The Spectacular Gardens and Culture of Spain
Preliminary Itinerary
April 19–28, 2012

Day 1: April 19, 2012
• Departures from U.S. to Madrid

Day 2: April 20, 2012
• Check into the Hotel Opera at 2:00 p.m.
• At 4:00 p.m., set forth on a guided walk through Retiro Park, originally designed in 1636 by the Conde-Duque de Olivares for King Felipe IV.
• Enjoy a talk on Madrid’s artistic heritage and European influences on traditional Spanish art by a local cultural expert.
• Be treated to a welcome dinner and meet fellow CAU travelers.

Hotel Opera (D)

Day 3: April 21, 2012
• Enjoy study leader Don Rakow’s first lecture: “European Influences on the Gardens of Central Spain.”
• Spend the rest of the morning at the Prado Museum, home to works by such renowned artists as Velazquez, Goya, Rubens, and Bosch.
• Following an independent lunch, visit the Real Jardín Botánico and experience a collection that includes about 30,000 plants and flowers, and 1,500 trees.
• Afterwards, experience a city tour by coach.
• Enjoy a reception in the home of renowned landscape designer Eduardo Mencos, with a chance to explore his beautiful private garden.
• Dinner is independent tonight.

Hotel Opera (B, Reception)

Day 4: April 22, 2012
• Set forth on a day trip to the city of Segovia.
• After a brief tour of Segovia’s lovely historic core (including its famous Roman aqueduct and castle), visit the private garden of Julia Silva, whose late husband was the landscape designer Leandro Silva.
• Following a group lunch of regional specialties, drive to the gardens of La Granja de San Ildefonso, considered to be the Versailles of Spain.
• Return to Madrid and be treated to a classic paella dinner at a restaurant near the hotel.

Hotel Opera (B, L, D)
Day 5: April 23, 2012

- En route to Toledo, visit the Gardens of Aranjuez, one of the most important gardens of the Habsburg period.
- Enjoy a guided walking tour of Toledo, including its magnificent cathedral.
- Following a group luncheon of regional specialties, drive to the Palacio de Galiana and its enchanting gardens, which include a botanical garden famous for its irrigation works, the ruins of which are still to be seen.
- Continue to the private gardens of Cigarral del Santo Ángel Custodio.
- Dinner is independent tonight.

Hotel Opera (B, L)

Day 6: April 24, 2012

- The day begins with another lecture by Dan Rakow: “Contemporary Gardens of Spain.”
- Madrid’s public gardens are the main attraction for today’s touring.
- El Capricho uses influences from Italian and French architecture, making it one of the most romantic parks in the city. Directly behind the palace are the fountains of the Campo del Moro, so named because this is where the Muslim army camped before a twelfth-century attack on the Alcázar. This park boasts lawns, trees, and flowers as well as two magnificent fountains.
- Tonight enjoy dinner together.

Hotel Opera (B, D)

Day 7: April 25, 2012

- After breakfast, check out your hotel and depart for Córdoba by fast-speed train.
- Upon arrival in Córdoba, visit the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos, the gardens of which reveal its Arabic origins, complete with terraces, pools, and cooling fountains.
- Next, visit the remarkable Mezquita-Catedral, with its fantastic labyrinth of red-and-white candy-striped horseshoe arches and the Patio de los Naranjos.
- Following a group luncheon of regional specialties, walk through the picturesque Jewish Quarter, including the Palacio de Viana with its twelve patios, each a lovely example of private gardening.
- Then, drive to Granada, check into the Hotel Alhambra Palace, and enjoy dinner together.

Hotel Alhambra Palace (B, L, D)

Day 8: April 26, 2012
• Adventure calls! This morning take a trip to the Alhambra. Moorish rulers constructed this fort in the fourteenth century. The Alhambra is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the inspiration for many songs and stories.
• After a tapas lunch, continue to the Cathedral and Capilla Real de Granada, burial place of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.
• Study leader Don Rakow will give his final lecture: “Moorish Inspirations for the Gardens of Southern Spain.”
• Dinner is independent this evening in Granada.

Hotel Alhambra Palace (B, L)

Day 9: April 27, 2012
• The day begins with a lecture on the unique blend of Islamic and Christian influences on the arts in southern Spain, given by a locally based art lecturer.
• Continue with a visit to the gardens of the Fundación Rodríguez Acosta and experience their art deco style.
• Take part in a private visit to Los Cipreses, a lovely home with terraced gardens spanning several levels. Then, enjoy a stroll through the old Arab Quarter of the Albaicín.
• Enjoy a farewell dinner celebrating the beautiful green spaces, architecture, and people we have encountered on our journey through Spain.

Hotel Alhambra Palace (B, D)

Day 10: April 28, 2012
• After breakfast, transfer by private bus to the Malaga Airport for flights back to the U.S.