Tony Tan’s 2016 Gourmet Tour of Spain

14 Day Tour From 14 to 27 October 2016

Spain! Every time I hear the name, it makes me fuzzy inside. Why? Because Spain does things to me few countries can ever come close to! Its lifestyle is great, its people are warm and charming, its language is beautiful, its history is fascinating, its culture is distinctive, but most of all, I love the food and wine of this captivating country. From the moment I heard Ferran Adrià speak on water years ago, I knew it was a country I'd be smitten with.

Since then, I’ve immersed myself in all things Spanish. I love Spanish films and literature as much as I love jamón over a glass of tinto – red wine. I adore chatting with Spanish chef-friends on both traditional and avant-garde cooking styles. To hear them talk food with passion is like listening to flamenco guitarists lost in a world of music. When they cook, their knives and tools are like the brushes and colours of artists like Dali, Miro and Picasso. Spanish chefs and cooking have taken the world by storm over the last couple of decades. While we are familiar with names like the Roca brothers, Andoni Aduriz and Ferran Adria, there is now a new generation of chefs who have melded modern gastronomy with traditional art. Have you heard of Michelin star chefs like Raul Balam, Ricard Camarena, Maria Jose San Roman? Or Javier Bonet whose nose-to-tail cooking is breathing fresh life in Madrid’s food scene? But wait, there’s more. We’ll check out ingredients like pimentón, saffron and olive oil in traditional markets. We’ll enjoy sparkling cava overlooking ancient medieval villages. We’ll learn to cook with Spain's best teachers like Gabriela Llamas and Jaume Brichs. We’ll also visit family-owned wineries that feature native grapes like bobal and xarel.lo. We’ll dine in excellent traditional and modern restaurants featuring witty and provocative dishes. We’ll also meet some chic Spanish friends and purveyors who will talk us through the intricacies of mojama, chorizo and sherry. Finally, cultural attractions like world class museums are also part of the tour.

Our journey begins from exuberant Madrid, best known as a cool party town awash with world class museums. The epicentre of Spain’s diverse cuisines and cultures, and not forgetting the stunning Royal Palace, bon vivants and discerning eaters flock to pompous-free tapas bars and nostalgic bodegas for fine food and drink. From here, we spend a day in Toledo, the former imperial city set on a hill above the plains of Castilla-La Mancha.

Then eastwards to Costa Blanca, Spain’s Mediterranean coast to the seaside city of Alicante. Along the way, we pass through Castilla-La Mancha, the land which inspired Cervantes to write Don Quixote. Considered by many as Spain’s last undiscovered food destination, Alicante is charming, low key and is famed for its palm fringe esplanade and its castle ruins. From Alicante, we work our way through gorgeous mountain passes and lush valleys towards Valencia, the city of cutting-edge architecture and sometimes known as the ‘new Barcelona.’ Best known the world over for its paella and oranges, this jewel of a city with Gothic sobriety and Baroque flourishes is, quite simply, wonderfully appealing. The Modernista market alone is worth the journey.

Our final destination is Barcelona, capital of Catalunya. Cool and contemporary, and completely food obsessed, Barcelona is a city of architectural treasures that span 2,000 plus years. The enchanting Gothic quarter, the whimsical creations by Gaudi and the Boqueria market are some of the highlights.

Included in this 14-day tour are stays in delightful 4-5 star hotels including the luxurious Mandarin Oriental, visits to exquisite local markets and to Alambique cookware shop. We will enjoy tours to magnificent cathedrals and ancient monuments, and to exceptional bodegas and attend olive oil tastings. We will also dine in a range of handpicked restaurants – many with Michelin stars – and first rate tapas bars featuring the tantalising cuisines of the Madrillenos, Valencians and Catalans.

We will also visit rice fields and a fisherman’s ‘boat’ for some of the most quirky but delightful culinary experiences. When our sojourn to this beguiling country is long over, you’ll remember the cobbled streets, the traditional cafes, the intoxicating scent of jamon; and the haunting music of a saxophonist playing a flamenco number in the silent night.

Viva la Espana! Join me?

Tony Tan, in association with helloworld
South Melbourne
Your Tour Host

Tony Tan

Tony was born on the east coast of Malaysia into a restaurant-owning family. He completed his formal training as a chef in Australia and in France at La Varenne. Since then Tony has become a prominent figure in Australian culinary circles, first on the Sydney scene and more recently in Melbourne. In Sydney, he ran his own highly successful restaurant, Taller’s Café. Since moving to Melbourne in 1986, he has managed Carlton’s well-known restaurant, Shakahari.

Tony was a presenter on the SBS Television series The Food Lovers’ Guide to Australia, coordinated the Asian Food Festival Awards in Melbourne in 1997, and has appeared on Eddie McDougall’s The Flying Winemaker and Anthony Bourdain’s No Reservations. Over the years he has presented Master Classes in Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide, while, internationally, he has taught in Singapore, Shanghai, Madrid and Auckland.

Tony won the Australian Travel & Tourism Award 2008 (The Kurosawa Collection) in the Best Tour Operator category.

He also writes regularly on Asian food and culture and established his own cooking school in 2001. Note: Tony Tan will host the group and local guides and establish his own cooking school in 2001.

Your Tour Itinerary

DAY 1 FRIDAY OCTOBER 14

Your adventure begins as you arrive in Madrid and transfer to the Urso, a luxury boutique hotel converted from a palace. Reeking of cool neo-Classical style with pared back Scandinavian looks, this centrally-located pride of Madrid is your home for 4 nights. Tonight’s welcome dinner is at La Manduca de Azagra, a smart Navarran restaurant featuring chistorras – tiny sausages and possibly one of the best torrijas – French toast – in town.

DAY 2 SATURDAY OCTOBER 15

After breakfast, we set off with our guide to explore the highlights of this great city including Puerta de Alcalá, Plaza de Cibeles and so on. Time permitting, we’ll stop briefly at Petra Mora, a high-end food store with goodies like artisan meats and piquillo peppers with kumbo.

After the tour, we lunch at Sala de Despíecie, one of the newest and much-talked about ‘restaurants’ in town. Created by visionary Javier Bonet with an emphasis on quality and fun, this joint defies convention by not serving traditional tapas. Expect the exceptional.

Rest of the afternoon free to explore on your own before dinner.

Dinner at El Triciclo, listed in Michelin guide as a culinary hotspot. Opened by three incredible young chefs – Javier Goya, David Alfonso and Javier Mayor, this casual venue is bright, youthful and buzzy. The food here is seasonal and innovative with twists on classic Spanish dishes. Salt-baked duck breast, purple garlic soup and venison with couscous may be on the menu. For party-goers, tonight’s the night for fun and flamenco and then enjoy a chocolate con churros at Chocolateria San Gines, a café/institution established in 1894.

DAY 3 SUNDAY OCTOBER 16

After breakfast, we tour one of Madrid’s big three museums, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. With its eclectic but impressive collection ranging from the Renaissance, to 17th century Dutch masters, Impressionists and pop art, the Thyssen is breathtaking.

Afternoon at leisure. For nature lovers, this is the time to stroll through Buen Retiro Park, one of the most beautiful green lungs of the city. Or take the opportunity to shop at Salamanca for local fashion or hunt for souvenirs at El Rastro, the flea market. After the tour, we lunch at Pepe Solla, one of the most famous places in town. You may want to try the local lamb with celeriac and a version of Perdiz a la Toledana, and wild game.

DAY 4 MONDAY OCTOBER 17

This morning, a short drive takes us to beautiful Toledo, a World Heritage city. Immortalised by the artist, El Greco, the city is a living museum of many cultures – Moorish, Christian and Jewish – and the local cuisine reflects these influences. Rich with ancient monuments, we’ll explore the Alcazar and the Toledo Cathedral.

Lunch at sophisticated Adolfo Restaurant, the best cocktails created by Spain’s top mixologists.

DAY 5 TUESDAY OCTOBER 18

Morning departure by coach for Alicante, the elegant port city along the Costa Blanca. Best known for its sun-kissed beaches, the city’s food scene is making a name for itself especially in the Barrio de la Santa Cruz, the lively old quarter. Our boutique hotel, the 5 star Hospes Amerigo, with its rooftop pool, is located near the Alicante Cathedral and Explanada de España, the boardwalk fringed with palm trees and sidewalk cafes.

Evening dinner at Maria Jose San Roman’s Michelín-starred Monastrell, the elegant space attached to the hotel. One of Alicante’s top female chefs and the unofficial queen of Alicante cuisine, she mixes the traditional with the new. Her interpretations of Mediterranean dishes are legendary. Expect, perhaps, her superb sardines on toast with red pepper cream or the local lamb with celeriac and a version of turron to finish.

DAY 6 WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 19

This morning, we tour Barrio Santa Cruz and St. Nicolas Cathedral before visiting Paco Torreblanca, acknowledged by his peers as one of the best pastry-artists and chocolatiers in the world. Torreblanca’s pastries are sublime and ephemeral pieces of art. To taste his turron de Alicante, the signature almond and honey confection much enjoyed at Christmas, is a revelation.

For lunch, we join the lively crowd at Taberna del Gourmet - one of the smartest eating places in town. An unpretentious and engaging venue, we may start with fat, green Tarragona olives. Shards of paellita – cured pork shoulder – may be followed by a modern take of Russian salad and grilled local fish known as negre.

Rest of day at leisure. Suggestion: go for a promenade along the Explanada de España and enjoy a tipple at the sidewalk kiosks. Or enjoy the divine spa in our hotel.

DAY 7 THURSDAY OCTOBER 20

Depart for Valencia, the shimmering city by the sea. Bold, innovative, contemporary and yet still proud of its conservative traditions, the country’s third largest...
city is also the home to experimental cuisine. It’s also famous for horchata, a milky drink made from chufas or tiger nuts. Upon arrival, we check in to the Melia, formerly a Hilton hotel. Dinner at Michelin starred Ricard Camarena’s restaurant, one of the stars of Valencia’s food scene. A former trumpeter, he traded in musical scores for cooking. We may dine on perhaps wild duck with chestnuts and vermouth and a sensational dessert of pear, liqueurice and bitter almond.

For the more spirited among us, this is the time to explore the city on your own. Take time to visit the 13th century Valencia Cathedral built over a Muslim mosque that was built over a Visigoth basilica. BD

DAY 8 FRIDAY OCTOBER 21
This morning, we explore the spectacularly futuristic city of Arts and Sciences, the Tura Gardens, the exquisite Mercado Central market – some say it’s as good as if not better than La Boqueria in Barcelona. After this, we drop by La Lonja, the Silk exchange and the Cathedral where the Holy Grail is kept. Lunch at L’Establiment in El Palmer, a village hidden among thick forests, this area is miles away from the hustle and bustle of Valencia. As part of our wine tasting experience with a bang!

DAY 9 SATURDAY OCTOBER 22
After breakfast, we head towards the plateau of Utiel- Requena, one of the best wine regions of Valencia. Scattered with rustic villages, Gothic churches and thick forests, this area is miles away from the hustle and bustle of Valencia. As part of our wine tasting experience, we will sample wines from the red bobal grape, the native berry that serious wine lovers are beginning to discover, its intensity, colour and beauty. Lunch at Bodega Mustiguillo where cooks may feature traditional dishes such as olla and potaje – a kind of meat and vegetable stew and ajoarriero, similar to cod brandade.

After the long lunch, we return to Valencia. Rest of day is at leisure – perhaps take the opportunity for a bit of retail therapy or more sightseeing in the old quarter or at the shopping malls, centro comerciales. BL

DAY 10 SUNDAY OCTOBER 23
This morning, we depart for Barcelona, the city of Gaudi, Picasso and the heart of Catalan cuisine. Upon arrival, our home is the ultra-luxurious 5 star Mandarin Oriental. One of the city’s much-loved hotels located right in the heart of Passeig de Garcia – the Fifth Avenue of the city – this chic hotel has its own lush garden in the courtyard and rooftop terrace swimming pool offering magical views of this glorious city.

This evening, join me for drinks at Mimosa Garden before we head for a journey to discover the roots of Catalan cuisine. From traditional cases de menjars (eating houses) to the current post-Bulli food scene, we walk to unexplored areas of the city to taste local produce and fabulous dishes. BD

DAY 11 MONDAY OCTOBER 24
After breakfast, we explore the icons of the city, the modernista architecture of Gaudi and Puig as well as visit Fundacio Juan Miro, the celebrated artist, sculptor and ceramist. Walking shoes please.

After this, a simple lunch at Mont Bar – where owner-chef Ana Merino wowed the public at Madrid Fusion 2016 – to fortify ourselves for the afternoon siesta. For the shopaholic, check out those in Passeig de Gracia or pop over to Ecriba, a much-lauded pastry shop in Gran Via.

In the evening, we take a leisurely walk to visit one of the last professionals working at the local pier where he will walk us through the fish auction and which may feature the intriguing Mediterranean red prawns. A seafood dinner at a mystery location follows. BLD

DAY 12 TUESDAY OCTOBER 25
Today is a journey to the countryside of Penedes. We begin our day with a breakfast of Catalan cheese and emobits (sausages) at a family-owned olive oil maker to be followed by olive oil tasting.

Then we head to Mas Candi, a young organic winery that’s making waves around the globe, to look at the unique world of indigenous grapes like Xarel.Lo, and how to they are made into wines of exceptional quality. After a glass (or two! of wine, we stop for lunch at a charming farmhouse on the finest produce which may include wild autumal mushrooms and cocoa, the rustic flatbread of Catalonia topped with Tiny salted sardines and soft red peppers. BL

DAY 13 WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 26
This morning is a total immersion with Jaume Brichs, a passionate Catalan chef and cookery teacher whom I’ve known for years. A pastry chef and restaurant consultant for a prestigious chain, Jaume will guide us through the Boqueria Market before conducting a lively cooking class that celebrates his native cuisine. Expect mouth-watering treats and an unforgettable dessert to match with local wines.

For those not wishing to join the class, an optional tour (at own cost) is organised to visit the Barri Gotic, the former Jewish quarters, Roman ruins and Picasso Museum. Our farewell-gala dinner at Moments, the two Michelin star restaurant helmed by Raul Balam, son of Carme Ruscalleda, the only female chef in the world with seven Michelin stars. The menu will be magical, imaginative and fun. So let’s party and end our Spain experience with a bang! BLD

DAY 14 THURSDAY OCTOBER 27
Our sojourn to Spain ends after breakfast with transfer to the airport for your onward flight home. B
**TOUR INFORMATION**

**TOUR PRICE** $11,998* per person, for twin share land only arrangement (single supplement add $3,000).

For international airfares please contact Janene Ferguson at helloworld South Melbourne via the contact details on this page.

**TOUR PRICE INCLUDES**
- Intercity transportation
- Twin share accommodation
- All tours and cooking classes
- where indicated
- Meals as per itinerary
- Airport transfer

**TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE**
- International airfares and departure tax
- Drinks, lunch and dinner except where indicated
- Luggage in excess of 20kg
- Travel Insurance
- Passport and other documentation fees
- Items of a personal nature, eg. laundry, etc
- Tipping and personal shopping

**PASSenger details**

Full name ____________________________________________

Mailing Address _______________________________________

Telephone (home) _________________________________ (business) _________________________________

Email address _______________________________________

Passport Number ____________________ Expiry Date ______

Note: Please provide a photocopy of your passport with this booking form.

**TOUR DEPOSIT**

To helloworld South Melbourne: (please tick) I hereby □ enclose a cheque □ have made a bank transfer of my deposit of AUD$2,000.00 per person as deposit for Tony Tan's Gourmet Tour of Spain, along with a copy of my passport, and wish to book (please tick):

- □ Single accommodation or □ Twin accommodation sharing with ___________________________

Please nominate the city you wish to depart from ___________________________

Payment options:
- Cheque: to be made payable to helloworld South Melbourne.
- Credit card: Please note, credit card surcharges are applicable.

**Extending your holiday**: helloworld South Melbourne can make all necessary travel arrangements should you wish to extend your stay.

**Tour conditions**

I understand:

1. That full payment is due no later than Thursday 30 June 2016;
2. Cancellation must be received in writing. Cancellation fees are based on per person and are as follows: up to 60 days before departure date – loss of deposit only; 60 to 30 days before departure date – 50% of tour cost; 30 to 7 days before departure date – 75% of tour cost; Inside 7 days before departure date – 100% of tour cost.

Comprehensive Travel Insurance is compulsory for all clients travelling. Please contact helloworld South Melbourne for your insurance options. At the time of final payment, a copy of your comprehensive policy is required together with emergency assistance details.

3. That helloworld South Melbourne and the Unlimited Cuisine Company (the promoters) reserve the right to change the itinerary at any time as a result of unforeseen circumstances. I hereby release the promoters from all responsibility for damages, injury, losses or delays suffered by me due to any reason whatsoever and understand that all expenses for the above will be borne by me.
4. This tour is based on minimum number people travelling. In the event of minimum numbers not being reached, we have the right to withdraw the tour. You will be entitled to a full refund on the funds already paid.
5. Prices and inclusions are correct at the time of printing, but may be changed due to currency fluctuations, increases in principles’ tariffs, taxes and charges and hotel/air tariffs.
6. All prepaid ticket taxes are included but please note that they are subject to change at any time.
7. The hotels listed in the itinerary are intended to be used, however, if a change becomes necessary for any reason, the accommodation substituted will be equivalent in standard to the hotel listed in the itinerary. Every effort is made to reserve twin-bedded rooms where requested.
8. A party is not liable to perform the party’s obligations if such failure is a result of Acts of God (including fire, flood, earthquake, storm, hurricane or other natural disasters), war, invasion, act of foreign enemies, hostilities (regardless of whether war is declared), civil war, rebellion, revolution, insurrection, military or usurped power or confiscation, terrorist activities, nationalisation, government sanction, blockage, labour dispute, strike, lockout or interruption or failure of electricity or telephone service. No party is entitled to terminate this Agreement under Clause 17 (Termination) in such circumstances. If a party asserts Force Majeure as an excuse for failure to perform the party’s obligation, then the performing party must prove that the party took reasonable steps to minimise delay or damages caused by foreseeable events, that the party substantially fulfilled all non-excused obligations, and that the other party was timely notified of the likelihood or actual occurrence of an event described in Clause 19 (Force Majeure).

I acknowledge that the booking is made upon the above conditions, which I agree and understand.

Signed ___________________________ Date ____________ / __________ / 2016

**Please return** your completed booking form to Janene Ferguson, helloworld South Melbourne, PO Box 769, South Melbourne Vic 3205, Australia. Or send via fax: +61 3 9696 0120 or email: sthmelb@helloworld.com.au