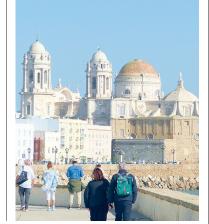
# This cultured city is secretly Europe's finest winter week

For the history-loving traveller, few spots compare with Cádiz, an ancient outpost on Spain's Atlantic coast, says *Norman Miller* 

Arriving on a winter evening, I find
the air is still warm as I cast myself
into the fishnet tangle of Cádiz's
cobbled medieval lanes in search
of dinner. In the old fishing quarter
of La Viña, I dive into Casa Manteca
(Calle Corralón de los Carros 66),
and sidle to the bar to order plates
of chicharrones (fried pork belly
eaten with lemon and salt),
succulent Iberian ham and mojama
(wonderful air-dried tuna), handing
over just a few euros for each (cash
remains king in food spots).
· · · · · ·

For a nightcap, La Manzanilla (Calle Feduchy 19) is a shrine to sherry in a city cradled within the Sherry Triangle of Jerez, El Puerto



Seafront skyline: the towers and golden dome of the 18th-century Cádiz Cathedral

**Essentials** 

EasyJet

(easyjet.com) flies year-

round to

Seville (an hour

from Cádiz by

car or train), from £50

return, while

Ryanair

(ryanair.com) flies to Jerez

(45 minutes by

car or train)

between April

and October,

from £75

return.

Hotel

Argantonio is a

Moorish-

influenced,

18th-century

Old Town jewel,

with spacious

rooms, from

£45 per night.

Norman Miller

was a guest of

Kirker

Holidavs

(kirkerholidays

com), which

offers a

three-night

package from

£628pp B&B at the Hotel

Argantonio,

including return flights,

private car transfers to

Cádiz, and the

services of a Kirker

Concierge.

For more

information

visit spain.info.

de Santa Maria and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Beneath vintage posters, barman Pepe guides me through unfamiliar varieties, such as madura and pasada, chalking each delicious glass on a tab on a burnished wood bar.

Western Europe's oldest city – and host to a satire-filled annual carnival (Feb 27-Mar 9 in 2025) – Cádiz has had time to work on stirring the senses: the Phoenicians founded a port here – Gadir (locals are still called *gaditanos*) – around 1,100 BC. Surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic, anchored to the rest of Europe by a thread of land, it spreads into the ocean like a mile-wide palm, open in welcome.

The city's historic focus looked out towards Africa and the Americas – literally so, with about 120 distinctive towers thrusting above the rooftops of merchant mansions where traders watched for ships returning from distant lands. At street level, old cannons have been set upright in walls as idiosyncratic corner protectors, repurposed from the Napoleonic Wars, during which Cádiz became Spain's capital from 1810-13.

Strolling along the seafront at Campo del Sur, I snap the colourful facades that helped inspire Cádiz's nickname of Little Havana – a city it doubled for in the James Bond film *Die Another Day*. Nowhere in Cuba, though, can boast both a 1stcentury Roman theatre (entrance on Calle Mesón), and 3,000-yearold Phoenician docks within yards of a neoclassical cathedral.

Further on, I sink into the sandy half-moon curve of La Caleta beach, bookended by 300-yearold forts, where colourful boats bob in the bay. But it's Parque Genovés I like the most, its ornately tiled fountains shaded by banyan trees, their huge roots sprawling like a giant woody octopus. And you can delve into contemporary Cádiz art and photography at the adjacent Ecco cultural centre.

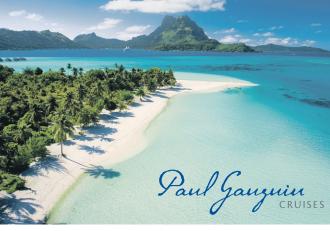
Another banyan spreads in front of the Museum of Cádiz, on Plaza de Mina, where I tick off Phoenician and Roman artefacts, paintings by Rubens and Murillo, plus a taster of the city's passion for puppets. This colourful facet of the local culture is chronicled in a wonderful panoply of stringed wonders at the Museo del Titere, by the grand 18th-century old city gateway of Puerta de Tierra. Distinctive flavours light up

Distinctive flavours light up each meal. There's *cazón en adobo* (dogfish fried in breadcrumbs with cumin) and *tortillita de camarones* (shrimp-speckled wafery sheets of deliciousness), savoured amid the colonnades at Spain's oldest covered market on Plaza de la Libertad, and then *choco* (grilled cuttlefish) at the Rick Stein favourite Taberna el Tío de la Tiza, on the tiny cobbled square of the same name. At the wood-panelled Mesón Cumbres Mayores (Calle Zorrilla 4), I stuff myself on slabs of tuna and the rich *berza* stew of chickpeas, green beans and chorizo.

Cádiz is also a beacon of flamenco, whose music inspired the *gaditano* maestro Manuel de Falla, Spain's greatest modern composer. I head for the Taberna Flamenca La Cava, near the Museum of Cádiz, and settle in for a show in its intimate old bar space, and as a kaleidoscopic whirl of music and fabric begins, I give myself up again to the sensual blast of this ancient city.

## TRAILFINDERS

## Fabulous French Polynesia



 Explore picturesque San Francisco and marvel at the Golden Gate Bridge • Relax by the turquoise waters of Tahiti
Be captivated by the resolutely Polynesian ambiance on a luxury all inclusive voyage to paradise • Swim the sumptuous lagoons of Bora Bora

### *Days 1-2* San Francisco, USA

Fly to San Francisco and discover the cultural diversity and compact downtown that the city has to offer.

### Days 3-4 Tahiti, French Polynesia

Fly to Papeete and spend your days relaxing by the large infinity pool at InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa that looks out across the ocean to the volcanic peaks of neighbouring Moorea.

## Day 5 Board Le Paul Gauguin

Day 6 Huahine, Society Islands Explore archaeological remains from the Polynesian past.

## Day 7 Motu Mahana, Taha'a Island

Visit Paul Gauguin's private islet of Motu Mahana and share a very special experience around an authentic traditional Polynesian barbecue.

### Days 8-9 Bora Bora

Days 10-11 Moorea Island

Bask on its heavenly beaches and enjoy a dip in the coral blue waters of its lagoon.

## Day 12 Tahiti, French Polynesia

## Days 13-14 Los Angeles

Disembark and fly from Papeete to Los Angeles and enjoy a final night in the 'City of Angels'. Days 15-16 **Fly home to the UK** 



16 day holiday from	
oceanview stateroom <b>£7,299pp</b>	BALCONY STATEROOM <b>£8,399pp</b>
Departs 17 Mar 26. Ask us about other departures	

## Why Cruise with TRAILFINDERS?

 We work with most major cruise lines & our expert consultants will help pick the perfect cruise for you

• Trailfinders can tailormake arrangements around your cruise, from a beach stay to a private tour

• We'll help you find your ideal flights across a huge range of airlines at the best prices

• Benefit from unrivalled financial protection – your money remains in our Trust Account until you return home

## ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE



Call **TRAILFINDERS** on **020 7938 0264** or visit your local Travel Centre Prices are per person based on a twin/double share. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 6 Dec 24.

Trustpilot **\* \* \* \* \***