes back to Roman times, continuously occupied since, with many medieval buildings.

A highlight is the Roman Barcino with Visigothic remains. *Barcilonum* to the Romans, *Barchinona* to the Christian Visigoths, *Barcelonès* for the Catalans today. The Underground Museum revealing the Christian Visigothic city.



Enjoy dinner at **7 Portes**, historic Catalan cuisine. Overnight at Barcelona Astoria Hotel.

Day 2 – Oct 9 - Barcelona (Gaudí + early medieval context)

Today we explore Spain's most vibrant city, famous for the unique architectural wonders of [Antoni Gaudí](#) (1852-1926), such as the Cathedral Sagrada Familia (below) and **Casa Batlló** (right) or **La Pedrera**.



One of many examples of Gaudí architecture

Midday - Lunch in El Born Santa Maria del Mar, a key medieval church (13–14th c., post-Reconquista Catalonia)

Afternoon gives you options, such as the Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA) a Roman/Visigothic museum with many historic artifacts.



Day 2 – Oct 9 – (continued)

You might like time to stroll along Barcelona's most famous tree-lined street, *La Rambla*, full of shops, pubs, art galleries, flower gardens, and so much else...

Or you may relax at one of the city's many beaches.



Barcelona Option: Montjuïc Castle (strategic hilltop, later medieval military, right)

Evening: Early tapas dinner

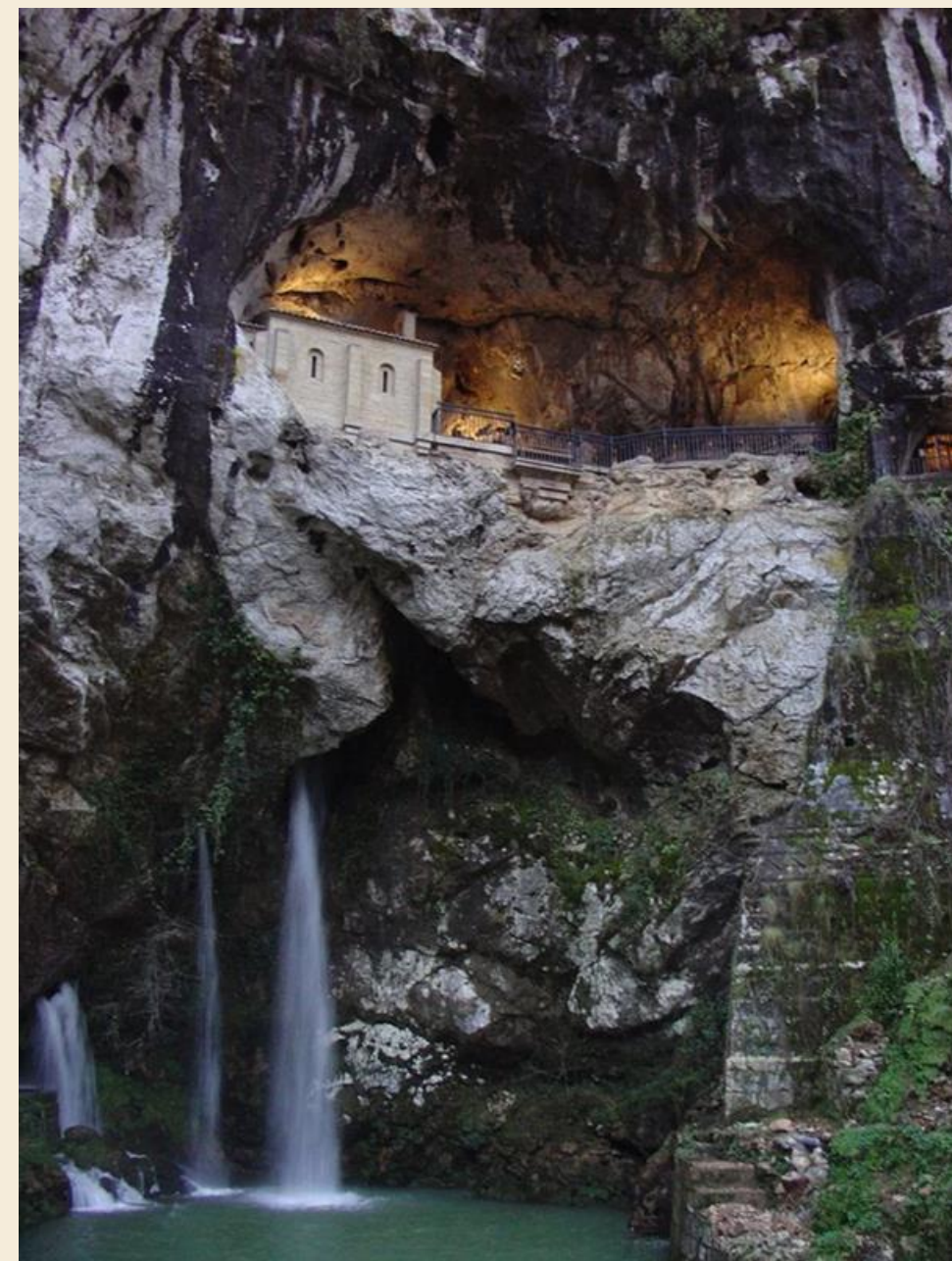
Overnight: Barcelona Astoria Hotel



Day 3 – Oct 10 - BCN → OVD (Asturias) → Covadonga → Burgos
Birthplace of the Reconquista, Birthplace of El Cid

Morning-Fly BCN–OVD - Drive to Covadonga (symbolic start of Reconquista, 722)
Covadonga

We take an early morning flight to northwest Spain and drive into the Picos de Europa mountains brings us to [Covadonga](#), where Visigoth Christian Knights in 722 began retaking Spain from Islamic invaders. We visit the Holy Cave (Cueva Santa, right) and the Basilica. We'll learn the legend of Pelagius (Spanish Pelayo, Portuguese Palagio) is revered in Spain as the founder of the Reconquista.



Lunch nearby (simple Asturian fare) features Fabada asturiana and cabrales cheese.

Days 3 & 4 – Oct 10 & 11 (continued)

Afternoon drive to Burgos with exceptional scenery that you see on the right...

Monument to birthplace of [El Cid](#), Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, village of Vivar El Cid



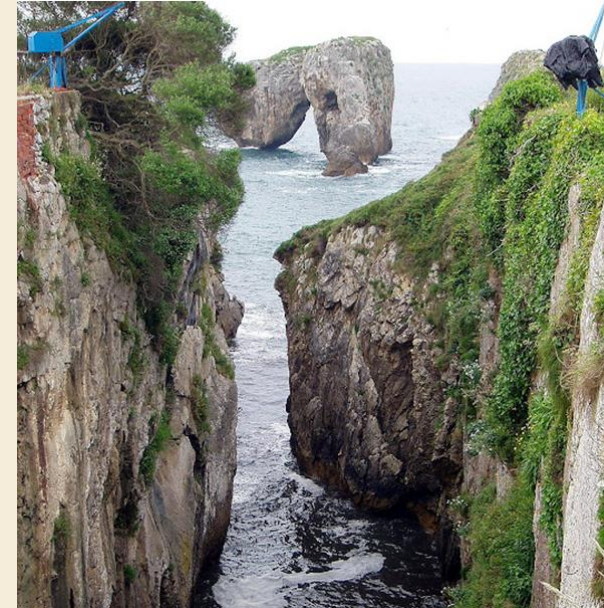
Evening (Burgos)

Stroll along **Arlanzón River**, dinner near Cathedral square

Overnight: Beautiful NH Palacio Hotel in Burgos – we'll be staying here two nights.



Hidden village of Puentevedey, “the Bridge of God”



Dramatic Atlantic Ocean scenery

We arrive at Burgos to spend the night in the lovely Burgos Palacio Hotel



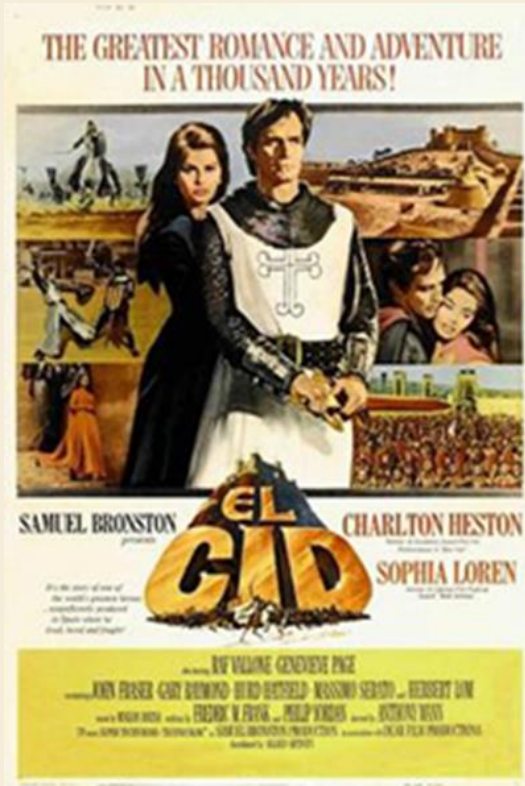
Day 5 – Oct 12 - Burgos → Madrid

El Cid at Full Strength

El Cid is the most famous Christian Knight of the Reconquista, so famous that Charlton Heston starred in a movie about him with Sofia Loren.

Activities today in Burgos, include the Burgos Cathedral, Gothic masterpiece (UNESCO) with the tombs of El Cid and his wife, **Doña Jimena**.

Visit **Museo de Burgos** – See the Tizona Sword of El Cid, [confirmed by spectroscopic analysis](#) to date from the time of his life (1043-1099)



Museum of Human Evolution (optional but world-class)

Lunch - Morcilla de Burgos, specialty is roast lamb (lechazo)



El Cid & Doña Jimena tomb

Day 5 – Oct 12 *(continued)*

Afternoon - Drive 2 ½ hours to Madrid, enroute we'll visit the spectacular Gormaz Castle, occupied by El Cid in 1087

We'll spend our evening in Madrid, the capital of Spain.

We may enjoy a gentle walk from **Plaza Mayor** to **Puerta del Sol** – to this day a popular late afternoon/early evening pastime in Spanish culture.



Madrid – Early tapas dinner at a charming restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel Intelier Palacio San Martin in the heart of Madrid



Day 6 – Oct 13 - Madrid

Visigoths → Christian kingdoms → imperial Spain

Morning - National Archaeological Museum - Focus areas: Visigothic crowns (Guarrazar Treasure) Treasure of the Visigothic Kingdom in the museum Kingdom of Toledo material Lunch will be near **Barrio de las Letras**.

We will visit the world famous **Prado Museum** - The Prado has the greatest collection of Reconquista and Post-Reconquista Spanish art.

The Surrender of Granada by Francisco Pradilla Ortiz Boabdil, ruler of last Muslim kingdom in Spain, surrenders to Ferdinand & Isabella, January 2, 1492. We'll also see Velázquez (court culture of Reconquista-completed Spain) and other religious art post-1492.



Evening – Flamenco dance at Tablao 1911 (historic)

Overnight at Hotel Intelier Palacio San Martin



Day 7 – Oct 14 - Toledo Trip

Visigothic capital → Christian stronghold

Morning – Depart to Toledo

Museo de los Concilios y la Cultura Visigoda - Museum of Visigoth Culture
San Román Church (Visigothic foundations)

We can visit The **Alcázar of Toledo**, where Charles V met Hernando Cotez in 1535
Cathedral of Toledo

Lunch with Tagus River views

El Greco post-Reconquista shows cultural synthesis.
This El Greco painting is in the Museo del Greco.

Dinner with View - Overnight at Parador of Toledo



Day 8 – Oct 15 - Toledo → Valencia

El Cid as Ruler

Morning – Depart Toledo to Valencia

Key sites: Valencia Cathedral, Ceiling of Valencia Cathedral



Statue of El Cid in Valencia



Cathedral claims the **Holy Grail**

<https://aleteia.org/2021/08/29/its-the-jubilee-year-of-the-holy-chalice-in-valencia/> again in 2026

Day 8 – Oct 15 *(continued)*

La Almoina Archaeological Centre

Shows Roman → Visigothic → Islamic → Christian layers of civilization.

We will find many El Cid references in city museums

Lunch - Proper paella Valenciana (nice area-outside tourist strip)



Evening – Overnight in Valencia at highly-rated hotel



The unique underground La Almoina Archaeological Center covered with a glass roof

Day 9 – Oct 16 - Valencia → Granada

End of the Reconquista

Morning - Madrid to Granada - Check in at hotel and lunch

Afternoon - Alhambra & Generalife

Focus on Nasrid palace culture; Transition to Christian rule



Granada



Evening – **Flamenco Sacromonte Gitano** caves feature an intimate, raw flamenco with deep Andalusian roots.

Evening – **Overnight Granada**

Day 10 – Oct 17 - Granada → Las Navas de Tolosa → Granada

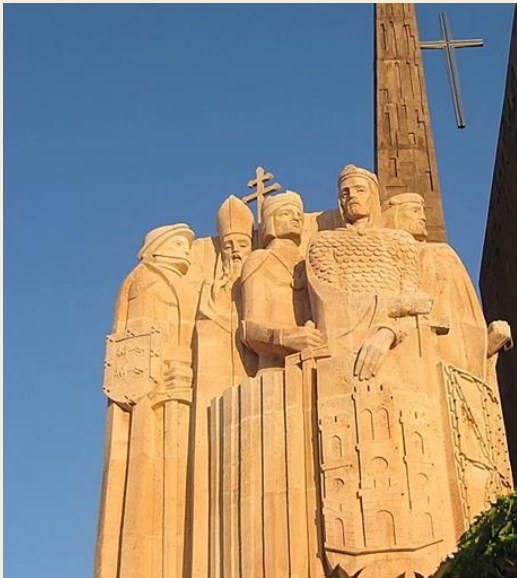
Turning point of the Reconquista

Morning - Drive to Las Navas de Tolosa battlefield



The battle museum overlooks the battle site and provides explanation and reenactments.

Visit nearby **La Carolina monument**



The 1212 battle was the collapse of Almohad dominance and opened Andalusia to Christian reconquest.



Overnight in Granada

Day 11 – Oct 17 - Granada → Las Navas de Tolosa → Granada

Turning Point of the Reconquista

Afternoon – We return to Granada and visit: Basilica de San Juan de Dios

Then we'll see the Royal Chapel which has the tombs of Fernando and Isabel.



Ferdinand of Aragon 1452-1516 – Isabella of Castile 1451-1504



Tonight, we'll **Celebrate our journey** of discovering the Reconquista over an excellent Spanish dinner.

Overnight in Granada

Day 12 – Oct 18 – DEPART to Barcelona for flights home on the late afternoon or evening of 18th or morning of 19th.

Group departs 11am to airport for 14:10/2pm flight to Barcelona for our flights home! Ask your travel agent **to check for evening flights out late in the day 18th or on Oct 19th.**

Expedition Schedule Overview

Early Arrivals	WED 7 OCT	PRE-TRIP – EARLY ARRIVALS Barcelona
DAY-1	THU 8 OCT	ALL ARRIVE – BARCELONA Overnight Barcelona
DAY-2	FRI 9 OCT	BARCELONA Overnight Barcelona
DAYS-3 - 4	SAT 10 OCT & SUN 11 OCT	BCN-fly to OVD (Asturias) Covadonga-Burgos Overnight
DAY-5	MON 12 OCT	Morning in Burgos – Drive to Madrid – Overnight Madrid
DAY-6	TUE 13 OCT	Tour Madrid Overnight Madrid
DAY-7	WED 14 OCT	Madrid-Toledo Overnight
DAY-8	THU 15 OCT	Toledo to Valencia Overnight
DAY-9	FRI 16 OCT	Valencia-Granada Overnight
DAY-10	SAT 17 OCT	Granada - Las Navas de Tolosa Overnight Granada
DAY-11	SUN 18 OCT – DEPART TO BCN	Late am to Airport- Group flies 2pm to BCN for Flights Outward. Check times for options in evening or on the 19th.

Spain Exploration: The Triumph of Christianity

Arrive Barcelona: Thursday, Oct 8, 2026 Return to Barcelona: Sunday, Oct 18, 2026 afternoon

Trip Details - All Inclusive: \$8,750 per person, double occupancy

Register: [The Reconquista Exploration of Spain 2026-Oct-8-18](#)

All-Inclusive: Accommodations in highly-rated hotels (check-in on Thursday, Oct 8 until check-out on Sunday, Oct 18 and midday flight back to Barcelona; all transportation, transfers, tours, admissions, guides, entertainment and activities in itinerary. Three quality meals per day included during trip dates. **Note: Book your flights home no sooner than evening 18th or on Oct 19th**

Price does not include: International airfare to/from Barcelona. Any meals, services, and activities not with group or in itinerary; personal expenditures, laundry, additional alcohol, gratuities, etc. Single Supplement of \$1,000 for Solo Traveler Private room (\$9,750 total).

Deposit & Payment: **Deposit of \$3,750 per person** in double occupancy. Same to register if solo traveler: \$3,750 per person. In both cases, balance in 2 payments. The Single Supplement is applied in the payments.

Cancellation and Refund Info: Refund in full on the condition of a fully-paid acceptable replacement for you. We expect this trip to be completed as scheduled. In the event of an unforeseen situation out of our control we will reschedule this expedition on various dates as early as possible. We advise trip cancellation insurance. Let us know if you need assistance.

Contact Us: holiday@wheelerexpeditions.com or holiday@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com.

Important caveat: *Every effort will be made to adhere to the itinerary above. It rarely happens, yet due to the nature of travel, the itinerary may be altered in any way necessary. Participants are expected to accept this, and to maintain a cheerful attitude on an adventure such as this.*



WHEELER-WINDSOR
EXPEDITIONS

Dr. Jack Wheeler, has been called the “real life Indiana Jones” by the Wall Street Journal has traveled to all 193 countries on all seven continents. He’s had two parallel careers: one in adventure and exploration with *Wheeler Expeditions*; the other in the field of geopolitics. After receiving his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Southern California, where he lectured on Aristotelian ethics.

His adventures began early. The youngest Eagle Scout in history at age 12, he climbed the Matterhorn at age 14, swam the Hellespont (LIFE Magazine 12/12/60) and lived with Amazon headhunters at 16, hunted a man-eating tiger in Vietnam at 17, and started an export business in Vietnam at 19. He wrote *The Adventurer’s Guide* (New York: Mackay, 1975), described by Merv Griffin as “the definitive book for anyone wishing to lead a more adventurous and exciting life.” He has three “first contacts” with tribes never before contacted by the outside world: a clan of Aushiri in the Amazon, the Wali-ali-fo in New Guinea, and a band of Bushmen in the Kalahari. He retraced Hannibal’s route over the Alps with elephants; led numerous expeditions in Central Asia, China, Tibet, Africa, the Amazon and elsewhere, including 21 expeditions to the North Pole; and has been listed in *The Guinness Book of World Records* for the first free fall sky-dive in history at the North Pole. His company has conducted exclusive expeditions to dozens of countries across the globe for over 35 years.

Jack Wheeler founded Wheeler Expeditions in 1976, today we lead bespoke expeditions each year to unusual destinations. The company has conducted exclusive expeditions to dozens of countries across the globe for over 35 years. On a personal note, in the early 80’s he married Ms. Rebel Holiday in St Tropez, France, and these days, Wheeler Expeditions is a family affair. They are delighted that their two grown sons Brandon Holiday Wheeler and Jackson Holiday Wheeler are living adventurous lives.

Edward Windsor, Lord Downpatrick, (“Eddy Downpatrick”) Eddy is an explorer and adventurer who takes great pleasure in designing and guiding exclusive expeditions. Eddy’s experience, intellect, and great passion for exploring our wondrous planet and sharing it led to the formation of **Wheeler-Windsor Expeditions (“WWX”)**. In addition, Eddy is a mountaineer, avid hiker, skier, cold-water swimmer, linguist, and is adept on a horse. He is a leader on many of our expeditions worldwide.

Rebel Holiday has traveled to 90 countries and has co-led expeditions for 3 decades. She has lived in 5 countries and speaks three languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese.) She is involved in business and the arts. Wherever she goes in the world, Rebel is most interested in people and cultures. She is passionate about cuisine and finds the best restaurants and special activities on trips. She currently enjoys sharing the beauty and culture of every country.



WHEELER-WINDSOR
EXPEDITIONS

Join us and this will be high on your list of “Best Trips Ever.”

Contact us if any questions:

jack@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com

holiday@wheelerexpeditions.com

We look forward to seeing you in Spain!

Jack & Rebel

