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Instant weekend: Seville

An at-a-glance guide to the city, by Nicki Symington

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Why go now?

Late March can be a mob scene in Seville with all the Semana Santa (Holy Week) festivities, so go now and beat the pre-Easter rush (20-27 March). Spring temperatures are mild and Ryanair's new route from Stansted makes it easier to get there.

Where to stay

The charming family owned Casa de Carmona (00 34 954 191000; casadecarmona.com), a 17th-century palace in Carmona to the east of Seville, is a real haven of tranquillity. Doubles start at €130 (£90).

Las Casas de la Juderia (00 34 954 415150; casasypalacios.com) is a set of character-filled houses grouped around a series of courtyards and patios in the barrio Santa Cruz. Doubles from €100.

What to see

Stroll in the gorgeous Alcazar Gardens and visit the adjoining royal palace, the cathedral and La Giralda tower. Seville is bull-fighting central, and whatever your feelings, it's worth visiting the bullring, even out of season (starts Easter Monday).

Where to eat

La Alquería at the Hacienda Benazuza (00 34 955 703344; hbenazuza.com), 20 minutes out of town, is the Andalusian outpost of El Bulli, home of Mr Molecular Gastronomy, Ferrán Adriá. The great man may not cook here, but a disciple does. If you can't face the trip out, try any of the tapas bars around El Centro. Bodega Extremeña (Calle San Esteban) is particularly good.

The big night out

Flamenco grew up in the old Jewish quarter, or barrio, Santa Cruz, a twist of quaint streets peppered with smoky bars. One such is Los Gallos (00 34 954 216981) in the Plaza de Santa Cruz, where many famous flamenco performers

have appeared. Bars such as El Tamboril, across the square, have free flamenco every night.

Getting there

From 25 February, you can fly from London Stansted with Ryanair (0871 246 0000; ryanair.com). Return fares start from £52.12, including tax.

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