

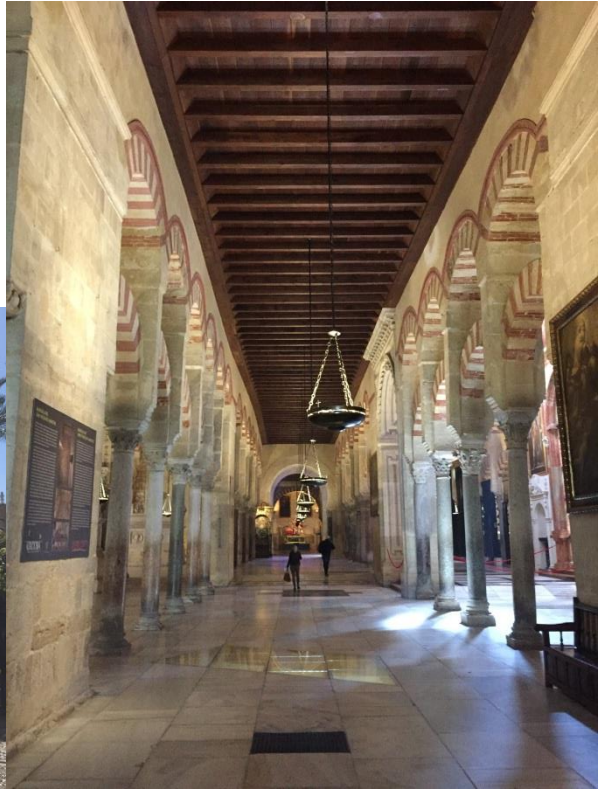
## Travel Log – Córdoba, Sevilla, Ronda, Alicante, Elche, Guadales

March 4, 2016

Cordoba. Well worth the trip with the Cohen's. We love the Cohen's. They are our best if not only true friends. Heck, they made the trip from Israel to celebrate with Mom in Malaga. We share the same values, we have similar family profiles and we both love to travel. They are truly down-to-earth nice people and loyal friends. When it comes to friends it is not quantity but rather quality that matters







March 5

Caminito Del Ray. What a wonderful day. A majestic unique mountain passage way. No need to describe. The pictures tell it all. A challenging hike but not as scary and difficult as we thought. Your Safta is something else. Pain or no pain she is up for the challenge and conquers it every time. Watch her:







March 6

Seville is a magical city. From all the cities we have been to in Spain, possibly except Barcelona, Seville takes the cake. The city centre with its famous cathedral, the palace and the Alcazar spells dignity, tradition and rich architecture.



March 8

We're off to Ronda on the only stormy, rainy day in our entire stay. The Cohen's feel done by the weather but Ronda is Ronda, seemingly the most famous tourist destination definitely in Andalusia.





Match 15

I am sick and tired to admit that mom is always right and that my futile attempts of talking her out of



her ideas are just that- futile. This goes for our trip to Alicante. 8 hours by bus? You've got to be kidding. Was it ever worth it if only for the ascent to the Castillo of Santa Barbara with the breathtaking view of the San Juan bay and the descent to the quaint neighbourhood of Santa Cruz. However the trip could easily be justified for our guided tour to Guadalest, a mountainous village of 200 with more than a thousand tourists a day. Sometimes even high resolution photos cannot capture this natural beauty of the landscape but that's all we have.



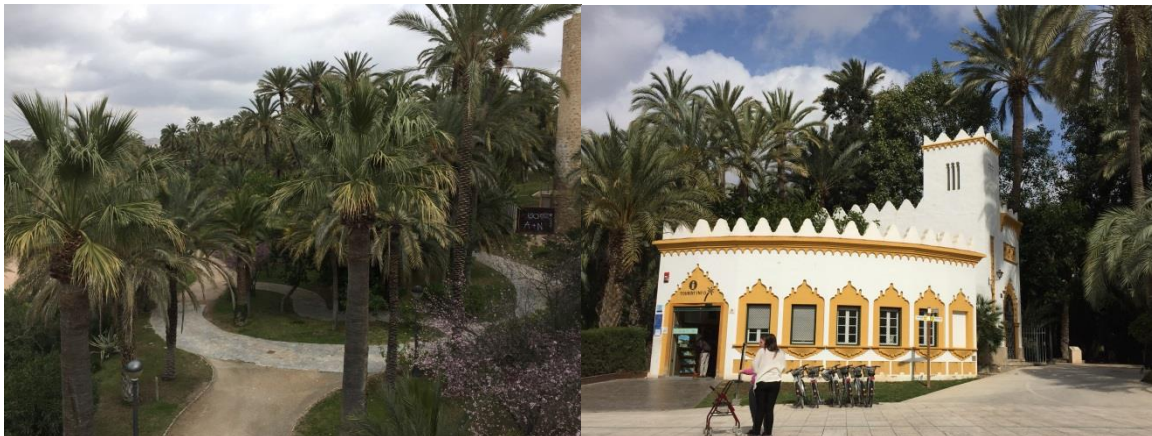






March 17

Me and my Dama De Elche are in Elche. In hindsight we should have taken the money shot when the bus from Malaga stopped in Elche. The town is famous for two things: Palm trees and shoes. Mucho mucho palmeras. While we wore our shoes down from all this walking we weren't going to buy new ones in Elche. The municipal parque was impressive but that's about it.





# ELCHE

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SIN VIGILANCIA



Or is it? We signed up to a walking tour in English but were told at the last minute that we can either get our money back or join a Spanish tour. We naturally opted for the latter and joined a group of some twenty mentally challenged Spanish women from a mental institution on a day trip. This for sure made our trip memorable.



April 11

Tonight we watched and been part of what must be the largest party in the world - The Feria of Seville. We are leaving just before the party really starts it is 1:00 AM now and it'll be going on for the next week literally 24 hours a day - no kidding. Tonight was the opening night with a fantastic show of dance and music culminating with the lighting of the gates and the grounds of the Feria.









The real parties that start now are in the private Casetas where they will be dancing and drinking till morning. We were not invited.

April 12

We love Spanish music and we are listening to plenty of it in one of the public Casetas on the Feria grounds. It is beautiful to see regular Savillanos young and old dance so expertly to the classical Spanish songs. This is good compensation for the fact that the bad weather (on and off rain) has finally caught up with us seemingly in preparation for our return home to Toronto. We are waiting for the famous Feria parade to start. It has been delayed by more than an hour and now that the sun has come out again may actually begin. Let's see if it as spectacular as advertised and it is in its spontaneous and almost disorderly parade of horse carriages , women in traditional Spanish dresses as you have seen in movies and men in formal suits or cavaliers outfits. We comment that Spaniards really know how to party and have a good time. North Americans by contrast are pretty tight.





Today is the first day of the Feria and also the first day of the bullfighting season in Seville. We have a front seat. It is our first time to watch a bull fight and I can guarantee you also the last.





This has nothing to do with our life expectancy it is just that we will never watch this cruel and inhumane, so called sport. There are three things about Bullfighting: first, no matter the circumstances you do not want to be the bull.



Secondly it is not a fair fight. At the end the bull dies after being made tired, injured with daggers or whatever they are being called, humiliated and finally killed by the Matador's sword.

Thirdly, and that has already been going on in many jurisdictions in Spain and Mexico, this form of "entertainment" must be legislated out of existence. Some credit must be given to the Matador's and especially the one mom nicknamed the "Closer" for their skills, agility and courage but let's face it the game is rigged. We had to see it - once to understand why this should not be allowed to continue.



All these guys versus the bull – Fair fight?

April 13

Today is a spare day as we are headed out tomorrow back to Malaga for our flight home the next morning. Yet like many other days and owing to our practice of letting be surprised by places and events rather than research them in advance we landed in Plaza Espana,







We were in Seville with the Cohens a few weeks ago but we missed Plaza Espana. We are now travelling back to our hotel in Seville's Mississauga - Congressos feeling pretty good that we "discovered" the place. It also reaffirmed our earlier conclusion that Seville is the prettiest of them all.



Almost three months of bliss went by pretty fast. This was by far the most exhilarating experience we had at least since returning from Israel. Europe in general, Spain in particular and Malaga specifically are what the doctor prescribed for this time in our lives. We lived, we walked, we explored, we challenged ourselves, we learned a lot (not only Spanish). We also tested our love, friendship and partnership which is inevitable when you spend every minute of every day for three months with one person – It works! Most of all we thank FaceTime and Skype for allowing us to stay close to our loved ones at home and without whom we would probably not even consider going. Europe is so different from Canada or the United States. There is more respect for tradition and upholding of traditional values although the young still insist on emulating the American "culture". Business attitudes are different as can best be illustrated by this (silly sounding) example. If you are on the street and need to hit a washroom stop at any restaurant and you're welcome to relieve with a kind word to boot. It's all about community. Try to do the same at a Starbucks? You must first be a client. Stand in line buy a 3 Euro coffee (a better Café con Leche at any restaurant –only 1 Euro), pay, get a receipt with a code to unlock the washroom door. After a period of time the light in the washroom goes off no matter where you are in the process. It's all about the bottom line.

We've seen places we'll remember forever: The Sahara Dunes:



Caminito Del Ray:



The Atlas Mountains



Seville and the Feria







Cheufchouan



Nerja:





... and above all Malaga:









