

Journey to a Golden Age

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January 12, 2017

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1. Today we are going to take a journey back in time to what many have called a “Golden Age” in southern Spain and northern Morocco that many Americans know little about.
2. It was an age of intellectual accomplishment some have compared to that of classic Greece or the Italian Renaissance.
3. The creativity of this Golden Age was accompanied and nurtured by periods of tolerance and cooperation between the area’s Jews, Christians and Muslims.
4. Because of this tolerance and cooperation, this period has been called “*Convivencia*,” “the Coexistence.”

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1. During our journey back in time, we will pay particular attention to the period when southern Spain and Morocco were ruled by so-called “Moors.”
2. The term “Moors” originally designated people from Mauretania, a Roman province along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in what is now northern Morocco.
3. The term has come to mean Muslims from North Africa who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711 and along with others ruled at least parts of Spain until 1492, when they were finally defeated by Christians under Ferdinand and Isabella.

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1. Although the Sahara Desert begins in southern Morocco, northern Morocco receives adequate rain for some crops and is quite fertile.
2. Because of the fertility of the surrounding area, the Romans built a major city near the modern city of Meknes, Morocco.

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1. This city, called Volubilis, was the capital of the province of Mauretania that gave its name to both Morocco and the Moors.

2. Volubilis was completely destroyed by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which destroyed almost all of the buildings in Lisbon and was felt as far away as Finland.
3. Important structures have been partially reconstructed, including this triumphal arch honoring Roman Emperor Caracalla.

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1. This is the column-lined main street or cardo in Volubilis.
2. During its prime in the third century, Volubilis probably had about 20,000 inhabitants.

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1. After Christianity became an acceptable religion in the Roman Empire in 313 A.D., Christianity spread to Mauretania and Volubilis became a Christian city.
2. This church had once been the main administrative building.

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1. Roman civilization was also important in southern Spain.
2. This bridge across the Guadalquivir River was built by the Romans in what is now Cordoba, Spain.

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1. A statue in Cordoba honors Seneca, a great first century Roman statesman who was born there.
2. His brother Gallio, who the Bible says dismissed charges against Paul, was also born in Roman Cordoba.

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1. In 410 A.D. a Germanic tribe called the Visigoths sacked Rome and the Western Roman Empire began to collapse.
2. After being pushed south by the Franks, the Visigoths established a kingdom in Spain and some of what is now Portugal.
3. Although the Visigoths are often portrayed as pagans, they were Arian Christians, who did not believe that Jesus was divine and were considered heretics by orthodox Christians following the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

4. As Arian Christians, the Visigoths were generally tolerant of the Jews who had lived in Spain for centuries, perhaps since the exile of the Jews to Babylon in the sixth century B.C.

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1. In about 589 A.D., the King of the Visigoths converted to Catholicism and made his kingdom officially Catholic.
2. The previously tolerant treatment of Spain's Jews changed dramatically.
3. From the capital in Toledo, Visigoth rulers and church leaders issued a series of decrees directed at Spanish Jews.
4. The decrees outlawed circumcision and observance of Jewish holy days.
5. Eventually, Jews were given the choice of being baptized as Christians, leaving the country or becoming slaves.
6. Jewish children over the age of seven were taken from their parents and delivered to Christian parents to be raised as Christians.

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1. In the seventh century, the Visigoths built a number of churches, some of which survive.
2. This is the Church of San Juan Bautista in the town of Baños de Cerrato in central Spain.
3. Notice the horseshoe arch at the entry, a Visigoth invention that we will see again and again during our tour.

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1. In 661 A.D., 30 years after the death of Muhammad, a family from Mecca established a new Islamic caliphate with its headquarters in Damascus, Syria.
2. By the end of the seventh century, this so-called "Umayyad Caliphate" controlled the regions of North Africa that bordered the Mediterranean, with many of the residents voluntarily converting to Islam.
3. The dark lines show the borders of the Umayyad Caliphate at that time.
4. As you can see, the western end of the Caliphate included Berbers, people indigenous to North Africa.

5. Jews and Christians in North Africa at the time were well treated by their Muslim rulers, who considered them People of the Book.

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1. In 711, a small Muslim force crossed the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco into Spain near the modern town of Tarifa, named for Tariq, the leader of the invaders.
2. The initial invaders were primarily Berbers, who had recently converted to Islam.
3. The Visigoths did not put up significant resistance, perhaps because they saw the Berbers as raiders who would soon leave.
4. Spain's Jews, who had been badly mistreated by the Visigoths, welcomed the Moorish invaders.
5. The invaders returned the favor, putting Jews in charge of the captured Visigoth towns as they moved north.

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1. The Muslim advance into Europe was stopped by Frankish forces led by Charles Martel during the Battle of Tours in 732.
2. This map shows the extent of the Umayyad Caliphate at that time.

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1. In 756, after a period of infighting, an Umayyad prince named Abd al-Rahman, who had been exiled from Syria, took control of most of the Iberian Peninsula, named al-Andalus in Arabic.
2. Al-Rahman styled himself the Emir of Cordova, nominally under the control of Damascus but essentially independent.
3. Al-Rahman's regime treated Spain's Jews more tolerantly than did Christian regimes in northern Europe.
4. As a result, Jews from all over Europe began moving to al-Andalus.

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1. In 784, al-Rahman purchased a Visigoth church in Cordoba that had been shared by Christians and Muslims since 711, reflecting a tolerant relationship between Christians and Muslims at the time.
2. You can see the mosaic floor of that church in this picture.

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1. On the site of the Visigoth church al-Rahman began building an extraordinary mosque modeled on the Great Mosque of Damascus.
2. The mosque was expanded by al-Rahman's successors until it covered almost six acres.
3. A flat wooden roof, capable of shading 20,000 worshippers, was supported by 856 Roman columns.

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1. Most of the columns were reused from earlier Roman buildings around Cordoba.
2. Novel double arches extended the height and gave the appearance of palm trees.

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1. In every mosque, a niche called a "*mihrab*" points in the direction of Mecca.
2. In the Great Mosque of Cordoba, the *mihrab* was an entire room.

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1. This area was the courtyard of the mosque, where worshippers washed before praying.
2. The Cordoba mosque was one of the most significant buildings of the Middle Ages.

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1. While Christian Europe was in a period so lacking in intellectual accomplishment that it is sometimes called the "Dark Ages," southern Spain under Moorish control enjoyed a period of remarkable creativity.
2. One of the most fascinating stories comes from the city of Ronda.
3. Ronda, founded by Romans in the third century B.C., sits on a plateau split by a nearly 400 feet deep canyon carved by the Guadalevin River.

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1. Abbas Ibn Firnas was born in Ronda in 810.

2. Among his inventions were corrective lenses, a method for cutting rock crystal, a water clock and a metronome to time his music.
3. At age 65, he strapped feather-covered wings on his back and flew from a Cordoba mountain to a jarring, but otherwise safe, landing below.
4. For being the first man to fly, Abbas Ibn Firnas is honored with his name on a crater on the back of the moon.

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1. In 929 A.D., Abd al-Rahman III declared himself Caliph of Cordoba.
2. This declaration completely separated al-Andalus from the Umayyad Caliphate headquartered in Damascus.
3. Leon and Castile were Christian kingdoms.

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1. Seeking to demonstrate that he was equal to his title, in 936 Rahman began building a magnificent new palace city on a 300-acre site in the foothills of the *Sierra Morena* a few miles west of Cordoba.
2. The architects took advantage of the hillside by designing three terraces, the top reserved for the palace and the bottom for government workers.

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1. The middle terrace included a hall for receiving foreign ambassadors, covered with ivory and gold to impress the visitors.
2. The hall included a bowl of mercury the caliph could jiggle to scatter reflected sunlight around the room.
3. Contemporaneous reports of visitors from Christian Europe show astonishment at the splendors of *Medina Azahara*, which is sometimes called the Versailles of the Middle Ages.
4. One author says that **“Charlemagne’s official residence at Aachen was a hovel by comparison.”** Lewis, *God Crucible* at 325.

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1. When completed in about 976, *Medina Azahara* incorporated more than 4,000 marble columns, some scavenged from as far away as Carthage.

2. Most of the columns supported horseshoe arches, an architectural feature borrowed from the Visigoths but modified by alternating stones of different colors to call attention to the curved shape.
3. Eventually this style came to be seen as Islamic architecture that we will see again and again.

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1. Al-Rahman III resurrected Roman water technology for *Medina Azahar* and the surrounding areas.
2. Formal Islamic gardens, watered by an aqueduct from the mountains, bordered the most important buildings.
3. A modified Roman aqueduct served as a sewer.
4. These advances in water movement brought additional prosperity to a region sometimes lacking adequate water for crops.

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1. By the time of al-Rahman III, at least half of the population of al-Andalus was Muslim.
2. Many of the Muslims were former Christians who had converted to Islam.
3. It is possible that al-Rahman III, who was described as blue-eyed and blond and dyed his hair black, was himself a converted Christian.
4. Even Christians who did not convert to Islam adopted the Muslim style of dress.
5. This 13th century painting shows a Christian playing chess with a red-headed person who could either be Christian or Muslim.
6. Al-Rahman named a Christian with the adopted name of Abu Umar ibn Gundislavus his chief minister.

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1. Al-Rahman III made a Jewish physician named Hasdai ibn Shaprut his personal physician.
2. Eventually, Hasdai became an important government minister, responsible for trade and foreign relations.

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1. To determine the direction of Mecca and the dates of Ramadan, Muslims in the eighth century made significant improvements in the design and use of the astrolabe.
2. During his travels, Hasdai obtained a book on astrolabes written by an Iraqi Jew, which Hasdai brought back to Cordoba.
3. The book prompted the writing of a number of treatises by Muslim authors about the astrolabe, which were then translated into Latin and later used by Spaniards and Portuguese in their explorations.
4. Hasdai, who was also a poet and scholar, encouraged Jewish writers and musicians to come to Cordoba from around Europe.
5. Among the Jews who came to Cordoba were the compiler of the first Hebrew dictionary and a poet who combined Arabic meter with Hebrew poetry.

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1. This was the heart of the Jewish area of Cordoba, in view of what was then the mosque.
2. You can recognize these buildings as Jewish homes because they have open windows on the outside.
3. Islamic homes of the time typically have open windows on the inside, overlooking a courtyard.

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1. By the end of the tenth century, Cordoba, with a large Jewish population, had become the intellectual heart of Europe, if not the world.
2. Its population of about 500,000 made it the largest and richest city in the world, surpassing Constantinople and Baghdad, the previous leaders.
3. Well-lit streets and running water made Cordoba much more impressive than the dirty cities of Christian Europe.
4. The population of Rome at the time was about 30,000.
5. There were some four hundred thousand volumes in the caliph's personal library and thousands more in the city's 70 public libraries.
6. Cordoba's calligraphers were producing 6000 books per year on paper, a technology still largely absent outside Moorish Spain and Morocco.

7. The largest library in Christian Europe had no more than six hundred manuscripts, virtually all on sheepskin.

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1. People came to study in Cordoba's universities and learn from scholars who became world famous.
2. This statue in Cordoba recognizes Muhammad al-Gafeoul, a twelfth century resident who developed a method for removing cataracts.

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1. In the early eleventh century, the Frenchman who became Pope Sylvester II studied in Cordoba.
2. He took back to Europe Arabic numerals and the decimal system and promoted the study of Arab learning in mathematics and astronomy.

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1. Ibn Rushd was born in Cordoba in 1126.
2. Known in the West as Averroes, he was one of the most important thinkers of the Middle Ages.
3. He wrote treatises on logic, theology, jurisprudence, psychology, musical theory, geography, astronomy, physics, medicine and celestial mechanics, among other subjects.
4. More than 500 years before Newton, he worked out the basic laws of force and motion.
5. His most lasting contribution was probably his commentaries on the works of Aristotle, which had largely been forgotten in Europe.
6. These commentaries were taken back to Europe by visiting scholars, where they eventually formed some of the foundations of the Renaissance.
7. As a result, Averroes, a Muslim, has been called the founding father of secular thought in Western Europe.

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1. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Jewish residents of al-Andalus prospered in fields of commerce, agriculture and medicine.
2. Jewish writers translated the works of the ancient Greeks into Latin.

3. Cordoba became the center of Jewish philosophy.
4. From this period came Moses Maimonides, the most important Jewish intellectual of the Middle Ages, who was born in Cordoba near where this statue now stands.
5. In 1148, when Maimonides was 13, the Almohads, a fundamentalist Muslim sect from North Africa, conquered Cordoba and threatened Cordoba's Jews with death if they did not convert to Islam.
6. For 11 years, Maimonides and his family tried to survive by pretending to be Muslims.
7. In 1159 they, like many other Jewish families, chose to leave Cordoba, eventually leading to the decline of Cordoba.
8. But Maimonides' family did not go to Europe.
9. They went to Fes, Morocco.
10. At the time, Morocco and southern Spain were under common Islamic control.

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1. Fes was founded in 789 as the capital of a new Islamic Empire in Morocco.
2. Jews were among the earliest settlers in Fes, where they started religious schools and participated in the commercial activities of the city.
3. By the middle of the twelfth century, Fes, considered the "Athens of Africa," had surpassed Cordoba as the largest city in the world and had become an international center of culture and learning.

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1. Today, the entire old city of Fes, called Fes el Bali, with a population of about 150,000 residents, is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
2. Except for the addition of electricity, life goes on much as it did when Maimonides and his family came to town.

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1. Fes el Bali is the world's largest automobile free urban area.
2. Its 9,000 twisting streets are so narrow in places that loaded donkeys cannot easily pass.

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1. Along these streets, merchants sell everything from clothing to fresh fish.
2. Many of these shops have been in the family for hundreds of years.

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1. Tanneries, where leather is tanned and colored in the same way it was in the twelfth century, are probably the most famous sites in Fes.
2. The leather is tanned using a mixture that includes pigeon droppings and cow urine.

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1. Every day, donkeys bring hides from the local butcher shops and workers dip the hides into the vats.
2. To deal with the smell, visitors are given mint sprigs to hold below their noses.

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1. After arriving in Fes, Maimonides continued his studies at this school called "Al-Karaouine," established in Fes in 859.
2. It is considered to be the world's oldest university and accepted students from all religions.

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1. Like Cordoba, Fes came under the control of the fundamentalist Almohads and Maimonides' Jewish teacher was executed.
2. Persecution of Jews was so intense in Fes that Maimonides counseled all Jews to leave.

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1. Maimonides and his family then settled in Egypt, which was open to Jews.
2. Maimonides became a physician to Saladin, the great Muslim general who had recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders.
3. This is the palace of Saladin in Cairo where Maimonides lived and worked.

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1. The driving of Jews from Cordoba by the Almohads was not the only conflict between Jews and Muslims in al-Andalus.
2. In the eleventh century, the Berber king of Granada had appointed the eldest son of a famous rabbi and poet as his vizier or chief minister.
3. On December 30, 1066, Muslim mobs stormed the royal palace and crucified the Jewish vizier, reportedly because of a rumor that he was plotting to kill the king.
4. The ensuing massacre killed up to 4,000 Jewish residents of Granada.

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1. By the middle of the 12th century, the Almohads controlled Seville and moved their capital from Cordoba to Seville.
2. They built a magnificent mosque, with a minaret modeled on this minaret in Marrakech, Morocco, at the time an important city.

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1. Since stopping the northern advance of Muslims at the Battle of Tours in 732, Christian rulers had dreamed of recapturing al-Andalus.
2. The effort took on greater urgency in the eleventh century with the beginning of the Crusades to recapture the Holy Lands.
3. By this time, there was no unified control of the region, with major cities under the control of local Muslim leaders.
4. The effort to recapture southern Spain has been labeled the “Reconquista,” the Reconquest.
5. The first major city to be recaptured was Toledo, the former capital of the Visigoth kingdom, which fell to forces under King Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085.

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1. Alfonso considered himself the “King of the Two Religions,” Christianity and Islam.
2. Christian conquerors maintained Toledo as a multicultural capital, preserving the large Jewish and Muslim quarters.
3. The best known symbol of that attitude is the Ibn Shushan Synagogue, erected in about 1180 and considered the oldest synagogue in Europe.

4. In a Christian kingdom, Islamic architects designed this building for Toledo's Jewish residents.
5. As you can see, the design is similar to that of the Great Mosque of Cordoba.

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1. Toledo had been a provincial capital of the Caliphate of Cordoba and an important center of Islamic learning, full of libraries.
2. Under the Christians, scholars from Europe translated Toledo's Arabic books into Latin.
3. One of the most famous of the Toledo Translators was Italian Gerard of Cremona, who translated 87 books about Muslim and Greek learning on astronomy, medicine and other sciences.

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1. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome mandated that all Jews wear special markings so that Christians would not inadvertently have sex with Jews.
2. One of the common markings was a yellow spot or ring.
3. The Christian rulers of Toledo, to the consternation of several Popes, refused to enforce this mandate.
4. They feared losing their important Jewish residents to the territories to the south still under Muslim control.
5. As one author writes: **"No yellow cloth patch, dunce cap, or other warning beacon could have preempted commercial, social and even intimate relations of Spaniards of diverse faiths."** Lowney, *A Vanished World* at 201.
6. Because of Toledo's open acceptance of Jews, when the Alhmohads drove Maimonides and his family from Cordoba to Fes, other Jewish families went to Toledo.

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1. Cordoba, weakened by the departure of its Jewish residents and the ineptness of its fundamentalist rulers, surrendered in 1236 to King Ferdinand III of Castile.
2. Church leaders removed a large section of the roof and the columns supporting the roof and erected an ornate cathedral in the middle of Cordoba's Great Mosque.
3. The minaret of the mosque became the church's bell tower.

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1. Here is a view of the church from the inside.
2. You can see the original arches on either side.

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1. Here is another view of the church in the mosque.
2. It is now called the “Mezquita” and is a favorite spot for weddings of Christians.

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1. Muslims are barred from worshipping anywhere in the mosque, even though the original *mihrab*, pointing toward Mecca, has been preserved.
2. There have been repeated efforts, so far without success, to change that.

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1. After the reconquest of Cordoba, Jews were encouraged to return.
2. This synagogue was built in 1315 near the home of Maimonides.
3. Note the similarity of the architecture to what we saw in Fes.
4. No matter what their religion, residents of Moorish Spain adopted the same architectural style as they had adopted the same style of dress.

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1. By the thirteenth century, Seville was one of the most important cities in the al-Andalus region.
2. Just before the fall of Cordoba, the rulers of Seville built this tower to seal the Guadalquivir River that connects Seville and Cordoba to prevent an attack from the river.
3. The tower comprised a lower section in the form of a regular dodecahedron and an upper octagonal section made of brick.
4. A large chain stretched from what became known as *Torre del Oro*, the Tower of Gold, to another tower across the river, lashing together a series of pontoons and creating a floating barrier to prevent attacking ships from entering the city.
5. The plan failed.

6. In 1248, forces under Ferdinand III smashed through the barriers and, after an 18-month siege, captured Seville and converted the tower to a chapel and then a prison.
7. Jewish residents of Seville, who had been mistreated by the Almohad rulers, welcomed the new Christian rulers.
8. Under Christian rule, synagogues were built throughout Seville.

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1. When Christian forces recaptured Seville, they took as their palace an Islamic fortress along the Guadalquivir River.
2. In 1364, Peter I, King of Castile and León, began building a new palace on the site called the “Alcazar.”
3. For obvious reasons, this entry to the fortress is called the “Lion’s Gate.”

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1. The design style used in Peter’s palace, incorporating richly carved walls, pointed arches and other traditional Islamic details, came to be known as *Mudéjar*.
2. Writings on palace walls praised both God and Allah.

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1. The best-known quarter of Peter’s palace is the Courtyard of the Maidens.
2. Its name reportedly suggested a false rumor, fueling the *Reconquista*, that Muslim rulers of Iberia demanded 100 virgins each year from the Christian cities under their control.
3. A narrow reflecting pool in the center of the courtyard was flanked by sunken gardens, evoking Islamic images of the gardens of Paradise.
4. Scalloped arches supported on columns surrounded the open courtyard, another defining characteristic of *Mudéjar* style.
5. The Courtyard of the Maidens, its reflecting pool covered, masquerades as the twelfth century palace of the King of Jerusalem in the movie “The Kingdom of Heaven.”

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1. This is the ceiling in the Hall of Ambassadors in the Alcazar, where Peter I received official visitors.

2. Peter I's rivals called him "Peter the Cruel" for executing leaders of an anti-Jewish riot in 1348.

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1. Christian King Peter I's treasurer was Jewish.
2. In about 1356, Peter established a synagogue in Toledo originally known as Synagogue Samuel ha-Levi after the name of this treasurer.
3. The synagogue was probably built as compensation for Jewish property that had been destroyed in the 1348 riots.
4. Note again the *Mudéjar* style of the synagogue.
5. Peter I was beheaded in 1369 by his half-brother Henry, who derided him as "King of the Jews" for opposing persecution of Spanish Jews and allowing the construction of the synagogue.
6. History now regards Peter I as "Peter the Just" for repudiating religious bigotry and encouraging cooperation among the religions.

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1. Protected by its strategic location, Ronda was not captured by Christian forces of the *Reconquista* until 1485.
2. Like many other churches in Spain, the Church of Santa Maria was built over a destroyed mosque and the minaret turned into a bell tower.

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1. This statue in Ronda memorializes Pedro Romero, a Ronda bullfighter.
2. He popularized his grandfather's novel idea of fighting bulls on foot using a gracefully maneuvered cape to conceal a sword for dispatching the bulls.
3. Bullfighters previously killed from horseback, reflecting the hunting games from which bullfighting was apparently derived.

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1. After the fall of Cordoba and Seville to Christian forces of the *Reconquista*, Islamic rulers of Granada called the Nasrids began expanding an old fortress on a bluff overlooking the city.

2. The resulting complex of buildings is called the “Alhambra.”
3. The Alhambra became a combined fortress and palace.

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1. The interior of the living quarters for the ruling sultan and his harem is decorated with exquisite stone work.
2. This ceiling is considered one of the finest examples of Islamic architecture in the world.
3. As with much Islamic art, the entire surface is covered.

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1. This is the famous Courtyard of the Lions, surrounded by the areas where the Sultan and his harem lived.
2. The fountain in the middle rests on twelve carved lions, representing either the months of the year or the twelve tribes of Israel depending on who is telling the story.
3. As we saw in the Alcazar in Seville, the channels leading from the fountain represented the four rivers of Paradise.

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1. The lions were probably carved by Jewish craftsmen and represent a rare exception to the principle that Islamic art never portrays anything with a soul.
2. The design is typical of Islamic dwellings, in which the living quarters looked inwardly to a central courtyard.

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1. This ceiling is over one of the hallways surrounding the courtyard.
2. The small windows at the top allowed hot air from the room to escape.

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1. The public business of the sultan was conducted in the Comares Palace.
2. This is the façade of the palace.
3. The writing above the windows says: “The only conqueror is God.”

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1. Foreign dignitaries and other visitors were first led to this “Courtyard of the Myrtles” before meeting the ruling sultan.
2. It is named for the bushes on either side of the reflecting pool.

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1. The same idea was later used on a grander scale in the Taj Mahal.
2. The water and the surrounding bushes suggest the Islamic vision of the gardens of Paradise.

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1. From the Courtyard of the Myrtles, visitors were taken to the Alhambra’s Hall of the Ambassadors.
2. Sitting on the chair in the center, the reigning sultan received official visitors and either granted or denied petitions.

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1. By the middle of the 14th century, anti-Jewish riots had occurred in northern Europe.
2. Much of the anger was based on the claim that Jews were responsible for the plague that was ravishing European cities.
3. The riots came to al-Andalus.
4. In March 1391, Christian mobs killed hundreds of Jews in Seville after being egged on by a Catholic archdeacon.
5. Synagogues in Seville were destroyed.
6. The riot quickly spread to other Spanish cities, with estimates of 10,000 Jews killed.
7. In Cordoba, the recently built synagogue we saw earlier was converted to a church.

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1. In 1401, Christians in Seville tore down the main mosque.
2. They left only the minaret that had been built in the twelfth century to be used as a bell tower for a new cathedral.

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1. In 1405, a Dominican priest preached a series of sermons against the Jews of Toledo, who had been protected under the Christians since the recapture of Toledo in 1085.
2. After one sermon, his listeners ran out of the church and went into *Ibn Shushan Synagogue* we saw earlier.
3. They dragged Jews out of the synagogue and killed them.
4. The synagogue was promptly converted to the Church of Santa María la Blanca, Saint Mary of White.
5. To avoid being killed, many Jews publicly converted to Christianity.
6. Christians suspected the converts were secretly continuing to practice Judaism and called them “*Marranos*,” meaning pigs.

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1. On January 2, 1492, more than 150 years after the fall of Cordoba and Seville, the sultan of Granada surrendered the Alhambra to the superior forces of Ferdinand II of Argon and Isabella I of Castile, the “Catholic Kings” whose marriage had united two Spanish kingdoms.
2. Isabella immediately occupied the seat of the sultan in the Alhambra.
3. On March 31, 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella issued the “Alhambra Decree,” ordering all Jews to leave Spain within four months unless they converted to Christianity.
4. By July 31, up to 800,000 Jewish residents had fled Spain to avoid execution without trial.
5. The Jewish quarter of Granada was demolished.
6. The synagogue in Toledo that had been built by Peter I was converted to a church called Nuestra Señora del Transito, the Transit of the Virgin.
7. Descendants of the Jews who left Spain in 1492 are the Sephardic Jews, constituting an estimated 20 percent of all Jews in the world.

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1. Ferdinand and Isabella instituted the Spanish Inquisition to determine if the Jews who converted to Christianity were still practicing Judaism in secret.

2. One of the tests was whether smoke was coming from converts' chimneys on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath – if it was not, residents were deemed to be practicing Judaism despite their claims of being Christian.
3. If found guilty, they were burned at the stake.
4. Church leaders justified the burning by referring to the words of Jesus in *John 15:6*: **“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”**
5. This famous picture of St. Dominic presiding over an “*auto-da-fe*,” an act of faith, was painted in 1496 and hangs in the Prado in Madrid.
6. You can see the pair about to be burned alive.

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1. While sitting in the sultan's chair at the Alhambra, Isabella reportedly received Christopher Columbus.
2. Columbus, who had seen Granada fall, pitched Isabella again on his plan to sail west to India and convert the Muslims of India to Christianity.
3. On April 17, 1492, less than a month after the Alhambra Decree, Isabella commissioned Columbus, who may have been secretly Jewish, to sail to India.
4. This statue in Granada memorializes that event.
5. Columbus left Granada on May 12, 1492.
6. On October 12, 1492, Columbus encountered the lands of the “New World” he insisted to his death were part of India.

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1. Although initially tolerant of Muslims, in 1501 the Christian rulers of Granada ordered all Muslims residents to convert to Christianity or be killed.
2. All the mosques in Granada were destroyed or converted to churches, as was this one.
3. Islamic holy books were burned.

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1. When completed in 1520, the Seville Cathedral covered more than 100,000 square feet and was the second largest church in the world, after St. Peter's in Rome.

2. Today, it is the third largest church, after St. Peter's and a church in Brazil.

Spain 82

1. Because of disagreements Columbus later had with Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus did not want to be buried on Spanish soil.
2. When Columbus died in 1506, after his fourth voyage across the Atlantic, his body was transported to Santo Domingo in what is now the Dominican Republic.
3. When Spain ceded Santo Domingo to France in 1795, remains said to be those of Columbus were sent to Cuba, where they stayed until after the Spanish American War.
4. In 1902, the remains were shipped back across the Atlantic and placed in a tomb in Seville's cathedral in front of a massive painting of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers.
5. Because the tomb is above the ground, Columbus's wish not to be buried in Spanish is being honored.

Slide 83

1. In 1877, workers in Santo Domingo found a box containing what they claimed, with some justification, were the bones of Christopher Columbus.
2. To resolve claims the Seville cathedral had the wrong body, scientists conducted DNA tests on the contents of the Seville tomb.
3. The tests showed a close match with known Columbus descendants, but also revealed that the massive tomb contains less than 200 grams of what one guide describes as a "potpourri" of bone fragments.
4. The Dominicans rejected these tests, but have not tested their bones.

Slide 84

1. Although cooperation between Jews, Christians and Muslims ended in Spain, it continued in other places.
2. After the Alhambra Decree, many of the Jews expelled from Spain were taken in by Suleiman the Magnificent, the great ruler of the Ottoman Empire.
3. Some settled in Jerusalem, where Suleiman had built a wall around the Old City.

Slide 85

1. Other Jews expelled from Spain went to Marrakech, Morocco, where they became some of its most important citizens.
2. In the twelfth century, Marrakech had been an important city.
3. When Averroes left Cordoba at about the same time as Maimonides, he went to Marrakech.
4. This gate dates from that period.
5. After the twelfth century, Marrakech fell into decline, overshadowed by Fes.

Slide 86

1. In 1554, during the period of Spanish exploration of the New World, the Saadi family gained control of Morocco and began restoring Marrakech to its former glory.
2. In 1558, the Saadi sultan created this area for the Jewish residents of Marrakech in a location that previously included the sultan's stables.
3. At the time, the Jewish community of Marrakech included many of the city's bankers and merchants and they were protected in this area from attack from other residents.
4. This area is called the "*mellah*," a word related to the salt used in Jewish cooking.
5. Saadi sultans employed Jews in their governments.

Slide 87

1. In 1578, Moroccan forces defeated a crusade led by 24-year-old King Sebastian of Portugal.
2. Using the wealth from the ransom of European prisoners, Ahmad al-Mansur, sixth Saadi sultan, constructed El Badi ("the marvelous") Palace in Marrakech, modeled on the Alhambra.
3. When finished, the palace contained 360 rooms, a massive courtyard and a pool measuring 300 feet by 60 feet.
4. The palace, which took 25 years to build, was decorated with marble from Italy, gold from Sudan and jade from China.
5. The sultans used the palace to host lavish receptions for ambassadors from Spain, England and the Ottoman Empire, showcasing Moroccan power.
6. Today, the El Badi Palace is largely in ruins.

Slide 88

1. Before al-Mansur died from the plague in 1603, he constructed tombs in the grand style of El Badi Palace for the royal family, their servants, and government officials.
2. The tombs included two mausoleums, one with twelve columns, which eventually sheltered a total of 66 graves, and a garden containing more than 100 graves.
3. The design is in the classic *Mudéjar* style.

Slide 89

1. A few of the grave markers are oriented in an east-west direction, perpendicular to the remainder.
2. They mark the graves of Jewish members of the royal staff.
3. The other graves are for Muslims, who are buried with the faces pointed toward Mecca.

Slide 90

1. Soldiers and servants of the Saadi sultan were buried in these graves outside the covered tomb.
2. The grave buried in a direction different from the others is the grave of a Jewish member of the household staff.
3. In 1672, Moulay Ismail ibn Sharif claimed the title of Sultan of Morocco and displaced the Saadi dynasty.
4. Over a ten-year period, he demolished El Badi Palace.
5. Apparently afraid to destroy the resting places of the dead, he sealed and hid the Saadian tombs.
6. The French rediscovered the tombs in 1917, restored them to their original grandeur and opened them to the public.

Slide 91

1. This is Ismail's mausoleum in Meknes, Morocco.
2. Ismail maintained diplomatic relations with Louis XIV, but was rebuffed in his effort to marry Louis's daughter.

3. But Ismail had enough wives and concubines to father at least 867 children, a record that still stands.
4. Like his Saadian predecessors, he maintained good relations with Morocco's Jewish residents, including some in his government.
5. With his death, the treatment of Jews in Morocco deteriorated.
6. The Golden Age of tolerance and intellectual achievement in Spain and Morocco was over and these areas would never again achieve the prominence they once had.

Slide 92

1. On March 31, 1992, five hundred years after the Alhambra Decree, Spanish King Juan Carlos I donned a white yarmulke in Madrid's only synagogue Tuesday and prayed with Israeli President Chaim Herzog.
2. Descendants of the Jews expelled by the Alhambra Decree can now become Spanish citizens.

Slide 93

1. Some have argued that the entire idea of *Convivencia* is a myth, designed to embarrass Christians or glorify Muslims.
2. There is no doubt that the Jews, Muslims and Christians of this period sometimes engaged in appalling killings in the name of religion.
3. The Granada massacre of Jews by Muslims in 1066 and the massacres of Jews by Christians in Seville in 1391 and the killing of Jews by Christians in Toledo in 1401 cannot be ignored.
4. Nor can the actions of the fundamentalist Almohads, Muslims who drove Maimonides and Averroes and thousands more from Cordoba and Fes.
5. There was also a lot of fighting among Muslims.
6. Less than 100 years after the completion of the fabulous city of Azahara, it was destroyed in a civil war among Muslim groups.
7. This is a picture of the mosque that was destroyed in that war.

Slide 94

1. But there were periods, lasting for generations, in which the people of al-Andalus cooperated with each other, no matter what their religions.

2. The Emirate and then Caliphate of Cordoba following the ascension of al-Rahman I until the coming of the Almohads was one such period.
3. The long period following the capture of Toledo by Christian forces was another.
4. These periods were also those in which intellectual achievement and scientific progress were most pronounced.
5. Jewish craftsmen helped build the Great Mosque of Cordoba.
6. Jews helped the Saadi sultans restore Marrakech to glory.

Slide 95

1. During these periods of intellectual achievement, people from different religions who choose not to convert did not give up their beliefs.
2. Muslims and Jews did not accept the Christian claim that Jesus was the son of God.
3. Christians and Jews did not accept the Muslim claim that Muhammad was a prophet.
4. They did accept their differences and the idea that they would be stronger together than apart.
5. One story tells how Maimonides worked out a way to divide profits between Muslim and Jewish partners in a business.
6. The Jewish owner would get the Friday profits when the Muslim could not work and the Muslim owner would get the Saturday profits.
7. Another story tells how Jews and Muslims in a small town shared a bakery rather than building two bakeries.
8. In the final analysis, it was probably self-interest more than anything else that explains the remarkable period we have visited.
9. As one author states: **“Uncomfortable necessity, rather than some higher-minded ideal of tolerance, first spurred the accommodation that scholar’s hail as Spain’s era of *convivencia*.”** Lowney, *A Vanished World* at 189.
10. That is probably the most important lesson we can learn from our journey.

11. That is also the mission of the Center for Interfaith Cooperation, in which cooperation among people of different faiths is the driving principle of everything that we do.