



What to see in Ronda, Spain in One Day

Description

“.....where you should go if you ever go to Spain on a honeymoon or if you ever bolt with anyone. The entire town and as far as you can see in any direction is romantic background...”

Ernest Heminway from the novel death in the afternoon

Ronda “The City of Dreams”



Ronda, Spain was not on our radar until we came across a random post on a travel site on Facebook. This unique and picturesque mountain town is in the Andalucia region of southern Spain in the Province of Malaga. Our concern was what to see in Ronda in one day and whether was Ronda worth visiting. The answer is a resounding YES. Seeing these perfect whitewashed buildings sitting precariously on the edge of a deep river gorge upon seemingly never-ending sandstone peaks looked almost surreal. This massive gorge divides the town in two. The spectacular Puente Nuevo bridge, built in the 1700s, is 360 feet above the Guadalevin River and spans the El Tajo gorge. It joins the old and new town, making for breathtaking views of the surrounding valley.

While the astonishing sight of these massive sandstone cliffs with a city perched on top drew our first attention, we soon discovered its rich and ancient history.

Ronda, Spain became one of the largest famous white towns in the Andalucia region. We already had

a few white towns on our itinerary; why not add one more?

With our plane tickets purchased and hotels reserved, we had limited options, but luck was on our side. Ronda was not far off the path we had already laid out. It made for a long day, but it was worth every second. The scenery is stunning and beyond compare. There was an energy and excitement in Ronda that was invigorating. The locals were exceptionally kind, warm, and welcoming. It was also a blast to photograph. Ronda is the complete package!

A Town Full of Life and History

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Rhonda Spain

The town of Ronda, Spain also known as the “City of Dreams,” is a small yet bustling city with a fascinating history dating back to the Neolithic Age. Established in the 9th century BC, storytellers say those who arrived here never wanted to leave. The first Ronda inhabitants were primitive people, then the Romans, followed by the Moors. After conquering the town, the Crusaders drove out the Moors in the 15th century. Ronda, Spain bears markings from all these various inhabitants over the years. It is truly a step back in time. Its beguiling white houses and buildings, Roman and Moorish Antiquities, and impressive architectural wonders such as the Puente Nuevo bridge will undoubtedly capture your heart.

Ronda has had many famous historical figures fall in love with it. It is often referred to as one of the most romantic cities in Spain. We may find it hard to disagree with that statement. Pulitzer award-

winning author Ernest Hemingway wrote about Ronda extensively in his 1932 book *Death in the Afternoon*. He adored this town. While wandering the city, it is easy to imagine him wandering the streets, stopping at some old tavern for a drink and dialogue with the other patrons.

An Illustrious Bullfighting History



Ernest Hemingway said of bullfighting in Ronda. “There is one town that would be better... to see your first bullfight in if you were only going to see one, and that is Ronda.”

Ronda, Spain has some surprising modern history. It is the birthplace of modern bullfighting. Consequently, it remains one of the few places in Spain where bullfighting still occurs. The Bullring is a draw for foreign tourists and Spanish citizens alike. Plaza de Toros is open for tours and has an excellent museum.

The greatest matador of all time, Pedro Romero, was a native of Ronda. Pedro was a master in the ring while never being gored even once. Young bullfighters continue to come to learn the sport here.

Bullfighting is synonymous with violence and animal cruelty. We would not partake ourselves. It is part of the intricate fabric of Spain's and Ronda's story. It has been outlawed in most of Spain, and where it remains is very restricted. But here in Ronda, the tradition continues, but maybe not for long. Bullfighting nights will make for a crowded city and expensive hotels. Look at the schedule to plan appropriately.

Getting to Ronda, Spain, and where to stay

Ronda is located in the mountains and is entirely off the beaten path. As one of the Andalusia region's white villages, it is a 2-hour drive from Sevilla, a 2-hour 15-minute drive from Granada, and 1 hour and 22 minutes from Malaga. On the day we visited, we started in Granada and ended the day in Sevilla, with many White town visits along the way. It was a comfortable and lovely scenic drive—a mix of highways and country roads.



Some buses or tours easily take you from Sevilla, Granada, and Malaga for those without cars. There are trains available, but the route is slow, and you will get there faster by bus.

Ronda is a smaller city; with so much to experience, you should give yourself at least half the day if you don't plan to stay the night. We highly recommend a one-night stay if you can.

A lovely place to stay would be the historical [Parador de Ronda](#). It is part of a collection of luxurious Spanish hotels that restore historic buildings to their original wonder. While you would expect upscale hotel prices, they can be surprisingly reasonable. We stayed in one in Spain and could not have been more impressed. The Parador gives you a passport on your visit to have stamped as you travel to all their hotels. We visited two more along our path and will return. The Ronda Parador Hotel is housed in the former town hall building at the cliff's edge with unparalleled river views. It is next to the Puente Nuevo Bridge and central to everything in Ronda.

Many other accommodations in the area can be found on Expedia. [Click here](#) to view your options.

Ronda, Spain Map

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Top 12 Things to Do in Ronda, Spain

Puente Nuevo Bridge and Interpretative center

Hike from the bridge to the river valley

Old Town and 13th Century Medieval Fortified Gate

Castillo del Laurel A Medieval Castle

Palacio Mondragon 12th century Moor building housing history museum

The Stone Bridges of Ronda There are a total of four bridges in Rhonda

13th Century Arab Bathhouse A must-see highlight of any visit to Ronda

La Casa del Rey Moro 14th Century home of the Moor Sultan with a garden and water mine

Mirador de Ronda Gorgeous viewpoint of the bridge, the gorge, and the mountains.

Plaza de Toros de Ronda with museum oldest bullfighting ring in Spain

Plaza de Espana City park in New Town

Calle Nueva. A small pedestrian street with restaurants and shops

1.

Arriving in Ronda, Spain



Parking can be a challenge. Even in the offseason, finding a parking spot took us 20 minutes. Try to avoid parking far away or at the bottom of the town. We recommend parking in the first place you can find in town as you will want to get right to your visit to this fantastic city. There are underground lots in the heart of town and open-air lots toward the more residential New Town area away from the Puente Nuevo bridge.

We arrived late morning, and the town was bustling and full of people wandering about. The traffic was congested, and we moved slowly through these old narrow streets. Add to that all the pedestrians and horse-drawn carriages sharing the limited space. We observed many large tour buses parked around town, which explained why so many people were present.

Bring some good trail shoes to hike the town and the valley to get incredible views of the town above. Having comfortable shoes benefits you if you get stuck parking way down the hill and have to walk back up. Like most mountain towns, we discovered there is no shortage of hills.

Start with the bridge

Puente Nueve Bridge is a visually captivating architectural masterpiece. It sits amidst these sandstone rock cliffs that plummet into the massive gorge. The bridge is a tall, narrow arch with high piers. It was as surreal in person as when we saw the images online.

Construction started in 1759 to replace the original bridge that collapsed in 1740. It took 42 years to build, with several architects involved. Fifty workers died during the process of building it.

Puente Nueve Bridge, during the Civil War, functioned as a prison and was used for torture.

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Ronda Spain

The bridge chamber can be reached through a square building that served as the guardhouse previously. Today, it houses an exhibit depicting the bridge's history and construction. The view of the El Tajo gorge within the interpretive center is sensational.

At this point, you are right near the hiking path down to the valley below the gorge. It is just past the bridge on the old town side on the right. Follow this path as it clings to the river valley, taking you into the narrow part of the gorge. This deep gorge splits the town in two. The views along the whole hike will blow your mind. Take that camera and some water as if it is a hot day; you will need it on the walk back up. The river flowing through the El Tajo gorge is the Río Guadalevín. The hike is about 45 minutes roundtrip and can be steep at times.

Old Town Ronda

Now let's continue looking at some of the other great things in this fantastic village. It was hard to pull ourselves away from admiring and photographing the gorge and the bridge.

To the south of the bridge, you find yourself in Old Town. An incredible 13th-century medieval fortified gate was part of the old town walls. Several spots remain where you can see these walls—each with a unique perspective of the Old Town that runs predominantly on the east side.

Just past the gate is Castillo del Laurel since no walled town would be complete without a castle. Mondragon Palace is another great site, don't forget to stop at some of the many churches along the way.



Continuing north, you will find two smaller stone bridges, one of which is the original bridge to the town. Located at the northeast corner of the Old Town, just past a 13th-century Arab bathhouse.

The Arab Bathhouse

The Arab bathhouse is a popular site for visitors and is truly spectacular. The best-preserved baths in Spain offer a peek into the Moors' fascinating world during the 13-16 centuries. There is a short animated presentation that is a good introduction. Make sure to plan it into your schedule. There could be a wait as they are popular but well worth visiting.

After the bathhouse, you come across another small gate, the original town gate, which graces the road as you enter the town. Follow the stone roads that lead to terraces that provide spectacular views. Now head northeast of the wall to find La Casa del Rey Moro. There is a water mine and lovely gardens visitors can wander through.

Now head back toward the Puente Nueve Bridge and New Town. Take a different path than you took down. You will find many shops to visit in any direction you choose.

New Town Ronda



Alameda del Tajo

Finally, you cross the Puente Nuevo bridge into the northern New Town area. There you will find picturesque views of the river valley below and the town surrounding the edges of the cliffs. Once across, you will discover Mirador de Ronda, a great lookout point of the gorge. A short distance away is the beautiful Plaza de Espana. The Plaza is near the Bullring of Ronda.

The Bullring is from the 18th century and trained the royal cavalry once. Stop by the museum to learn about Spain's infamous bullfighting history.

Next to the Bullring, you will discover a gorgeous 19th-century city park, the Alameda del Tajo. The park's tree-lined paths are perfect for taking relaxing walks. Many locals are here, especially for the *paseo* (evening stroll). The park offers magnificent panoramic views of the Ronda landscapes. A duck pond adds to the charming setting.

On our way out, we stopped at Calle Nueva. A small pedestrian cobbled stone street near the Bullring, where you will find almost anything you want to eat there and some fun shops.

Then there is the food.....



The El Morabito Terrace Ronda

There are many great places In Ronda to stop for local treats and possibly a meal; there are plenty of bakeries and shops with local delights. We grabbed a delicious pastry to give us a bit of sustenance for our final climb. In the mood for an authentic Spanish treat? Find a cafe serving churros and hot chocolate.



Tapas

Along the many lovely streets throughout Ronda, you find all sorts of eateries and restaurants. There are many simple little taverns to enjoy traditional Spanish sherry or sangria. We were impressed with all the intimate family eateries and larger fancy restaurants. Tapas is a popular menu item in Ronda. Calle Nueva, a lively pedestrian cobbled stone street near the Bullring, was full of restaurants.

You can enjoy tapas and spectacular views with many restaurants perched on the cliffside. We always welcome special and unique dining settings to accompany our meals. Drawn into this idyllic setting, we chose to eat at [El Morabito](#) in Old Town. We ate on the terrace overlooking the valley. It was the perfect setting, and we marveled at the fantastic views while we enjoyed delicious tapas. It is next to a trail that takes you to excellent views of the town bridge inside the gorge.



Ronda, Spain

Ronda, Spain a feast for the eyes!

This white town is a magical place with scenery that is beyond comprehension. Even looking at pictures after the fact, it still seems unreal. It is a lovely stop full of history, culture, food, wine, hiking, and unique sites. Give it at least half a day. We did not give it the time it deserved. Make it a part of a grand tour of the White Towns of Andalucia, Spain.

It is an absolute must-do when in the Andalucia region of southern Spain. Travel is all about this kind of gem found off the beaten path.

Where stay when visiting Ronda, Spain

There are many places to stay while in Ronda. One advantage of spending the night is once the day crowds leave you can truly enjoy the magic this beautiful town has to offer. Though we did not spend the night, we did walk by the [Parador de Ronda](#). This is part of an exclusive collection of hotels in Spain. We stayed at one in Caceres, Spain, and loved it. We highly suggest checking out the Parador, its location was ideal and the views stunning.

It is important to price out properties on various sites. [Expedia](#) is a US-based company, whereas [Booking.com](#) is Europe-based. Not all properties appear on both, so check both. Our personal first choice is Booking.com. If the establishment has a website, check the price there as well.

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While in the area, may we suggest....



Zahara de la Sierra

While in this area of Andalucia, we suggest visiting two other white towns on the same day trip to Ronda.



Setenil de las Bodegas

Setenil de la Bodegas ([click here for the article](#)) and Zahara de la Sierra are entirely different from Ronda but astounding in their unique ways. They are all relatively close, and the drive is delightful. It would take an hour to drive a loop to all three towns.

When returning to this magnificent region one day, we hope to give it at least three days to see many more White Towns of Andalucia. Further south is also the Rock of Gibraltar; for those extra adventurous, you can take the ferry to Morocco.

Happy travels!

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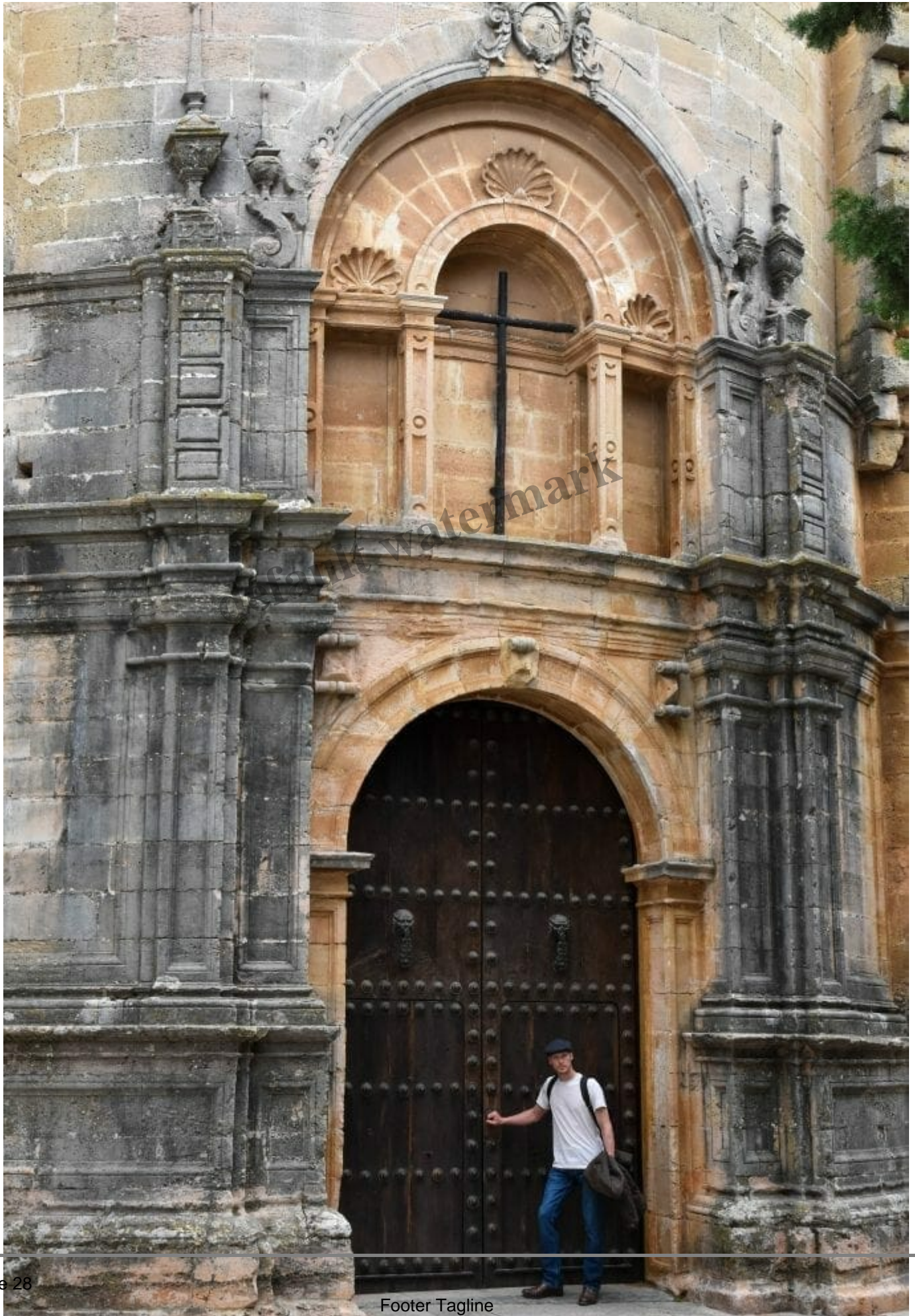


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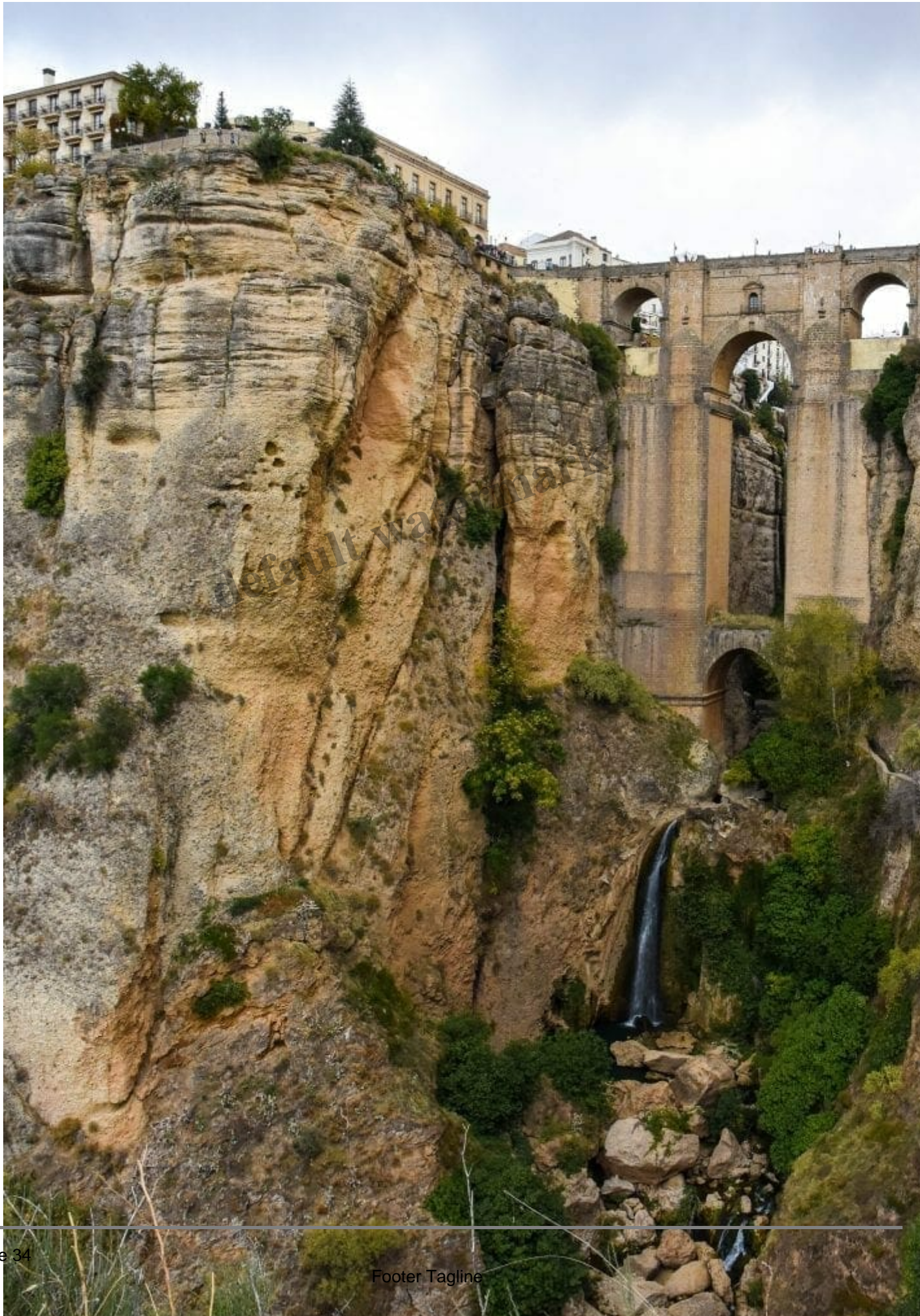


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We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller

ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

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[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

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