

Trip Report for the Ski Club Website:

Spain, Portugal, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains

March 6 – 20, 2018 Trip Leader: Hal Sparks Davis

In early March, twenty-six Jacksonville Ski Club members enjoyed a wonderful two week tour of the Iberian Peninsula.

We started in Portugal where we rode Tuk Tuks around Lisbon, enjoyed delicious seafood and toured monuments dedicated to the famous explorers who discovered and opened up the American continent. We also had a Port Wine tasting in Sintra, visited the Pena Palace and made our way out to Cabo da Roca, the wild and rugged westernmost point in Europe, where the wind was blowing about 80 mph.

After our time in Portugal we flew to Malaga, birthplace of Picasso, and transferred to the beautiful and interesting city of Granada. The clubs of the Florida Ski Council sent a total of almost 300 people to Granada, and the activities were spectacular. We attended an exciting horse show and private mock bull fight in the city arena and afterwards we enjoyed an amazing Flamenco Show in a beautiful palace. The tour of Granada and the magnificent Alhambra Palace were equally fascinating. Granada is a city rich in tradition and history, with strong Moorish influence in its culture and architecture. It is the birthplace of Tapas, and it is the place where King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella decided to finance Christopher Columbus on his voyages to the new world.

Our travelers took advantage of the extensive tour program offered by Holiday Travel through the Ski Council and many of our travelers skied for several days on the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in sight of the Mediterranean Sea.

Then we were off to the Spanish Riviera, the Costa del Sol, with swaying palm trees, warm sunny days and a beautiful view of the Mediterranean right from our balconies. We visited the British Rock of Gibraltar, ate fish & chips and saw the monkeys of Gibraltar, called the Barbary Macaques. They were so used to people that they even jumped on our little bus as we toured the peninsula. We also spent a long day traveling by bus and boat to Tetouan in Northern Africa, where we had a great Moroccan lunch and an eye opening tour of the Kasbah, which made us appreciate our way of life even more.

Finally, after two weeks of adventures and parties we spent our last sunny day in Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol and flew back to our homes in Florida. The trip was wonderful, exciting and interesting... but the best thing about the trip was the people we traveled with. Everyone joined in the parties and adventures and everyone pulled together to help each other with any problems. Let's go back to Europe again !!